CHANGELING™
THE LOST
A Storytelling Game of Beautiful Madness

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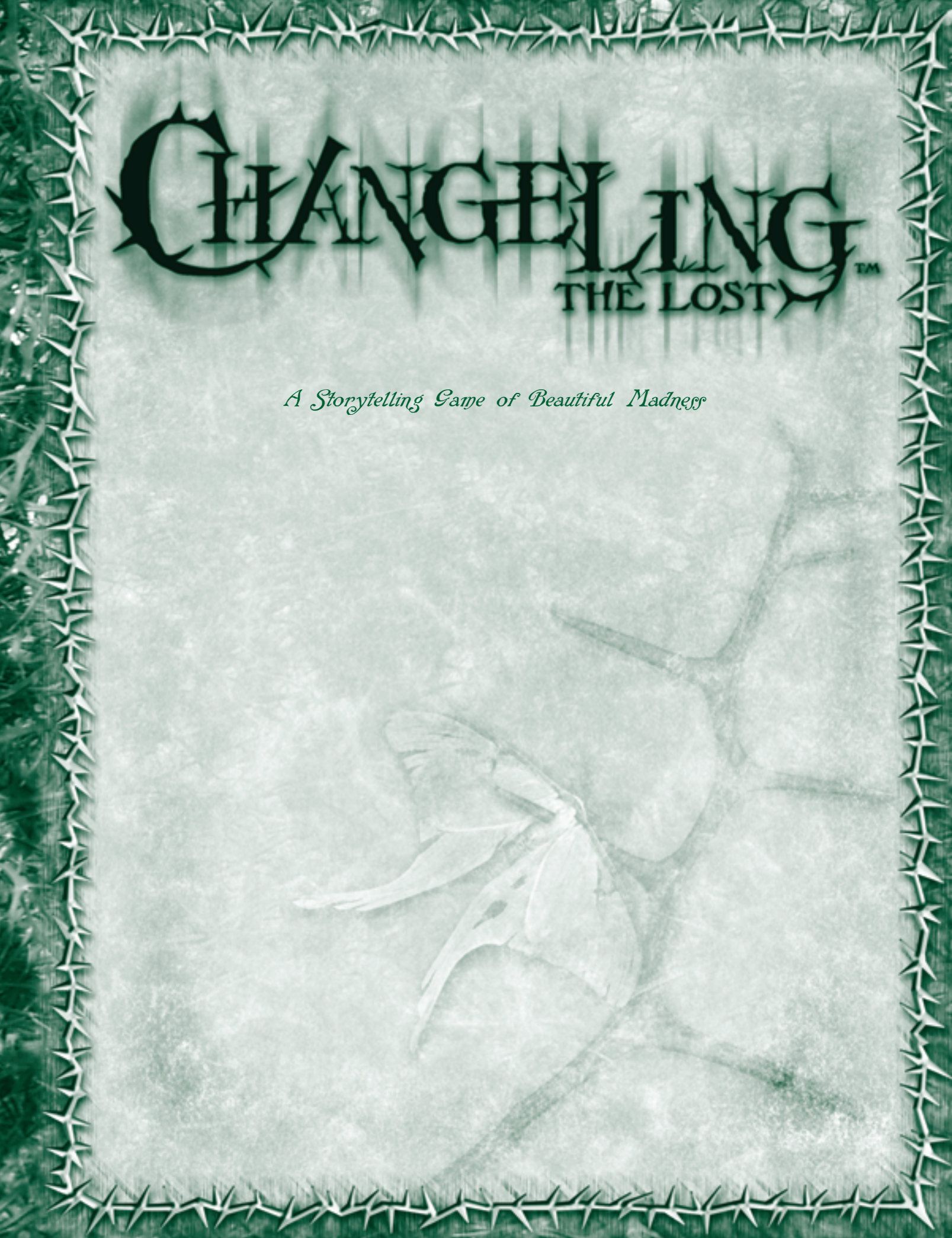

What Alec Bourbon Said

They called the guy Alec Bourbon because he loved to drink, but aside from that, he had a strange way about him. It made some people nervous and it made some people laugh, but Alec never left anyone around him untouched. Whenever he and the regulars who hung around his shithole local heard that Van Morrison song on the jukebox, "Jackie Wilson Said," Alec would change that line to "Alec Bourbon Said," and then he'd follow it up with any bit of doggerel that came to mind and howl it to the bar at top volume. Even weirder was that people played along — if he said, "Alec Bourbon said thumb your nose," every (other) rummy and souse in the joint would thumb his nose and laugh like it was the greatest joke in the world. They'd pound the heavy oak tables in that old bar, and for a brief moment, the air wasn't so heavy with stale smoke or the smell of losers.

The bar was named after some almost-forgotten church, a haunted ruin where witches danced as the drunken protagonist stumbled home in an old poem. This wasn't a place where ironic hipsters or slumming socialites went to drink beer from cans. This was a place where men who had witnessed hard lives went to die slowly, poisoning themselves along the way. It was always winter inside, the end of something, cold and melancholy but for the few brief moments when something comic happened. Even then, though, that mirth was momentary, like the time Old Dom slipped in a pool of spilled beer and fell on his face, shoving his glasses into his baggy eyes. The whole place guffawed at Dom's goggled peepers! The surgery left him entirely blind in one eye and mostly blind in the other, though. Old Dom owed Alec $20. Alec Bourbon liked it cold and dark inside the bar.

Our man had a face like the bole of a tree and hands like a tree's gnarled roots. His hair, when he didn't wear that greasy New York Jets cap, looked like a crow's nest of thatch and twigs. Even Alec's disposition could grow as dark as the wooden surfaces of the bar on occasion, especially when women were involved. They hated him, and he hated them. Butch, behind the bar, said that Alec Bourbon had been married years ago, but that she was a beer woman, so he eventually had to kill her. Alec said Butch had a shit sense of humor, to shut the fook up and that puns were the lowest form of language. Butch told Alec to pay his tab and that was the only time in 37 years that Alec didn't offer a returning remark. It was Alec's bar anyway, even if he didn't own it or work there. He was there more than anyone else.

So it was that the mumblesome old regulars who shared Alec's bar were surprised one night when in walked a pretty young woman looking at least a

century Alec's junior and asked for him. She wore a bright green dress. Her eyes were wide and dewy, her legs long and strong, and more than a few coarse words passed among those hoary men when she arrived.

"Alec's in the shitter," Butch said.

"I will wait," she replied. Not "I'll wait," but "I will wait." And so she waited.

When Alec returned from the bathroom, he carried his glass with him. "Thirsty work!" he called to no one in particular, and all those no ones in particular laughed, just like they always did, before returning to their own drinks. This time, though, they kept their eyes on him.

He walked back to his bar and sat on his high, wooden stool. The woman, her hands clasped before her, approached him. "You are Alec Bourbon."

He replied by looking at her, eye-to-eye, and downing his drink in a long gulp.

"I am Anne —"

"I know who you are, rabbit," he cut her off, "and if you want what you want, you have to have a drink with me."

"I do not drink," she protested. Short, quiet laughs and vague comments about femininity floated through the air from patrons seated at the oak and mahogany recesses of the bar's tables.

"You do if you wan' talk to me." This much was true. Alec rarely received guests at the bar, but when he did, they always drank with him, some more willingly than others. Several loud young men from Boston once drank with him eagerly. An enormous steelworker who came to see him drank reluctantly. "You drink with me, I do as you ask," Alec said.

"You do not know what I shall ask," the woman continued, though she took a seat next to him (even though he never stood for her or offered it to her, the cad).

"I didn't get to be the man I am today by hiding my head in the bushes!" Alec bellowed, slapping his hand on the bar with a sound like a cudgel.

The woman skittishly agreed. "I assume we drink bourbon?"

"Bully for you, honey."

After that, no one heard what they said to each other for the rest of the night. The woman left, but no one could tell you when, or how many drinks she had or her apparent mood when she left. Everyone at the bar just nodded and looked the other way. Butch swore he put the woman's only drink on Alec's tab. Butch vaguely remembered her saying something about a year and a day.

Muttering to himself, Alec rode the downtown train. "Promises, promises," he snarled at the world, or maybe to anyone who had the power to do anything about them. That was his life, promises and dreams. He imagined that in anyone else's life, a world of promises and dreams would be a beautiful thing. Not so for him. He kept promises because he had to. For the same reason, he kept so many dreams at bay.

At the second stop after the transfer line, the woman with the dewy eyes and long legs got on the train. She wore a dour gray dress and a raincoat almost the same color as the dress, only a little more blue.

Alec noticed her but paid her no mind. She saw him, but her eyes betrayed no hint of recognition.

Other people boarded the train, too: teenagers going home late from friends' houses, short-order cooks coming off the mid-shift, lawyers who put in long hours. Alec didn't know any of them. A man in a suit on a cell phone bumped his knee and said, "Sorry, old man." Alec offered a half-hearted reply, "Promises, promises." The man in the suit gave Alec a curious look that expressed a lack of comprehension, but then turned away and returned to his cell phone conversation. Alec was obviously senile. Just another nut on the train.

Alec sat in the same seat for the whole trip, his left hand wrapped around the railing like a tree branch that had grown around an intruding fence post. He kept his right hand in his pocket, except for the dozen times he brought it out to raise his flask to his lips.

At the south eight stop, the woman with the dewy eyes and long legs got off the train. Alec left the train, too. She went down the stairs and onto the street. Alec followed, 99 steps behind her, sipping from his flask. She turned left on Third, left again on Alder and then right on Sixth. Alec had gone left on Fifth, left again on Holly and then left onto Sixth.

Alec wanted her to have enough time.

When he turned onto Sixth, no one was there. It was too cold to be out long this time of year, but that was the way Alec liked it. The bourbon in his flask kept him warm, and he smoked a cigarette, clutching it between his fingers, feeling its heat through his cutoff gloves. That was probably long enough, he reasoned, and took a few steps down the block.

The brownstone he lingered in front of was lit up with cold light, only a few of the windows displaying any hint of the season's coming holidays. Presently, a couple dressed in running gear came out the front door, walking a pale-eyed Weimaraner. Alec grabbed the doorknob before the door closed and pushed his way inside. He found the foyer damnably warm.

D7. Fourth floor. Alec took the stairs.

As he came to the landing on the fourth floor, Alec checked his jacket. There, inside, he felt the length of polished flying rowan he carried with him. It had always done the trick in these circumstances. He squinted his eyes and pursed his lips, as if the thought pained him; the club always helped him fulfill his promises.

Alec Bourbon knocked on the door of D7.

The dewy-eyed woman answered, though the door was chained. She had changed from her workaday dress into a slouchy sweatshirt and jeans. Blue light emanated from the room behind her, the television spilling its content, unheeded, awaiting her return.

For a moment, the woman's face looked confused. Then a look of recognition washed over her features. "Uncle Roy?" she asked.

"That's right, my dear," Alec Bourbon replied. "I've brought your birthday present."

The woman smiled, elated. She closed the door, and Alec heard the rattle of the chain on the other side. Then she opened it again, her arms wide to embrace him. He didn't, but she didn't act snubbed.

Wretched apartment. He was doing her a favor. The TV, he saw, was tuned to the Mets game (the *Mets*, of all games!). A cat hunched over its food and water dishes in the kitchenette. Alec could hear the hum of the microwave, could smell the reek of frozen food sluggishly thawing and cooking in its heavy sauces.

"Do you want a beer, Uncle Roy?" the woman asked.

Alec gritted his bark-textured teeth. "No, dear, I've brought my own." He took out his flask and took a deep swig, glancing at her out of the corner of his eye. Then he put his flask away, without bothering to offer her any.

She smiled anyway and took a bottle of diet ginger ale out of the refrigerator. Pouring herself a juice glass full of the stuff, she went over to the couch, the television grabbing her attention again. "What's this about a birthday present?" she called over her shoulder. "I don't see anything wrapped."

"You have three guesses, dearest. If you can guess what it is, I won't give it to you."

The woman took her eyes away from the TV again and looked at him. "That's a strange gift to give. You *won't* give it to me if I guess what it is?"

"That's right. Now what's your first guess?"

"That doesn't make any sense," she said, intrigued by the weird, unconventional nature of the present. She hadn't even planned on celebrating her birthday. No one at the office knew today was the day, and she was tired anyway. Maybe she and some of the girls could get together this weekend.

"Just indulge your Uncle Roy, sweetheart."

"Is it Mets tickets?" She came over to stand with him in the kitchenette, hoping to gain a clue, to see if he held something that might give away some of the surprise.

Alec Bourbon rolled his eyes. "No, it's not Mets tickets."

"Is it a CD?"

"No, it's not a CD. I wouldn't know what music to get you. All your music sounds like racket to me anyway."

She laughed as the microwave beep-beep-beeped that it was done. "Is it a collar for Robespierre?"

Robespierre? What the hell kind of name is that for a cat? Alec wondered. "No, it's not that. So now I have to give it to you" He sighed heavily as he drew the length of wood from inside his jacket.

She made a confused face — just as all the women always did — and he swung the club at her face with such ferocity that it burst her nose and mouth at once. A spatter of blood showered across the linoleum floor and the countertops.

The confused look remained on her face, but her eyes bulged with pain and welled with tears.

Alec Bourbon struck her again, and she fell. And then again. And again and again and again. She didn't move, slumping awkwardly against the lower cabinets, her legs splayed out at a painful angle and her sweatshirt sopping up some of the spilled blood.

Alec Bourbon locked the door, chained it and sat down on the threadbare loveseat, his head in his hands, unmoving, his tears oozing slowly like sap from a tree's severed limb. "Robespierre, clean up some of that goddamn mess in there, would you?" The cat licked its paw twice, then went into the bedroom and curled up on the hamper.

By the time the game had wound down, Alec Bourbon was drunk as a lord, but he still had work to do. He pulled himself up from the loveseat with a suppressed sob and returned to the small kitchen to clean up the remains.

The blood on the floor was gone, but the blood that soaked into the sweatshirt still stained it, a crimson blemish. The woman's body had vanished. In its place sat a rudely made corn dolly. In place of the doll's head, a severed rabbit's head had been tacked to the poppet. The rabbit's face wore a hideous rictus, and one of its eyes was clouded over. Everything smelled of wax and lacquer.

Alec Bourbon gathered these as quickly as his clumsy stupor would let him and stuffed them into a trash bag. Then he put an additional scoop of cat food in Robespierre's bowl. Taking up the bag, he climbed out of the window and clattered gracelessly down the fire escape into the alley.

"I had a promise to keep, if it's any of your business, you mop-headed young fuckface," Alec Bourbon told Butch, behind the bar. "I need a constitutional. I'll have a beer and a shot on the side."

Everyone at the bar roared. Alec drinking beer! It happened only once or twice a year, and he always made a face like an old woman birthing a live snake. He never told anybody why he ordered beer once or twice a year, so they respected that, but they teased him about it insofar as he'd let them. Old Dom said, "Don't treat him special. Pour him that same piss you pour everyone else."

They laughed and sang and somebody played "Jackie Wilson Said," whereupon Alec called out, "Alec Bourbon said, tug your tongue!" and everyone tugged their tongues and laughed some more. The bar might have been cold, but everyone's minds and blood were warm.

"Whatsinna bag?" some loutish young ratso from down the street asked Alec, seeing the trash bag at his feet as he sat at his rugged stool.

"Losing lottery tickets. You want to buy some?" Alec ribbed the kid right back.

"Naw way, old man," the kid replied.

"Good on you," Alec said.

Just then, the door opened, and a dewy-eyed woman with long, strong legs walked in. She wore a royal blue dress and a bright green wool coat to fend off the outside cold. A chill wind blew in through the open door, and everyone in the place wanted to say, "Shut that goddamn door!" but everyone also knew not to say anything.

The woman walked to the bar where Alec sat. He downed his beer and waved Butch away.

"Seeing you does my heart good, Alec Bourbon. I trust everything came off without a hitch?"

"It did indeed, Anne Timothy." Despite the woman's salubrious tone, Alec's face wore no smile.

"You have my many thanks," she said, and motioned to Butch to come back over.

Alec was surprised. None of the people not from the bar ever drank with him if they didn't have to. Even those rowdy Boston boys pleaded that they had to get back on the road. "You're going to take a drink with me?" he asked.

"Certainly, I cannot. But I know you gave your word, and a promise fulfilled is a burden eased. Even if only temporarily." Her eyes went to the bag and then to the bartender. "Mr. Bourbon will have his namesake," she called to Butch. "A token of my appreciation."

By the time Butch returned with the shot, Alec had knocked back the one that still stood before him. If he was still surprised, he didn't show it. He didn't want her to see what made him work. She knew one of his promises. He didn't want her to guess any more. "I suppose you'll want this, then." He reached down to the floor and offered her the trash bag. It still smelled faintly of wax and lacquer.

"Yes, that is part of the promise, too, I believe." She smiled. Alec shrugged.

She got up and walked out of the bar without a backward glance. The cold wind blew in again, but the door banged shut quickly.

Butch was the first to break the silence. "Shot down, Prince Charming?" Everyone else half-laughed nervously.

"Stop your braying, you gap-toothed jackass," Alec said. "Here, take this bourbon and put it above the lintel there. Don't spill a drop, and leave it there until I ask for it."

Butch furrowed his brow but complied. "Just leave it here?"

"Just leave it there," Alec Bourbon confirmed. He wasn't the only one who had made promises. Now he could hold Anne Timothy to one of hers.

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This game's for all of you out there who love those old stories that change a little bit each time a new storyteller picks them up. We love them, too. Enjoy.

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STAWICKI
2007

She rubbed her hand. It had stopped bleeding, but it still ached. More like itched. The scratches on her legs were swelling, too, and every step made her toes slither together.

Blood was collecting in her sneakers.

She'd been calling out to him for hours. She'd been yelling his name. She'd followed him into the garden, and she was planning on really giving him the business because he knew he wasn't to be out after dark. But now here she was in a part of the woods she'd never seen before, all cut up from the thorns. She'd lost the path an hour ago, and she'd been calling out his name ever since, calling out…

…his name. What was his name?

She stopped and shook her head. His name was *there*, in her brain, and she knew it. She knew her cat's name (Penguin) and she knew her employers' names (Brian and Stella) and she knew *their* cat's name (Fusi) but what the hell was the kid's name?

She kept walking, toes still wet from blood, hand still itching from the scratch. She was walking slower now. She was confused, having trouble catching her breath or maybe her thoughts —

— and when the face appeared, she nearly screamed.

"Go back!" The face had a head behind it and a body under it, and it looked rather familiar, kind of like the girl who'd drowned last year.

"Aren't you dead?" she asked.

The girl-thing — it didn't really look like the girl, just from a certain angle — shook its head violently. "No time! Go back! The path's behind you just a few steps!"

"But I have to find… him."

The girl-thing shut its eyes tight, as though trying to block out pain. It was silent for a long moment. And then it said, "He's back at home already."

She started to protest, but then found she didn't have the energy. She walked a few paces back. Found the path. Went back to the house.

Later, her employers would ask her why she left Danny — *that* was his name! — alone for so long. Why she'd gone walking through the rose bushes (because where else had those scratches come from?). But all she could think of was the girl-thing, and how sad and scared it looked, and why it had been wearing a dog's collar.

And why Danny seemed *taller* now than he had that morning, and why he didn't know his cat's name.

Introduction

"Be easy," answered the nix, "I will make thee richer and happier than thou has ever been before, only thou must promise to give me the young thing which has just been born in thy house."

— "The Nixie of the Mill-Pond," as recorded by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

We all grow up on fairy tales. Our first exposure to them these days is often in a somewhat light-hearted, "child-friendly" form. The good fairies bless the heroes so they can overcome their challenges, and the wicked fairies' curses ultimately come to naught. Everyone lives happily ever after.

But as we start to find the older fairy tales in their original form, things turn out differently. Blood and sex creep into the tales. People come to bad ends. These stories were told to children not to comfort them as they fell asleep, but as cautionary tales. Warnings not to stray too far from home. Not to go into the dark woods. Not to wander down the road at night. Stay at home, be good, mind your manners… or something bad will happen to you. The Good Folk might come and take you away.

Changeling: The Lost is a game about what happens when these old stories prove true. The Others do come and take people away, keeping them as slaves in a fairyland that's as much nightmare as dream. Severed from the mortal world, these abducted humans gradually become more and more like their captors, losing themselves in their new lives. But some of these captives remember who they are, and try to escape back to the place they were born. Changed in form and feature, scarred by their durance, some of them even make it back.

A Game of Beautiful Madness

The protagonists of this modern fairy tale are the changelings, or as they often call themselves, the Lost. Stolen away from their human lives as children or adults, they spent what seemed like years or even centuries in Faerie, chattel to beautiful but inhuman lords and ladies. Fed on faerie food and drink, they gradually became more fae themselves, their bodies shifting slightly to reflect their roles. Some, however, managed to escape. Holding on to their memories of home, they found their way through the winding thorns of the Hedge, the barrier between the mortal world and time-twisted Faerie.

Their return, however, was all too bittersweet. Some came back 20 years after they'd first vanished, even though it had never seemed that long to them in Faerie. Others who had reached adulthood in Arcadia found that they returned only a few hours after their abduction. And almost all found, horribly enough, that they weren't missed. The Fae had been thorough. Left in the stead of each abducted changeling was a replica, a simulacrum, a *thing* that looked like him or her — but wasn't. Now, with inhuman strangers living their lives and nowhere to go, the Lost must find their own way in the world that was stolen from them.

Changeling deals with the struggles and dreams of people who are no longer what they were, their mortal flesh interwoven with fae magic. An illusion called the Mask obscures their remade physical bodies, allowing them to pass for humans — a word that doesn't apply to them any more. The contrast between the reality of the mortal world and the unreality of Faerie colors their stories, in ways that often express as beauty, madness or both.

The beauty referred to almost goes without saying. Faerie is beautiful. It isn't kindly, or nurturing or benevolent, but it is wondrously beautiful. The same is true for its children, both those who were born of its unreal matter and those mortals who were abducted and nursed on its magic. Even a hideous Ogre may have some strangely sketched artistry to its asymmetrical features, and even a Darkling of disturbing mien may have an elegantly hypnotic grace or cold, frank sexuality. But as the Lost move among the mortal world, trying to recover their old lives or draw enough Glamour to sustain themselves, they become aware of the beautiful things that mortals often take for granted. To a

changeling, there is beauty in the grief hanging over the funeral of a good man, or in the awkward way a young girl twists her hands at a school dance. They see things nobody else does — not simply because they can, but because they try.

The madness inherent to a changeling's existence is also twofold. Part is external. Changelings too often cross paths with things of Faerie and the Hedge — strange, creeping things that should not *be*, that defy human rationality. The Others themselves can only be described as "mad," for surely they subscribe to no mortal definition of sanity. But an equally great threat comes from within. The threshold between dream and reality, between Faerie and mortality, is easily crossed… and a changeling doesn't always know which side of the threshold she stands on.

Theme

The prevailing theme of **Changeling** is the quest to find one's way home. For some, this may mean reclaiming the mortal lives they were stolen away from as best they can. For others, it means finding a new home among the freeholds and Courts of the Lost. Some hope to be fortunate and determined enough to achieve both, finding one foothold in the mortal world and another among their fae kin. Even the tangled skeins of intrigue and ambition that grip many a freehold trace their roots back to changelings who are determined to find their way to a place they'd be willing to call "home." It's no simple journey, and the stories of each chronicle unfold around the challenges of this road. Who can you trust? What is your heart's desire, your ideal home? What is the price you will have to pay to achieve it?

The secondary theme of the game reflects the nature of the fae. A common hallmark to legends that feature things we think of as "fae," in fact the characteristic that may define a supernatural entity as "fae" or not, is a certain theme of deception or dishonesty. In some stories, the fae are the ones who trick mortals, appearing to be things they aren't, substituting their own young for human children or leading wanderers astray. In others, humans are the ones who break some form of social contract with the fae, although often while unaware that the contract is in place, and are punished severely by the fae for their "disloyalty." The themes of deception and mistrust run through many **Changeling** stories, as the Lost must hide themselves away from friends and family in order to keep from drawing their enemies' eyes. Promises and pledges are the mortar that holds fae changelings together, the only way the Lost can tell who to trust and who to avoid. Changelings are at their most powerful when they can finesse their way into some sort of advantageous position over their enemies, and most constrained when they must give their word. In that, they are very like the fae of legend, and the "faerie tales" of their lives have a hauntingly familiar refrain.

Mood

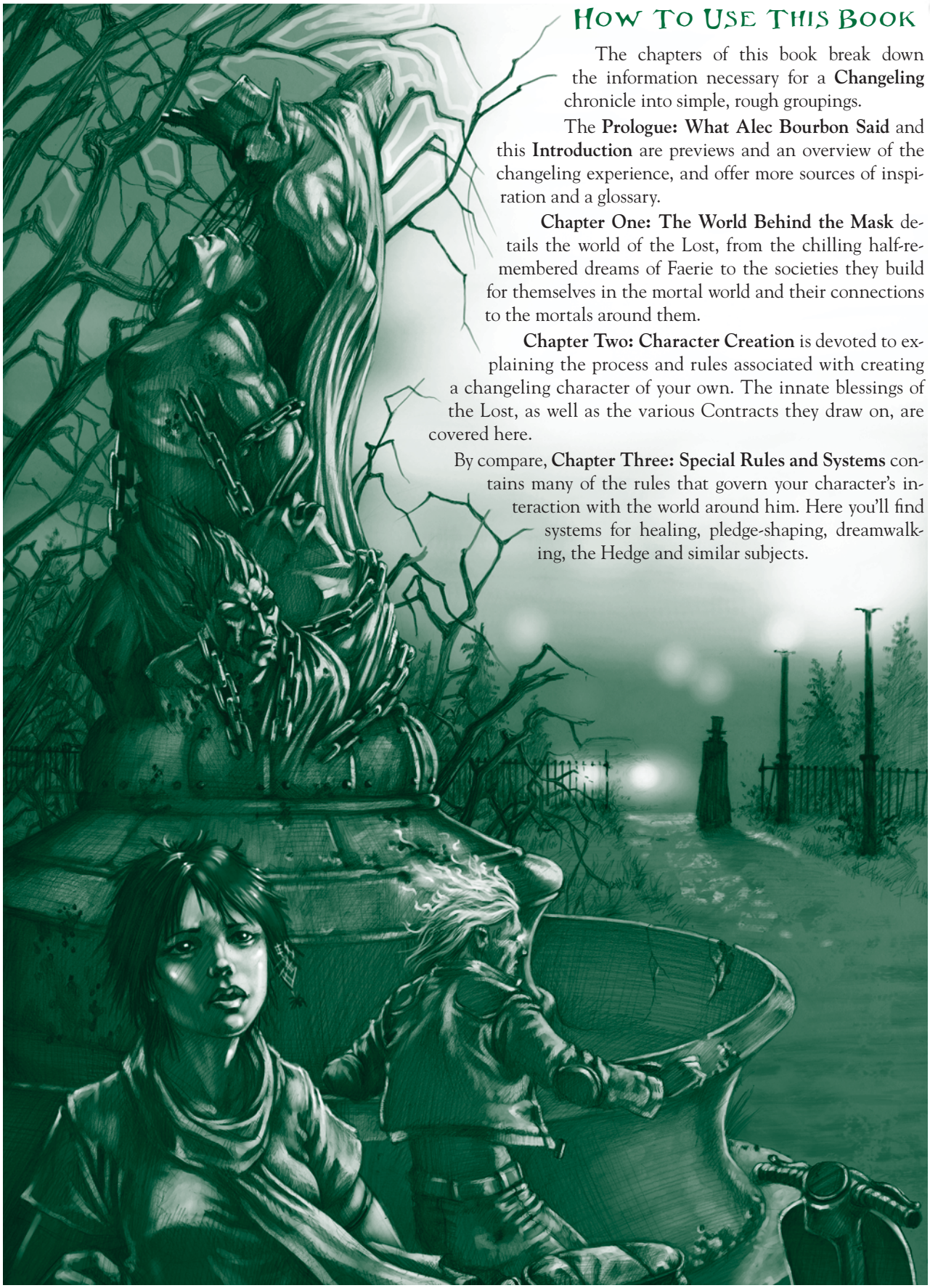
The mood of a **Changeling** chronicle can shift many times, reflecting the mercurial nature of the fae. The prevailing mood, however, is bittersweet. The Lost walk through an unseen world of wonder tinged with danger and deceit. The beauty of the fae is often sinister. The Hedge is alluring, and offers both succor and danger. The magic that changelings work is wondrous stuff, but has its strange catches and costs. And yet, for all the fear of the Others, the suspicion of betrayal and the hurt of necessary lies, the Lost still feel the glory of intense emotion and see the vivid colors of fae magic. Both bitterness and sweetness are essential to this world. Without bitterness, the fae are toothless things, as weak and watered-down as the Victorian fables meant to shelter children from anything that might hint that the world was less than perfect. Without sweetness, the setting is a withered and valueless place, more akin to a sulky nihilist's view of the universe than the place it actually is. For all the horror, there is also wonder. For all the beauty, there is also madness.

Between Worlds

The Lost have the potential to be almost anything. Their human roots are strong enough to show them the way home from Faerie, and some changelings make themselves as much a part of the mortal world upon their return as possible. For some, the possibility of reclaiming their former lives or bonding once more with their loved ones is the greatest aspiration. Others give up on their former identities and forge entirely new mortal lives for themselves in the areas where they can prosper without too much scrutiny. They may become art dealers, club owners, crime lords. And the Lost can use their fae gifts to protect those important to these new lives, making the best of their transformation.

But changelings are indubitably not what they were, and many embrace that change as best they can. They wear the marks of their captivity with pride, strengthen the power of their Wyrd and focus on their identities as citizens of Lost society. For these proud survivors, the human world is where they play at mortality and gather strength. They are most comfortable among the freeholds and Courts, and swear pacts of deepest friendship and love to their changeling kin.

Neither life is superior to the other. In order to keep an unclouded perspective between mortal solidity and dreamlike fae madness, the Lost must acknowledge both sides of their nature. Motleys gather out of friendship and pledge to aid one another in rebuilding their mortal lives, just as they promise to stand beside one another and achieve standing, power and safety among the changeling courts. The hows and whys of their journeys, the lives they will forge or reforge for themselves — these are the stories that will unfold in **Changeling: The Lost.**



How To Use This Book

The chapters of this book break down the information necessary for a **Changeling** chronicle into simple, rough groupings.

The **Prologue: What Alec Bourbon Said** and this **Introduction** are previews and an overview of the changeling experience, and offer more sources of inspiration and a glossary.

Chapter One: The World Behind the Mask details the world of the Lost, from the chilling half-remembered dreams of Faerie to the societies they build for themselves in the mortal world and their connections to the mortals around them.

Chapter Two: Character Creation is devoted to explaining the process and rules associated with creating a changeling character of your own. The innate blessings of the Lost, as well as the various Contracts they draw on, are covered here.

By compare, **Chapter Three: Special Rules and Systems** contains many of the rules that govern your character's interaction with the world around him. Here you'll find systems for healing, pledge-shaping, dreamwalking, the Hedge and similar subjects.

Chapter Four: Storytelling is about the art of running Changeling, from a brief one-shot to an extended chronicle. Many of the game's themes see full exploration in this chapter, and a number of sample antagonists provide a cross-section of the Lost's many enemies.

Appendix One: Entitlements concerns the cryptic noble orders and secret societies that have sprung up among the Lost, titles that convey supernatural power and often sinister ambitions.

Finally, **Appendix Two: The Freehold of Miami** presents a sample setting for use in a chronicle, or even as simple inspiration for the politics and threats surrounding a freehold in a different area. The freehold in Miami is seeing difficult times as the seasons refuse to change, which provides a strong motivation for the right characters to make a difference.

Sources and Inspiration

The potential source material for a **Changeling** chronicle is nothing short of an embarrassment of riches. Every fairy tale has a potential idea for a token, kith or pledge somewhere within it, and there are countless volumes of fairy tales to choose from. This entire Introduction could be nothing but a list of potential sources, and still many fine works would be omitted.

While it might seem incongruous to list children's books or movies as potential sources, many still deal with very adult issues (such as the fear of abduction). Seen through the slightly clouded lens of the World of Darkness, these stories easily become rich fodder for **Changeling** tales.

Non-Fiction

There's a copious amount of scholarly works on faerie myth and folklore, which are excellent for pointing out underlying parallels, always useful for exploring maximum diversity with a few basic archetypes. For good idea-to-page ratio, of course, it's hard to beat anthologies and art books.

The Great Encyclopedia of Faeries and *The Complete Encyclopedia of Elves, Goblins, and Other Little Creatures* by Pierre Dubois, illustrated by Claudine and Roland Sabatier. Surprisingly comprehensive "bestiaries" that cover fae from around the world.

Faeries by Brian Froud and Alan Lee. Many other Froud books are also good (and increasingly whimsical, particularly when he teams with Terry Jones, as in *The Goblin Companion*), but this is one of the most influential art books on the subject.

Grimm's Fairy Tales. The more complete the version, the better. Some compilations (such as *Grimm's Grimmest*) focus on the ugly aspects of these fairy tales that are often omitted from more "child-friendly" versions, but nothing's quite as good as the whole picture.

Andrew Lang's *The Red Fairy Book, The Green Fairy Book,* et al. A good compilation of fairy tales that goes well beyond Grimm in scope.

The Mabinogion contains a few key episodes of a human's interaction with the otherworld, specifically in the tales of Pwyll and Manawydan.

Spectrum: The Best In Contemporary Fantastic Art. These collections of fantasy and science fiction artwork often feature startling, beautiful and surreal pieces that serve as excellent visual inspiration.

Fiction

The fae are ridiculously popular subjects for modern fantasists. The following list only scratches the surface, picking works that are exceptionally thematic for **Changeling: The Lost**; a comprehensive list of works that deal with the fae is beyond our poor page count's scope.

Something Wicked This Way Comes by Ray Bradbury. An American classic, equal parts wonder and horror. The Autumn People are particularly notable as examples of how fae archetypes can easily wear modern trapping.

Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell, by Susannah Clarke, depicts a world where much of magic is owed to the fae. The depiction of the fae themselves is of exceptional inspiration.

The Stolen Child by Keith Donohue. Elegantly fey, with a compelling take on the classic changeling abduction myth and the issues of stolen and lost identity.

The King of Elfland's Daughter by Lord Dunsany. The patriarch of modern faerie fantasy, and still worth reading for sheer enjoyment.

Neverwhere, American Gods, Anansi Boys, Stardust and other works by Neil Gaiman. The author frequently addresses the theme of hidden worlds that mortals are usually incapable of seeing, and the troubles that come when people find their way from one to the other.

Gormenghast and *Titus Groan* by Mervyn Peake. The highly eccentric, bizarre characters of Gormenghast, including the character of Gormenghast itself, makes an excellent model for similarly skewed faerie courts. The BBC adaptation is also recommended.

Fables by Bill Willingham, Mark Buckingham and Steve Leialoha. Depicts the current lives of the literal protagonists of fairy tales such as Snow White. A fusion of modernity and traditional fable, with no small amount of darkness as well as whimsy.

Poetry

The world of the fae is by default poetic. Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market," William Butler Yeats's "The Stolen Child" and the traditional "Tam Lin" are classics of the subject matter, but to be honest, almost any good poem can suggest potent imagery for a story idea. Take a poetry

collection, read a poem at random and there's the seed for a Hedge encounter or story hook. T. S. Eliot's "The Hollow Men" might provide the inspiration for a Scarecrow Ministry plot, for instance, while Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal* is a virtual litany of decadence suitable for a softly decaying court to whom the only sin is boredom. From Edgar Allan Poe and Shakespeare's sonnets to Wilfred Owen's "Dulce et Decorum Est," the possibilities are more than any one chronicle could ever exhaust.

Movies

American Beauty, directed by Sam Mendes. Notable source material for the theme of beauty in strange places (such as suburbia), as well as the question of what happens when a person changes his entire life.

Labyrinth, directed by Jim Henson. A classic faerie fable, with plenty of well-crafted imagery for all things fae.

MirrorMask, directed by Dave McKean. Notable both for the struggle to exchange lives, and for a particularly surreal otherworld that mixes modern and archaic imagery.

Pan's Labyrinth, directed by Guillermo del Toro. Powerful fae imagery and a genuinely mature storyline. Heady stuff.

Lexicon

Arcadia: The domain of the True Fae and once-prison to all changelings. Also *Faerie*.

aspects: The "building blocks" that make up pledges. These aspects are: *task*, *boon*, *sanction* and *duration*. Aspects have three categories of power: lesser, medial and greater.

Autumn Court: The Court tied to Autumn, fear and mysticism.

banded: The slang term for someone bound into a pledge; see *oathbound*. Originates from the black bands that appear around the aura of someone bound into a pledge.

boon: The aspect of a pledge that governs the rewards for those who adhere to the pledge.

changeling: A human who has been gradually changed by her durance in Arcadia, becoming partly fae herself.

Contract: A mystical pact struck between the fae and a living embodiment of natural force, allowing the fae to call on supernatural powers.

Court, Great Court: A large social organization dedicated to mutual aid and self-defense, bound together by pledges of loyalty. The Courts of North America and Europe tend to be organized in a group of four seasonal Courts.

dream phial: An object that holds a changeling's created dream; going to sleep with a dream phial releases the dream into the sleeper's mind as he slumbers. Created through *dreamweaving*.

dream riding: The oneiromantic art of entering a *dreamscape* and altering it slightly as the dream progresses, allowing the dream to unfold mostly normally, with only slight changes according to the desires of the *oneiropomp*.

dreamscape: The wholeness of a dream, made up of the environment, creatures and occurrences within the dream; everything in a dream except the dreamer or visiting *oneiropomps*. The art of creating a whole dreamscape is called *dreamscaping*.

dream warping: The strange and unholy manipulations of mortal dreams capable only by the True Fae, capable of turning mortals into sleepwalking slaves, sources of Glamour and Willpower and other terrible feats.

dreamweaving: The craft of creating dreams out of Glamour, instilling them into dream phials.

Echoes: The powers manifested by a *fetch*.

ensorcelled: Those humans who have entered into pledges with the fae; specifically those who are by means of a pledge able to see through the Mask.

entitlement: An exclusive order of changelings, one part noble title and one part mystical brotherhood.

fae: A blanket term for creatures and things imbued with the power of Faerie or the Hedge.

Fae, True Fae: The immortal, mighty and remorseless inhabitants of Faerie; the creatures that abduct humans and gradually transform them into changelings.

Faerie: *Arcadia*, or more rarely, the inhabitants of Arcadia.

fetch: A Fae-constructed replica of a human being, left behind to take an abductee's place.

forswearing: Breaking a pledge. The one who forswears is referred to as forsworn or an *oath-breaker*.

forsworn: One who has broken a pledge. This title may rightly be used for as long as the oath's penalties are in place, and for a year and a day after. Often used as an insult if the breaking of the pledge is publicly known.

frailty: A supernatural prohibition or weakness that comes with high Wyrd.

freehold: A local society of changelings, usually overseen by a seasonal ruler and offering support to their fellow changelings.

Gentry: A changeling euphemism for the True Fae.

Glamour: The raw supernatural energy that feeds the fae. It is tied to the strong emotions of the human heart.

goblin: A general term for fae creatures and things of dubious or no loyalties; often applied to hobgoblins and unaffiliated changelings.

Goblin Contract: An illicit Contract, typically easy to learn but with unpleasant side effects.

goblin fruit: The many types of fae consumables harvested from the Hedge that have some supernatural effect on the user.

Goblin Market: A fae black market, often moving location, in which changelings and sometimes other fae barter for illicit goods and services.

Hedge, the: The thorny otherworld that lies between the mortal realm and Faerie.

hobgoblins: The fae creatures and denizens of the Hedge.

Hollow: A safe haven within the Hedge.

Keeper: The Fae who kept a changeling in Arcadia, and whose influence is usually felt in that changeling's seeming.

kith: A sub-category of seeming, representing more specific affinities such as the various elements or animals.

Lost: A euphemism for "changeling" or "changelings." Often used by changelings who refuse to think of themselves as no longer human.

Mask: The illusion that conceals the presence of the fae from mortal eyes.

mien, fae mien: A changeling or other fae's true form, concealed by the Mask.

motley: A small group of changelings, sometimes bound in a pledge of friendship.

oathbound: One of the parties in a pledge. May also be used to describe some secret protected by an oath; "that information is oathbound, friend."

oathbreaker: As *forsworn*.

oathsworn: As *oathbound*.

oneiromachy: Dream combat. Only those capable of wielding *oneiromancy* may engage in oneiromachy.

oneiromancy: The practice of lucid dreaming. Changelings and other creatures of the Wyrd are capable of applying these techniques to the dreams of others, however.

oneiropomp: A changeling or other creature that enters the dreams of another.

oneirovores: Creatures native to the Hedge or Faerie that consume the dreams or dream-selves of mortals.

Others: Another euphemism for the True Fae.

pledge: A vow tied into the strands of Wyrd, enforcing it with the very nature of the fae and fate itself.

sanction: The aspect of a pledge that governs the punishment for those who violate the pledge.

seeming: A changeling's physical aspect, which reflects the role he played in Faerie.

Spring Court: The Court bound to Spring, desire and beauty.

Summer Court: The Court bound to Summer, wrath and military strength.

task: The aspect of a pledge that governs what is expected of the *oathbound*.

token: An object infused with a measure of fae power.

trod: A path cut through the Hedge, from one mortal site to another or to Faerie. Also used to refer to the physical location that corresponds with the entrance to such a path.

Winter Court: The Court bound to Winter, sorrow and intrigue.

Wyrd: The power of Faerie.

STAWICKI
2007

fucking hate the telephone.

Funny thing to hate, right? But I do. Ever since I got back, I've hated it. I always think it's going to be *him*, my Keeper or whatever you want to call him.

But I always answer it, because if he comes back, I want to know about it. So tonight, the phone rings, and the guy on the other end of the line says, "Look out your window."

What is this, a Craven flick? OK, I look. Nothing. Moonlight on the snow. If anyone had been in my yard, the motion sensor would have kicked on the light above my garage door. "OK, what?"

"See the snow?"

"Who the fuck is this?"

"You're going back."

I hang up. I stand there a minute shaking. I was out in that snow for *twenty fucking years*. That bastard gave me nothing but a few skins to keep me warm while I kept his ice-gardens looking pretty. No fire, no sunlight, nothing for heat but thought and desire. Try keeping *that* warm for —

"Twenty years, asshole."

I hadn't even realized the phone was ringing, much less that I'd answered it. I walk to my room and dig my gun out of my closet. "Who is this?"

"Give you a hint. I'm like you, except when I got back, I wasn't stupid enough to stand by a window while I'm backlit."

"What the fu —"

Next thing I know, I'm in a goddamn snowdrift. The guy standing over me looks a lot like me. I remember him. He was one of the other tenders for that bastard's garden, but he didn't keep himself warm enough. He's standing in the snow, and I can't tell where it begins and his legs end.

"Told you," he says. He's got this weird thing in his hands. It's a tool that the Prince gave him. Strange that I didn't recognize it right away.

He raises it over his head, and god *damn* if the phone doesn't start ringing right then. Figures.

Chapter 1

The World Behind the Mask

She ran and ran
As if she feared some goblin man
Dogged her with gibe or curse
Or something worse:

— Christina Rossetti, "Goblin Market"

Arcadia — The Perpetual Twilight

There are three places that are called Arcadia. One is the mortal Arcadia, a Greek prefecture on the Peloponnesus. One is the mythical utopia, a land of incomparable natural beauty where all manners of joy and pleasure might be found. Unspoiled by man, that Arcadia is the home of supernatural beings that exist without conceit or greed, filling their days with idyllic pursuits among the verdant forests and meadows of plenty.

And then there is the domain of the Fae.

This Arcadia is indeed breathtaking, but its beauty also terrifies. It is a land of deathless joy in gnarled gardens, and of mountains built of half-gnawed bone. In Faerie (for so it is also called), forests, dark and primeval, writhe alongside concrete jungles thick with artfully bent metal and delicate snowflakes of broken glass. Almost Victorian estates squat along shorelines that are crowded thick with the carcasses of a thousand sailing ships, all of this bordered thickly by the Hedge's labyrinthine mazes. Arcadia is all of those things, or perhaps it is none of them. Perhaps everything that is "known" about Arcadia is merely the fevered visions of those who have lost the ability to discern reality from fantasy and truth from dream.

Because of the nature of Faerie, even firsthand accounts of the land are inherently skewed. Those who have journeyed there, and escaped to tell the tale, find themselves deeply changed by their experiences. Many seem no longer certain of the reality of the world around them, let alone of the alien one they just left. Some, perhaps the fortunate ones, remember little to nothing of the time spent in Arcadia, even if decades passed in their absence. Traveling through the thorny Hedge that surrounds Arcadia tears away at both the body and the sanity of any but the native inhabitants, who are themselves rumored to be nothing more than manifestations of the land itself — immune to, or perhaps merely symptoms of, its reality-shredding power. They are Faerie, and the land is Faerie.

What little is known of Faerie comes from the accounts of those who have visited there and escaped with some measure of their sanity intact. Because of this, it is uncertain whether the contradictions they report are a matter of slanted perception or whether reality, in fact, blatantly contradicts itself within the fae realm. Any fact reported about Faerie or those who dwell within its borders is suspect, at best. Even if it's utter truth in the time and place it was witnessed, it may be complete falsehood at any other time and place.

Among the accounts told by those who have been unfortunate enough to visit Arcadia (and fortunate enough to return) are the following:

Faerie is the nightmare from which there is no waking. Reality, at least as humanity knows it, does not exist there. Faerie's "natural" laws are not those of science, of spirit or even of magic as mortals can comprehend it, but a complexly woven tapestry of agreements and loopholes with no rhyme or reason intelligible to the human mind. The inhabitants thereof are bound, and bind themselves, in constantly shifting strata of power and manipulation that not only determines social structure and hierarchy within

the sentient population but shifts the very nature of truth as well.

Faerie is filled with supernatural denizens who each possess almost unrestricted power within its own demesne — or so they profess. Certainly their abilities are far beyond those witnessed in the mortal realm, leaving no wonder why they were thought to be gods or the most powerful of spirits by humanity's earliest civilizations. These creatures' ability to enforce their own will on the world around them is manifested in the form of oathsworn Contracts — some ancient, some newly uttered — with which they can change the very nature of reality, binding time and fate to their whim. The oldest of these Contracts are thought to date back to the beginning of time, and through them the Fae maintain absolute dominion over their homeland — and those humans unfortunate enough to journey there.

The only physical way for a human to enter Faerie proper is to be taken there by the True Fae. While other supernatural means may afford humans entry into the Hedge, Arcadia is the domain of the Fae, and entrance there is solely at their behest. Rumors exist of those who have, through one means or another, found the winding road to Faerie; however, not even legends speak of anyone ever returning, save those who were taken into the Fae realm by the Gentry themselves. Perhaps it is a simple impossibility, and the road to Faerie is not traversable by any save those welcomed by the Fae. Perhaps there is a key to entering Arcadia that no mortal can wield. Or perhaps the Fair Folk simply do not appreciate unsolicited guests and make their lethal displeasure known upon those who come uninvited.

If even a small part of the accounts of those who have traveled there are to be believed, the realm, just as those who make their home there, is a place of unknowable extremes and possibilities. Within the Hedge-hemmed borders lies the potential for both utopian wonder and brimstone torment. The human mind, however, seems intrinsically incapable of comprehending the vast paradoxical nature of the place, just as the human mind is unable to truly understand the wholly alien nature of those who make their home there.

The True Fae

The denizens of Arcadia have worn many names throughout the centuries, as humankind, chilled by its encounter with their alien otherness, attempts to fight the fear of the unknown with the power of naming. While their names are legion, those who have dwelled within their halls and dungeons, who have served in their kitchens and courtrooms and boudoirs, call them "the Gentry" or simply "the Fae."

The word "fairy" has been sanitized in recent years. The idea behind it has been so far separated from the original meaning as to be wholly unrelated, just as the innocent images of miniscule, winged women is almost wholly disparate from the reality of the True Fae. Originally, the word "fae" came from *fatum*, a vulgar Latin name for the Goddesses of Fate — forces capable of drawing out or cutting short a human life with the smallest of efforts. The Fates were all-powerful and unknowable to mortal minds. And, indeed, to those unfortunate mortals who cross their path, the Fae embody the term just as well. They can snatch a child from her former life as neatly as shears cut a tapestry cord, leaving only unraveling threads in their wake. And even to those who have spent decades as their servants, slaves, lovers or pets, the True Fae are beyond understanding. Though a Fae might be by turns warm or cold, bright or dark, even kind or cruel, each one is marred by the same flaw — they have no sense of compassion or empathy, no ability to comprehend or relate to a human being's pain. Even their "kindnesses" can draw blood, and their favor is like an elegant and chill prison.

The term "fae" has been applied to witches and demons, spirits and monsters, ghosts and goblins. Some associate it with the tall, elegant humanoids that the Celts called the *sidhe*. To others, fae may be miniature creatures with delicate wings, or watery horses with hooves of steel or keening ghosts that foretell death by their presence. All of these creatures may have been inspired by the True Fae, while none of them catch a significant portion of the truth. In their home realm, they are as powerful and incomprehensible as gods, or so say the changelings who were forced to serve them. Even when the Fae walk in the mortal world, any brief sighting captures but a single facet in a terrible and beautiful Fae jewel. Those who catch only a glimpse of them are awestruck by the beauty, cruelty, might and the alienness that surround them. And those who dare to venture nearer find that the more they seek to know the Fae, the more their minds, spirits and souls are warped by the very presence they seek to understand.

To the changelings who have been abducted by the Fae, those who served beneath them and those fortunate few who have escaped their clutches, there is no doubt, however, as to the True Fae's identity. They are demons, monsters and fiends, no matter how fair the form they may wear.

Fae vs. True Fae

The "True Fae" are the native denizens of Arcadia, which bears the name "Faerie" by virtue of being their home. When the term "the Fae" is capitalized, it refers only to the True Fae, while "the fae" also may include changelings, hobgoblins, fetches and other supernatural citizens of Faerie or the Hedge. The term "fae" as an adjective may refer to any person, creature, place or object related in some way to Faerie culture, either through connection to the True Fae or other fae beings.

The Abduction

From the Russian Babay to the Mexican El Cucuy, the bogeyman lives under the proverbial beds and in the metaphorical closets of almost every human society. Throughout history and almost without exception, each culture has had at least one version of monstrous beings that haunt the shadows of their moonless nights, waiting for the opportunity to snatch misbehaving children or lure unsuspecting travelers to their deaths — or worse.

Modern scholars profess that these "kidnapper" legends all have a common root: humanity's need for cautionary tales, that each of these creatures was invented by parents or society elders to proscribe harmful behaviors through the use of a menacing and mysterious enforcer. Children who misbehave may be threatened with the *homem do saco* ("Bag Man") in Portugal or *le croquet-mitaine* ("the mitten-biter") in France, but the sentiment is the same: "If you don't behave as we want you to, we won't be able to protect you and something will come and get you." Likewise, young girls who stray from their parents' watchful supervision or young men prone to sneaking out for adventure pose an inherent threat to the social hierarchy of their individual cultures. Creatures such as Nanny Rutt, an English well-dweller who disappears with those who venture too near her home, or the Peruvian Ecandato who take the form of dolphins and lure travelers into their river-world, serve as external reinforcements of the safety of home and the importance of remaining there. While the details of each legendary creature may be very different, at their core they are the same. Since the desire to encourage conformation to acceptable behavior standards is universal, it is understandable that each society developed mythological figures that punish those who behave inappropriately. Similarly, since certain human experiences (death, slavery, separation from one's friends and family) are almost unequivocally seen as the most severe retributions possible, it is not surprising that the creators of these myths used them as the punishments inflicted by the kidnappers for misbehavior. By foisting the responsibility for punishment off on some mysterious outside force, those in control both circumvented rebellion against their own authority and removed themselves from the position of enforcer. The identity of the "kidnapper" might vary, but the message remains the same: conform and be safe, deviate and be removed from the game by something beyond our control.

But the tales don't stop with the "bad ones" being taken. Innocent children are taken from the safety of their beds, hardworking farmers are swallowed up in their fields and pious clergy are stolen from sacred ground. In this case, to Occam's credit, the simplest explanation is the correct one.

For centuries, perhaps since the dawn of human existence, the Fae have preyed upon humanity. Every year, in every corner of the world, thousands of individuals go missing without explanation. Stolen from their homes, taken while traveling or snatched from their cradles, countless men, women and children simply disappear without a trace. For some, mundane explanations exist. Runaways return, murder victims are discovered, fugitives are apprehended. For others, the explanations are much less clear.

In some cases, the lost people are never found again, and no clue ever leads to their whereabouts. No bodies are discovered, and they never again raise so much as a blip on the radar of human society. Investigations lead to dead ends, leaving their families and friends befuddled as to their fate. It is as if they had completely disappeared from the Earth, leaving no trace behind. And many who vanish are never missed at all, not until it's far too late.

In other cases, the disappearance is not permanent. The missing individuals may not remember anything about the time they were gone, even if they were missing for years. Other times, they may claim to remember, but their tales are befuddled, at best. They may claim to have been taken by ghosts, spirits, aliens or fairies, mysterious individuals of impossible descriptions, and spent hours, or days or decades in a world not our own. Some allege to have been held prisoner in the lands of the dead, be it Heaven or Hell. Yet others claim to have been imprisoned in a nightmare realm, where the rules of the mortal world do not apply. Their tales are muddled, as full of gaps as they are contradictions. Many cannot remember how they came to return. Perhaps they earned their freedom, or escaped through stealth or guile. Some even claim to have slain their captors, although often the least lucid are the ones who make these claims.

In both permanent disappearances and those in which the victims eventually return, the simplest explanations are again the correct ones. Their stories, if they live to tell them, are rooted in truth, no matter how fantastic they may seem.

Of course, not all who vanish are stolen by the Fae. However, not all who are stolen by the Fae vanish. The majority of changelings are never missed at all, their lives replaced by an impostor created by their captors. They fight their way back only to discover that they were never missed, and that they have no lives to return to. Unable to live as they once did, the Lost must find a new road to walk.

Stolen Child

Many of the classic human legends speak of children stolen from their beds, or even their cradles, by their Fae abductors. And, in truth, this legend is rooted in fact. Many Fae do prefer to kidnap their new "wards" at a very early age, and the abductions of babies certainly form a large part of those abductions that were historically identified as the work of the Gentry. After all, snatching a sleeping child from a cradle is far easier than abducting a strapping youth who is more capable of self-defense. Also, should the abduction of a youngster be thwarted by circumstance, a child's babblings — if they are even comprehended — are far more likely to be ignored or downplayed than those of an adult. As well,

although time in Faerie often lengthens a human's lifespan considerably, compared to the True Fae, a human lifetime is an infinitesimally short period. By taking their charges as early as possible, the Fae ensure that by the time the children are of an age to be of use to their abductors, the children have already transitioned into accepting whatever passes for reality in Faerie as "normal." Their Keepers will thus have as long a period as possible of use from their wards.

However, the majority of changelings encountered as adults weren't taken as babies. While many humans are stolen from the cradle, their mortality rate is very high due to the fragile nature of human infants, the inherent dangers of Arcadia and the unreliable attention they are likely to receive in Faerie. In fact, no human taken to Faerie as a babe has returned to the mortal world on his own cognizance. Their memories of the human world are simply not strong enough to afford them passage through the Hedge and back into the land of their birth. Those who do manage to escape their Keeper's care and set out for a world they never really saw are doomed to wander endlessly through the Hedge, before either finding another Fae Keeper or possibly ending in a much more dire fate. However, in rare circumstances, those stolen from their human kin at a very early age can be rescued by other changelings and brought back into the mortal world. These individuals may well develop severe emotional disorders at later ages, and may also be prone to wandering back into Faerie, intentionally or not. Their connection with the Faelands is as strong, if not stronger, than their connection to the lands of their birth.

The Hunt

Once the humans are capable of wandering unsupervised, perhaps as young as five or six, they provide both more challenges and more benefit to their Fae abductors. The humans are more prone to putting up a fight against the entity who attempts to take them by force, and perhaps of raising the attention of others, if not stopping the attack on their own. On the other hand, they also possess greater fortitude for enduring the trials and tribulations of life in Faerie, and by having a firmer human identity, may serve their Keeper's purposes better than an individual who was taken as a swaddling child. For some True Fae, taking a human captive is a sporting challenge — a game of cunning and skill, not unlike how humans see small game hunting. These individuals may avoid taking children as captives altogether, and intentionally seek out not only adults but those adults who will most strongly try the Fae's skill. Athletes, outdoorsmen, even hunters themselves, provide these Fae sportsmen with the challenge they seek, and once they have overcome their human quarry, they take great sadistic pleasure in using their new wards as hunting stock to flush out future prey in Arcadia.

The Dance

Not all changelings are abducted by force. Some are seduced across the border between the mortal world and Faerie, cajoled into the Hedge by entities far older and more practiced in the social arts than any human ever will be. Like lambs to slaughter, the changelings follow their would-be captors to a fate the humans cannot comprehend, and could not avoid even if they understood it. Legends speak of villagers following ghostly lights or will-o-wisps into the depths of the wilderness and never emerging. These amorphous globes of phosphorescent illumination may appear similar to the natural phenomenon of swamp gas, but it is no naturally occurring bioluminescence that craftily lures its followers into the depths of the Hedge. Other Fae are more direct. Playing upon a human's sympathy, they may appear as a lost child or an injured animal, and lead the Good Samaritan who seeks to aid them into Faerie, proving that no good deed goes unpunished. Lust is also a powerful motivator, and many humans are literally seduced across the border and through the Hedge into Arcadia. And, of course, many of the legends of the Devil making a deal with someone over his soul have their roots in a cocky Fae's openly offered bargain with an equally arrogant human. Unfortunately for humanity, the outcome is much more rarely in the human's favor than the folktales report.

Luck — Fair or Foul

Despite the Gentry's greed for human servants, not all changelings are originally the product of Fae efforts. While it is almost impossible for a human to enter the Hedge without some sort of supernatural aid, that aid (wanted or not) is not always from the Fae. Certain circumstances can open doorways into the fae world, and it is not unheard of for an ill-fated person to slip through them and find themselves in the thorny maze of the Hedge. Unfortunately, once they've entered and wandered away from the doorway, it's far more difficult to return, and Fae will often patrol the Hedge on the look out for those who have become lost in the Thorns (but not yet succumbed to the dangers thereof). Presenting themselves as protectors and benefactors, these Fae may actually have an easy time of convincing their new wards to pledge loyalty to them, Tragically, the outcome is just as debilitating to the new changeling as if he'd been taken by force.

The Durance

While it is impossible for the human (or changeling) mind to fully understand the alien and convoluted whims of one of the True Fae, there seem to be several common motivations for the Fae to take human "wards." Though Keepers may not have any single motivation for what they do, the Lost have pulled from their mutual disjointed memories what they believe to be several primary roles that changelings are "encouraged" to play.

Many folktales speak of the Fae's inability to have children of their own, and a resulting fascination with human babes. These stories, however, are more likely than not the wishful thinking of parents who believe their children have been taken; thinking that they have been stolen be-

cause of the parental longings of their new "family" is far more reassuring than believing them killed, neglected or treated as slaves. Unfortunately for changelings, the truth is less comforting. While some have vague memories of being treated roughly akin to a member of a fae family, the reality was far more "red-haired stepchild" than "beloved heir to all you survey."

Likewise, while romantic tales have been spun of the Fae falling in love with mortals and sweeping them off to serve as consorts, the realities of such tales are far from idyllic. Some changelings, especially those who were seduced across the Hedge, may have been concubines to their Keepers, but the role was scarcely more romantic than that of an abducted sex slave to a mortal master. The Fae are fickle beings with no real ability to empathize with a lover's wants or needs. They might have played at being attentive and "considerate" from time to time, but only for as long as it seemed fashionable or amusing.

Other changelings, especially those who were taken later in life, seem to have been chosen to continue their mortal roles for their new Fae patron. Child prodigies, cunning inventors and philosophers have been snatched to serve in the laboratories, naves and libraries of Faerie, while writers, poets, singers and musicians are abducted for their Keepers' entertainment. Cooks and craftsmen, those with a knack for working with metal or plants or taming wild animals have all found their services come to the attention of the True Fae, and found themselves stolen away for their use.

Perhaps most confusing, at least for the victims, are those who seem to have been taken for no particular reason whatsoever. They may be pressed into service in their Keepers' guardian forces, or set to scrubbing their floors — tasks that certainly could have been filled as easily (and certainly more efficiently) by fae underlings or through the use of Fae magics. Whether these individuals were truly chosen at random, or whether their Keepers had some greater plan that was beyond human kenning, is uncertain.

Changes

When humans enter the Hedge, the Thorns do more than tear at their flesh — the Thorns rip away at their souls as well. While some lucky individuals may quickly return to the relative safety of the human world and escape relatively unscathed, those who venture deeper, further and longer into the Hedge find that the separation from the human world affects them in strange ways. Their senses may begin to play tricks on them. Not only sight and sound, but their sense of what is right and wrong as well can become skewed, and they may find themselves reacting to situations or contemplating actions that they would have considered loathsome before entering the Hedge.

While the human soul is not quantifiable, there is a certain something which makes humanity humanity, and it is this same unique characteristic that begins to unravel like a mis-knit sweater, the deeper one travels into Fae lands. This undoing is disconcerting, to say the least, for those who notice it. Far too often, however, those who are thrust into the madlands do not have sufficient touchstones with reality to realize that they themselves are changing, or the tools to deal with the damage should they recognize it. Still, assuming that they are able to escape back to the human world within a reasonable period, most will find themselves able to heal the damage to their spirit. Some, however, travel too long or too far in the Hedge and become lost to the human world altogether. Rumors exist of the fate that may befall humans when bereft of their souls: they become monsters that haunt the Thorns, seeking to steal from others that which they no longer possess themselves. Far more likely, however, is the chance that those who travel deep enough into the Hedge to lose their souls entirely are, as they near Faerie proper, found by the True Fae and "enlisted" in one fashion or another into their service. While the border of Faerie may permit humans to dash in and escape relatively unscathed, entering Arcadia proper is another matter entirely.

An Offer You Cannot Refuse

Whether taken by force, or as part of some ill-struck bargain, humans who enter a Fae's demesne are never the same afterwards. A human cannot exist for long in this alien realm without Fae aid. Everything in Arcadia exists and interacts as a result of Contracts and oaths with those around it, and without access to those oaths, humans will find no sustenance, no shelter, no rest and no healing. Even the simplest acts such as quenching one's thirst or warming one's self at a campfire are safely completed only at the behest of ancient Contracts between the elements of water and fire and the fae denizens of the realm. Without entering into a bargain with their Keepers to be included in these Contracts by proxy, humans can receive no benefit from them. No amount of water will quench their thirst and even standing within a fire will not warm them (although it may certainly cause them harm). The laws of physics and science do not hold sway in Faerie. All reality is based on these inordinately powerful Contracts and oaths, and without a Fae mentor to include a human in them, a human's fate in Arcadia is sealed.

In truth, however, a human's fate is forever changed no matter whether she chooses to bargain with the Fae or to die by refusing. Those who have accepted a Contract with the True Fae (and through them, to Faerie itself) are changed by the process — they become changelings. This bargain, once struck, can never be entirely undone. Although they may return to the mortal world eventually, and in time reclaim their human souls, changelings will never be wholly human again. Their spirit will always be at least partially fae, and those who attempt to deny their fae nature for long

pay a heavy price for it. Their emotions are more powerful, and the emotions of others are almost like nourishment to them; the Lost feel joy and sorrow, love and hate with maddening intensity. In some ways, changelings can be seen as having grown beyond their human selves. Their fae side allows them access to the ancient oaths of their Keepers, and through the knowledge of them, to the ability to strike pledges and promises with each other and the world around them. These agreements grant changelings abilities far beyond those of humanity, and their fae senses allow them to see the world possibilities in the world around them that they were blind to as normal humans. However, no power comes without a price.

Perhaps the greatest ongoing cost of the changeling state is the foes accrued. While the Gentry prey upon humanity, the Lost are by their very nature of particular interest to the Fae. Likewise, other fae creatures may pay them special note when hunting, an attention that rarely ends well. Other hazards of changeling existence are less adversarial, but no less potentially lethal. Just as humans, changelings must have food, water and shelter to exist, but their basic needs do not end there. Should they attempt to reject their fae nature by eschewing the company of other changelings, avoiding the use of Contracts, pledges and Glamour, and avoiding the Hedge entirely, they will begin to suffer physically and emotionally for such denial.

The Escape

While changelings' roles during their captivity in Faerie may vary wildly, each changeling has at least one common experience. At some point, they have made their escape and returned to the mortal world. Some escape literally, using some means to break away from their captivity against their Keepers' will (or without their knowledge). Some use stealth, slipping away when their Keepers' attention is elsewhere. Others may use guile, tricking their Keepers or one of its minions into allowing them passage back to the mortal world. A few use strength, breaking out of their chains (literally or figuratively) or overpowering their captors by force. These escapes are not always successful, and many changelings speak of multiple attempts that failed before they finally won their freedom. Being dragged back in chains and undergoing whatever punishments their Keeper found entertaining might deter some from future attempts, meaning that those changelings who do win their way back are often the strongest, most cunning or determined of their kind.

Other changelings report that they did not escape, but were freed. Some, such as the legends of True Thomas, claim to have agreements of a limited-time Contract with their Keeper, and were released at the end of their sentence. Others won contests, riddles, challenges or duels with their

captor (or serving as their Keeper's champion) and demanded their freedom as their prize. Perhaps the most confusing are those few whose Keepers simply released them with no apparent reason. While these individuals are, of course, grateful for their freedom, they are often left with a sense of unfinished business, and the completely valid concern of what service they are performing for their master now as free fae that was more valuable to their Keepers than continuing to serve in Faerie.

In many cases, a number of changelings may find their way to freedom as a group rather than singly. Though they may separate at the last, drawn by memories of differing homesteads, they were able to overcome obstacles as a group that would have stopped any one. Each motley of Lost that makes their communal way out of the Thorns is an object lesson in mutual strength. In a few instances, multiple groups of changelings find their way back home at the same time, their jumbled memories suggesting a largely failed uprising. Over the last decade or so, a larger number of changelings seem to have been finding their way home. Some suggest that it was the heightened emotional turmoil of the millennium's end that drew these stragglers home, even if some of them arrived late thanks to the time-twisting nature of Faerie. A few older Lost mention a similar exodus that seemed to arrive during the 19th century's *fin de siècle*, and wonder if there isn't a larger pattern at work.

Player or Pawn

In the back of the mind of each changeling who escapes the madlands of Faerie, a niggling question eventually arises. No matter how stealthy, cunning, strong or deadly the escapee considers himself to be, getting the best of the True Fae in their own realm is the stuff of folklore, more than reality. Thus, regardless of how the changelings escaped from their Keepers, they almost inevitably come to ask themselves whether they really "got one over" on the Fae. Was she really sleeping when the changeling snuck the key out from under her pillow, or was she only pretending not to wake? Did she truly leave the door ajar at just the right time for the changeling to slip away, or did she intend for him to go? Did he truly win the contest, overcome the given challenges or defeat the enemy and thus earn his freedom or was it all staged? Was that really the Fae the changeling slew, or some artificial simulacrum designed to make him believe his Keeper was dead? Was the escape truly an escape, or was it all, just as everything else in Faerie, something other than what it seemed?

No changeling, of course, can ever truly know. And for some, the possibility that their escape was anything but what it seemed takes a long, long time to surface. But for those who have any inkling of the complex and manipulative nature of the True Fae, the question does eventually arise, adding one more layer of doubt and fear to their existence in the mortal world.

Home Again, Home Again

Returning to the mortal world is often at least as jarring for changelings as finding themselves in Faerie was. How difficult their transition back is depends on several factors, any one of which may be enough to drive a changeling mad with frustration, fear or confusion. Each individual, of course, experiences the return in different ways depending upon the nature of his human life before abduction, the circumstances of his time in Faerie and the price of his escape. There are, however, certain challenges that most, if not all, changelings must deal with upon their return to the "real" world.

Stranger in a Strange Land

Perhaps the singular most difficult challenge to returning to the mortal world is the fact that they are no longer mortal themselves. For all that they may appear unchanged to mortal eyes, changelings have experienced things that no "normal" human has, and are aware of an aspect of reality that, at best, would have them labeled slightly eccentric. At worst, publicly professing that you'd been abducted by supernatural creatures from another realm who transformed you to be no longer human could easily lead to commitment to a mental institution. However, even if a changeling keeps his differences to himself, he still knows that he is no longer what he was. He is no longer the same as his parents, his former friends, the people he grew up around. Even if they were to accept his return (no small feat in and of itself), he is walking between the world of the fae and the human world, and is no longer truly a part of either.

Changeling society is based, at least in part, on this principle. In order to thrive as changelings, each individual must maintain somewhat of a balance between his human side and his fae self. To ignore his human side is devastating to a changeling's Clarity. He begins to lose any sense of what is real and what is merely the discontented grumblings and terrified shrieks of his wounded soul. Delusions, hallucinations, depression, compulsions, phobias and psychosomatic ailments all wait down that road, greedily anticipating the arrival of a changeling who eschews the mortal world too greatly. Considering the dangers that await those who have immersed themselves solely in fae matters, the logical reaction would seem to be to err in the other direction. The other extreme, however, is, if anything, more dangerous. While low-Clarity changelings are in danger of losing their sanity, those who eschew the fae world entirely put themselves in danger of withdrawal-like symptoms as their fae-side slowly starves.

Seemings and Kiths

Faerie's effect on changelings goes all the way to the soul, but the changes are not entirely esoteric. The Fae

nature of his Keeper is translated down to the changeling through the Contracts between them, warping the changeling both in body and spirit. This change divides the Lost up into strange affinities that they refer to as seemings. A changeling whose Keeper was crafted of living shadow, for example, might himself become of the Darkling seeming, taking on shadow-related characteristics as well. He might well develop an aversion to light, or his coloring might become monochrome. If his Keeper preferred an underground demesne, the changeling might develop the same tastes, adapting — whether he liked it or not — to survive in the fae environment he found himself bound to. Not all changelings, however, follow directly in their Keepers' footsteps. Take, for example, the human performer who was kidnapped by a Fae troll to entertain him with her song. She may, based on the role her Keeper places her in, develop a Fairest seeming, while the strapping young man who was stolen to guard his lair might become an Ogre himself.

Within Faerie, the True Fae's will seems to permeate all aspects of his dealings, imposing itself on those around him. Humans (and the changelings they develop into) seem particularly vulnerable to the forces of this fae will. The manifestations of this Fae taint, however, are almost limitless. Even within the same seeming, two changelings may develop very differently. These further specialized affinities, called kiths, exist within each seeming. An Elemental seeming, for example, may manifest general qualities of all elemental forces: stone, air, earth and water. Or she may be very specifically a Fireheart, carrying the living flame within her. Likewise, a Wizened seeming might be a general wise woman, the epitome of a fairy tale witch, or she might be a Chirurgeon who's mastered disturbing surgeries, an Oracle with an innate eye for Fate and the future or even a Smith of magical weapons and armor, putting her innate understanding of how things work to very practical and yet still supernatural use. Each of these kiths might have very different miens, reflecting physically different aspects while belonging to the same overarching seeming.

A changeling's mien almost never changes so far from the changeling's original form to make him unrecognizable. He may grow or shrink a few inches, but he is very unlikely to gain or lose a foot or more in height. Hair and eye color may change, and facial features may subtly shift, but the appearance of the stolen human is never completely overwritten. It's said that it's possible to change completely, but that those who do never find their way home, having lost the ability to recognize their mortal selves. The changes are physical, but do not appear to be genetic; DNA analysis cannot determine a "goblin genome," for instance. It also seems impossible for a changeling to pass on his fae qualities to any offspring — not that the Lost have much by way of fertility after the change, that is. Exposure to Faerie seems to negatively affect a human's ability to sire or bear children, making it impossible for most by the time they have become changelings proper. Therefore, the Others are obliged to steal new servants every year, rather than simply breeding the stock they already own.

Upon returning to the mortal world, changelings may be relieved to find that the physical manifestations of their fae mien do not reveal themselves to humans. Changelings are protected by an enchantment that hangs over all things fae, concealing them from mortal eyes. This Mask, as they call it, may seem a small boon compared to the myriad other challenges they face in the mortal world, but it is a boon none the less. Their miens, however, have not disappeared or faded upon leaving Faerie. Other Lost will see changelings quite clearly — as will the True Fae, should they come across the changeling. Likewise, should the changeling venture into the Hedge or Arcadia proper, he will find that everyone, including humans, sees his fae mien and not his human guise.

Time and Ties

Faerie is a land of mutable reality. Science and logic hold no power there, unless this is the particular interest of the Fae who rules the area in question. Natural laws may or may not apply as they do in the mortal world, depending on whether or not the land is bound by Fae Contracts that simply replicate the effects of these laws. Time is no exception to this phenomenon. A changeling may find return from what seemed to be a week of time in Faerie, only to find seven years have passed in the mortal world in his absence. Conversely, a changeling may serve for decades and return to find that mere moments have passed while he was gone. This may make reclaiming one's former life impossible. Imagine trying to explain to your parents that, although their son only disappeared a few days ago, the person before them who claims to be their child is actually in his 50s, having experienced decades of slavery at the hands of his inhuman captors. Just as difficult is the fate of the woman who returns to find her children grown and married with children of their own, when it seems to her that only a week has passed in Faerie.

Fetches

While time fluctuation between Faerie and the mortal world may lead to seemingly impossible complications for those who try to return to their "normal" life, they are nothing when compared to those who return to find that, at least according to their friends and family, they have never left. The True Fae are masters of manipulation, and many replace the individual they've taken from the mortal world with a simulacrum. This mock-up, called a fetch, steps in where the changeling disappeared, continuing his life as if he had never gone. And, considering the travails that changelings undergo in Faerie, the chance is high that they, rather than the fetch, will be seen as the imposters should they return and attempt to confront their families with the simulacrum's existence.

These fae creatures appear in all aspects to be the abducted changelings. Their faces, bodies and voices are all

identical to the people they are replacing, and through some fae spell, they seem to know as much about the changelings' lives as the changelings themselves. For all that they appear human, however, they are not. When killed, a fetch degenerates back into the stuff it was made from: bits and pieces of bizarre junk, held together with a shard of the abductee's own shadow. The reversion can take anywhere from a few weeks to a few minutes; a fetch's corpse may last long enough to pass an autopsy and be interred, or be nothing more than bits of wood, string and bone bobbing in the water.

Destroying a fetch may be an important step toward a changeling reclaiming her former life. Science-fiction mirror world fantasies aside, however, the act of killing something that appears to be oneself is a task for which many changelings find they have no stomach. After years spent in Faerie, many changelings find themselves in a very conflicted state while looking at the creatures that look just like them, act just like them and have been living beside their friends and loving and supporting their families. Some changelings wonder if they are doing their loved ones a disservice by attempting to destroy the substitutes. Other changelings, especially those with low Clarity, may find themselves wondering if they are the originals at all, or simply poor deluded fae creations that have been cursed with others' memories of earlier lives.

Memory and Clarity

The human mind sees patterns everywhere. We learn by them, teach by them and when they do not exist, we invent them, seeking to understand even random events through imagined structure. An object dropped will fall to the ground. Time moves forward; people are born, age and then die. It is more than a casual expectation. The basis of human views on reality is built around them to the extent that insanity is sometimes described as expecting different outcomes from identical situations. However, none of those logical scientific explanations can predict the mad pavannes of Faerie. From the moment humans cross the Hedge, they are stepping out of their world physically, philosophically and even theoretically. All previous assumptions are potentially invalid, and the corresponding grip on "reality" that came with a firm set of rules begins slipping away.

For changelings who have survived a durance in Arcadia and returned to the mortal world, the rules have changed not once, but twice. Their time in Faerie swept away the certainty of the "real" world, and upon returning they must learn how to balance the human and fae realities, hopefully without losing themselves in the process. This balance, called Clarity, is one of the most important factors in a changeling's life. Too much Clarity, and he is in danger of losing touch with his fae self. Too little, and he risks insanity and finds himself uncertain of the reality of the world around him.

Just as waking reality is often easier to remember than even the strongest experiences encountered in a dream, the bizarre experiences a changeling undergoes in Faerie are muddled upon a changeling's return to the mortal world. This confusion is unavoidable. The human part of the changeling simply cannot cling too tightly to the utterly Fae environment it was thrust into, leaving a changeling doubting, questioning or simply not remembering the majority of his durance in Arcadia. Often this is seen as a mixed blessing. While it is a relief to not be constantly assaulted by the cruelty and terror that is part and parcel of dealing with the True Fae, foggy and incomplete memories often leave changelings wondering as to what truly happened to them. If they are barely able to contend with those memories they possess, what greater horrors did they undergo that lie suppressed below the surface?

First Contact

One of the most significant events any changeling will undergo is his first contact with others of his kind upon escaping Faerie. While many changelings will have known other fae-abducted humans, the changeling experience really begins anew upon returning to the mortal world, and only others who have suffered in Arcadia and lived to tell about it can truly understand what it is to be changeling. Because of this camaraderie, many changelings gather in groups called freeholds, ostensibly to protect themselves and each other from the dangers of fae existence. In a large part, however, freeholds provide a sense of the familiar to those who have had their realities stripped away not once, but twice.

In freeholds, the Lost find a sense of belonging that they likely have not been able to reclaim upon returning to the mortal worlds: their friends, family and loved ones may have already finished mourning the missing individuals, or a fetch may have filled the gap entirely, leaving no room for the returning changeling. While it is not impossible for a changeling to take up his former place in human society, it is challenging and he will never again fit there as well as he did before his time in Faerie. In a freehold, however, everyone understands the things he's endured and the challenges that he faces every day. A freehold offers a sense of community and a level of acceptance he will not find elsewhere in the mortal world. Most freeholds are dominated by the Great Courts, whose cyclical intrigues add another layer of texture to changeling politics. However, the basic structure of the freehold relies on a Court, but not the Courts. The one does not necessitate the other, though the power of each Great Court's support network has come to mean that few freeholds do not feel their influence.

Freeholds also fill another need, although it is less openly spoken about than the need for pseudo-human contact. Changelings are not solely human any longer, and although they may have suffered torturous cruelty in Faerie, their eyes were also opened to an entirely new plane of wonder than is possible to experience in the mortal world. Arcadia is the land of dreams as well as nightmares, and even at its most

horrific, it is a place of miracles and magic. Few changelings are willing to admit that there are aspects of Faerie that sparked flame in their spirit and wonder in their existence in a way nothing human can. But it is a need, a longing that cannot be quenched by even the most vibrant of human art or the most passionate of human lovers. In a freehold, there is safety to experience somewhat of that fae marvel without much of the danger inherent in actually traveling into the Hedge, let alone Faerie. Contact with other changelings, individually or through the elaborate courts and noble orders that are reflections of those encountered in Arcadia, feeds that fae hunger in a way nothing else can.

New Starts or Reclaiming the Old

Simply stepping back into their old lives is rarely an option for the Lost. Many challenges prevent them from picking up where they left off before their abduction. If a changeling hasn't been replaced by a fetch, his first challenge is attempting to explain where he's been. Telling the truth will only backfire upon him. The inherently tricky and cunning nature of fae magic ensure that revealing the reality of their existence to humans saps away at the changeling's own grip on reality. The changeling's Clarity slips away with each "reveal," leaving him less and less reliable as proof of his own assertions, the more stridently he attempts to demonstrate them. Humans are more likely to believe they are being made fools of, tricked or are the object of a con game than they are to believe that a few special effects really prove the existence of another level of reality. And yet, some explanation for what can be decades of absence must be made, if the changeling hopes to regain any aspect of his former life. Some changelings create elaborate tales of kidnappings, weaving stories of being held for years at the hands of some unknown assailant. While these stories can't be proved, they are more likely to be believed (and less likely to end up with the changeling being treated for psychosis) than the truth. These explanations, of course, only get more complicated if time has passed differently between the two worlds. Absences may be difficult to explain, but convincing someone of your identity when you are decades older or younger than you should be is nigh on impossible.

Equally difficult is returning to a gap that does not exist. Changelings who have been replaced by fetches are faced with a particularly thorny challenge. Directly attempting to take one's place back from the creature that has lived with one's family for years is rarely successful. The fetch has, for all extents and purposes, been the family member while the changeling has not, and nothing short of killing the fetch and revealing it to be nothing but constructs of flotsam and shadow is likely to prove the changeling's claims. Attempting to slaughter one member of the family in front of the rest, of course, is equally likely to end in disaster. Those who wish to attempt to replace their replacements must use subtlety both in dispatching them and in stepping into their place, a role that the fetch now knows far better than the original occupant. Even if the fetch has died during the changeling's absence, the problems remain. It's difficult to explain to your wife how you've returned to her when she attended your memorial service four years ago.

Some changelings find that reclaiming their former lives is simply impossible. Perhaps their families have gone on without them, or their time in Faerie has left them far too old or young to hope to recover their previous existence. Or perhaps other factors stop them from doing so; the True Fae are a cruel and manipulative race and more than one changeling has returned to the human world to find himself accused of vile crimes that were actually perpetrated by his Keeper during the changeling's abduction. For these changelings, there is little choice save for creating new lives for themselves. Some stay near their hometowns, riding the bittersweet line between monitoring their families' well-being and not revealing their own true identities. Others are unable to bear the pain of such proximity to the familiar, or are in too great of danger by remaining near their former homes, and must set up new lives for themselves elsewhere. In both cases, established freeholds often provide support for displaced changelings who are attempting to craft new identities for themselves. Not only do many have resources

for creating the paper trails required to be acknowledged by human society, but they also may act as a surrogate family, offering the changeling the acceptance and inclusion that he has been unable to reclaim on his own.

The Hedge

The thorny maze that surrounds Faerie holds many mysteries to the Lost. Certain aspects of the Hedge are well-known, but much like modern technology, even those who use them regularly do not necessarily understand the "how" of them, and almost no one is certain exactly of the "why." Those who remember being abducted by the Fae almost always have memories of being dragged painfully through the Hedge's Thorns on their way back to their would-be Keeper's demesne. No matter how clear the path seems to be, none but the True Fae pass uninjured into Faerie. And those who remember their return recall an equally painful departure, as if the Thorns were unwilling to free them before exacting a suitable toll. Because of this, if nothing else is known for certain about the Hedge, it is generally held to act as a boundary between the mortal world and that of the Fae. This is, however, one of the only (mostly) certain facts about it. Most other aspects are mutable, as well suits a place whose entire reason for being seems to be to obstruct and confuse.

The Hedge can as easily manifest as immaculately landscaped Victorian hedgerows as it can ghastly stinking bogs where passage is marked (or hidden) by treacherous stretches of murky water. Thick primeval forests where undergrowth snatches at the clothing and flesh of those who would pass through is as much a part of the Hedge as impassable jungle tangles rife with venomous-looking sucker-vines and carnivorous vegetation. Perhaps more confusing than the many possibilities of flora and fauna within the Thorns, however, is the Hedge's mutable nature. There seems to be a psychoactive element to the Hedge, an effect that is heightened by those with powerful fae magic. Around those with a high Wyrd, the Hedge conforms intrinsically to their nature, manifesting cold winds and ice around winter-aspected changelings, or deeper shadows around those who prefer to remain in the dark. It is as if the fae borderlands inherently sense the strength of the changelings who travel there, and echo back elements of the strongest fae spirits in a physical form.

Certain aspects remain true, despite the mutability of the landscape, however. Paths and roads traverse the Hedge, some leading solely to other entry and exit points to the mortal world and some — most often the clearest — stretching deeper into the fae landscape. While human instinct often dictates that the broad road is the safe one, in Faerie such idioms are rarely true. Those roads that are the clearest are often those that are maintained by the magic and will of the True Fae. Such roads may provide swift passage, but the destinations are often ones from which no human returns.

Entry and Egress

The Fae lands are nearly impossible for humans to reach from their native lands without supernatural intervention, either direct or incidental. The Hedge's boundaries, similar to many places of legend, are not merely physical but also mystical, so while it is theoretically accessible from locations across the globe, actually entering the Hedge from the human world is never a sure thing. Certain locations are more likely to allow egress than others, as are certain situations. Doorways into the Hedge have been opened across the world, and once opened, they may fall dormant but never truly close. Humans, through supernatural efforts or by foul luck, sometimes can pass through those portals into the Hedge, but once within the Thorns, they are likely to quickly rue the actions that led them there. Leaving again is a not overly difficult, as long as they have not wandered away from the doorway. However, once the human world has fallen from their sight, it is no simple matter to return there. The Hedge is almost limitless in its labyrinthine vastness, and within its confounding expanse are countless dangers, including that of simply remaining lost forever.

The Lost, however, are both blessed and cursed by their association with the True Fae. This affords the Lost far more reliable access to the Hedge than they had as humans, at the same time as it makes them of far greater interest to the denizens of Faerie. Although the Lost can pass into the Hedge far easier than humans, once there they are a veritable beacon of Glamour, signaling their presence to those creatures who prefer to prey upon fae flesh, magic or emotions.

Trods

While every entry into the fae world is inherently supernatural in nature, some are more potent than others. Certain locations, called trods, are so imbued with power that they not only act as doorways into the Hedge and the Fae realm that lies beyond it, but they actually generate the stuff of fae magics. This fae essence, called Glamour, can be reaped by those with the skill to do so, and then be used to strengthen themselves or fuel their supernatural powers. Some places rumored in human legend to be attuned to the fairies may in fact be trods of sufficiently high power to have come to the attention even of the mundane humans in the vicinity. Other trods, although equally powerful, have remained sequestered away from mortal notice, guarded carefully to protect them from those who might intentionally or accidentally taint or weaken them.

Trods, while providing a vital benefit to those able to harvest their Glamour, are intrinsically dangerous as well. Changelings are not the only creatures who find Glamour to be of use, and the possibility of a True Fae being drawn to one, especially one that is being actively used, is high enough to make trods a guarded risk to those who would prefer to avoid the Fae's attention.

Hollows

Likewise, the Hollows that exist throughout the Hedge enjoy a reputation of mixed blessing. These clearings may appear as anything from small animal burrows to expansive clearings built up with elaborate lodges, but just as other aspects of faerie, Hollows are rarely exactly what they seem to be. Changelings may carve these niches into the Hedge, outfitting them as suits their seeming, and use them as a form of sanctuary, bound by the protections of the ancient oaths of hospitality. There, held in place by the changeling's will and whatever oaths and pledges he inflicts upon the area, he may retreat from the human world and immerse himself in the wonder of fae possibilities in relative safety. Enterprising individuals may even attempt to cultivate what normally only grows wild in the Hedge: goblin fruits that can provide healing or other benefits, semi-sentient servants to cater to the changeling's whims and needs or animated treasures the likes of which humankind only knows about in fairy tales. But despite the obvious advantages of such locations, they are dangerous as well. Time spent in the Hedge, especially in relative safety, can become addictive to the fae spirit, and some find that they are loath to leave their hidey-holes for the harsh realities of the human world. However extensive time spent in the Hedge, just as with any prolonged exposure to powerful fae-stuff gnaws away at a changeling's Clarity, leaving him less and less able to discern what is truth and what is fantasy.

Changeling Life

From the first moment that the Lost pass back through the Hedge and into the mortal world, they are outsiders. They have changed, and the mortal world has continued on, often completely oblivious to their absence. Despite the danger that one of their kind may betray them to the Fae, and the paranoia engendered by their captivity, most changelings seek out others like them, both for the simple companionship of people who understand their unique state and because the advice and aid of changelings who have spent longer in the mortal world can prove invaluable.

Although it's far from a tradition, many changelings escape together and emerge from the Hedge in small groups. While memories of the Fae lands are exceptionally sketchy, the members of these groups often recall having helped one another escape or finding their way through the Hedge. This experience can form a powerful bond between the escapees, who frequently remain together long after they have learned to adjust to life in the mortal world. This shared escape forms the basis for many changeling motleys. However, when the Lost return to the mortal world, they are usually forced to look beyond their own motley.

Many changelings welcome and sometimes desperately require help learning to live in a world that may be many decades later than they last remember. Also, in most cases, the changelings' legal identities are either held by their fetches or the changelings are considered deceased, possibly for many years. Most changelings require assistance in obtaining or regaining some form of legal identity, which is typically a fake ID of some sort. The worst off are the Lost boys and girls who left the mortal world when they were children or adolescents and grew up with the Fae. Few are equipped to deal with the mortal world as teenagers or young adults. Likewise, changelings who have been away 20 or more years face a world transformed by computers, and have difficulty learning to work almost any job or even using a public library. Even those lucky changelings who were abducted as adults and have been gone only a few years are now out of step with both world events and the lives of their families and may ask awkward questions about the World Trade Center when they first see the New York skyline.

Becoming part of changeling society is generally a simple matter. The paths through the Hedge are far easier in some places than others, which means that most changelings arrive in certain areas that usually retain a high changeling population. Because they can see each other's fae miens, the process of one changeling identifying another is often as easy as noticing that one of the fellow passengers on the subway has antlers or is seven feet tall, with crimson skin and a huge horn in the middle of her forehead. Some newly escaped Lost can flee or attack during these first run-ins, fearing they have encountered one of their Fae masters. Other Lost beg forgiveness for escaping and plead not to be punished. Some understand that they have simply encountered another escapee like themselves.

Of course, the revelation works both ways. The other changeling is likewise greeted by the sight of a young man with hair of phantom fire or a woman with long silver claws and night-black skin. The more experienced changeling now faces the difficult task of dealing with someone who may have no understanding of the realities of life in the mortal world as one of the fae. No matter where the encounter may lead, the first meeting with another of their kind is typically both terrifying and wonderful for changelings who escaped from the Gentry alone and had previously wondered if they were either delusional or the only one ever to escape Arcadia. This meeting is often an equally powerful experience for a group of changelings who escaped together and who are struggling to find their way in a world that is no longer the comfortable home they left years before.

History and Modernization

Changelings are somewhat longer lived than ordinary mortals. Those who were abducted anywhere from two to six decades ago can still escape back into the mortal world, often little older than when they left. As a result, changeling society is considerably more conservative than mortal society, in part simply because many changelings were born 50 or more years ago. Also, the nature of Faerie has changed

little over the millennia and the fact that all Lost have spent years or decades there also provides a further, often unwanted sense of continuity. Some changelings take pride in holding offices or practicing traditions that they say trace back to "True" Thomas of Erceldoune or Urashima Taro, both figures of legend whom the Lost claim as their own.

The modern era and, especially, the Internet have provided a new, tentative outlet for changeling society. Before the late 1980s, most changelings in a single city or town had a few reliable tricks for finding one another, particularly those who knew where the local trods were and where refugees might find their way through. During this era, learning about changelings from other cities or other nations relied greatly on reports from wandering changelings, who occasionally lied, exaggerated or simply forgot important details. As a result, individual freeholds were largely on their own. The Courts were often the keepers of tradition, and the most reliable communication came between members of the same Court.

Freehold rules and structures share many similarities, but also often profound differences, especially in the degree of obedience and allegiance the members of a freehold owe to their leaders. In some places, changelings were expected to swear oaths of total fealty to their sovereigns and offer them a variety of goods and services free of charge, while other freeholds were significantly more egalitarian. Many Lost accepted life in oppressive or ill-managed freeholds because their only options were either to live without the support of other changelings or to move to a new and unknown city, find a way to contact the local freehold (if indeed the city had one at all) and hope that conditions there were better — all while running the risk of crossing paths with privateers, loyalists, the Fae or other threats. Some Lost took the risks, for better or worse. Many didn't.

The growing facility to contact other Lost elsewhere via the Internet has made communication and potential migration easier, to a point. Some changelings have mastered the complexities of this new medium, though given the time-lost nature of Arcadia, not to as significant a ratio as their human counterparts. Only a small number of changelings regularly use Internet traffic, and they are quite cautious about giving away too much of themselves in electronic format. But now and again, a connection is made. A few dedicated and Net-savvy changelings seek out newsgroups, mailing lists and websites devoted to alien abductions, kidnapping or similar unexplained mysteries in an attempt to understand more about both themselves and the Fae.

A little more than a decade ago, a handful of Lost in different cities across the world began to make tentative contacts with one another through hints, suggestions or simply half-remembered descriptions of Arcadia loosely disguised as fiction. Although a few changelings unknowingly contacted privateers, loyalists or Fae-ensorcelled mortals, the others were, for the first time, able to exchange information with their distant fellow changelings. By the end of the 1990s, there was a loose network of several scores of changelings across the world who had managed to get in contact with one another. These sparse online contacts have allowed some changelings to travel to different cities and even different nations with some idea of how to make contact with a local freehold. Although it's still a mysterious and dangerous journey, those who wish to travel now know somewhat more about the lives of changelings in other portions of the world than they did several decades ago.

Most of the few changelings who use the Internet fear that agents of the Fae will locate them if they post too many hints about themselves or their activities on any but the most private online forums… and a cunning privateer could still infiltrate those. As a result, many of the net-savvy Lost are lurkers more than anything, keeping a close eye out for any newly returned changelings who might not know the dangers of an online cry for help. First-time contacts of this nature are still extraordinarily rare. Only changelings who previously experienced online communications in the late 1990s or later will be able to easily navigate the modern Internet shortly after their return. But their numbers may only increase, and it may become increasingly important to watch for these first tentative distress calls. After all, an increasing number of enemies may find their way online as well.

Safety

One of the characteristics that almost all changelings share is that they have great difficulty feeling safe. Abducted without warning and enslaved by almost incomprehensible beings, in the back of every changeling's mind is the fear that someday, something else will suddenly turn his world back into a living nightmare. Changelings fear they will be recaptured by the Fae or become the victims of some as yet unknown horror, and this fear is a central issue in many of their lives.

This fear is greatest in those recently returned from Faerie, and often gradually dissipates among those who manage to make relatively stable lives for themselves in the mortal world. Even then, most Lost never fully get over occasional panic attacks, a tendency to violently startle or the periodic recurrence of horrifically terrifying nightmares. As a result, the derangements Suspicion and Paranoia are particularly common reactions to severe mental stress. Even among changelings who remain fully sane, fear and the perceived lack of safety are responsible for much of the structure of changeling society.

Their desire to feel safe and to avoid any situation that could result in their recapture means that some changelings seek to learn as much as they can about the Fae and the other various other potential supernatural dangers found in the World of Darkness. Most changelings limit the focus of their interests solely to the Fae and attempt to learn all they

can, both from legends and myths and from perilous ventures into the Hedge. The most determined sometimes go as far as going on undercover missions among loyalists and occasionally even privateers, where the undercover changelings attempt to learn these groups' secrets and the secrets of their masters. Paradoxically, fear and a desire for safety leads some especially obsessed changelings into exceptional dangers as they attempt the difficult task of truly knowing their enemy.

Others worry that there might be other completely unknown supernatural threats waiting to take both changelings and mortals completely unawares. As a result, some Lost seek to learn all they can about all of the many supernatural threats and mysteries found in the World of Darkness. A few become serious occultists, studying the legends and mystical traditions of many lands and eras, while others end up as obsessive, but often disturbingly well-informed, conspiracy theorists who find evidence of supernatural involvement in all manner of events, including a few times and places when it was actually present.

Their natural suspicion and desire for safety is the primary reason that changelings remain so mysterious to most other supernatural beings. Changeling occultists recognize the fear that vampires, mages and werewolves might all have some secret connection to or alliance with the Fae. As a result, the Lost are no more inclined to reveal themselves to a mage or a vampire than they are to a mortal. No matter how much interest the Lost might have in other supernatural beings, changelings have trouble trusting their own kind and trusting outsiders is even more difficult, especially if these outsiders are as secretive as the other supernatural inhabitants of the World of Darkness.

Few deny the benefits of high Clarity. However, changelings who are intensely focused on learning about the Gentry or other supernatural beings can conflict with those who attempt to retain their perspective by avoiding fae contact as much as possible. Changelings decry the latter as willfully blind individuals who choose to ignore the many terrible and immediate dangers that surround them. Many freeholds contain one or more changelings who have made an intense study of various supernatural or Fae-related topics. Although these individuals are often of dubious lucidity, the information they know can be of vital importance. In addition to causing some Lost to develop a keen and sometimes obsessive interest in various supernatural threats or oddities, the desire for safety is also responsible for the three major focuses of changeling life: trust, hospitality and secrecy.

Trust

Trust is one of the most difficult things for changelings to relearn. Although the Fae are bound by their word, they are masters of following only the most exact wording of any agreement they make and have great expertise at both lying and deception. After living for a year or more as slaves to such beings, changelings naturally have difficulty trusting others. Their reluctance to trust is made even more problematic by the nature of their existence back in the mortal world. To avoid being labeled as lunatics and perhaps even being found by the Fae, the Lost must continually lie about themselves and their experiences. Very few find any mortals they can trust. As a result, trusting another changeling or making a mutual pledge of friendship or alliance is an profound act that changelings do not take lightly.

However, similar to many others who have experienced various forms of extreme mental or physical trauma, changelings who decide to trust someone often give their trust absolutely and with an almost terrifying intensity. This dichotomy between emotional distance and absolute trust frequently troubles mortals changelings interact with, who often rightly understand it to be a clear sign of both significant emotional problems and serious abuse.

As difficult as it often is, the ability to put aside their fears and doubts and unreservedly trust someone is essential for most changelings' well-being. Isolated changelings who lack anyone they can trust usually become increasingly withdrawn. Some lose themselves in madness or violence. Others become sufficiently careless that they soon end up either dead or back in the hands of their former masters.

Because of the difficulty most Lost have trusting others, pledges form a central part of changeling society. Pledging mutual friendship and loyalty with the members of a changeling's motley is one of the central features of changeling society, just as the basic pledge of alliance with the changeling's freehold forms the basis of her relationship with the freehold. Within this system of pledges, changelings can feel relatively safe, and the power of these pledges allows them to more fully trust their allies and colleagues.

Over time, most changelings learn to trust more fully. Eventually the length of time a changeling has belonged to a motley and the degree to which she knows the other members become more important than their mutual pledges in maintaining her trust. However, the habit of using pledges to insure trust runs deep in changeling society and allows the Lost to make agreements and alliances with those members of the freehold who never learn to fully trust others without such mystically enforced guarantees.

Because changelings can only keep a limited number of pledges at one time, every changeling must occasionally make agreements that are not sealed with pledges. Such deals and promises are often quite stressful, and changeling gossip and urban legends are filled with tales of unpledged Contracts resulting in betrayal or disaster. To relieve this stress, some changelings attempt to keep close track of how well others are upholding their end of the Contract. Others do their best to convince themselves that the other party or parties are entirely trustworthy, even in the face of strong evidence to the contrary. Some deal with this stress by deciding to break such Contracts in ways that gains them ad-

vantage as soon as they begin to worry that the other party might betray them. They reason that if the deal is going to be broken, they rather do so first, so they can be the victor and not the victim. A few Lost seek out unpledged Contracts, with both mortals and other fae, for the express purpose of planning to break them — doing so gives the changelings a feeling of power and control that they desperately need.

The most common method of ensuring that Contracts made without pledges are kept is learning as much as possible about the others involved in the agreement. Because changeling communities are relatively small and insular, almost every changeling is relatively well-known to her neighbors. As a result, reputation becomes of vital importance. Known oathbreakers are never tolerated. Those who are merely known for skirting the edges of oathbreaking and bending any non-pledged Contracts to their own advantage are not excluded from changeling society, but they soon find that no one is willing to make any deals with them that are not backed by pledges.

One infrequent but well-known punishment is forcing someone to swear a pledge if he wishes to avoid being thrown out of his freehold. While doing this is regarded as an extreme step, it is also widely accepted as the best solution for changelings who are dishonorable or otherwise highly problematic to deal with. Such forced pledges allow the other members of a freehold to trust a changeling who has otherwise proven unworthy of this trust.

Hospitality

One of the major reasons that most changelings support their local freehold or Court, or at least are willing to work with them, is the promise of a safe space wherein they can deal with their fellow changelings. Between trust issues and the fact that changelings cannot afford to be too profligate with pledges, those who wish to or need to interact with others of their kind must accept the risks of interaction sooner or later. To help minimize both the risk and the fear involved in these interactions, both freeholds and Courts strictly maintain the rules of hospitality in their gathering places. When changelings come to either, they can expect a safe space where the leaders will enforce polite conduct. Duels are acceptable, but using Contracts or violence on another changeling without either prior agreement or extreme provocation is most definitely not. Thus, the Lost can be assured that they are safe from sneak attacks, abduction or other similar fearful events that often loom large in their psyches.

In response to the policies of the changeling freeholds and Courts, some changelings also enact similar rules of hospitality in their homes and common meeting places. In almost every city, some sign or sigil marks a place as subject to the rules of hospitality. In some places, this mark takes the form of a unique and carefully sprayed bit of graffiti tagging, often done in some unusual color of paint such as emerald green or purple. In Glendale, California, the particular tag is a stylized cat head in blue paint, with a wavy gray line on either side. In more upscale areas, the sign can be

anything from a small handmade pottery glazed plaque inscribed with a stylized image of a house to a trio of window stickers for various causes or charities arranged in a particular pattern. In Waltham, Massachusetts, the hospitality symbol is a pair of stickers for two conservation charities placed next to one another, with a sticker representing a popular local band placed above and between them, forming a triangle.

The rules of hospitality themselves are both relatively simple and extremely widespread. Inside places marked as being under the rules of hospitality, changelings must honor all of their promises and refrain from any unprovoked attacks, including attacks with Contracts and with physical violence. In addition, changelings who have not broken the rules of hospitality and who are in need may claim sanctuary at any such place for at least one full day. At the end of this time, they can be asked to leave, but for this duration, they are safe from both harm and eviction.

Changelings who mark a place as being covered by the rules of hospitality are expected to indicate their identities beside the mark. Extending the rules of hospitality over a location means that the changeling or changelings who do so are swearing an oath to defend these rules with force and possibly with their lives. In some communities, changelings simply verbally state their support of this hospitality to the rest of the freehold. However, in most freeholds, they add their mark next to the mark indicating hospitality. These "signatures" can include small individual graffiti tags, arcane-looking personal sigils drawn in magic marker or occasionally even thumb-sized photos taped into a window next to the hospitality sign.

Making such declarations requires both courage and determination and is almost never done lightly. However, protecting such areas is in the interest of almost all Lost. Therefore, when the local mistress of hospitality is forced to step forward and defend someone in her space, most other changelings currently partaking of her hospitality typically stand beside her against anyone who threatens the peace and safety of this location.

Some changelings who are especially brave or powerful (as well as those who merely wish to appear as either) declare their homes to be protected by the rules of hospitality. Most are unwilling to do so because they wish to reserve the right to take pre-emptive action against anyone who might be a potential threat. The most commonly protected spaces are cafes, bars, restaurants, pubs, private offices, public meeting halls, hotels or, for the wealthy, separate guesthouses near their actual houses. In these locations, changelings from all over the city can show up and, depending upon the exact rules governing the space, either walk in or ask for permission to enter. Once inside, they meet their fellow changelings, transact business or exchange information and gossip, secure in the knowledge that their most paranoid fears and worries are unlikely to happen here.

Secrecy

For changelings, the act of living in the mortal world involves keeping secrets. Revealing their true nature to mortals can result in madness, disbelief and, possibly, calls for the changeling's commitment. Very few mortals are willing to accept stories about lengthy abductions to a magical world by inhuman beings. Unable to perceive fae miens or accept the hidden truths, mortals are only comfortable when the changeling answers their questions with carefully constructed lies.

While some bitter and hardened Lost care little for the madness and confusion that revealing themselves to mortals might produce, all are aware of the dangers that such revelations can bring on both themselves and other changelings. Attempting to reveal the truth of their existence naturally provokes disbelief among almost any mortal, especially family members who have spent years either in the company of the changeling's fetch or mourning the fetch's death. Accusations that the fetch is a monstrous creation win more disbelief or fear than sympathy.

Mortals fear or dismiss what they cannot understand. Either response can be dangerous, especially if the mortals talk widely about the strange tales some relative or stranger has been relating — privateers and loyalists are always eager to listen to such stories and do their best to track down the source. Changelings whose mortal families hold extreme religious beliefs sometimes find themselves subjected to violent and sometimes dangerous attempts at exorcism, as their families attempt to force the "demons" out of them. Attempted revelations about the changeling's fetch go over especially poorly and can result in restraining orders, charges of conspiracy to commit murder and similar problems.

A few changelings wonder about the necessity of secrecy, particularly those whose seemings might be viewed as beautiful and magnetic. However, because mortals cannot perceive the changelings' fae miens, at best changelings appear to be magically powerful humans with strange and disturbing delusions about their pasts. And despite not being ravening predators or members of the walking dead, changelings are nonetheless strange and somewhat inhuman beings. Those few who manage to convince unensorcelled mortals that they are not simply insane instead inspire the typical mortal fear of the uncanny and the unknown.

Attempts to tell others in order to gain allies against the Fae are futile. The unfortunate truth is that unensorcelled mortals cannot aid the changelings against the Others, because mortals cannot perceive the Hedge or any other fae manifestations. Most mortals also cannot perceive changelings as anything other than deluded or foolish humans claiming to be strange and inhuman beings. The range of reactions to a changeling's claims runs from mockery, ridicule and accusations of insanity to possible confinement in institutions or even violence.

But the most important reason for secrecy is the constant fear that revealing or even being insufficiently careful about hiding their existence can result in their being found and recaptured by the Fae. While the Others recapture very few changelings, none who have been recaptured are ever seen again. Most Lost recognize that the Gentry aren't constantly stalking the Lost across the mortal world; many believe that they are only in danger during their journeys into the Hedge or when encountering privateers. However, the nagging fear that they may one day fall asleep and wake up back among the Fae, or that they will be captured some night when walking down a deserted street, is not a groundless fear. The possibility is real.

Some changelings become sufficiently paranoid that they constantly vary their routines to avoid allowing anyone or anything to lay a trap. A few refuse to let even their closest comrades know where they live. Most lack this devotion to secrecy, but still experience a slight hesitation when someone asks where they live or a stranger knocks on their door. The most obvious result of this tendency to secrecy is that the Lost usually do what they can to appear normal and unremarkable.

Even newly escaped changelings rapidly recognize that ordinary people cannot perceive the changelings' fae miens or most of their other oddities. However, many changelings fear that being seen as too eccentric will cause rumors and gossip that may find its way to the Fae, either through listening privateers or in the dreams of mortals. As a result, changelings do their best to not do anything that will mark them as changelings. Unfortunately, even the Lost who spent many decades in Faerie do not understand how the Fae think or what they might look for. As a result, no changelings have any clue as to what, beyond open statements about their nature or history, might provide dangerous hints to the Fae.

In the past few decades, some changelings have gained acceptance among small groups of eccentric mortals interested in alien abductions and similar phenomena. However, many of these mortals are unstable, and membership in such fringe communities opens the changeling to ridicule and suspicions of insanity by most outsiders. Nevertheless, some changelings cherish the ability to more openly talk about their experiences with mortals. However, among such groups, tales of changelings being kidnapped by "the grays" held for years, and then escaping only after being permanently changed can result in requests to see the "flying saucer" the changeling escaped in or questions about the nature of the aliens' technology. Also, only those changelings who wandered into the Hedge on their own or otherwise did not have a fetch find easy acceptance in such communities. Someone who disappeared under mysterious circumstances and reappeared equally mysteriously years later gains much credibility among people interested in the strange and the mysterious. However, stories of magical replacements that must be brutally slain often make even the most accepting and eccentric mortals rather uncomfortable.

Changelings who have slain and replaced their fetches sometimes gain acceptance with mortals who belong to these groups by claiming that their minds or spirits were captured by aliens and replaced by some sort of "alien mind-duplicate." Most changelings who become involved in groups of supposed UFO abductees or in similar fringe communities soon discover that gaining acceptance depends largely upon altering the truth of their experiences so that it better fits with the beliefs of the community. The process is often little different from gaining the same degree of acceptance from the social mainstream. In all cases, the Lost must lie to everyone except their own kind and the most trusted of the mortals they have ensorcelled. It's a difficult demand, but some find it gets easier as time goes on… almost instinctive, really.

Territoriality

The trods that changelings require to re-enter the mortal world aren't found everywhere. Gateways into the World of Darkness are far more common and easier to traverse in certain cities and towns. As a result, changelings naturally tend to cluster in such places. Certain cities have comparatively large changeling populations, while others may have none at all. Naturally, not all Lost remain in the city where they first emerged from the Hedge, but many of those who have no compelling reason to live elsewhere do because these cities usually contain large freeholds.

The Lost usually return to the mortal world close to the homes they knew, guided by their memories. Sometimes, though, their loved ones have moved away. Most changelings who move elsewhere do so because they long to regain contact with their mortal friends and families. Because changelings were once forcibly removed from these people, most Lost are compelled to remain near their loved ones even if forced only to watch over them from a distance. Also, the trauma produced by a changeling's abduction and escape expresses itself in a multitude of ways, but for many, it results in an attention to safety and routine that makes travel to unfamiliar locations more than a little stressful.

Many changelings' half-conscious thoughts of unfamiliar towns and neighborhoods are filled with fears of the Fae, rapacious privateers and similar dangers lurking around every corner. Once changelings have found someplace relatively safe and secure, most are reluctant to move from either their dwelling or their city. The well-remembered location that called the changeling back through the Hedge also exerts an exceptionally powerful hold for almost every changeling, and most wish to be able to regularly spend time in or near this location. It was the beacon that brought them back home once; should the worst happen, it might be able to bring them home again.

Over time, this reluctance to travel sometimes fades, as changelings go from having nightmares of being recaptured several times a week to experiencing them only in times of

extreme stress. Also, some Lost find safety and security in being difficult to find and deliberately seek careers or ways of life that involve either frequent travel or life on the road. With jobs ranging from long-haul truckers to airline stewards or traveling salespeople, these changelings regard their mobility as their greatest protection from such threats as their former masters.

Although some changelings are solitary by nature and seek out their own kind only when facing troubles they cannot manage on their own, most establish at least loose ties with a Court or a freehold. Those who are naturally inclined to travel occasionally serve as emissaries or messengers when such are required. A few Lost, especially those who find mortal jobs that involve frequent travel, manage to gain significant status and power through their work as emissaries and intermediaries. Owing allegiance to no Court or freehold, but having close ties with several, these fae have friends and allies even among freeholds or Courts that are frequently at odds with one another. Because most changelings find the safety and security they seek by making a stable life in a single place, these traveling heralds often gain impressive reputations for bravery and daring.

Freeholds

Although changelings may not always like or even respect one another, the majority of changelings recognize their common bond of slavery and escape. Except for the few twisted wretches who work for the Gentry, the one of the few goals all changelings can agree upon is maintaining their freedom from the Fae. As a result, changelings naturally band together for mutual defense and support, to prevent any of their number from being dragged back to Arcadia or enslaved in the mortal world.

Local changeling communities are called *freeholds*, a name that reflects their focus on self-determination and mutual aid. Changelings who have recently escaped from Faerie are always offered the hospitality of the local freehold. These refugees are treated as guests for as much as a month, or perhaps even longer if they suffered mental or physical harm during their escape. After this initial period of open hospitality, changelings are usually offered a chance to join the freehold.

The decision to join a freehold can naturally be changed later, but is nonetheless of vital import, because membership in a freehold helps determine both a changeling's loyalties and the contacts she will gain in the changeling community. Although some freeholds that are overcrowded or in turmoil may be reluctant to accept new members, joining the majority of freeholds is a simple act for any changeling not suspected of dangerous insanity, aiding the Fae or similar dire problems or crimes. The prospective member need only swear a pledge to give her services to protect and defend the freehold and its members from the Fae and their allies and to never knowingly give aid or comfort to these enemies.

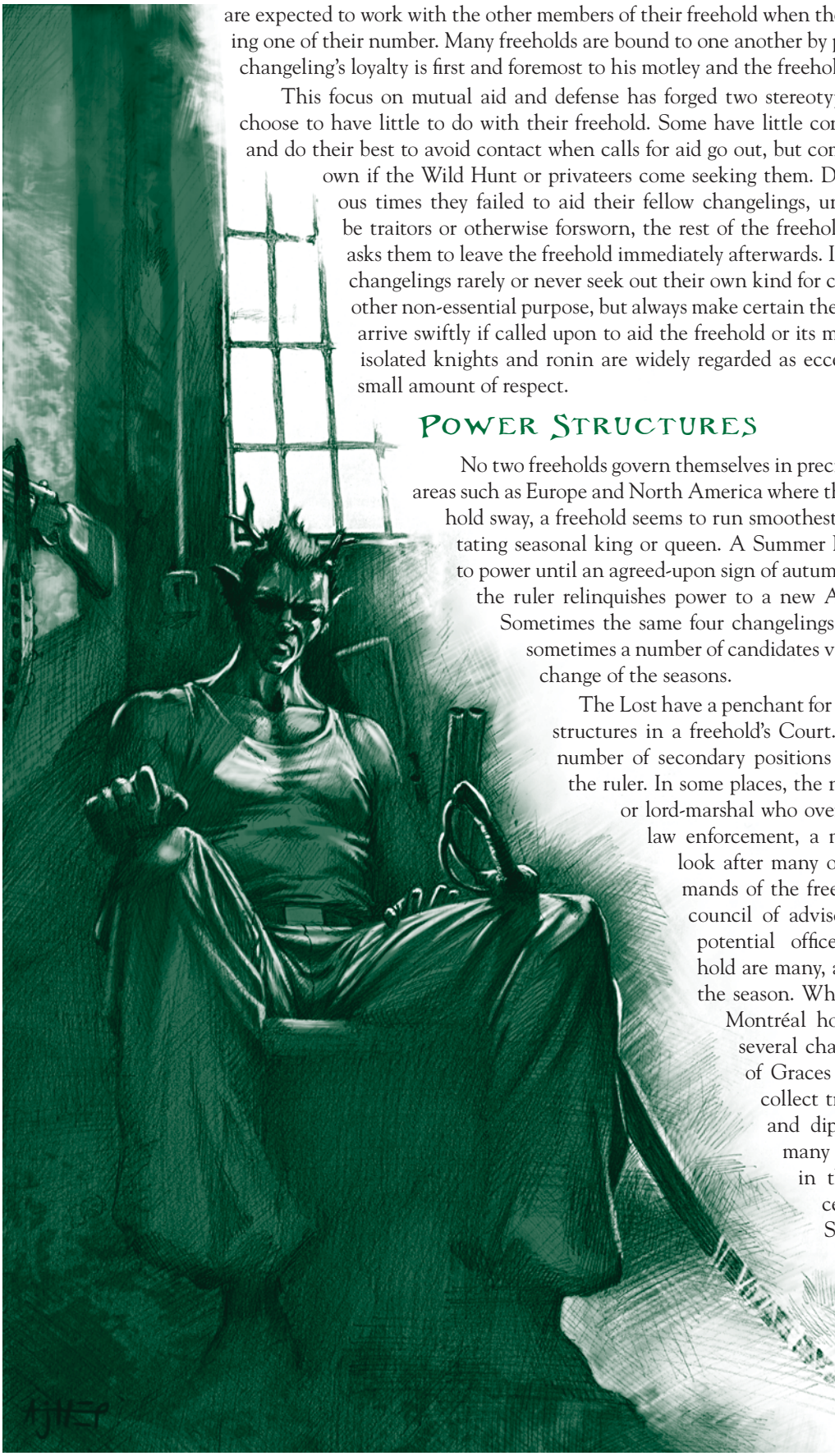
Almost all freeholds include this clause in their pledges. Many freeholds also include other more extensive clauses. Some expect all who join to agree to aid and defend the members and the freehold as a whole against any external threat, including ones having nothing to do with the Fae. While most freeholds also have a clause that removes this protection if a changeling brings down the force of mortal law against himself, a few freeholds lack this clause and agree to shield changelings from even the full force of the police and courts. Naturally, most freeholds include provisions for expelling Lost who knowingly or sometimes even carelessly bring serious harm or threat of harm to the freehold. Almost all of the older and most traditional freeholds also require members to swear to obey the freehold's official code of laws and the most authoritarian also require changelings to pledge to obey all of the leaders' official pronouncements and edicts.

Freehold Names

Every freehold has a name, but these titles are as diverse and varied as the freeholds themselves. Some, such as "the Waltham Brethren," are centuries-old names that may sound archaic to modern ears. Others, like Tucson's "the Martinez Lodge," are named after their founder. However, the Lost have a penchant for the colorful, especially among freeholds where children of a single seeming predominate. Such names can range from fanciful titles such as "Wolfhaven" or "The Gathering of Elements" to cryptic titles such as "The Nest." Changelings tend to avoid giving freeholds too-obvious names derived from myth, ever since the disaster that befell the 17th-century legendary freehold of New Lyonesse.

Various Midwestern freeholds use a very similar pledge. The one sworn in the Chicago freehold "Arlene's Gather" is typical of the rest: "On my freedom and my honor, I swear to obey the written laws of this freehold and to aid my fellows against the Gentry." Meanwhile, in the Waltham Brethren, a recent revision of the centuries-old oath now reads, "Before others who have shared my captivity and who are now my brothers and sisters in freedom, I swear to obey the laws of the Brethren and the directives of its appointed leader. I further pledge to protect my brothers' and sisters' freedom and to forever defend them from the True Fae and their agents."

Changelings who desire to attain power and status in their freehold or to hold some office usually must supplant their basic pledge of membership with more extensive oaths of office, but this original pledge defines membership in the freehold. Even the most isolated and reclusive changelings



are expected to work with the other members of their freehold when the Wild Hunt comes seeking one of their number. Many freeholds are bound to one another by pacts of mutual aid, but a changeling's loyalty is first and foremost to his motley and the freehold they all belong to.

This focus on mutual aid and defense has forged two stereotypes for changelings who choose to have little to do with their freehold. Some have little contact with their freehold and do their best to avoid contact when calls for aid go out, but come asking for aid of their own if the Wild Hunt or privateers come seeking them. Despite any and all previous times they failed to aid their fellow changelings, unless they are known to be traitors or otherwise forsworn, the rest of the freehold aids them, but usually asks them to leave the freehold immediately afterwards. In contrast, some isolated changelings rarely or never seek out their own kind for companionship or for any other non-essential purpose, but always make certain they are easy to contact and arrive swiftly if called upon to aid the freehold or its members. These stoic and isolated knights and ronin are widely regarded as eccentric, but command no small amount of respect.

Power Structures

No two freeholds govern themselves in precisely the same fashion. In areas such as Europe and North America where the seasonal Great Courts hold sway, a freehold seems to run smoothest when governed by a rotating seasonal king or queen. A Summer King or Queen holds on to power until an agreed-upon sign of autumn arrives, at which point the ruler relinquishes power to a new Autumn King or Queen. Sometimes the same four changelings hold the office in turn; sometimes a number of candidates vie for rulership with each change of the seasons.

The Lost have a penchant for favoring elaborate power structures in a freehold's Court. Many freeholds have a number of secondary positions and honorifics to assist the ruler. In some places, the number is small: a sheriff or lord-marshal who oversees security affairs and law enforcement, a minister or seneschal to look after many of the administrative demands of the freehold or perhaps a small council of advisors. In many more, the potential offices a changeling might hold are many, and even transition with the season. While the Spring Queen of Montréal holds court, she appoints several changelings to her Council of Graces to oversee celebrations, collect tribute in the form of art and diplomatically smooth out many feuds and rivalries within the freehold. When she cedes the throne to the Summer King, the Council of Graces steps down with her. For his part, the Summer King then organizes a cadre of Knight-Defenders, Knight-Hospitalers and Knight-Champions

to carry out the tasks needed for a Summer-held freehold. Some freeholds find it advisable to have certain offices that remain unchanged through all four seasons, with the same Minister of Doors serving year-round. Others accept certain cabinet offices that remain constant, but the appointee changes with the ruler.

The result is frequently Byzantine, but strangely many changelings feel quite at home with the situation. The many offices provide a welcome motivation for the Lost. By chasing one's ambition toward a ministry, knighthood or even the freehold's throne — and by serving that office once acquired — a changeling finds a new potential place in the world. Even the most paranoid Lost find courtly intrigue comforting in a way, as there's something honest about the politicking for a commonly desired privilege. After all, you know your rival is working against you, but at least you know why. As a result, the intrigues and offices of a freehold are first and foremost in many a changeling's struggles to find a new place to call home.

Tolerance and Madness

One of the most distinctive features of almost every freehold is the tolerance for both eccentricity and dysfunction. Although it's a sensitive subject, all changelings know that their lives have been horrific and strange beyond even their own ability to describe or remember. As a result, many relate to each other and often to the world around them somewhat strangely. Various mild derangements are unfortunately widespread, as well as significant to occasionally extremely profound gaps in social skills. Some changelings spent the adolescent years when most humans learn to relate to one another in bondage to the Fae, while others spent decades as slaves and have forgotten most of the ways they used to deal with the rest of humanity.

Especially among those who have only recently escaped, there is no shortage of changelings who jump at another's touch, even when this touch is both casual and fleeting, or stare off at nothing for long periods of time. While most learn to suppress this behavior when among mortals, another of the functions of a freehold is to be a place where such behaviors are accepted and acknowledged. In most freeholds, reproving someone for some bit of eccentricity that is neither harmful nor disruptive is considered rude and heartless.

Some freeholds are less tolerant, and for practical reasons. For one, they argue that such practices encourage troubled changelings to wallow in their problems rather than solving them. More troublesome is the tendency to permit unacceptable and disruptive behavior under the guise of tolerating emotional problems. A changeling who attempts to disrupt a freehold under the pretense of dementia may quickly find that her fellow changelings have experience in discerning feigned mental illness from the real thing, and no sympathy for the former. Worse, a changeling who cannot distinguish between the real and unreal is like a beacon to any minions of the Gentry who hunt the rogue Lost.

Ultimately, the average freehold is a place where changelings have more freedom to be their eccentric selves, and even a place where those who suffer from mild mental illness can find greater solace and assistance than they would in the outside world. The Lost still remember when mortals imprisoned the insane like convicts a century ago, or when mortal doctors "treated" them with electroshock and lobotomies. Today, mortals in many nations leave many of the mentally ill to fend for themselves, and most of the rest are given treatments that occasionally help, so freeholds are now usually willing to arrange to obtain mortal medical treatment for some of their most severely deranged members. In some of the most organized and compassionate freeholds, the leaders make certain that especially reliable members obtain official paperwork allowing them to make decisions for the less mentally stable changelings.

This tolerance can also have a darker side. In some freeholds, the dividing line between accepting and ignoring insanity becomes very blurred, leading to troubled changelings being allowed to commit suicide, flee into the Hedge seeking the Fae or attack mortals or members of the freehold, all because no one noticed exactly how serious the changeling's problems were becoming or because no one cared enough to intervene.

The relatively small and intimate nature of freeholds also means that changelings who wish to manipulate their fellow changelings for their own advantage often know how to use a carefully crafted rumor or well-told lie to set off one or more of the more paranoid or otherwise unstable members of the freehold in a manner that is useful to their cause. One of the most significant tensions in the changeling community is between the idyllic and fully accepting image that most freeholds attempt to cultivate and the fact that, just as all small insular communities, freeholds are prone to vicious gossip, petty rivalries and lingering grudges. When combined with the exotic and stressful nature of life as a changeling, betrayals and attempts to seek advantage can easily result in truly horrific things happening to anyone getting in the way of a particular ambitious, skilled and amoral changeling.

On rare occasions, a loyalist, privateer or a changeling who simply wishes to use a particularly accepting freehold to her advantage, feigns serious mental illness and uses the freedom and acceptance granted her to learn the details of the lives of the members of the freehold, and if possible to work her way into their houses and hearts. Blackmail, identity theft or some other form of betrayal is then the traitor's payment for the freehold's compassion. While such events are uncommon, there are regularly rumors of such events occurring in some distant or not-so-distant freehold.

But there is always some hope. The prodigal who is teetering on the brink of madness may yet find some sol-

ace in the company of others like him. There he is among those who see many of the things he does, the beautiful and frightening faces hidden away from mortal view. He isn't hallucinating. He sees what is real behind the Mask. Among his own kind, he may at last be able to heal.

Acceptance and Membership

When members of a freehold first encounter changelings recently arrived from Faerie, most members simply introduce themselves, let the new arrivals know where to contact members of the freehold and then allow the newly returned Lost to make the first move. This first meeting can be dramatic; sometimes the newcomer hadn't even known that she was the only one to make it back. She might even mistake the freehold member for one of the Gentry.

Experienced changelings have learned that those newly escaped from Arcadia commonly develop one of two goals. Some feel utterly lost in the mortal world and seek out others of their kind for aid, advice or simple company. Some wish to have nothing to do with other changelings, changeling society or any other reminders of the Fae and want to resume their previous lives as swiftly as possible. Unfortunately, because of such daunting obstacles as the length of their absence and the likely presence of their fetches, these attempts prove either difficult or impossible. However, most changelings who seek mortal lives first prefer to test these problems for themselves and then come to their local freehold seeking advice later. The stark necessity of interacting with other changelings frequently banishes the resentment many feel at having to deal with people whose appearance and very existence reminds them of their half-remembered years of slavery.

The most basic service every freehold offers to newly escaped changelings is an explanation of the realities of their existence, including the past or present existence of their fetches, the specific dangers the changelings might face and the inability of most mortals to notice anything unusual about them. Most freeholds can provide newcomers a place to stay for a few days and often a small amount of money to help them start to make their way in the world again. To obtain more than these minimal services, changelings are expected to join the freehold.

The larger and most well-organized freeholds can frequently provide moderately good fake IDs, some of which even come with at least a limited credit and employment history. Other freeholds contain changelings who specialize in discreet research and detective work. These changelings are skilled at learning the current state of a changeling's friends and family and determining whether the changeling's fetch is still around and what it is doing.

Finally, some freeholds offer another, darker service. Many changelings either want to attempt some sort of accommodation with their fetches or do not wish to try to regain their old lives and so have no reason to slay their fetches. Other changelings wish to destroy their fetches themselves. However, a fair number of changelings who wish to reclaim their lives from their fetches either have difficulty with the idea of what is, in one sense, cold-blooded murder or lack the skills to accomplish this deed in a discreet manner. As a result, a few larger freeholds employ a "Jack Ketch," someone who specializes in the swift and careful disposal of fetches. Few changelings are willing to become hired killers, even of fetches. However, those who do can command high prices for their services.

Membership in a freehold gains a changeling access to such services, but taking advantage of the more extensive or difficult services, such as obtaining larger sums of money or asking for the disposal of a fetch, incurs obligations to either the freehold as a whole or (more commonly) to an individual member. These debts range from loans, which must be repaid, to more nebulous obligations to other members of the freehold. Such services are naturally available to all members, and not just the newly escaped. In this way, a freehold serves as a social and financial safety net for changelings, where a badly injured changeling can obtain goblin fruit, a changeling who has incurred some trouble can obtain a loan or even a new ID and all members can find allies to defend themselves against recapture.

Payment for most such services is typically made in kind rather than in money. Every changeling is expected to be able to provide, or at least help with, some sort of service useful to other changelings. These services can range from something as simple as free food or a spare room, but every changeling who asks for a significant service is expected to contribute something in return. This arrangement is the cornerstone of changeling society, and those who favor the courtly intrigue of a freehold often sit at the center of a web of favors, promises and allegiances The most basic and central service freeholds offer is dealing with threats from the Fae and their allies. Victims of attacks by privateers or Fae are expected to recompense the members of the freehold who aid them, just as all members of the freehold are expected to help out when the Fae threatens a member or one of their mortal loved ones.

Unfortunately, the Fae and their agents are well aware of these pacts of mutual aid and often attempt to isolate a member of a freehold from her fellow changelings before attempting to go after her or her family. Occasionally, privateers or Fae arrange for a changeling or even an entire motley to look as if they have been shirking their responsibilities to their freehold, or perhaps even betrayed their freehold, causing aid to be cut off until the situation is sorted out.

Other attackers go with the far simpler solutions of either coming after the changeling when the freehold is busy with some other more critical problem (perhaps arranged by the attackers in advance) or attacking when the changeling

is alone and far from help. All too often, all the members of the freehold can do is attempt to comfort the survivors or attempt to retrieve any captives from the Fae.

Freeholds differ significantly on how acceptable money is as repayment for other services. Traditionally, changelings were expected to repay all services in kind, and the oldest changelings, who remember the independent and relatively isolated days of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, consider monetary payment for anything except loans and other purely monetary services to be completely against the spirit of changeling society. However, some of the less traditional freeholds have become as heavily monetized as mortal society, and a few have set rates for providing fake IDs, research, long-term shelter in another changeling's home and even killing a fetch. Most freeholds and most changelings fall somewhere between these extremes and accept payment in both money and services.

In addition to the obvious advantages of safety in numbers and mutual aid, convincing a newly arrived changeling to join the local freehold is also considered to be a good idea because it allows other Lost to better keep track of her actions and, if necessary, to place limits on her behavior. Once a changeling has grown used to the advantages offered by life in a freehold, the threat of limiting these benefits can easily be used to help restrain unacceptable behavior.

One of the difficulties in changeling society is the problem of what to do with changelings who refuse to follow the rules. Privateers and others who pose an immediate and deliberate threat to the lives of the Lost as a whole are the worst sort of enemy. Killing them is widely considered to be the most pragmatic solution. However, many problematic changelings are not so obviously villainous. Some simply have hair-trigger tempers and are prone to violence when some person or situation inadvertently reminds them of their captivity with the Fae. Others may be completely non-violent but are pathological liars, petty thieves or simply completely self-centered and amoral. All such changelings can be exceedingly difficult to deal with. The situation is naturally made worse by the fact that many Lost are willing to ignore serious eccentricities in their fellow changelings. This dismissal means that problems only tend to be raised once they have become so severe that no one can ignore them anymore.

Not all criminally inclined changelings confine their attacks to other Lost. Some strictly avoid harming other changelings or their loved ones, and instead rob or assault mortals. Many such criminals then come to their freehold for protection when mortal justice takes notice of their actions. Because they have avoided any direct offense against the members of their freehold, these changelings make appeals similar to those made by or for insane changelings who wish to avoid asylums or involuntary medical treatment. Many freeholds are exceedingly reluctant to turn over one of their own to mortal justice, especially if this changeling either displays stark terror at the idea of imprisonment or hints that he may end up revealing some of the secrets of the freehold if he is brought to justice. This situation becomes even more complex if, as is very common, the members of the freehold have previously sheltered this changeling from the consequences of more minor legal infractions.

The options for dealing with Lost criminals are relatively limited and without easy answers. Ultimately, each freehold must come up with its own solutions. At the one extreme is execution, which is typically meted out only for mass murderers, privateers and other changelings who have performed truly heinous acts. In such cases, the leaders of the freehold almost always decide that the only solution is to slay the changeling. While rare, such executions are also far from unknown.

Traditionally, these executions are carried out in the mortal world, using a cold (wrought) iron implement. These weapons range from rare and archaic choices, such as beheading the offender with an axe, to the more common option of specially made wrought-iron bullets or shot. To avoid mortal attention, the body is then almost always hastily buried in the Hedge or, for privateers and other particularly heinous criminals, the body is sold at a Goblin Market and the proceeds given to either the freehold or the victims.

Most other punishments are purely social in the sense that they involve exclusion or at least the threat of exclusion from the freehold and possibly from the changeling community as a whole. Fines (in either money or services) and forcing changelings to swear pledges are the most common penalties for minor to moderate infractions. When dealing with all but the most serious crimes against mortals, the most common answer is for various members of the freehold to use various Contracts to deflect suspicion from the criminal and then use other Contracts and forced pledges to force this changeling to cease committing such acts. Also, some compassionate Lost attempt to use either their money or their Contracts to redress some of the criminal's wrongs.

Both fines and enforced pledges are backed by the threat that changelings who do not comply will be temporarily or permanently banished from the freehold. These banishments are always widely announced, so other freeholds will be unlikely to allow this changeling to join. Similarly, the ultimate punishment, short of execution, for changelings is banishment from their freeholds. Centuries ago, changeling outcasts used to be thrown out of their freeholds after being branded on their faces or hands to clearly show all changelings that these outcasts were not to be trusted. Today, branding has been replaced by messages about the banishment passed to all nearby freeholds. Sometimes, this banishment is for a few years or even a decade; most often, banishment is for life. Banishment is most commonly reserved for oathbreakers and for changelings who have com-

mitted exceedingly serious crimes such as treason, but who have not aided the Fae or their allies. In a few rare cases, banishment is also used on heinous criminals who have powerful allies that shield them from the threat of death.

Banishment is widely acknowledged as an exceptionally severe punishment. Being excluded from a freehold means that either the changeling must travel to a distant location and hope that no one there knows of her disgrace, or she must resign herself to a life completely isolated from the changeling community. Sometimes even privateers and loyalists refuse to accept a changeling who has been thrown out of her freehold, although both groups are more than happy to turn such individuals over to the Fae. In most cases, the members of the freehold the changeling is banished from are all required to swear that they will have no further contact with this changeling, and, in almost all cases, they readily comply.

Three punishments are all but completely absent from changeling society: imprisonment, enslavement and return to the Fae. All of these options are considered to be far too close to changelings' captivity by the Fae, and only the most debased and draconian freeholds use any of these punishments. Execution is considered both more acceptable and ultimately more humane than any of these sentences. This distaste for incarceration is why many freeholds prefer to shield changeling criminals from mortal justice and deal with them under the laws of the freehold. However, although almost no freeholds actually imprison changelings, many Lost have far less difficulty with turning the guilty over for imprisonment by mortals.

Mortal Society

Almost by definition, the Lost who manage to return to the mortal world have close ties here, usually ties of family or dear friends. A changeling abducted as a teen usually thinks often of her parents while she was held captive by the Fae, while those captured as adults often leave beloved spouses or children beyond. Upon returning, the first thing almost every changeling attempts to do is contact the people she left behind.

Obviously, the existence of either a living or a dead fetch greatly complicates this problem. Depending upon how the fetch died, an appearance back from the dead might occasionally be possible, especially in cases when the body was at all difficult to identify, such as in an airline crash, but few changelings are this lucky. The problem of dealing with a living fetch can be even more difficult, unless the changeling kills it or arranges for its murder.

Murdering a fetch allows a changeling to attempt to resume her old life. However, differences in apparent age and the lack of several years or possibly even several decades of memories can make this process exceptionally difficult. For those unable or unwilling to slay their fetches, dealing with loved ones becomes even more difficult and painful. Many changelings used memories of their loved ones as something that both helped them survive their captivity and as an important motivation for helping them return to the mortal world. As a result, few are willing to simply turn their backs on these people simply because they cannot resume their old lives. The alternatives that changelings choose are many and varied. Some, especially those belonging to the Winter Court are content to stalk their families — watching them from afar, but never making contact beyond an occasional anonymous phone call or a brief conversation during a carefully arranged "chance" encounter that takes place when the changeling is wearing a disguise.

Changelings who learn to use the Internet can often make contact with their loved ones online, getting to know them again under an assumed identity. Although often a lengthy, difficult and frustrating process, this method is also one of the most successful. A few lucky Lost manage to regain friends, and sometimes even parents, spouses or children in the guise of a stranger who slowly finds a place in their lives.

Both online and in person, changelings who have not yet managed to regain ties with their loved ones often go to one another for help. They share stories of the various fleeting contacts they have had with their families and exchange ideas on how to proceed with watching them or making further contact. In addition, changelings frequently help each other construct scenarios in which they attempt to meet and get to know their families as a stranger, or occasionally to break into their homes and take an intimate look at their families' lives while they are out. Those who were parents before their abduction feel this desire most keenly, as they cannot have more children of their own — they can only attempt to become closer to those children they've lost.

Going Stealth

A few lucky changelings manage to integrate themselves back into their old lives. Some kill their fetches and manage to replace them. Other changelings either never had one or find that their fetches died under mysterious circumstances and fabricate stories about how they were presumed dead while they were either held captive or had temporarily lost their memories. Regardless, armed with their correct fingerprints and knowledge of their lives before their abductions, these changelings attempt to resume their old lives.

Most begin this process filled with the naïve but fervent hope that they will soon be able to forget about the horrors of their ordeal in Arcadia and that life will again become normal and ordinary. These Lost may cut themselves off completely from contact with their freeholds and fellow changelings for fear that their odd companions will alarm their old friends and families and that dealing with other changelings will keep them from fully resuming their mortal lives.

Unfortunately, changelings' time with the Fae changed their minds and bodies. The mundanities of mortal life are

no longer completely natural to someone who can hear the call of the Hedge and constantly feels the scales or antlers that the mortal eye can't see. Attempting to return to a life of school or office work, television and the other details of everyday life demands that changelings ignore who they now are and constantly deny much of what they see and feel. Few are willing to make that compromise, particularly those who join a Court. The marks of Faerie are the badges of survival, something that can engender a strange pride.

Worse yet, very few changelings are lucky enough to find their fetches dead in some fashion that allows them to resume their lives and find some excuse for their lack of memories of recent events. Most must kill their fetches and then do their best to impersonate them, forever hoping that no one will notice that they no longer know the many details of their lives that died with the fetches. Faking a sudden physical or mental illness can help, but these changelings often find the lines between truth and lies blurring as they must pretend to be themselves and lie about a multitude of intimate memories in order to be whom their families or colleagues want and expect them to be.

The pressures of such an existence can become extreme. Mistakes in which the changeling reveals a lack of knowledge become increasingly awkward as her family begins to doubt the evidence of their senses and wonder if they have a lunatic or an imposter living with them. Often, friends and families either plead or berate the changeling to try to find a way to be like she once was, making clear that they preferred the fetch to whom the changeling is now. To avoid both confusion and arguments, many Lost find themselves increasingly relying upon their Contracts to bend the minds and the perceptions of their friends and family.

Relying upon fae power to keep loved ones from suspecting the truth is a slippery slope. Some Lost end up transforming their families into their thralls. A changeling may turn to her fellow changeling for help in trying to find some way out of the tottering series of lies and magics that she has built up between herself and her family. Such attempts can be quite difficult if the changeling previously spurned contact with her freehold.

While many changelings know someone who has "gone stealth" by attempting to live as a mortal with his mortal family, almost as many have seen these efforts end in failure. Such failures have results ranging from the changeling abandoning his family in horror and remorse at how he treated them to efforts to find a more equitable, or at least a more practical, solution. One common result is a changeling understanding that denying his nature is simply not possible. At this point, most begin sneaking out to spend time with other Lost for companionship and for mutual aid. A particularly pointed spur is an incident in which the Fae, privateers or some other supernatural threat approaches the changeling and his family. The illusion of normality rarely survives.

Other Solutions

Balancing family and other ties from before his abduction with life as a changeling is one of any changeling's most difficult challenges. The ways in which this effort can skew to the dysfunctional are many, one of the most common being a changeling stalking his family and possibly acting as their protector while never actually contacting them. Successful solutions are few, and most rely upon either a degree of honesty and trust rarely found in changelings or a skill at secrecy and subterfuge that is unusual even in these subtle beings.

The first option requires a changeling to reveal the truth to his family. Given their inevitable disbelief, the only solution is to use pledges to ensorcell them and allow them to see the truth about the changeling and his new world. Few families are willing to accept this, and even fewer Lost are in a position to let them. This option works far better if there never was a fetch or if it died before the changeling returned — admitting to murdering a fetch (or perhaps even murdering the fetch in front of them) is too much for all but a very few mortals to accept, even after they see the fetch's true nature.

When it works, this solution is nearly ideal. The changeling now has the support and possibly even the aid of her family. Of course, now her family can also see and will likely have to deal with the oddities that the changeling calls her friends and companions in the local freehold. Having to regularly interact with a variety of physically changed and mentally damaged changelings can try the patience and even the sanity of most mortals. Changelings who take this approach are regularly beset with doubts about how long their families will be able to accept them and their inhuman lives, especially because many have heard heart-rending stories of mortals who can no longer deal with knowing the truth about the Fae and their actions and beg to have their fae sight revoked.

Because of these difficulties, some changelings take the opposite solution — they find or make a place for themselves among their loved ones and then lead double lives, in which they pretend to be perfectly normal and regularly sneak out to spend time with other Lost. This approach avoids both the internal stresses of "going stealth" and the difficulties of admitting the truth, but the slightest mistake or even a simple bit of bad luck can reveal to the changeling's family that he is not in fact spending time late at the office or going to his therapist or martial arts class. While often easier than constantly denying the truth about her existence and her perceptions, the constant lying necessary to make this solution work often ends up distancing the changeling from her family and mortal friends.

A very few unusually eccentric or traumatized Lost discover a strange, but sometimes disturbingly functional, solution by developing two entirely separate personalities, one that

knows that it is a changeling and another "human" personality that is completely unaware of its true nature and that functions perfectly in the changeling's mortal life. In some extreme and problematic cases, neither personality knows about the other. However, most often the changeling personality knows about the mortal personality and can occasionally listen in on what is occurring when that personality is in charge. In such cases, the changeling personality is often able to take control easily and with minimal trouble when the mortal personality is forced to deal with something outside of its experience.

Functional Multiple Personalities

As a reaction to a combination of the horrors the character experienced in Faerie and the shock of returning changed to the mortal world, some changelings develop multiple personalities to help them deal with their experiences. These changelings typically have two personalities, one personality that knows it is a changeling and another that thinks it is human and has no knowledge of the body's experiences as a changeling. This second personality always has some plausible story about who it is and what happened when the changeling was abducted. If neither personality knows about the other, then this is a typical example of the Multiple Personality derangement. However, a few Lost have managed to resolve most of the psychological issues involved without reintegrating their two personalities. This odd but less extreme condition counts as a Flaw, but is only a mild derangement.

Such characters present a challenging but fascinating role-playing experience. In such cases, the changeling personality knows about the mortal personality and can at will observe and offer subtle hints of advice that come across to the human personality as unconscious thoughts and urgings. The human personality knows nothing of the character's life as a changeling, but definitely knows that something is odd in its life and that there is someone else in its head who deals with all the "weird stuff." In most cases, the two personalities can actually communicate in a limited fashion, although the human personality rejects and rapidly forgets any suggestion that it is anything other than a normal human being who is forced to deal with a variety of unusual situations. Each personality can call on the other to take over if needed, but usually does so only when confronted with something outside of the personality's experience. In the case of the human personality, this includes changelings, the Fae and other supernatural oddities. For the changeling personality, this usually includes the changeling's family, close mortal friends and the changeling's mortal job.

These personalities are always different from one another. Their emotions, tastes and desires all differ, although not necessarily radically. With the approval of the Storyteller, the player can also purchase a special one-dot Merit only available to such functional multiple personalities. This Merit, called Shared Sleep, means the character needs only four hours of sleep a night to feel fully rested, as long as she spends at least six hours a day in each of her two personalities. In effect, one personality sleeps while the other is awake, significantly reducing the amount of sleep the character's body requires. This Merit should only be available to characters that are played such that each personality is a recognizable individual.

Mortal Protectors

Few who know the Fae credit them with caring sufficiently about mortals to attempt to protect them from harm. Nevertheless, there are countless tales of families and individuals having fae protectors, ranging from the Scottish banshees that delivered warnings of impending death to Japanese Baku who protect mortals by devouring nightmares and the evil creatures that cause them. Most changelings rightly assume that these legends refer to their own kind. Whether changelings are watching their friends and families from a distance or attempting to live as ordinary mortals in their midst, changelings live in a world that is broader, stranger and full of far more obvious dangers than that of ordinary mortals.

Unfortunately, while these dangers remain invisible to the vast majority of mortals, they are no less real. The Fae attempt to kidnap mortals or their children, drive them mad for sport or send the beasts of the Wild Hunt after them. Similarly, ghosts and various other monsters possess ordinary mortals or otherwise threaten their sanity or their lives. By virtue of their nature, changelings have a far easier time noticing and protecting themselves and others against many of these dangers. Every changeling tries to protect his loved ones from being taken or harmed by the Fae, and some Lost attempt extend their protection to every mortal they know. Preventing one abduction or returning someone recently abducted by the Fae to the mortal world means that the changeling has saved someone from a fate as terrible as his own, which can be a great comfort, especially when the changeling is troubled by memories of the years he spent in Arcadia. There's historical precedent to avoid isolationism, too. Those Lost who say they're better off ignoring the mortals

and remaining exclusively among their own kind are told of the last days of New Lyonesse, where the once-great freehold's ignorance of the humans around them proved a fatal blindness.

Changelings who care to notice are periodically presented with a variety of unusual problems, from looking in a passing baby carriage and seeing a newly formed fetch waving its cornhusk legs and twig fingers to sensing that a house that she walks by is haunted by some sort of malevolent spirit. Although most Lost do not seek out such problems, many cannot help but notice them.

For some, especially members of the Summer Court, protecting mortals from supernatural threats and especially from the Fae and their allies becomes an all-consuming passion. Unfortunately, doing this often involves spending large amounts of time away from mortals, either in the Hedge or skulking alone. Those changelings who pursue this path too strenuously almost always end up becoming increasingly isolated from humanity even as they strive to protect it. Also, protecting mortals from the Fae is not without risk. The Fae do not react kindly to anyone attempting to deprive them of mortal slaves or prey. Any changeling who does this too often will find the Wild Hunt, ensorcelled mortals or perhaps a motley of privateers or loyalists attempting to hunt them down and turn them over to the Fae.

Courts

The Great Courts are common social structures on a greater scale than motleys. Great Courts serve much the same purpose — safety from the Fae — but on a larger scale and with more organization. Each of the four Courts has its own unique affiliations with one of the seasons and a dominant emotion, bound to the Court through oaths its founders exacted from the seasons many, many years ago. Changeling legend holds that the Western Great Courts were first founded shortly before the Dark Ages, and while their presence has waxed and waned over the years, it has always been strong enough to survive. The names of the founders are often modernized, but it's commonly held that they lived at least at the time of the Roman Empire.

Changelings bound their Courts to the seasons for the strength it would give them against their one-time captors. Any pact provides power in the form of Contracts, but the founders explicitly chose to align their Courts with an aspect of the world that the Gentry couldn't understand. A Fae lord may tyrannize a realm of endless winter, but he would never forsake his power and allow another to warm his land to spring. Tying their resistance to the voluntary progression of the seasons gives the changelings a stronger connection to Earth and a basis for defense that the Others are — so far — unable to undermine.

These pacts serve changelings around the world, but they are most common (near ubiquitous, really) in North America and Europe. There are regions where the changeling Courts have developed to the point where they no longer relate to the seasons, and they no longer benefit as much from the pact. Changeling society in such places is often weaker and more susceptible to the Fae. Other Courts relate themselves to different earthly phenomena, and their founders may have forged other pacts. As long as the Courts maintain meaning and symbolism that can be used against the Fae, the Courts can still have some power. The directional Courts in China, the sun Courts (dawn, noon, dusk and night) and Courts tied to the Buddhist cycles of reincarnation serve as examples.

Joining a Court involves a pledge on the part of the changeling, and the changeling's Wyrd supports that pledge. The Wyrd ties strongly to the seasons' interactions with time and the emotional affiliations that each Court assumes. In return for the pledge, the character's seeming gains the Court's Mantle, a supernatural addition to the changeling's mien that reflects the Court's season and dominant emotion.

spring

(the Antler Crown, the Emerald Court, the Court of Desire)

There's only one reason to get away from Faerie, miss, and you know it. We come back to Earth to leave the dreams behind. Feels good to finally wake up, doesn't it? Thing is, there's no point in getting back to Earth if we don't get back to ***real life****. Too many of us get all tied up in just being away and not getting caught that we don't think about what we're gonna do now. We have to move forward, and we have to enjoy ourselves — there's no other way to escape all that misery we all share.*

But it doesn't have to be one or the other, fun or safety. With us, the Spring Court, leaving the past behind is our defense. No offense, but I've seen you dance, miss, and I think you know it. You're not just enjoying yourself and making friends. You're keeping ***them*** *away.*

Bare branches will again bear fruit. This belief is the common element in members of the Spring Court. Just as all changelings, these Court members have had their lives ripped from them by their onetime Keepers. The Spring Court exists for changelings who refuse that loss, choosing to replace it with something new. They deny despair in preference of hope, and together they keep that hope alive where alone it would falter. Their lives are not over, and they intend to prove it — to the Fae, and to themselves.

Mother Susan is the alleged founder of the Antler Crown. After returning to Earth from Faerie, her dreams of motherhood were shattered by infertility. Contracts she forged with other entities enabled her to have a child again, but she would not keep it. Many believe that Mother Susan gave up her infant to Spring in order to seal the pact that founded the Court. They honor her as one who sacrificed her spring so that others might have theirs, though many question what could have driven her to such an extreme. Some say it was guilt, and they wonder what she might have done to first have her child.

This is how the members of the Spring Court defend themselves against the Fae. These Court members will not be silent, pain-wracked victims of their tormentors. These Lost choose to exult in the now and guiltlessly retie themselves to the human world around them. They surround themselves with the beauty their time in Arcadia showed them, proving that their joy is not trapped in that other place forever. Far from a denial of the situation, this is a deliberate attack on the Fae. Changelings of the Emerald Court fulfill their own desires, and do it with style, out of spite and pride, to diminish the power the Gentry hold over them.

If it were easy, every changeling would do it. Instead, there is an entire Court devoted to the idea. The Court of Desire serves as a support group for its members as much as a governing body. For every refugee who truly embraces the concept of living well in order to live at all, there are two who play the game and hide their shame. Being among others struggling the same way strengthens all of them, helps them go on. The reinforcement the Court provides is the reason it and many of its members have survived so long.

So, what members of the Spring Court do, they do with style. They must enjoy life and steal Faerie's thunder, which they do by making their existences beautiful as well as enjoyable. Changelings of this Court seek the most poetic aspect of any effort, from poignant stanzas and cleverly appropriate bargains to something as simple as walking gracefully to the bus.

Bearers of the Emerald Mantle practice equal elegance in their interactions with others. Their wit and

eloquence naturally attract allies and acquaintances whom, in a pinch, they can call upon or manipulate when necessary. This quickly became and remains another of the Court's tools in its effort to remain free.

The results are subtle, but effective. One motley spends its evenings in a nightclub, drinking in the thirst and lust and the slaking of each. It can also rouse the clubbers to riot to conceal their escape. Others sneak into office parties across their city, riding the white-collar workers' one night of release, but they always have friends to hide them. From this, changelings of the Spring Court camouflage themselves against these backgrounds. Hunting Fae cannot find changelings as easily when the prey doesn't have that feeling of loss that most changelings cannot shake off.

And when True Fae grow close, the Court gathers. The monarch arranges soirees to delay or deflect the wrath of the Fae. There is a metaphysical power in unbridled joy that turns away captors seeking their slaves. There is such strength in being able to honestly laugh in the face of terror that it slows or stops the hunting Gentry, who wonder if these are their quarry after all.

Courtiers

Changelings in a Spring Court pursue their every action with elegant grace, and they refuse to neglect their own pleasures. Many of them are very serious about seeing their own desires met, to the point where people might call them narcissistic egoists. Few admit that a Spring courtier has a very good reason to pursue his own interests, and that that pursuit requires an iron will and a self-control to rival any recovering addict.

The ideal of beautifully living for today is very attractive, especially to escapees from the courts of Faerie. But few changelings have the right personality to live in the moments of their own creation — so much of what they are is in the past, decided for them by minds decidedly unconcerned with fulfilling the changeling's desires. They still have not escaped the Arcadian prison, though they walk free on Earth. Such people do not belong in the Spring Court.

The Court seeks those who want to deny the consequences of the past. Rather than hide from it or stand against it, they choose to leave their troubles behind them and forge something new and distinctly *theirs* in the "new" world of Earth. They are pioneers and explorers on the experiential landscape, always seeking a new pleasure because moving any more slowly means the Fae will find them.

A proper member of the Spring Court is devoted to meeting her own desires and doing so elegantly, but also to helping other members meet *their* desires. A changeling who can not just emulate Spring's rebirth but help carry it to others is one who has the Court's respect. A courtly Knight proclaims his love for the maiden in every artfully careless step and revels in it, but it is better if his proclamation gives the maiden the opportunity to gently swoon and become ravished just as she desires. A changeling scientist constructs her lab such that every Bunsen burner and bubbling flask speaks volumes about the sanity she delights in pretending is lost, but it is better if her research assistant has the opportunity to thematically rail against her madness before storming out the door in secret joy.

Anyone is welcome to join the Spring Court, but members are judgmental. A changeling without the same affectation for beauty as the others is quickly made to feel as if she doesn't fit in. Unless (or until) she shows some special poetry in either her work or play, she will be only on the periphery of the Court and unable to advance.

Some changelings of this Court suffer strong feelings of guilt. What gives them the right to see to their own wants while others suffer? No mere human may have endured as much as one of the changelings, but there are other fae who have. This question is most common among members whose hearts are changing, and will soon lead them away from the Spring Court.

Rituals

Some observances are common among many, if not most, Spring Courts. Best known is the Spring Revel, a region-wide party the Court commands each time power transfers to the Spring Court from the Winter Court. Changelings of all Courts look forward to these celebrations, as the Court of Desire arranges locations where the fae can be private and makes a special effort to see that at least one desire of every attendee, changeling, human guest or other, is met. The best monarchs use the opportunity to demonstrate the intended themes of their reigns without being so gauche as to state them. Members of the Spring Court, at least, believe that the Revel deters Fae incursion.

Spring courtiers constantly compete to make the most subtly eloquent and audaciously beautiful statement in their individual bailiwicks. This is no poetry slam or lyrical comparison. It is a competition practiced in all media across a Court's jurisdiction, and a composition's worth is measured by the response among humans. The Spring King or Queen usually

judges. She determines which member of the Court performed best (taking into account gamesmanship and honor, the wild cards) and bestows a simple honor or prize once each year, usually during the Spring Revel. Arranging a building's skeletal structure to look like a rose growing into full bloom as it is built is an example of one victorious entry.

Every year, many Spring Courts hold a Homecoming. Some members of the Court (or other Courts) try to rename the party to something not used by academic institutions for their sporting events, but the attempts always fail. The name is too perfect. The Homecoming usually takes place on the date of the Spring monarch's escape from Faerie, but it is occasionally rescheduled to honor a particular changeling. Everyone is invited, and they are all expected to "let loose." Surprisingly, most of the guests actually do.

Heraldry

The Antler Crown displays itself extravagantly, holding little back. The Court's colors are the vibrant blues and greens of its season — the green of new growth and the pale, infinite blue of an unclouded sky. Courtiers occasionally make use of the lighter tints of winter to signify the transition. Symbols common in Spring Court heraldry include an antlered crown (naturally), dawn, spring flowers or buds, the eastern direction, ribbons, a rapier and main gauche, a lance, the imagery of wings, a fox or rabbit, a robin or sparrow, a well-maintained phonograph or vinyl record, a lace handkerchief and a needle, among others.

Mantle

The Mantle of a Spring courtier reflects the growth of life and hope within her. Mantle • to ••• manifests in a character's seeming as something fresh and rejuvenated. Fragrant drafts of spring air are common, and images of slowly growing plants are far from unknown. Mantle ••••+ affects the character's surroundings with the fecundity of her seeming. Flowers grow up where she steps and things appear more lively.

A member of the Spring Court with Mantle •+ is socially smooth and adds one die to Socialize rolls. A character with Mantle •••+ easily rejuvenates those connections she once lost and purchases Allies and Contacts at reduced experience cost. She pays one-half the normal cost for those Merits. A character with Mantle ••••• rarely makes *faux pas*; when meeting someone for the first time or otherwise making a first impression, the character's player may re-roll her relevant Social dice pool if she desires. She must keep the second roll.

Desire

Lust. Hunger. Greed. These and more fall under the broad blanket of "desire." The Spring Court claims the greatest connection to this emotion by right of the Court's pact, and few deny that the courtiers make it a part of themselves.

A member of the Court of Desire luxuriates in her signature emotion any

place she can find it: the child in the supermarket who can't have a cookie. The dog on the street, staring hungrily at its owner's pastrami. The older man walking with his grandchildren and longing for a rest. Some Lost relieve these desires, slipping the kid a snack or bumping the sandwich onto the ground. If doing so creates a greater story or meets more wants — the mother is upset at the well-meaning stranger usurping her authority, so she forgets herself and allows her other child to have some bubblegum — so much the better.

Many changelings find positions in human communities that provide close views of human desires. One owns a strip club, while the friends in her motley serve as bartender, waitresses and janitor. A changeling organizes and leads a two-week summer camp, knowing the sort of drama that runs rampant there. Members of the Spring Court are quick to organize celebrations, from block parties to gallery openings. Some become purveyors of alcohol or marijuana (occasionally to minors), letting the relaxed inhibitions help people reach for what they want.

Spring courtiers are careful to recognize their own desires. To do otherwise would be a failure, because a pleasure unknown is a pleasure unfulfilled. Members also try to be aware of what others want, especially their comrades-in-arms. Allowing a fellow refugee to suffer despair is as much a failure as despairing yourself. A few changelings take it further, considering it their duty to ensure their companions meet their desires.

Some members of the Court spend their time seeking new pleasures in an attempt to experience everything and deny themselves nothing; their less frenetic comrades often stick with the few pleasures they prefer, though often only after a period of searching for what those pleasures are. There are those who consider the continued search for fulfillment just another part of the escape that began with a furious, fearful race through the Hedge. Others think of it as their reward for making it this far.

Stereotypes

Summer Court: They're strong, and I suppose that makes them safe. But by protecting their lives, they don't really *live*.

Autumn Court: They spend too much time remembering. They should really get out more — out of doors, and out of the past.

Winter Court: I'm this far from being one of them. If I'd shut my doors instead of throwing them open, I'd be there.

Summer

(The Iron Spear, the Crimson Court, the Court of Wrath)

No, I don't worry about Them at all, and you don't need to either. Okay, well, that's an exaggeration. They're always out there, and we're Their prey, but we have sharper teeth than we did the first time Their hounds took us down. This time, we're ready to fight back.

And that's really what you want to do, isn't it? You'd have to be damned stupid to pretend they're not coming, and you don't look like a hider to me. No, when they come back, you want to be there with a gun and a sword in your hands. I don't know about you — I have a guess, but I don't know — but I want to make them ***bleed*** *when they come for me. And you look like someone I'd want at my back.*

The buck has horns. This is what members of the Summer Court want the Fae to realize the next time they come a-hunting. Changelings break free of Faerie and escape to Earth, and they are going to fight tooth and claw not to be uprooted again. In Arcadia, they were alone and helpless. Back on Earth, they stand strong together. The Summer Court welcomes any changeling willing to fight to the last drop of blood for her — and for others' — safety.

The Court's founder was Sam Noblood, whose mien always dripped with red during a fight. Legend has it that Sam topped an old branch with a bundle of autumn leaves to make a spear, and hunted down Summer. The pursuit was long, but Sam Noblood cornered Summer and extracted a promise: in exchange for peace, the season would support Sam's Court.

That legend embodies the Crimson Court way to success in life: through strength. What is worth keeping is worth fighting to keep, and a fight only ends in your favor if you make it. To members of the Summer Court, everything is something they must learn to endure and overcome. But not alone. A changeling's family, friends and kinship with humanity have been stolen from him, but the Court offers a new family. Enemies of the changelings are to be faced and defeated, together, doing what no refugee could do before he escaped and found companions. Otherwise, there was no point in fighting free of Faerie in the first place.

Not all members of the Court are strong, but all of them see strength as the best means to achieving their security on Earth. Strength is an ideal for them, the ability to weather what the world forces on them and the power to shape events to the changeling's best interests. Courtiers who do not wield such strength pursue it, and the Court supports its members in their pursuits.

The ideal manifests in many ways, from the simple brute who can take a punch (or a dozen) and dish it all out to the political fixer with the backup to stay connected and the clout to direct policy. For some, breadth of ability is another measure of strength. No changeling has the freedom to fight in only a single arena, so being capable in more than one is considered another expression of strength.

The Iron Spear's dedication drives it to lend aid to any Lost who need help fighting off the Fae. It's an ultimate measure of their power: if the Court can fight on behalf of all changelings and *win*, it is successfully earning its safety through its creed. The Court's need to test itself causes them to champion fae society in other causes as well, often without being asked. Members of the Summer Court stand between the Courts and other supernatural threats, such as vampires or mages, and they act to stop human institutions that would do the fae harm, for example, investigative reporters and paranormal conspiracies.

Courtiers

Changelings who join the Summer Court are usually the more direct, conflict-minded refugees from Arcadia. When they see an assault, their solution is to fight back. To such a person's eyes, webs of intrigue and plotting nearly beg to be torn down around their weavers. Their instinct after their escape is to pick up what pieces there are, suffer what they must and spit the Fae's hospitality right back in Their faces. The Gentry are masters at finessing around or through such direct challenges to their slippery power, but the Summer Courts don't care — and that's part of what makes their survival such a big deal.

Besides that directness of manner, members of the Court of Wrath have the will to use it. For many, it's the smoldering fury they hold for the Fae that stole their lives and didn't even let their families mourn. If you don't intend to let enemies live long enough to play games with them, why pretend? Others return to Earth with the patience burned out of them, or a steel-hard dedication instilled that they have trouble questioning. Some just like lording over the weak, and they fall into this category, too.

Some fae see those who join the Summer Court as leftovers from the other Courts. They aren't elegant enough for Spring, inquisitive enough for Fall or crafty enough for Winter, so they end up in Summer. These are stereotypes too often applied and only partially correct. A changeling who is none of those things and also not a fighter remains Courtless. And all too often, the other Courts recognize the Summer Court as a changeling's destination before any Summer courtier meets her. The fae has the strength and will to fight, yes, but also seeks a foundation for her wrath. She needs a knightly brotherhood sworn to defend the refugees and destroy their enemies, because that is exactly what she burns to do.

Nearly all members of the Summer Court appreciate the direct application of force for its usefulness and elegance. Few restrict their study of direct conflict to brute-on-brute fights, though, and none of them ignore that most of their enemies use less straightforward tactics. One courtier knows exactly how to read the intricacies of politics, and exactly when to cut through them with truth like a knife. Another undermines others in arguments, unsubtly but very effectively, and can sway crowds to her whim. The strategist sees where the enemy commanders must move their troops, and stations her soldiers in the perfect place to stop them.

Pledging to the Summer Court is an uncomplicated affair, just as the rest of the Court's activities. The Court runs a potential member through a gamut of arduous physical challenges, from fistfights and rock-climbing to staying alive in the woods at night. (Basically, all the Physical Skills.) The intent is to see if the changeling can keep going through it all and to determine which (if any) skills are the individuals' forte. Some don't make the grade. (In game terms, most characters in the Summer Court have ••• in at least one Physical Skill. Some manage to join the Court with less, with liberal Willpower expenditure and a bit of luck.)

Rituals

Compared to the other Courts, the Court of Wrath's rituals are abundant and unsubtle. Very common are contests of physical skill. The Court is full of changelings who place great value on sheer force or ability, and it pleases them to know who is best at any given thing. Wrestling matches or mock combats are common, as are footraces, free running and climbing competitions, martial arts contests, tests of archery and marksmanship and many other competitive endeavors. Most courtiers have running scorecards in their head that tell them who has beaten whom and how many times, creating an approximate pecking order that differs for each category.

One recent tradition that has caught on among many Summer Courts is to arrange official contests during their periods ruling the freehold. Each of the three contests tests a quality at which another Court is, ostentatiously, the best. Each Court chooses a champion for each contest, and the best fae brings honor and prizes to her Court. Unsurprisingly, the Autumn Court usually wins the contests of invention and magic, the Winter Court usually wins the contests of stealth and subterfuge, etc.

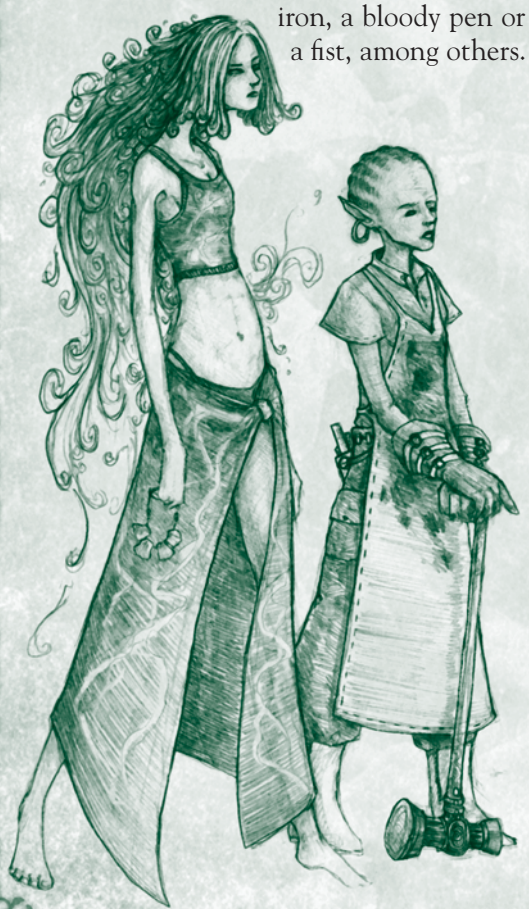
Most changelings see the contests as an opportunity for the Summer Court to challenge other Courts in their bailiwicks, trying to show them up. Few realize that the contests were designed to spread goodwill, as members of the other Courts reinforce their pride as the most eloquent poets or craftiest forgers. In this way, the Summer Court builds social awareness of the Courts' individual strengths and weaknesses, shoring up areas that the Fae might try to exploit.

Some Crimson courtiers also try to take part in human competitions. Different Courts take different stances on such activity. While excelling at a craft is very much in line with the Court's nature, doing so

can also attract unwanted attention. Some Summer Courts discourage it, suggesting that the competitors instead hone their skills to fight the Fae. Other Courts support the idea as a way to draw out the True Fae for ambush. Problematically, truly national competitions take changelings far afield, where they don't know the lay of the land and must interact with strange (and probably untrusting) fae in order to take basic safety precautions. The other Courts look down on such grandstanding in human society, believing that it can only cause trouble.

Heraldry

The Court of Wrath displays itself proudly, daring its enemies to approach. The Court's colors are the rich greens of forests and open fields of grass, a spread of reds, from the succulent strawberry red of full summer to the red of hot metal and forest fires and the bright yellows and oranges of the sun at its zenith. Symbols common in their heraldry include an assortment of weapons (the spear, sword and mace are all common, sometimes all together), a shield, sunflowers, summer berries, a bright sun or a full moon, flames or fire, a mushroom cloud, a boar, a badger, an eagle, gold (the color or the substance), iron, a bloody pen or quill and a fist, among others.



Mantle

The Summer Court's Mantle carries the sensation of its pure, unrelenting strength. Characters with Mantle • to ••• demonstrate aspects of heat in their seemings. Heat distortions and the sensation of a dry, warm wind are common. Mantle ••••+ is even stronger — people able to detect the seeming can feel a physical heat rising from it and sometimes feel dried out.

Mantle • gives the Crimson courtier an instinct about how to use his Strength to its best ability. Characters with that rating add four dice instead of three when they spend a point of Willpower on a Strength-based roll. Mantle ••• provides protection against the dangers of the world, acting as one point of armor at all times and against all dangers. Characters with Mantle ••••• have a hidden reserve of strength to help them carry on: one extra health level.

Wrath

There is a righteous wrath in the heart of nearly every member of every Summer Court. Somewhere deep, they want their tormentors to feel as helpless as the changelings once did. It is something that they must deal with — the sheer anger at how they have been abused, the rage at those who took what can never be returned. The courtiers of Wrath know how angry they are in their hearts. They try very hard to spend their wrath on something, anything, so that they do not lose their control. Strength without aim is too dangerous for the Court to favor it.

There is wrath in every competitor at a contest. Wrath lurks behind the desire to be victorious, disguises itself as competitive nature, but really wants the others to fail and you to win. A competitor wants the others to *go down*. This is the other reason the Summer Court holds so many informal competitions. In addition to honing their strengths, the contests burn their anger. The members work to keep their fires banked, so the flames will burn hot when the fae need them to but not before.

Members of the Court of Wrath do burn out occasionally. Having lost their driving anger, they often become Courtless. Recognizing the phenomenon, the Court makes an effort to provide its members appropriate fuel for their rages without letting it burn too brightly. One of the Court's core purposes is to prevent its members' wrath from consuming them, or from dying out and leaving changelings undefended.

In the pursuit of wrath, courtiers frequent sporting events. They let the competitive urges wash over them, flavored by the angers of clashing or disappointed fans. Changelings may become coaches or even influential teammates, working to fan the competitive rage that drives athletes. Humans are prone to anger, and the fae can usually create it with ease. One can pretend his car is broken in the middle of rush hour to anger hundreds, or one could order with infuriating sloth at the popular coffee shop to piss off a couple dozen. On a smaller scale, some changelings enjoy pretending to be telemarketers or evangelists and calling upon families at dinnertime. It's small scale, but more personal.

Not every member of the Crimson Court considers petty anger appropriately wrathful, and some seek out deeper furies. Some visit prisons to get a sense of the prisoners, or correspond with murderers on death row. These can provide tastes of wrath current and wrath past, both of which are valuable to the Summer Court. Daring changelings may join or assist local criminal organizations, hoping to be near gun battles and dramatic betrayals, but others seek out positions in Hollywood or politics where such things are more common.

Stereotypes

Spring Court: They're too busy playing Fae to fight them.

Autumn Court: These guys have the right idea, but the fire they're playing with is hotter than ours and harder to control.

Winter Court: If I wanted to hide from real life, I'd've stayed in Faerie.

Autumn

(The Leaden Mirror, the Ashen Court, the Court of Fear)

The Fae gave us the weapons to fight them when they took our lives away. They just don't know it. See, they think our memories fail us when we escape to Earth. For the most part, they're right. But I remember some of what I saw there. A lot of what I remember… don't get me wrong, it was Hell. But even Hell has its miracles.

In between all the things I never want to see again are the little wonders. Dropping a leaf from the ground upward to a tree. Food appearing on a table. Paths turning inward on each other so you never find your way out — well, that one's a mixed blessing. I hated it, and still do, but I love the magic. Look at yourself. You have the same light in your eyes I did when I realized that I'd stolen from Faerie as much as they stole from me.

The curse is a gift. Not one member of the Autumn Court is glad of her abduction and enslavement. But since they were taken, they were changed and they can't go back, they can damn well take advantage of those changes. They know that the gramarye of the Fae doesn't have to be terrifyingly beautiful and gloriously torturous. It can be simply wondrous, too. Though all changelings use magic, the Leaden Mirror walks on the cutting edge of Wyrd.

Clay Ariel founded the Court of Fear. She had natural hands before she was taken, but when she returned, they were artificial. Only soft clay, she had to be careful not to damage them. Ariel took this as a lesson, and her toys and weapons of clay were well-known. None living today know what influence Clay Ariel exerted on the season of Autumn, but legend states that she went off without any armament but a wry smile. She ruled as the first Autumn Queen for long years after forging her Court's pact.

The Autumn Court survives by turning the weapons of the Fae against them. These weapons are the pacts and Contracts made between Faerie and the various aspects of Earth. Many Court members also justify their experiences as slaves by bringing magic to Earth. This is the opportunity to enrich their world with breathtaking wonder, and they've already paid the monstrous cost. Autumn courtiers are the most likely to seek out trods and other places of power, because that is where there is more to learn. Every Contract is another sword to wield, another shield between her and the Fae and another rainbow cast by the otherwise lonely rain.

This Court encourages subtler solutions to problems that face fae society. Clay Ariel didn't charge off to wrestle the season for her pact, and Autumn Court members rarely try to match their enemies eye to eye and fist to fist. One would much rather lead a foe into a trap or trick an opponent into attacking the wrong target — minimum force for the maximum result. To a degree, it's just efficiency. It lets the changeling spend as little effort as possible and get back to other things. But it's also common sense, honed by fear: when you're fighting with your enemies' weapons and don't know exactly how they work, you use them as little as possible.

So the Court tracks down and investigates any potential source of Wyrd knowledge. A member of this Court is much more likely than most to ask other changelings about what they remember of Faerie. When that fails, they ransack their own memories for new revelations, sometimes resorting to hypnotism or thiopental sodium. Autumn courtiers also travel more than most changelings, exploring places of fae significance. Every little bit helps.

Autumn Court members often explore the Hedge, seeking a glimpse of Arcadia's wonder. Others explore the limits of known pacts and their interactions with each other — some take a very scientific approach to such things, while others refuse to explain magic with reason. Daring Ashen courtiers try to effect new pacts, expanding the breadth of changeling magic and developing Contracts that the Fae could not match. (The occasional assertion that all Court founders would have been members of the Autumn Court today is always laughed down.)

Not every source of power the Lost try to use is Wyrd. There is more to the supernatural than just the Fae, and the Autumn Court knows that better than most. Its members explore — carefully, cautiously, with great (and very reasonable) reservation — the worlds of werewolves, mages and other supernatural creatures. One never knows where one might find an ally. Or a new weapon.

Courtiers

Every member of the Ashen Court has a little voice that misses magical Arcadia and desperately wants to go back. Maybe that voice was placed by the Fae, maybe it's natural, but it's there either way. This is just one reason of many a changeling may join the Autumn Court, and it's often not the greatest. Many changelings quite simply want to hurt their captors and see their magical capabilities as the best way of doing so. Others become enamored with the irony of fighting the Fae with the magic of Faerie.

The best prospective members of the Court are creative and inquisitive, but in the end, they are also in love with magic. There are creative ways to make war without magic, and there are questions one can ask that only concern earthly subjects. Changelings join this Court because they want to change the world obliquely by pushing through dimensions of trust and poetry that most people ignore. All eventually deal with the conflict of surrounding themselves with what the strove so long to escape, but it often takes some time.

Courtiers of Autumn seek alternative solutions to surmount their obstacles. A member would rather sweep the legs out from an opponent than push him over, and luring him onto a patch of ice is more attractive than either. One might spread a rumor to draw out the Fae instead of planting real bait to attract them. Either way, changelings attracted to this Court generally lean away from the most direct path. Unless, of course, it's the best.

Though all members of the Court involve themselves with magic, many specialize in certain fields and expand their mastery of other disciplines. Even those who relegate the study of magic to secondary importance apply the Autumn Court's method of problem-solving to the rest of their lives. The businessman who outsourced before outsourcing became "cool," the scientist who gives outlandish theories a chance and the teacher who neatly sidesteps the principal's wrath are all people who could join the Autumn Court.

Most Autumn Courts require a potential member to share some secret of Wyrd lore that they do not already know. Acceptable secrets are often just foggy tidbits that a changeling remembers from her time in Faerie. Some fae make such things up, but a secret that does not ring true is quickly weeded out. On the other hand, the ability to falsify tales of Fae magic and fool others is a valuable creativity, and may be respected. Other changelings demonstrate Contracts not commonly known in the area or to the Court.

But magic has a price. Changelings who practice too carelessly find themselves growing apart from Earth again. Worse, some of them don't realize how much of their humanity they are giving up for their gramarye. The wise among them accept the costs they cannot avoid, and the Court serves to help the Lost without that strength. Others simply don't care or don't think of it, exulting in magic for magic's sake and damning the (or ignoring) consequences.

Rituals

The rituals of the Autumn Court are not as colorful or outlandish as some of the other Courts'. The annual Fallen Fair is common in many regions. Each year, members of the Court and esteemed guests from other Courts gather to show off their discoveries in the realm of the supernatural. Changelings demonstrate their advanced aptitudes with well-known Contracts, display newfound tokens and share their unique pacts (if any). There is a full docket of lectures on all manner of magical topics. The Fallen Fair is also an unofficial opportunity to barter magical tools and services.

Many Autumn Courts sponsor a hunt, called the Hunt of Leaves, the Ash Run and other names. This is a lethal hunt that welcomes all interested changelings, in which the fae ride (or run, or drive) down and kill their enemies. Topping this list are the True Fae, but the hunt also targets loyalist changelings, leftover dream-things and sometimes fetches. The Court bears

the expense and effort, arranging necessary weapons or concealments from human society. All the other Courts need to provide are warm, willing bodies. Of course, the Autumn Court has the first claim on bounty, especially magical, from the hunt.

The hunt gets most of its participants from the Autumn and Summer Courts, but a healthy smattering of the other changelings (including Courtless) always participate. Whatever their reasons, most relish an opportunity to make the enemy run scared, if only for an evening or two.

Some Courts mimic the scientific community's approach to magic to a larger degree. They fund lectures by members of *other* Autumn Courts, arranging travel and accommodations and occasionally providing an honorarium. Some also publish journals containing their members' monographs. Such a work is generally on the scope of an indie 'zine (and is taken as such by mortals who happen upon one).

Heraldry

The Leaden Mirror is oblique in its symbolism. The colors of the Court are those of Autumn: the red, yellow and orange of dying leaves, mixed with the gray of a overcast sky or the brown of a bare tree. Symbols commonly used with the Autumn Court include fallen leaves and branches, wilting grass, falling raindrops, lightning, rising smoke, sheaves of wheat, bushels of harvested fruit, an owl, a raven and crow, a vulture, a blowfish, a snake, a spider, a bed, a vintage automobile, an eyeglass, looking glass or a magnifying glass, a book, a rowan wand and a candle burning down, among others.

Mantle

The Mantle of the Autumn Court is more overtly sorcerous than the others. It has mystical overtones — sparkles of light, occult characters, queer musical tones or other indicators — in addition to the normal seasonal nature. At Mantle • to •••, a character's seeming displays the occasional dead leaf on the wind (moreso during the height of the season), lit candles or the vines of harvest-time plants. At Mantle ••••+, the seeming shows those with more frequency and occasionally appears to kill nearby plants with frost, or at least make them wither. People who can perceive the seeming also feel occasional chills, not usually associated with temperature.

Members of the Ashen Court have an affinity for the magic of the fae. Mantle • provides a character two bonus dice on any Contract activation roll that uses Occult. As the character ties herself more strongly to the Court, she develops an affinity for the Fae. At Mantle •••, she adds one die to Empathy and Investigation rolls dealing with True Fae or Faerie. The greatest members of the Court benefit from an instinctive understanding of magic. At Mantle •••••, they may re-roll any failed Occult roll dealing with magic (but not activating a power, such as a Contract or pledge). The results of the second roll stand.

Fear

Autumn Court members deal with fear on two basic levels. They evoke the emotion in oth-

ers, and they explore their own fear. Cultivating fear in communities is easy, but not always desirable, moral or safe. A changeling may spread word in a neighborhood about the sex offender who moved in next door, but if the rumor leads back to him (assuming it's false), there will be consequences. Likewise, one can lower the perceived safety of people who live in the area by staging muggings or calling the police with lies about drug deals or shootings. This can also backfire, as such "prophecies" tend to be self-fulfilling. The cold war was a good time for the Autumn Court, as the threat of nuclear war loomed large, and some skeptically note that fear will always be good business for human society as well as the Leaden Mirror.

Children are a valuable source of fear for Autumn courtiers. Children are less skeptical than adults, and emotionally more pure, so many members of the Court hone the skill of telling scary stories or arranging frightening performances. Spreading local legends about "that house" or "old man Withers" is common. Some *create* the yard where kids never venture to get a lost ball. Creating truly frightening haunted houses during Halloween is a tradition few pass up.

On the surface, members of the Court know why they're afraid. Their period of forced servitude in Faerie is still terrifying to them. What's important is how they relate to that fear. An Ashen courtier tries to be aware of her fears, whether a frightening moment (an imminent car crash) or an abiding terror (the Others, naturally, but also more mundane things like spiders or losing an honored position).

Knowledge of the emotion and of the fae's self is the key; Court of Fear members put little stock on conquering their fears, which they consider an unhelpful goal, and more on learning how to *use* those fears. They try to wisely excuse themselves from projects in which they will be nervous and unhelpful, and they examine when to work with their fright to surpass their normal limits.

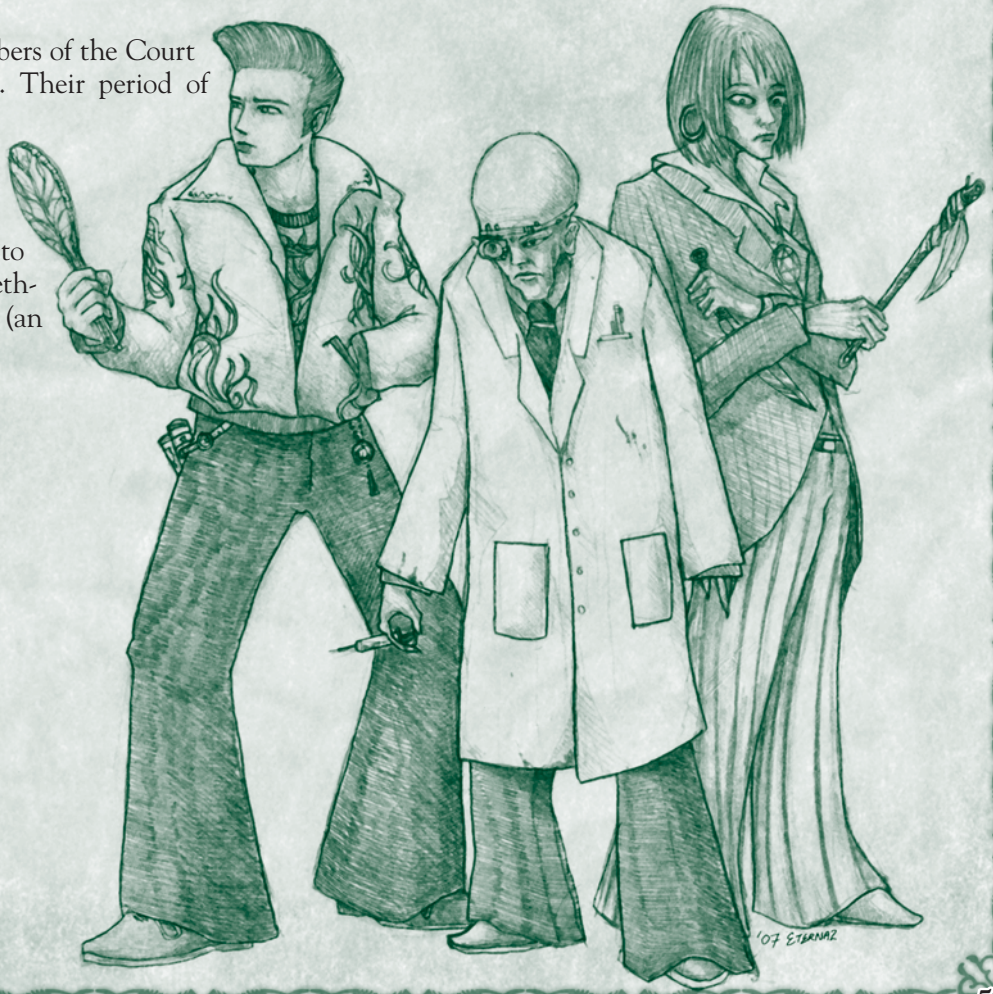
Members of this Court are also known for their ability to understand *other's* fears, and their aptitude for wielding that knowledge with great efficacy.

Stereotypes

Spring Court: They may understand the nature of Wyrd, but they sure don't do anything about it.

Summer Court: There's so much potential, but they waste it all on brute force.

Winter Court: If they ever came out of their shells, they could do something. As it is, they just hide.



Winter

(The Silent Arrow, the Onyx Court, the Court of Sorrow)

Jesus, will you shut. Up? There's a war on out there, and if you're too loud you'll end up in somebody's sights. Better to stay down in a foxhole. Down here, you're hard to see, which is good because the war's nearly invisible. But it's there, it's deadly, and it's much, much better to be out of the way where we are right now. Can't see you, can't shoot you, right?

See, you may have forgotten most of Faerie, but Faerie hasn't forgotten you. It wants you back. And the world may look normal to you, but you, you stick out like sore thumb. Gotta learn how to hide that, the mien. Put it away where they can't find you, and you'll be fine. Some of us go ahead and fight back, killing in the dark like, but I prefer to stay out of it. I'm gonna live forever.

The hunt ends when the fox goes to ground. If the True Fae can't find you, the Winter Court reasons, they can't hunt you down and drag you back to Faerie. In the Winter, all the glory of the seasons fades to nothing, nowhere to be seen, and snow hides the ground. But there is life, waiting beneath the earth where it can't be disturbed. The Silent Arrow knows this.

The founder of the Court was a changeling called Snowflake John. Per his moniker, he was nearly impossible to tell apart from any of the other people on the street at any time. In a crowd, he could blend in seamlessly. When the other Court founders were challenging their seasons, he did the same: by not showing up. Legend has it that John declared publicly his intent to earn a pact from Winter, but the challenge never materialized. After two years, when Winter had circled the globe fully twice, Snowflake John reappeared and asserted that Winter's inability to find him had earned him the right to make a pact. Many changelings claim that there was something else to the bargain, but none agree on what it is. The fact remains that the Winter Court has its pact.

When the Fae come, the Winter Court is gone. And when the cat is away, the mouse plays on. The Court itself takes up whatever unoccupied location is convenient and attractive, and abandons that place just as easily when danger or discovery threatens. Members all know the short list of those places, giving them a place to look, but even they are never sure where the Court will surface until someone finds it and passes the word. It's a security measure, ensuring that their enemies have a very hard time tracking them down and ambushing them.

Members of the Court practice speaking in code, the better to conceal their intentions from their oppressors. They leave messages for each other in ways that outsiders cannot distinguish or intercept (using Contracts for this purpose is ideal; a combination of drop boxes and codes is second-best and usually sufficient). Many of them keep multiple homes and make a practice of avoiding regular paths to avoid ambushes. Changelings regularly invest in security systems (mundane, magical or both) and secret rooms. Some Courts arrange "safehouses" for their members, in the event that they need a place to hide from unwanted attention (whether Fae or human). The cold war was a defining time for the Winter Court; while the Autumn Court profited greatly from the fear of nuclear annihilation, the Winter Court learned to fuse many of the mortal innovations in espionage and deceit with their own fae talents for trickery.

The Onyx Court isn't all paranoia and secrecy, though that element is certainly present. Members try to be subtle in their daily lives. They avoid attention

from their neighbors by being "just another guy." In the suburbs, where homeowners drive off every day and have landscapers by once a month, you don't want to be the car left in the driveway. Even the fae who don't have regular jobs (many, but not all) drive off and find someplace to spend their "workday." Winter changelings make unremarkable employees, doing adequate but unremarkable jobs and trying not to get in trouble. Only those who can maintain an unnoticeable record while dealing with the weird things from Faerie stick with employment.

Members of the Court fit in wherever they go. City life is very attractive because, amidst all those people, it's easy to be just another anonymous neighbor. At a coffee shop, a Winter Court member makes an effort to be kinda hip and kinda pretentious. On the street at night, he's just another fellow in a windbreaker with a baseball cap. Even in situations where nobody quite fits in — a diversity rally, for example, or an event where punk rockers mingle with the upper class — the changeling may not fit in, but he fits in more than *that* guy. The changeling's not the stuffiest rich guy, or he's not the most-tattooed, most-pierced punk, and he gets glossed over.

This is all part of the Court's effort to go unnoticed by the Fae. Not fitting into human society is a dead giveaway, so the Winter Court makes a point of fitting in seamlessly. Even the other humans barely notice Winter Court members, but not to the point of ignoring them. That would also reveal the hiding changelings.

Courtiers

Other changelings occasionally call Winter courtiers cowards, but they know that's not true. Members of this Court aren't just trying to conceal themselves from the Fae, they're also trying to live their own lives. To have a life, they have to draw a curtain between themselves and the fae world. There's a degree of denial to it that some members of the Court recognize. To truly hide from Faerie and all that is, a changeling must also hide from himself.

Besides, divorcing themselves from Faerie and the Wyrd isn't common in the Court. Only the most extreme members manage it. Others create the image of humanity, enough to delay the Fae and provide a cover for the courtiers' other activities. They are subtle, sneaky, crafty and dislike having their true motives known, even by their allies. Their allies, after all, are less adept at concealing the truth. The Court spies on Goblin Markets, exiled Fae and even the True Fae when they ride on Earth. Winter courtiers also sometimes kill. The Silent Arrow is not just a poetic moniker.

The Court certainly accepts those changelings who only want to run and hide, but with the knowledge that most will find themselves unable to live a normal life. Eventually, even the most timid refugees develop a need to interact with the world of which they are now a part. They end up helping, becoming the spymasters or fixers or assassins of the changelings world.

Changelings of this Court evade problems rather than solve them. It's a sort-of solution — whatever the trouble, it can't hurt *them*, now, so it's okay. This callous attitude doesn't mean they don't help. Winter courtiers lend a hand getting other changelings out of the way, and they sometimes walk *into* trouble, trusting their skills to get them out of it again safe and well.

Onyx courtiers manifest their callings in different ways. The commander manages to distract the enemy but never actually get caught in battle. Nobody notices the Winter socialite, but he's there soaking up information just the same. They make excellent silent partners in businesses. And not all of them avoid notice — but even those that don't influence others perceptions of who or what they are. A popular emcee may look harmless, but he's shaping the thoughts of hundreds, thousands or more fans.

Many changelings join the Winter Court when they're fresh out of Faerie, but a more proportionate number remain a part of it. To run and hide is a very natural instinct immediately after one's escape, making the Winter Court a very attractive option. Few Winter monarchs choose to turn away the new refugees. Instead, the Courts try to aid as many scared changelings as they can. Only after several months' interaction between the Court's members and the potential inductees does the Court accept them or turn them away. In the latter case, the Court can usually suggest a more appropriate Court. Few fae take the rejection poorly enough to instead become Courtless.

Rituals

Most famous of the Winter Court's rituals is the Winter Market, a gathering most Courts sponsor two or three times in the season. At the market, changelings of all Courts (and Courtless) are free to set up stalls or booths, buy, sell, run games and trade services or information. The Winter Market is less focused

than the Autumn Court's Fallen Fair and much more open to non-magical bartering.

In most Courts, the Winter Market serves two purposes. The first is to be a clearinghouse for the Onyx Court's information, "confiscated" goods and services, of which there are many. Winter courtiers make up the majority of purveyors at the Winter Market, if not by too much. The second is to counter the illicit draw and influence of the Goblin Market. The Winter Market provides an opportunity for the same sort of deals and networking without forcing any changelings to expose themselves to hobgoblins, exiled Fae and loyalists who are just as likely to sell information back to Faerie as they are sell Contracts to the free fae.

Some Courts use the Winter Market to achieve a third goal. The confluence of changeling Courts gives the Silent Arrow an opportunity to judge the other Courts' capabilities and natures. It's also a chance for the Court to infiltrate their peers' societies. Many Winter Courts feel no need for this measure, but quite a few do.

Winter Courts also often hold the Winter Formal once each year. Some wiseass named the event after typical high school or university dances, and the name stuck. The Winter Formal is a masquerade where concealing one's identity is mandatory, and an opportunity for free-for-all, guiltless socializing. The Court procures tokens that conceal the seeming, or makes a pact with certain entities of Faerie to make identities unknowable for the evening. In this way, even typical enemies of the changeling Courts can attend and mingle, while the changelings still feel safely hidden.

Radio Free Fae is a modern tradition spreading through Winter Courts. As masters of subterfuge, the Onyx courtiers are also usually at the heart of any underground movement. Radio Free Fae is a method of disseminating information that all Lost should know without divulging the location of either the sender or the receiver. The broadcast "station" can be tracked down, but it moves regularly. Surprisingly, not all Winter Courts support Radio Free Fae, and it is sometimes upheld by an underground movement within the Winter Court itself.

Heraldry

The Winter Court rarely advertises its presence. Even when the Court must, such as at official functions, its heraldic colors and symbols are small in number. The Court's colors are white and black. The Court occasionally mixes in a gray, but the colors are almost always highly contrasted. Some symbols commonly used by the Court are an arrow, a stiletto, icicles, holly leaves, a silenced pistol, a wolf, a mouse, a hare, a mole, a stark tree, a gray mist or fog, an eclipse or a waning moon, a bearded man and others.

Mantle

The Winter Court's Mantle is more subtle than the other Courts', often to the point where a member may be confused with one of the Courtless. The Mantle is most evident in its absence: at Mantle • to •••, the seeming simply looks *stark*, as if it were clearer or easier to see than others. When invoking a Contract or evident magic, snowflakes may whisk through the image. At Mantle ••••+, a seeming looks more plain than ever, though actively using magic may fill it with a flurry of snow.

At Mantle •, a character becomes more indistinguishable from his surroundings. Subtract one die from all Wits + Composure or Wits + (Skill) rolls to notice the character. This does not apply if someone is looking specifically for the character, and the character may subdue this aura for a scene with a little concentration. At Mantle •••, a character adds one die to all Subterfuge rolls. At Mantle •••••, the one-die penalty increases to a three-dice penalty.

Sorrow

Members of the Court of Sorrow deal with their signature emotion much as they deal with the rest of their lives: they hide from it. They all know it's there, hovering on the edge of their consciousness, but they deal with it by avoiding it. In most cases, this is the healthiest thing to do. There's no way to face the sorrow of losing Faerie's wonders when one never intends to go back, and what good is sorrow at one's stolen life when there's no *way* to go back?

Bringing their emotion to others is rarely a matter of cruelty. Often, it is a kindness. It is a way of offering the release to others that the courtiers cannot — or are afraid to — experience. A changeling may attend a funeral and discuss the deceased with those who miss him, and some go so far as to become touching eulogists. They bring the sorrow of others' to mind so that others can deal with it. Natural disasters such as hurricanes and typhoons are seen as times of plenty for the Winter Court — though, of course, it's best not to be visibly seen indulging. That would be a bit crass.

Guilt and regret are other high-yield sources of sorrow. Fae of this Court may spend time near a Catholic confessional, or even inside it, listening to the repentant ask forgiveness. Others visit prisons to discuss the cause or results of inmates' incarcerations, or they may participate in or run group therapy sessions. There are less moral changelings who cause tragedies in order to benefit from the sorrow they cause, but these acts are usually discouraged, sometimes violently, by the Court.

Stereotypes

Spring Court: I think they may be hiding from themselves the same way we are… just louder.

Summer Court: Sometimes I think, if the Summer guys would just stop pounding their chests and howling, *They* might lose track of us.

Autumn Court: If they took fewer risks, they'd be a great help. As it is, they're more likely to cause trouble than prevent it.

Courtless

Not every changeling joins one of the Courts. Reasons vary, but most of them have some connection to the fact that each Court has its own specific method of avoiding recapture by the Fae and a special connection to a specific emotion. Not all changelings can associate themselves with a modus operandi the way they perceive the Courts as demanding. Or maybe they don't feel a real tie to any of the four emotions supported by the Courts. Sometimes the worst conflicts come when a refugee fits in with one Court's methods but another's ruling emotion — individuals who can't reconcile the two may bounce from one Court to the other a couple times before ending up Courtless.

Some changelings who eschew the Courts do so not because they wouldn't fit, but because something about the Courts is distasteful to them. Maybe the concept is too near a Faerie Court for a new refugee to contemplate (though she may join a Court after several years). A changeling might be politically or philosophically opposed to governing bodies in general. He simply does not get along with people telling him what to do and how to do it, or social groups have always meant trouble for him. Maybe the Courts look too disingenuous or too internecine.

Normally, one out of every six or seven changelings refuses to join any Court. In regions where the Courts are strong and recruit often, or where the Others are more aggressive, Courtless are far less frequent. Regions with weak Courts, or Courts that are very corrupt or fractured, have a higher incidence of Courtless fae. Particularly charismatic leaders on either side also skew the numbers, either toward the Courts (as is more likely) or toward independence, when that's what the leader believes. Even with good reasons to avoid the Courts, the promise of a support structure and the power from a Court's pact convinces many.

The Courtless are not, in general, a political faction. They're defined by a desire to remain free of the Great Courts, but that doesn't imply an organized goal of promoting the interests of changelings outside the Courts. But in some areas, the Courtless rally. They may be a group of individually motivated Lost held together by a single charismatic leader who insists on giving them a voice in the freehold. They may conduct themselves as a union, openly recruiting other changelings to a life free of Court meddling. The effectiveness of these gatherings varies widely, but in some places a Courtless leader holds political influence and ability as great as any Court noble. Even if a Courtless leader cannot sit upon a season's throne, he can hold power behind it.

Threats

A changeling who finds the Courts has a lot on his plate. It's easy to get caught up in the politics of an underground group of survivors. A world away from her captors, the escaped prisoner of the faeries can forget that they are there, and can forget how dangerous they are. Likewise, not all changelings have really adjusted to the human world. Some have gone mad. Some left their souls behind in Faerie. And some are working for the enemy.

A changeling's fetch, on the other hand, is a constant reminder of what the changeling is. The existence of the fetch more or less forces the changeling to come to terms with herself, with what she's been through and what she is. It's the changeling's destiny to face a reckoning with the Faerie replacement that stole her life, but what that might be — reconciliation or murder — it's impossible to say.

The Fetch

Your baby is beautiful. He's a bright, smiling, round-faced adorable child who loves you and holds you tight before you put him to bed at night, who babbles sweet little sounds that sound like "mama" or "daddy." So where did this red, wrinkled, wailing thing come from, this thing that wriggles and kicks and grizzles, this runny-nosed thing that turns its head from you when you smile, that throws its toys across the room, that coughs and spits and hates you? This is not your baby. Someone came and took your beautiful baby away, and left this ugly whining thing in his place.

Your brother is caring and honest and wise, and he loves you dearly. He's always been there to keep you safe from bigger, scarier kids, and he's told you jokes and sometimes he's given you sweets and smuggled comic books into your room when Mum and Dad aren't looking. But who is this, who doesn't want to talk to you anymore, who doesn't want you to walk by him on the street, who sits in his room and wears black and listens to loud, angry music and swears at Mum and Dad? This is not your brother. Someone came and took him away, and left this dour, sarcastic stranger in his place.

Your mother is all warmth and welcome and wonderful cooking, but one day you grow up and you think: who is this old woman, this sour-faced hag who can't even cook anymore? Why is she so rigid, so self-righteous? This is not your mother. She went away, and this miserable, stretched-out woman was left here in her place.

It feels like that for a lot of people. Nearly every parent looks at her baby and thinks, *Are you really my child?* As relationships change and people grow up, children see their siblings in a different way, and as they get older, people begin to see flaws in their parents that they never notice anymore. Once, it was reasonable to believe that your baby, your brother, your father, your wife, had been exchanged for a changeling.

In 1895, a young Tipperary woman named Bridget Cleary grew ill, and became bedridden over the space of weeks. Her husband Michael knew what had happened. She had been exchanged. So for days, he touched her over and over with a red-hot poker, and got the men of his village to hold her down while he pissed on her and although she begged, he held blazing wood to her lips and when she

couldn't say her name three times, he threw paraffin on her and burnt her alive. And then he went up to the ruined fort where he spent days waiting for the Fair Folk to bring his wife back. They never came.

Stories like this don't happen anymore, at least not in the developed West. Nowadays, people know for a fact that this is just a psychological artifact, a state of mind people enter. It's perfectly normal. People get over it, and when they don't, there's a recognized pathology behind it. Parents shake their heads and feel guilty. Children get over it, although their relationships with their siblings never really recover. And atrocities like the death of Bridget Cleary don't happen any more.

And the real fetches go unnoticed.

They're more subtle than their victims are led to believe, and don't always know what they are. They're nearly perfect, but not quite perfect, imperfect enough to rouse mild suspicions that quickly allayed by people of sense.

And they live the lives of the people they replace. Meanwhile, their counterparts trapped in Arcadia change, become imbued with the stuff of Faerie until they are quite different. The longer a changeling stays in Faerie, the more different he becomes and the more chance his fetch has to live his life for him.

And, by the time the changeling gets back, the fetch, who might even think himself human, has lived a life that the changeling hasn't, and the fetch has become that person, forging relationships, making and breaking friendships, working and living and taking part in a life that the changeling hasn't live. Like the silent movie star who, so the story goes, came third in his own look-alike contest, the changeling finds an impostor in his home who is better at being him than he is himself.

A fetch knows when the changeling he replaced is coming back. He knows when his counterpart is near. He can see the changeling's fae seeming. If the fetch knows what he is, or if he suddenly remembers, having forgotten Arcadia and convinced himself that he is human, he'll be ready. If he doesn't know what he is, he faces what he sees with horror and disbelief.

Either way, the fetch will, at some point, have to face the truth of what he is. Everybody sees someone who looks exactly like him. He sees something different: horns, strange eyes, fur, claws, skin of ice or fire or water or earth. He sees the Faeries, come to take him back, or the changeling he always feared would come to take his life away.

He's lived this life as his own for a long time now, and he's made it his own, steered it in his own direction. The changeling might not recognize it, and he probably wouldn't have a clue what to do with it if he got it back. Does the old owner of this life have any claim to it anymore? "It was mine first" is not always a convincing argument. Possession may not be nine-tenths of the law, but it's a big part of the discussion.

The fetch has magic. The reappearance of the changeling original causes powers to manifest in the fetch, beginning with a kind of sixth sense, an ability to ***know*** that a changeling is coming, even if the fetch doesn't know what one is. Every fetch can see fae seemings, whether he knows what they are or not.

One fetch knows and waits; another reacts with horror, or begins by thinking he's going mad. Then, the other powers come. A fetch runs from a fight with his original, and finds himself tearing the shadows from people and eating them without any idea of what he's doing. The changeling uses weird magics; his fetch throws them right back at him.

And some become living traps, able to cry out and call the True Fae to come and take back their property.

The True Fae

This is the story of Yallery Brown. A young man, a kind-hearted farm laborer, was walking through a field one day when he heard a sound, like a child crying. He followed the sound to a large stone, and he lifted it, and there under the stone was a tiny little man. The little creature said that his name was Yallery Brown, and that the man had saved him, and that he would help the kind-hearted man in all his work for as long as he lived. And the man must never thank him, warned Yallery Brown, for then all his help would end. Then Yallery Brown vanished. The laborer returned to work and found that, true to his word, Yallery Brown was giving him aid. But Yallery Brown's help was, it transpired, worse, much worse than useless, for in plain sight of everyone, threshing tools moved around in mid-air and sheaves of corn were tied and stacked by invisible hands. Soon, the laborers realized that the invisible force was doing the work of the kind-hearted laborer, and they began to shun him, and whispered dark accusations of witchcraft. The man moved to another village, but things became no better for him, for the invisible hands of Yallery Brown followed the man everywhere he went. The young man began to starve, for no one would employ him. One day, after being told to leave another field and never to return, the man remembered the faerie's words, and he called out into the air around him, "Thank you, Yallery Brown! For all that you have done, you have my thanks!"

But he heard a small voice, full of spite, whisper in his ear:

Work as you will, You'll never do well;
Work as you may, You'll never gain grist;
For harm and mischance, and Yallery Brown,
You've let yourself out from under the stone.

…and that was all.

That night, the young man's troubles began in earnest. For the faerie, taking offense, clattered pans and overturned tables, and spoiled what little food the young man had. Yallery Brown shrieked in the laborer's ear when he tried to go to sleep and laughed at him and sliced his shoelaces and cut holes in his clothes and pinched the man and repeated his

rhyme in the hearing of all as the man walked down the street, over and over again. He became an outcast, and no one would have anything to do with him. And after many days of this, the young man, hounded beyond endurance, starving and tired, drowned himself, and he was buried in an unmarked plot, and all for an act of kindness.

And this is how things are with the True Fae, the Others, the Gentry. They don't behave as people do. Words have different meanings. They operate by different rules, and not knowing the rules under which they operate is no excuse. There are things they *know* about the world that are not what we know. They make connections between things that are not the connections we would make. As best as changelings can describe it, the Others are solipsistic creatures. Nothing seems to really matter to them that is not of their own making, and they seem to have no ability to comprehend life from another being's perspective. They love and hate like fire and ice, but there is no empathy to them.

Some who collect Fae lore consider them to be mad. It's not an unreasonable conclusion. Consider: a person afflicted with schizophrenia hears voices and has bizarre visions and hallucinations. He knows for a fact that things are not how others see them. Objects and words hold special meanings for him that they don't hold for other people. Everything is a symbol. And that's how every single one of the Fae sees the world. It's no wonder that once upon a time, communities sometimes thought that people with psychiatric illnesses were touched by the faeries. And, certainly, the more a changeling is like the creatures that once held him captive, the madder he becomes.

And yet, even considering them to be pathological beings ascribes to them a humanity that they simply don't share. It makes them like us. It makes them understandable. And they are not understandable.

Some stories suggest that the Fae are simply dreams and nightmares. In dreams, we travel from location to location without any recollection of travel. In dreams, the rules of the world are different, and we know that things have always been the way they are: we always know that our fingers were made of jointed steel, or that we could fly, or that we are the best friends with Diana, who did not die, and who is just in hiding. In dreams, words and objects and places mean different things and have different connections. Dreams have their own rules, which must be followed.

And there's something in this, too. Certainly, if any creatures could be made of dreams, it's the True Fae: they follow arcane rules, they make little sense, they seem so very

familiar. The forms they take seem to be dictated by the subconscious wishes of the people who see them.

But the Fae are clearly more than just material expressions of the collective subconscious. They certainly have some relationship with humanity, but it's not a dependent one. The Fae don't always spring straight out of what we think and know.

While comparisons between the True Fae and madness and dreams give us an insight, it's only a shallow one. In the end, the most one can say about the origins of the Fae is that they simply *are*. They exist, and that is all.

Clap Your Hands if You Believe in Fairies

Do people take faeries seriously any more? It seems that people in the olden days (whenever they were) believed in faeries, and they don't any more.

But it's getting on for 650 years since Geoffrey Chaucer wrote that same thing. People have *always* thought that faeries were something in which humans believed at some time in the unenlightened past.

And this isn't because it's true. It's because that's what the Fae represent. They are the reason to be afraid of the dark, and while sensible, enlightened people know that there is nothing to be afraid of, there's still that doubt, and so they dismiss it, and make it unreal, and a thing of the past.

In the last 100 years or so, people have been more reluctant to put down inexplicable events to faeries, but they still see them.

For example: in 1970, some schoolboys in Penang, Malaysia, saw three figures disembark from a tiny craft. They were no more than three inches high. They wore pointed shoes and had stars on their clothes. One had horns. The "spacemen" attacked the boys. One was burnt. In Kentucky in 1955, strange lights preceded the siege of a farmhouse by green, pointed-eared goblins with wide mouths and bulging eyes. In 1993, an Australian family saw an army of tall, round-bellied black creatures in a field in Victoria. The creatures floated rather than walked, and later, the mother would describe them as being absent in substance, as if they were made of void. In 1954, a woman in Arezzo, Italy, saw small, smiling men with crooked teeth. They wore capes, doubles and hose, and their caps were of tight-fitting brown leather. They tried to take her with them, but she escaped. In 1951, an Illinois man was swarmed by foot-tall creatures like frogs, aided by a swarm of black-shelled bugs. And in 1972, a man in Argentina picked up a hitchhiker who had a strange, stony face, like an Easter Island head, who later vanished from the car in a flash of light. The list of accounts goes on.

The point is that UFO lore has co-opted many of the stories of the Fae, but they are still there. They're still watching us, they are still invading the country we know.

Otherworldly Abductors of a Different Stripe

That aliens abduct people is enshrined in ufological lore. People get taken from lonely places. They are shown things they don't understand. Their captors perform experiments on them, sometimes. Sometimes the abductees have to explain random objects to their strange abductors. Sometimes they're subjected to bizarre abuses. Sometimes they're made to have sex. The victims lose chunks of their memory.

Sometimes their captors are benign; sometimes they're downright malicious.

Sometimes they're faeries. Are these weird beings always the Fae? No. Sometimes it never happened at all. And sometimes it's not the Fae.

Are there really extraterrestrial beings apart from the Fae doing these things? Even the Fae don't know.

Categorizing Faeries

The Fae don't fall into categories. Sure, those field guides to faeries that sit on the Mind, Body and Spirit shelf of any good bookshop and the serious books of occult lore alike divide the Fae into hundreds of species and factions. The stories talk about Callicantzaroi and *sidhe* and lutins and kobolds and Wichtlein and Fir Bolg and Tylwyth Teg and Duergar and brownies, Flower Fairies and nymphs, trolls and hags and a thousand other kinds of Fair Folk from all over the world.

The collector of Arcadian lore can quite easily be overwhelmed with the volume of lore about the different kinds of Fae, the ways they differ in behavior, the different rules they observe. Knockers need to be fed to be appeased, but Brownies require a saucer of milk. Some faeries demand interest on things they lend; others take offense at getting back more than they originally proffered.

In the end, while knowing this stuff has saved quite a few people from the inexplicable wrath of the Fae, it doesn't have anything to do with any "species" or "society" the Fae might have. The different kinds of fairies, faeries, Fair Folk, Good Neighbors, Devic intelligences or whatever they're called in the books are really just observations of different Fae behaving in different ways. The Fae aren't really constrained by shape or history or social mores. They're too fluid. A boggart could give birth to a Dobie or Bwca. A Fae who adopts the form of a glowing White Lady one year could become a loathly hag or a bone-grinding giant or a night-lurking troll the next. That little gray abductor could well have been a man-eating ogre a century ago.

This is the deepest secret of the True Fae: there are really no "kinds" of Fae. There are only faeries, in all their malice and power and inconsistency. Faeries *are* as faeries *do*. They change their shape and behavior as the whim takes them. Some stay the same for centuries. Some change weekly or daily, or from moment to moment. When they change, they become, for all intents and purposes, different beings. Often, they forget (or pretend to forget or choose to forget) their past, allowing enmities and friendships that might have been forged for centuries to dissolve as if written on the Arcadian breeze and forging new memories, new pasts.

In the end, the behavior of these faeries depends upon only one question: is it entertaining? The Fae do nothing that isn't interesting and fun. There are absolutely no other moral considerations they observe. If torture and murder is diverting, and a Fae is creative enough, he will be a fiend, until he becomes bored with it. If kindness passes a few years in an interesting manner, then the Fae will be a saint, until kindness becomes tedious. Mortals are interesting, but treating them in the same way over and over again can eventually become a bit dull. And being a monster or a saint or a lover or a demon stops being *fun*, the True Fae becomes something else.

But then, all this could be an imposture, a mask to hide the truth. Faeries lie.

The Fae and the Errant

The people the Fae steal are inexplicable to the Fae as the Fae are to people. That's why so many of them have escaped over the ages. The attitude the Fae hold toward the ones who escaped varies. There are many humans, and nearly as many vulnerable humans, and if a changeling escapes, it may be less effort to make a new fetch and steal a new slave than it is to track down a lost one. Besides, mortals are 10 a fairy penny.

Fae who stumble upon a changeling in the human world or the Hedge immediately know what it is they've met, but usually don't care. Mortal slaves escape all the time. Most Fae just aren't interested in changelings. Faeries can be possessive and vengeful when they want to be. Usually, they don't care. One of the True Fae might well treat a changeling as beneath its notice, and ignore her. Maybe the Fae looks to one side, and absentmindedly squashes the changeling like an ant. Maybe the Fae gains some mild amusement with toying with the changeling for a while, before discarding her, forgetting her like a child disposes of a spent dandelion clock.

Things are different when the Fae come across one of those rare changelings with real power, a creature whose Wyrd is bright and fluid and approaches the stature of the fae themselves. The Fae understand power, and respond to it. *How* they respond to it depends on the changeling, and it depends upon the whim of the faerie. Violence might result, as the Fae embarks on an attempt to kill or re-capture the errant thrall. But then, the Fae are not so predictable. One Fae might conceive a hate or an envy for a changeling with that sort of power; the same Fae might express paternal pride, the sentiment that "Junior" has finally come of age, come into his inheritance. That same faerie might think those differing things at the same time. A Fae could think of a changeling like this a fine potential cat's-paw for a fairy game of politics or lust, or an agent in the human realm or a pretty bauble that must be obtained.

The Banished

Sometimes, the human world houses True Fae who can't return to Arcadia. They're less powerful, these Fae, and without their links to Arcadia, they are effectively mortal. There isn't a single one of them who doesn't want to go right back into Faerie.

Some are weak Fae who dawdled too long among people and forgot the way back. But some were kicked out, sentenced to mortality by some Arcadian court. It's difficult to imagine what could make a Fae anathema to his own. Certainly, some have committed crimes so bizarre and alien that humans or changelings couldn't ever understand them, even if they were clearly explained in detail, and illustrated with pictures.

Others make the mistake of becoming diseased, infected by contact with mortals. In Arcadia, everything is permissible, as long as it's entertaining. A Fae can become attached to a mortal, but actually falling in love, actually taking that seriously? That's not fun anymore. A Fae could wish revenge on some changeling, but if it becomes so important to the Gentry that it stops being diverting, then the Fae becomes a bore. The concepts of true love, true hate or any true emotion, are human concepts, and can only really be experienced by a being with a soul. The Others have no souls, but sometimes the emotion obsesses them. They become a little less Fae, infected with a false kind of humanity that they don't understand. A being like this is dangerous to the Gentry, and dangerous to the human world.

Banished Fae, however they were barred from Faerie, become obsessed about returning to Arcadia. They desperately need that point of escape. The irony is that in the action of *needing*, in that obsession, the desire that overrides everything else, they become less and less able to re-enter Arcadia. It's deadly serious for them, and that simple fact, more than anything else, is what keeps them excluded from Faerie forever. And it's what makes them so terribly, terribly dangerous.

Dwellers in the Hedge

Other beings exist in Faerie, too, beyond the Fae. Some sometimes make it into the Hedge, where an unfortunate changeling may encounter them.

Some creatures bear a resemblance to myth. There are things something like dragons. There

are chimerical fusions of cat and bird, poison-blooded scaled and humanlike birds and a thousand other things, that appear and disappear and feed on the unfortunate who stumble across them. Then there are things made of pure emotion, of fear or hope or any number of emotions, things that take human form and animal form.

Worst of all are the thing that were once people, caught in the Hedge and *changed* by the magic of the place or the design of the Fae into near-mindless creatures, predators and scavengers alike.

Changelings vs. Changelings

Any changeling knows that there's no guarantee that other changelings are going to be his best friends. Still, the seasonal Courts offer to the fae-touched the illusion of civility. There's something approaching a society, and with a society comes a community. If the community is dysfunctional, corrupt or downright violent, it's still a community, with its own ways of doing things and its own manners and forms. The seasonal Courts are a kind of microcosm of human society, and similar to human society, the Courts produce those individuals who can't be part of it: its dropouts, its sociopaths and its enemies, both willing and unwilling.

The most dangerous changelings are often those who are somehow "broken." Maybe they're mad. Maybe their escape didn't work out for them (or they never escaped at all). Or maybe, worst of all, they came back incomplete.

The Loyal

Not all changelings who return to the human world through the Hedge escaped. Not all of the changelings who are active now are free.

The truth is that sometimes the Gentry let some of their changelings go. Sometimes the Gentry send their changelings out as their agents.

A changeling might seem to have been a vital part of his Court for some 20 years, but he's dreaming of Arcadia, the hopeless slave of his Dark Lady, his will completely given over to her, his every action the result of a direct order from his sardonic mistress. He keeps his regional Court running smoothly, but the whole edifice depends on fragile structures he has helped to institute, and all it would take for a single element to be pushed, flicked away like a single standing domino, and the whole thing collapses. And the Dark Lady rewards her slave. Or kills him. It depends on how bored she is.

There's another changeling who doesn't even know she's still in thrall to the Fae. There are dreams and episodes of lost time, but she thinks she's in control. She thinks she's in the driving seat. She isn't. When she's supposed to be sleeping, she's someone else, and she's doing the murderous work of a Bloody-Mouthed Hag who tips and jerks the sticks, who tugs at bloody strings.

A third escaped, only to have his Keeper track him down within mere weeks. The Heartless Giant claimed to be merciful, and so, faced with the prospect of destruction, the changeling betrays his enemies and his friends alike, because it's him or them. He's becoming desperate, and his works are careless. It's only a matter of time before someone gets him, whether it's his fellow changelings or a bored Giant who doesn't need him any more.

The ways in which the Fae use changelings are only limited by the Fae's need for entertainment, and many a free member of the seasonal Courts has fallen foul of the loyalists. They could be anywhere.

The Sick

Some changelings don't come back through the Hedge intact. The touch of the Fae makes every changeling a little crazy. It's impossible to survive for long in Arcadia without losing one's mind a little. But some changelings are too well suited for Faerie. They escape, but the act of so doing shatters whatever mental balance they might have managed to maintain as prisoners.

Other changelings are sane enough when they burst through the Hedge, but find that the trials of being a faerie's former plaything in a world that has abandoned them are too much to take, and they tip over the edge.

A changeling could react to the loss of her balance in any number of ways. One changeling takes on the role of a nursery rhyme character. She sneaks back home, and takes an ax; she gives her mother 40 whacks. When she sees what she has done, she gives her father 41. She chants skipping-rope rhymes and nursery songs to accompany her gruesome actions. They are all she has to go on, and she builds her life, such as it is, from snatches of half-remembered childhood doggerel.

Another changeling appears to be in control, but the little studio apartment she makes her home is filled with her collections, such as the eyeball collection she keeps in her fridge and the molars and incisors that fill her kitchen cupboard. The charnel stench of her home is beginning to leak out into the community. So far, she's kept her enthusiasms secret from the ordinary people around her. Serial killers get sloppy and get caught. A serial killer with fairy magic on her side may be in no danger from human law, but the changelings she knows are a different matter entirely. They "wouldn't understand." And if they do find out, and they don't understand, what will this tooth fairy do to be able to continue pursuing her hobby?

Other changelings go into denial, entering a kind of fugue state. One, who tended toward religiosity before he was taken,

begins to imagine that he was in Hell, that he was kidnapped by devils and that they made him one, too, because he was a sinner. Maybe he tries to destroy the other "thralls of Satan" he meets in a pathetic attempt to save his soul and regain the favor of God. Maybe he decides that if he is damned, he should act as one of the damned. If he has no choice other than to be a devil, he should, he thinks, behave like one.

It doesn't make much sense. But then, madness rarely does. Sickness of this kind leads to tragedy, and there is very little anyone can do to avoid it.

The Soulless

The human soul fascinates the Fae. It's the one advantage that humans have over them, the one thing that the Others crave, but can never really comprehend. It's one of the reasons why the Fae seek to kidnap humans in the first place: some of the Gentry apparently reason that if they can't have souls of their own, they can at least have a toy with a soul, which makes about as much sense as most of the things that the Fae do. Faerie isn't really suited for a human soul: some say while in the keep of the Others, the soul sleeps, only to really awaken when the changeling escapes. Some say it's caught on a thorn of the Hedge, and is reunited with its owner only upon the return. Except that some changelings don't arrive back in the human world spiritually intact.

The Lost call them the "soulless." The prevailing belief among changelings is that though the Thorns may tear away one's soul along the road to Arcadia, it eventually returns as you find your way home — most of the time. Some never heal, though. They're unable to process emotion or to relate to humans. A soulless changeling is essentially a psychopath with no hope of ever getting a cure. All the soulless has is what he learned in Faerie: entertainment is everything, regardless of who gets sliced up and stuffed in the freezer.

They are particularly horrifying to their more fortunate kin, because the prevailing theory is such an ugly implication: not only can your soul be torn from you, but there's no guarantee that you can get it back. However chilling this supposition, though, it is still at least some comfort compared to a more sinister alternative: the idea that perhaps *no* changelings have been reunited with their souls, and that they all share a common damnation. Better to believe that the broken ones are soulless, for that at least tells you that you aren't.

The Fanatical

Some changelings have more difficulty carrying their scars. Pushed past the breaking point, they refuse to simply hide and hope the Others don't surface again. They do their best to eliminate the threat of the True Fae once and for all — but the ways they choose may put all their changeling kin at risk of extinction. There might be one or two in any freehold, and sometimes there's more — enough to gather together and actually succeed. They're a difficult sort to deal with, in part because they're so sympathetic. They've been abused to the point of reprisal, which any Lost can understand. They aren't often "evil," but their methods don't have any sympathy for the changelings — or mortals — caught in their crusades. It may be efficient to remove them with cold iron, but it is that really the right thing to do? And will they always be easy to find?

Here and there, changelings with a greater aversion to the trappings of Faerie decide that the best way to keep themselves and others safe from the Others is to tear up their roads. The trods must be destroyed, so that the Fae can't come through any more and victimize others. Other changelings call them bridge-burners. After all, similar to bridges, trods work both ways; they're a boon to the Fae, yes, but they're all the more valuable to changelings. Thus

the bridge-burners pose a delicate problem. Trods are the lifeblood of a freehold, and without Glamour, the Lost are defenseless. There's a chance they might be right, and eliminating the trods would render an area safe from the Others — but if they're wrong, the changelings and their loved ones would only be all the more vulnerable. It's a chance very few are willing to take.

On the other hand, some do want to go back — in force. Most changelings have likely dreamed of exacting some sort of vengeance on their Keeper at some point, but realize that they have no realistic chance of overcoming the Gentry in their own citadels. But some lack that capacity for sane judgment. From time to time, a changeling begins preaching the necessity of unifying all the Lost and all the mortal fodder they can enlist into a single army, then marching on Arcadia. The trouble comes when these would-be warmongers are persuasive enough to sway others into their cause — and changelings are nothing if not persuasive. Such militia groups often act covertly, having learned that few freeholds are anything but sympathetic to their goals. Rumor speaks of brutal press gangs taking new "recruits" by force, or of seductive recruiters tricking their targets into accepting pledges or oaths to a warhawk and his banner. Both the Lost and their loved ones are potential targets for being pulled into a campaign that's sure to end in bloody tragedy.

Those Outside the Gates

The Lost are aware to varying degree that other supernatural creatures roam the world, things that seem to have no connection to Faerie or the Hedge. In many cases, changelings dare not investigate too much further. Stories of a pale, beautiful woman seducing young clubgoers who later wake up strangely fatigued just might refer to a *belle dame sans merci* from Arcadia. If the woman later turns out to be "merely" a reanimated corpse with a cannibalistic taste for blood, is that cause for relief? In general, the Lost try to keep as low a profile from their fellow supernaturals as they do from ordinary humans, driven by their well-justified paranoia and trust issues. There are the occasional exceptions, of course, and such contact brings a little more gossip to circulate through the freeholds.

Vampires and werewolves, different as they may be, are often lumped into the same category in changeling lore. Both are predators, clearly enough; one may favor human blood and the other human flesh, and one may seduce while the other savages, but both would potentially see the Lost as a fresh breed of prey. When a changeling or motley does decide to open relations with one of these hunters, the changelings do so quite cautiously. Some feel that there's a great advantage to having potential allies who have strengths quite different from fae magic, and try to woo a vampire or werewolf into a pledge of mutual assistance. It's not a common practice, but a few changelings are brave or mad enough to try.

Mortal sorcerers, on the other hand, present a different potential problem. The reassuring thing about them is that they are harder to mistake for the Others, and easier to recognize as simply human. But the troubling thing about them is that they so often prove very, very interested in Arcadia. Filled by some mad hubris, some magi have tried their best to convince the Lost to reveal the pathways to Faerie, perhaps confident that their magic would somehow bring them past the gates and guardians and protect them against the might of the Gentry, even at the source of the Fae's power. The very prospect is enough to make a changeling break off contact as quickly as possible. Even if a mage did have enough power to challenge a True Fae on Earth, could the same be said once the mage has traveled the roads to Faerie? When his soul was caught on the Thorns along the way, would he even have any power left at all? It would be a path to almost certain damnation, and only the maddest of changelings would want to walk that road again no matter their companions.

NO
TRESPASSING
STAWICKI
2007

t's a public park, but the cops apparently don't see it that way. Of course it is after midnight, so I'm probably breaking a few rules. But the guns are inappropriate.

"Drop it!" they keep yelling. Idiots. I'm not holding anything.

I run, and one of them fires. I feel the bullet fly past my ear, and I see wood chips from a tree up ahead. I'm not going back into the Briars tonight, so instead I head for the ranger station. The building's made of wood, and as I'm running I think at the building, *You know your part, right?*

And the building thinks back, *Oh, is it night? Yeah, OK, got it,* and I run right up the side, fingers digging into cracks that only a spider would see, and I'm up and over the roof and then the fence on the other side. The cops circle the building, but by that time I'm hiding, and even if their minds are looking for me their eyes won't see me. All part of the deal.

And one says to the other, "Did you see what he was carrying?" The younger cop's voice is a little unsteady. Goddammit, I'm not carrying *anything*.

The older cop nods. "I thought it looked like a…" He stops. What the hell? It's like a conspiracy. "You get a shot on this sicko, you take it. I'll back you." He pats his pocket. "He's armed, you know."

The younger cop nods. "I just keep thinking of my little boy. Anybody ever did that to him…" They walk on.

I look down at my hand. I'm holding something that looks like a slender branch, only it's got fingers.

Guess I *am* carrying something. Where the hell did this come from?

Chapter 2
Character Creation

I would go out into the streets to fight with my delusion,
and prowling women would mew after me,
furtive craving men glance jealously at me,
weary pale workers go coughing by me,
with tired eyes and eager paces like wounded deer dripping blood,
old people, bent and dull, pass murmuring to themselves,
and all unheeding a ragged tail of gibing children.

— H.G. Wells, *The Island of Dr. Moreau*

Character Creation

Creating a character for **Changeling: The Lost** is equal parts art and science. The art comes from your vision of the character — who she is, where she comes from and where she's going. The science comes in translating that vision of the character into the game mechanics that define what the character can do and how she does it. Remember, as the name suggests, the main focus of a Storytelling game is on telling engaging stories about intriguing characters. Bear this in mind when creating your character: think about what makes your character an interesting and three-dimensional person, not on some arbitrary concept of the Platonic ideal of a "bruiser" or "occultist."

Where art and science blend is in the allocation of Traits. Your choices of Traits should reinforce your concept, and vice versa. Sometimes coming up with an interesting reason for why your character might have a seemingly out-of-place Trait can make for every bit as intriguing a character hook as anything you had planned for the character's background. At the same time, don't bend over backwards to incorporate Traits you want or think you'll "need" into the character. Odds are you won't have enough points to create a character with every Trait you want. If you did, there wouldn't be much room for your character to grow later.

When creating your character, consider not just your own ideas but those of your fellow players and Storyteller. This sort of communication is vital to ensuring that your character will get along reasonably well with the others. Talking with the Storyteller can help you make sure your character fits well into the chronicle and that you have plenty of stuff to do.

Step One: Choose Concept

This is the fundamental backbone of your character. If you like, it is the skeleton on which you'll hang the meat of your character. Concept can be anything from a simple two-word phrase ("wild huntsman" or "scheming politico," perhaps) to a paragraph or more ("traumatized runaway whose abandonment issues sometimes make her secretly wish that she'd never left Faerie"), whatever it takes for you to get an initial handle on your character. Your only real limitation is age. Changelings who were taken as infants or very young children, and those who were abducted more than 50 years ago, don't have a strong enough memory of their homes to find their way through the Thorns. In the former case, they can't recall enough details; in the latter, the details of their homes have almost indubitably changed beyond recognition.

You might want to consider incorporating seeming and Court into your concept, although that isn't necessary. Whatever you decide, remember that while seeming and Court influence your concept, they shouldn't define it: your character isn't a walking collection of stereotypes, and sometimes choosing a seeming or Court that runs counter to the "obvious" choice for your concept can make for a more interesting character.

Step Two: Select Attributes

Once you've got your concept to a point where you're happy with it, it's time to start fleshing out your character from a game-mechanics perspective. The first and easiest step is to prioritize the character's Attributes, the Traits that determine

her raw physical, social and mental potential. Characters have nine Attributes divided into three categories: Mental (Intelligence, Wits, Resolve), Physical (Strength, Dexterity, Stamina) and Social (Presence, Manipulation, Composure).

Each category of Attributes is first assigned a priority: primary, secondary or tertiary. For example, a "sleazy lawyer" concept might have Social Attributes as primary (the "sleazy" half of the equation), Mental Attributes secondary (sleazy or not, law school is hard work, but we're focusing on sleaze as the predominant aspect) and Physical Attributes tertiary (beyond a few minutes a week on the Stairmaster, the character doesn't work out much). While your concept might give you an obvious clue as to how to prioritize the categories, remember that there is more than one road to any character. A gang leader might rule through brute force (Physical primary), street smarts and business sense (Mental primary) or force of personality (Social primary).

You get five points to spend in the primary category, four to spend in the secondary and three for the tertiary. All characters start with a single dot in each Attribute, representing the basic capabilities everyone possesses. For example, our sleazy lawyer starts with one dot each in Presence, Manipulation and Composure, and has five additional points with which to buy his Attributes.

The fifth dot of any Attribute costs two dots to purchase. To buy an Attribute up to 5 costs five points: the first dot comes free, three points buy the second, third and fourth dots and two final points buy the fifth dot.

Step Three: Select Skills

Similar to Attributes, Skills are divided into Mental, Physical and Social categories, and you must prioritize each as primary, secondary or tertiary. Skills represent the abilities your character has learned throughout her life, whether through formal study or the school of hard knocks. Most Mental Skills fall under the former category, as it's difficult to just naturally pick up working knowledge of the sciences. By contrast, many Physical skills can be self-taught or picked up through experience.

You get 11 points to spend on your primary category, seven to spend on your secondary category and four to spend on your tertiary category. Just as Attributes, the fifth dot of a Skill costs two points to purchase. Unlike Attributes, however, your character does not begin with a free dot in any Skill. Even those Skills that can be picked up naturally in the course of life aren't truly intrinsic in the same way Attributes are.

Step Four: Select Skill Specialties

While Skills represent broad categories of ability, most people have a few areas in which they truly excel. Some scholars are better versed in medieval literature than they are in classical philosophy, or they might excel at speedily researching any topic no matter how esoteric. In game terms, these characters might have four dots in Academics, with a Specialty in Medieval Literature or Research, respectively.

Choose three Skill Specialties for your character. These Specialties may be applied to three different Skills, or you might assign two or even all three Specialties to a single Skill. Skill Specialties can be specific subcategories of a Skill (such as the Firearms Skill with a Pistols Specialty), a situation in which the skill applies (the Brawl Skill with a Multiple Opponents Specialty) or any similar specific, restricted category. The Storyteller is the final arbiter on whether a Skill Specialty is too broad or narrow.

Your character's Skill Specialties give her a bonus die on dice pools whenever the Specialty applies.

Step Five: Add Changeling Template

Up till now, you've been defining the basic, mundane traits that reflect your character's natural abilities and talents, the abilities any ordinary mortal might have. Now it's time to add the spark of magic that transforms your character from an ordinary mortal into a changeling.

Remember, a character cannot possess multiple supernatural templates, and there are some Merits that are only available to mortal characters. A werewolf or vampire cannot become a changeling, and a changeling cannot become a mage or possess the Unseen Sense Merit, among others.

Seeming

Your seeming is the manner in which your fae nature manifests itself. Your seeming is the primary factor in defining your fae mien, the true appearance of your altered self. Often your seeming comes at least in part from your Arcadian jailer, but in at least some instances, your Keeper might have had a different nature and deliberately shaped your seeming to fill his needs or desires. For example, a changeling taken by a lordly Fae who took regular hunting excursions into the Hedge might develop a beautiful and lordly mien of his own, or the hunter might shape the changeling into something akin to a hunting hound or a hawk.

Within each seeming there exists a variety of kiths, which are a way to more carefully define your character's fae nature. All Beasts have animalistic features, of course, but within the broad spectrum of "Beast" one might be a Runnerswift, embodying the fleet-footedness of the antelope or the hare, or instead a creepy, alien Skitterskulk with an affinity for centipedes. You don't have to choose a kith if you don't want one, and with your Storyteller's permission, you might even make up your own. Each seeming comes with a particular blessing and curse, and the kiths add an additional blessing to the mix. In addition, each changeling gets one free Specialty to Athletics, Brawl or Stealth to reflect the physical changes of the seeming. This may represent a Beast's animal athletic ability,

claw-like nails that make the character's strikes more damaging, or a preternatural grace or affinity for darkness.

Court

Courts are the predominant social structures of changeling society. They represent your political allegiances and your philosophy toward life as a changeling. Courtiers of the Spring Court, for example, believe in throwing themselves into mortal life, the better to lose themselves against the backdrop of humanity and hide from the Fae.

You can choose to be Courtless, if you prefer, and swear allegiance to no Court. This might make your life easier in some respects, but the lack of a support network larger than your motley of friends can be difficult. Likewise, you can leave your Court and swear allegiance to a new one as the story progresses, but this is not done lightly, and those who do it frequently are often mistrusted.

Wyrd

Your character's connection to the strange energies of Faerie is measured by her Wyrd Trait. Wyrd represents the raw power of her fae nature, her affinity for the use of Glamour and how strongly her seeming "bleeds through" into reality. A changeling with a high Wyrd is a true creature of Faerie, perhaps closer to the True Fae than she'd like to admit. Her seeming is beautiful and terrible, plainly inhuman and madness-inducing. By contrast, a low-Wyrd changeling might look scarcely different from an ordinary human when she reveals her seeming.

All changelings begin with one free dot of Wyrd. This rating may be increased by spending Merit points, at a cost of three points per dot of Wyrd. Thus, you can raise your character's Wyrd rating to 2 for three Merit points, or to 3 for six Merit points. Wyrd is fully described on pp. 83–88.

Contracts

The fae have always been known as great bargainers and deal-makers, whether it's a promise of riches in exchange for a firstborn child or a happy marriage as long as the bride never, ever lights a candle after dark. Contracts allow the Lost to call upon the bargains their erstwhile masters made with the world itself to achieve miraculous effects ranging from creating useful items out of random detritus to crawling along walls or ceilings like a spider.

Contracts have a variety of effects grouped into common themes, such as Darkness or Stone. Most Contracts are freely accessible to all changelings, but each seeming and Court has a particular affinity for one particular category of Contracts. For example, Darklings are naturally adept at, and find it easier to learn, Contracts of Darkness.

Each category of Contracts contains five "clauses," or individual powers, rated from one to five dots. Your character begins with five dots of Contracts, at least two of which must be spent on either seeming or Court Contracts. Each dot of a Contract (also called a clause, as it effectively represents a particular clause in the pact between the fae and the primordial entity in question) must be purchased in order. For example, you may spend three of your Contract dots in the Artifice Contract list, which would give you the one-dot clause Brief Glamour of Repair, the two-dot Touch of the Workman's Wrath and the three-dot Blessing of Perfection. Similar to Attributes and Skills, the fifth dot of a Contract costs double (effectively making it impossible to begin play with a five-dot clause).

You may spend dots on Goblin Contracts during character creation, but only on one-dot Contracts. Goblin Contracts are purchased individually instead of as clauses in a larger Contract list, and therefore must be bought separately. Goblin Contracts more powerful than two dots are not available at character creation.

Step Six: Select Merits

Your character has seven dots of Merits, which you may distribute as you see fit. Merits should fit into your character concept; an effete socialite is unlikely to have the Fighting Style: Boxing Merit (although explaining such an apparent incongruity may lead to an interesting character hook). As always, your Storyteller is the final arbiter, and is free to disallow certain Merits or even provide a free dot, perhaps to represent some contact or item crucial to the chronicle. If your character is in a Court, you automatically gain one free dot in the appropriate Mantle Merit, such as Mantle (Autumn).

For a list of new Merits specifically for changelings, see p. 77. Remember also that you may spend three of your Merit dots to increase your character's Wyrd by one, or six dots to increase it by two.

Step Seven: Determine Advantages

Advantages are described from a mechanical point of view in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 90–105. Some of these Traits have slightly different meanings when applied to changelings, and others are irrevocably altered by the character's time beyond the Thorns.

Willpower

In the mad world of the fae, the ability to maintain self-control and focus is vital. The strength of a changeling's will can allow her to root herself and her perception of the world in reality, espying the supernatural for what it truly is. By imbuing her promises with Willpower, a changeling can form pledges, oaths that bind her to another through the power of Wyrd. Changelings otherwise employ Willpower in the same manner as mortals.

A changeling may spend a Willpower point in the same turn she spends Glamour. For more information on spending Glamour, see p. 88.

Clarity

Changelings are no longer human. They have been infected by the peculiar madness that is Faerie, where dream-logic rules and memory runs at the edges into hallucination. When a changeling at last finds his way home, to a world of concrete and certainty, he carries with him a spark of Faerie that rebels against the rational order of this world. A changeling's life, then, is a constant, unending struggle between sanity and madness, between truth and deception. The concept of Morality as it applies to mortals is replaced by the concept of Clarity, representing the character's ability to distinguish the solidity of the mortal world from Faerie and to reconcile the two disparate halves of his nature.

As an optional rule, the Storyteller may allow players to exchange Clarity for experience points at character creation. This represents some horrible trauma in the character's past, perhaps during or just after his escape from Faerie. The character's lower Clarity represents a difficulty remembering the truth or accepting the fae half of his nature, or perhaps a longer durance spent trapped in Faerie, while the extra experience points represent something the character learned from the event. Players may sacrifice one dot of Clarity for five experience points, lowering Clarity to as low as 5 (for 10 experience points). This exchange does not bring a derangement with it; the player may choose to begin the game with such a disadvantage, but there is no mechanical recompense for doing so.

Glamour

Glamour is the magical energy that fuels a changeling's supernatural powers. Glamour allows her to employ her Contracts, acquire preternatural (albeit temporary) skills or perform a variety of astounding feats.

All changelings begin with a Glamour pool equal to half of their maximum Glamour pool as determined by Wyrd (see p. 84). If the character has purchased the Harvest Merit, she begins play with an additional point of Glamour per dot of Harvest. Thus, a character with Wyrd 3 and two dots in Harvest would begin with eight Glamour.

Unlike many other Traits, Glamour is rated only as a pool of points that you can spend. There is no dot rating for Glamour that your character always possesses.

Virtues and Vices

Changelings have the same Virtues and Vices that mortal characters do, though in many cases their representation is somewhat warped by the character's fae nature. Often, a changeling's Virtues or Vices are triggered by something that other mortals would consider illogical at best or mad at worst. For example, a Gluttonous Ogre might enjoy a good steak as much as any other individual with the same Vice, but he can't quite help the way his mouth waters when he sees children playing in the street outside his home. A Charitable changeling might feel particularly compelled to help people occupied in a certain trade. There are no mechanical effects associated with these odd compulsions, although they do seem to be more pronounced in changelings with low Clarity.

A Host of Furious Fancies

Storytellers may wish to allow players to create characters with more experience than those described in the rest of this section, representing characters longer freed from Faerie at the chronicle's start. This option is generally recommended for veteran players; those new to the game are often better suited to learning about the setting along with their characters, and creating experienced characters only once they themselves have a handle on the setting.

Fresh from the Thorns	0 experience points
Established Freebooters	35 experience points
Veteran Motley	75 experience points
Lords of the Manor	120+ experience points

Step Eight: The Spark of Life

By this point, your character has been established pretty well in terms of dots and rules. You know what he's good at, what he's not so great at and what he hasn't a chance in Hell of accomplishing barring a miracle. But all of this is just one half of the character; much as an actor takes the character written on the page and infuses it with life, you must now decide how to bring the dots and points together to create a living, breathing character. What's he like, physically as well as emotionally? A short, overweight and unkempt character is going to convey a very different image from a tall, chiseled model type, even if they have the exact same Traits. Is his seeming very similar to his mortal guise, or are they divergent? Does he have any distinguishing marks (in either form?) Is he well-liked by his fellow escapees, or do they mock him behind his back, or even openly?

Some aspects are at least partially decided by the Traits you've already designed. Is his Dexterity high? Then he probably never trips and easily navigates crowded rooms. Is his Composure low? He likely doesn't deal with insults or threats well. High Intelligence? Maybe he annoys his comrades by pointing out obscure minutiae, or always speaks with perfect grammar.

Beyond the basics determined by Traits, consider a few quirks or unusual habits to add life to your character. Maybe he has a peculiar speech pattern or a habit of running his hand through his hair when he's nervous, or prides himself on following the latest fashions. Maybe there's some stimulus that makes him very uncomfortable because it reminds him of his time in Faerie. Little hooks such as these go a long way toward making your character seem like a real person rather than a mere collection of dots on a page.

Changeling Character Quick Reference

For the beginning steps of character creation, see the two-page spread beginning on p. 34 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. The following section summarizes the qualities that come from the character's transition to a changeling.

Seeming

Choose a seeming, representing the general faerie archetype that your character has become, either by proximity or by the purpose of her durance.

Beast: The animal-blooded who hunt in the tangled forests of Faerie, swim in its waters, soar in its skies or pace in its kennels. *Affinity Contract:* Fang and Talon. *Kiths:* Broadback, Hunterheart, Runnerswift, Skitterskulk, Steepscrambler, Swimmerskin, Venombite, Windwing.

Darkling: The nocturnals, the fae that lurk in the shadows and call from lightless grottoes and hidden glens. *Affinity Contract:* Darkness. *Kiths:* Antiquarian, Gravewight, Leechfinger, Mirrorskin, Tunnelgrub.

Elemental: Children of the earth, air and sky of Faerie; those born of the raw elements of nature itself. *Affinity Contract:* Elements. *Kiths:* Airtouched, Earthbones, Fireheart, Manikin, Snowskin, Waterborn, Woodblood.

Fairest: The most beautiful of Arcadia, if not always the kindest; the elegant and adored, the graceful and manipulative. *Affinity Contract:* Vainglory. *Kiths:* Bright One, Dancer, Draconic, Flowering, Muse.

Ogre: The strong and often brutal goblins and giants of Faerie, broad-backed and bloody-handed. *Affinity Contract:* Stone. *Kiths:* Cyclopean, Farwalker, Gargantuan, Gristlegrinder, Stonebones, Water-Dweller.

The Wizened: The subtle and ingenious crafters of Arcadia, the wise and cunning wondermakers. *Affinity Contract:* Artifice. *Kiths:* Artist, Brewer, Chatelaine, Chirurgeon, Oracle, Soldier, Smith, Woodwalker.

Kith

You may, if you like, choose a kith. These optional subcategories of the seeming grant their own individual blessings, and further refine the seeming's archetype. The kiths available depend on your seeming.

Court

Choose a Court, one of the four great houses of changeling society. You may also choose to be Courtless, a member of none. Each Court also grants affinity with two Contract lists, both the Fleeting and Eternal lists for the appropriate season.

Spring Court (Desire): The changelings of the Emerald Court reject the pain and sorrow of their time in Arcadia, drawing power from desire and *joie de vivre*.

Summer Court (Wrath): The changelings of the Crimson Court draw power from the anger they bear toward their captors, gathering strength to fight against anyone who would enslave them again.

Autumn Court (Fear): The changelings of the Ashen Court find their strength in fae magic, drawing the Glamour they need for their sorcery from the fears of mortals.

Winter Court (Sorrow): The changelings of the Onyx Court hide under layers of deception like a seed under snow-covered ground, hardening themselves on a diet of midwinter sorrow.

Courtless: Those who choose to go their own path are sometimes said to belong to the Colorless Court, outsiders in a dangerous world.

Contracts

A character gains a total of five dots to distribute among Contracts, at least two of which must be spent in one or two of his seeming or Court's affinity Contracts. The classes of Contracts are:

General

Dream: Entering and shaping the dreams of others.

Hearth: Traditional fae blessings of fortune.

Mirror: Altering one's appearance.

Smoke: Powers of stealth and passing unseen.

Seeming

Artifice: The Wizened's talent for supernatural craftsmanship.

Darkness: The Darklings' affinity for cunning nocturnal witcheries.

Elements: The Elementals' powers for commanding the elements to which they are bound.

Fang and Talon: The Beasts' ability to emulate, speak with and command animals.

Stone: The Ogres' blessings of might and brute force.

Vainglory: The Fairest's mastery of supernatural beauty and splendor.

Court

Fleeting Spring: The Emerald Court's powers over desire.

Eternal Spring: The Spring Court's Contract of growth and rejuvenation.

Fleeting Summer: The Crimson Court's powers to manipulate wrath.

Eternal Summer: The Summer Court's Contract of heat and vigor.

Fleeting Autumn: The Ashen Court's powers to induce and ward against fear.

Eternal Autumn: The Autumn Court's blessings of harvest and curses of withering.

Fleeting Winter: The Onyx Court's powers to invoke and control sorrow.

Eternal Winter: The Winter Court's Contract of snow and ice.

Goblin

Goblin Contracts: Dangerous black-market pacts that enact a steep price for every boon. Only one-dot Goblin Contracts may be purchased at character creation.

Wyrd

A character's Wyrd, the innate power of his fae nature, begins at 1, but Merit points may be spent to increase it. The rate is three Merit points per extra Wyrd dot.

Glamour

A character's starting Glamour points equal half his Glamour pool as determined by Wyrd (rounded up).

Merits

Players may purchase the following special Merits for their Lost characters: Court Goodwill (• to •••••), Harvest (• to •••••), Hollow (• to •••••, special), Mantle (• to •••••), New Identity (•, •• or ••••), Token (• to •••••). See p. 93–98.

Experience Point Costs

Trait	Experience point cost
Attribute	New dots x 5
Skill	New dots x 3
Skill Specialty	3
Goblin Contract	Dots x 3
Affinity Contract*	New dots x 4
Non-affinity Contract*	New dots x 6
Merit	New dots x 2
Wyrd	New dots x 8
Clarity	New dots x 3
Willpower	8 experience points**

* Determined by the character's seeming or Court. All changelings have affinity with Contracts of Dream, Hearth, Mirror and Smoke.

** Experience points can be spent on Willpower only to restore dots lost through sacrifice or performing feats that require such a sacrifice (see "The Ancient Pact," p. 187).

The Prelude

Much like Step Eight in the character creation process, the prelude is an optional way to flesh out your character and get a handle on his personality and attitude before the "official" start of the chronicle. The difference is that while in the character creation process you're thinking about these issues in the abstract, the prelude is actually played out, typically as a one-on-one session with the Storyteller. By thrusting your character into various situations, you might find that it seems more natural for him to develop in a different direction from what you'd initially anticipated.

At the Storyteller's discretion, you may also take the opportunity of the prelude to shuffle dots around on your sheet to better reflect how your character ends up playing out. For example, if the character ends up reacting more impulsively to events in his life than you initially anticipated, you might move a dot from Resolve into Wits. You should only make changes like this if it makes sense for the character; don't move dots into Larceny just because you were stymied by a locked door some time during your prelude. Likewise, you can't shuffle dots from one category to another (for example, moving a dot of Strength into Intelligence), and the adjustments must still adhere to the character creation rules. The Storyteller may allow an exception for the benefit of the story, if she sees fit.

Preludes are useful for the Storyteller, as well; presenting backstory and important information about the chronicle to come is much more evocative when done via prelude rather than a mere "info dump." Players will be more inclined to trust an allied motley if said motley aided one or more of them in their escape from Faerie than if the Storyteller simply says "these changelings have been trusted allies for many seasons." Likewise, the prelude can reveal information about the setting, such as where Hollows, Courts or other significant locations are found. The prelude can also give players insight into their characters' dim and fleeting memories of imprisonment in and escape from Faerie.

Storytelling the Prelude

As Storyteller, you have to make several important choices regarding how you will run the prelude before you begin to think about what it will entail. Will it be a one-on-one event for each player, or will the entire group share a prelude? Will the sequence be interactive, with the players responding to the actions of Storyteller characters and situations, or will you simply narrate the prelude in the form of an "opening monologue?" If the players do have choices, will you use the Storytelling rules to adjudicate their actions, or simply decide what happens based on what best serves the story?

Both individual and group preludes can be beneficial to the chronicle. Individual preludes allow you to focus the maximum amount of attention on each character, but require a great deal more time and effort to schedule. On the other hand, the group prelude can be treated as a de facto first session, allowing everyone, players and Storyteller alike, to get a feel for the game before the "real" action starts. Of course, depending on how many of the characters know each other from before the first session, your choice might be at least partially made for you. Feel free to mix and match; perhaps two characters knew each other before they were taken and share a prelude, while the others receive individual preludes. You can also switch up based on the nature of the scene, running pre-abduction scenes individually, then a group vignette within Faerie (as the characters' Keepers brought them together), then back to individual scenes for the escape as each finds his own way out.

Some Storytellers prefer to treat preludes as a short, non-interactive sequence in which they relay important information about the chronicle or the character's backstory before diving into the action. This works well for one-shot games or limited series, or for chronicles in which the Storyteller provides pre-generated characters (as is often the case with games played at conventions, for instance), but does have the obvious drawback of limiting the player's ability to develop his character in play. Experienced groups who have developed a knack for fleshing out characters in the creation process also use this method to save time and get to the meat of the story quicker. Either method is fine, but if you do choose to narrate the prelude rather than running it, be a little more lenient about shifts in character personality over the first few sessions. Just like the cast of a TV show, it sometimes takes a while for players to get comfortable with their characters.

If you decide you do want to run the prelude as an interactive story, you also have to decide whether or not to use dice and the Storytelling game rules, or whether to extemporaneously decide whether actions succeed or fail and how. The former option of course feels more like the prelude is a part of the game, but as anyone with even a tiny bit of experience with role-playing games knows, the best-laid plans of mice and men often go awry when dice are involved. Since you don't want your chronicle derailed even before the first session, be generous with bonuses and stingy with penalties, and try to avoid calling for rolls on actions that might significantly upset things, whether by success or failure. If the characters encounter a character who will end up being a major threat later in the chronicle, don't use dice if one of the players decides to attack him; the potential for an extreme damage roll, however slight, is still there. On the other hand, if you decide to narrate the results of some or all of the character's actions, make sure your rulings are fair and don't single out any one player for more successes or failures.

A special note should be made regarding two specific instances: Combat and Clarity loss. In both cases, consider very carefully whether you want to allow the dice to de-

termine the outcomes. No one wants to invest time and thought in creating a character only to have him die before the game starts, and a player may not want to begin the game at a Clarity deficit.

Elements of a Prelude

Ultimately, any scenes that can showcase a character's attitude and personality can serve as a prelude, in whole or in part. Some scenes stand out as so pivotal in the formative life of a changeling that they deserve special discussion here. Don't feel obligated to use all or even any of these, or to run them in the order listed; you can create a sense of dreamlike unreality by running scenes out of chronological order or deliberately inverting cause and effect.

Everyday Life

"It's not working, Henry."

Her voice is tired, drained of all the life that once attracted you to her. She's right, of course. It's over. Hey, it's nobody's fault, right? People grow apart. It happens. Sure, she'd fallen off the wagon five times in the last six months and you haven't had a steady job in almost a year, but still — nobody's fault.

At least, that's what you tell yourself as you look into her dull, sunken eyes. "I met this guy in rehab, Henry. He really gets me, y'know? He's been where I've been. And he… he asked me to move in with him."

Okay, so maybe you were wrong. It is somebody's fault.

What do you do?

All changeling characters started off as ordinary people with lives and dreams and relationships. Those taken too young to have those experiences lack any connection to the mortal world that could guide them back. Since the loss of that mortal life is one of the central themes of **Changeling**, it makes sense to begin the game with a significant scene from the character's former life. This scene might be the pivotal one that leads, directly or indirectly, to his abduction, or it might be a scene from significantly before the character was spirited away by the Fae that encapsulates the character. A smart ass with a real problem with authority might have a scene from his teen years involving a conflict with his overbearing father, while a shy, mousy girl might be humiliated in front of her peers at a social event.

Scenes of everyday life can be played out much as any other game session, either one-on-one or in a group. If Traits come up during the course of the prelude, just disregard any Traits added in Step Five and any changeling-only Merits the character has. Feel free to have the player roll for significant actions in this sort of scene, or simply narrate the results as best suits the story.

The Taking

It's a cold night, and you really shouldn't be walking around in it, but after her confession that she was moving in with Rehab Guy, you just couldn't stay in that house. A busted car and no money for the bus means its the Two-Step Express for you.

There's a full moon tonight, huge and bright in the clear sky. A shudder runs down your back; wasn't it the last full moon that all those weird killings in the Pines happened? They never caught the guy, either; he just stopped. The papers started calling him "the Werewolf."

A sudden rush of fear quickens your steps, and you tell yourself it's stupid to be afraid of the dark. But the air is still and heavy, and you can practically feel something watching you from the shadows of the trees. Apart from your footsteps, the woods are as quiet as the grave. No bugs, no birds, no nocturnal rodents scurrying in the brush. As you break into a run, you hear a sound that turns your blood to ice water: the baying of a pack of hounds.

What do you do?

Being claimed by the Others is a terrifying, primal experience, and should almost certainly be a featured part of any prelude. This is your chance to tell a modern fairy tale from the point of view of the hapless protagonist, so play on every tale of monsters in the dark that catches your fancy: trolls under bridges, wolves in the forest, elves bathing in moonlit pools or the ghosts of drowned children luring the unwary into swampy graves. If you can, try to have the abduction come from an unexpected source: in the example above, the Storyteller might have focused more on creating an ominous mood around the bridge before suddenly having the hounds burst from the woods.

To a certain extent, the taking scene is predicated on the player's choice of seeming, but there is plenty of room to work within that. Just as not all Ogre changelings are cut from the same mold, the True Fae who might be an Ogre's Keeper have infinite variety. If the player has a specific Keeper in mind for his character, certainly incorporate that, but still try to surprise the player. Maybe the character was sold to his primary Keeper and was taken by another.

The taking scene, as a general rule of thumb, should be played out without dice. Humans are helpless in the face of the True Fae, by and large, and if the character gets away or somehow drives off his abductor, he obviously isn't going to become a character in a **Changeling** game. Rather than letting the player roll dice just to be told he fails to get away, a more evocative mood can be created by describing the character's valiant attempts to get away, only to be snatched up and dragged off screaming into the Thorns.

The Escape

You have forgotten your name. You are Hound, and that is all you have ever been. Your life is as it has always been: wake, hunt, kill, sleep and wake again. You sometimes think once you were other than Hound, but that must be a dream. So much is dream, here, you cannot tell truth sometimes.

There are other Hounds who share the kennel with you. Each night, the Hunter locks you in the kennel after the Hunt, and each

morning he unlocks the kennel and leashes you anew. Tonight, though, is different. You see the lock on your cage: Gleaming. Bright. Open. Is it a test? Will you be hunted if you leave? Is the Hunter waiting for you to try, or has he forgotten you?

A name comes unbidden to your mind, and with it a face. "Henry." Is that you? Is Hound Henry? Henry does not live in the kennel — and once, you did not either. You were Henry. You are the swiftest runner and the finest tracker in the kennel. You could find your way home. You could be Henry again. You remember the scent.

What do you do?

The escape from Faerie is a telling moment in a character's life. It is ironic, then, that so few can recall it in detail. This scene should reflect the terrible, glorious madness of Faerie in all its dreamlike splendor. Characters (and players) never know what is real and what isn't.

Feel free to indulge your experimental side here. Change how the rules of the game work, have others respond as though the characters were saying something completely different than what the player says. Kill off characters in gruesome ways, only to have them reappear the next scene as if nothing happened. If you're feeling really daring, you might even arbitrarily switch to a completely different mechanic for resolving actions. Maybe instead of rolling to attack a nightmarish creature of the Hedge, tell the player to draw a poker hand and gauge the success based on the result. Use this trick sparingly, and only with rules that either the players know well (such as a game you've all played frequently) or very simple mechanics; you don't want to bog down explaining new rules.

One particularly nasty trick you might try in a group prelude is to pick one scene during the escape and run it individually for each player — then subtly change the details for each player. When the group comes back together after the individual sessions, the players'll be left unsure of which version, if any, is what really happened.

Final Questions

The following questions are provided to help you establish as much of your character as possible. Feel free to answer some, all or none, but remember that every piece of information you provide makes your character more real.

• How old are you?

When were you born? How long were you in Faerie? Do you look older or younger than your years? Is your fetch the same age and appearance as you?

• What do you look like?

What color is your hair? How do you dress? Do you have distinguishing marks? What does your seeming look like?

• What was your existence in Faerie like?

Who was your Keeper? Was he or she capricious, or cruel or sympathetic? Were you a favorite servant, or despised? Does your seeming reflect your Keeper's nature, or were you shaped to some other purpose?

• What are your motivations?

Do you want to regain your mortal life? How do you react to changeling society? Are you looking to create a new life as a changeling? Do you wish to be "cured?" Is there a rival you want to defeat? A lover you want to woo?

If You Call Me Imp or Elf

Changeling names run the gamut from odd to ordinary. Some retain their old names from before being taken, or choose new human names (especially if they have forgotten their old ones). Some retain the names their Keepers gave them as a badge of defiance, while still others adopt names reminiscent of folk ballads (in the vein of "Johnny Appleseed," "Mad Maudlin" or "Jack a' Diamonds"). Some name themselves after literary or mythological fairies, but on the whole, this is considered both in poor taste and an omen of ill luck. You never know if such a name isn't going to draw the attention of one of the Others every time it's spoken.

Example of Character Creation

Chuck is creating a character for Matt's **Changeling** game. Matt tells Chuck that the game will center around the political woes of the freehold of Miami and the ongoing guerrilla effort to unseat the Summer King. The Lost of the Spring, Autumn and Winter Courts — along with a few Summer changelings whose loyalty to the seasonal Court outweighs their loyalty to Summer — are desperately trying to establish an alliance powerful enough to restore the proper order of things. The game will focus on the themes of paranoia and mistrust that run through changeling society as the Courts struggle to forge an alliance and keep it together long enough to stage the coup. Matt says that the game is designed to thrust the troupe into the center of this intrigue, espionage and diplomacy, and requests that all characters be, if not devoted to the alliance's cause from the start, at least ambivalent enough to be swayed.

Matt hands Chuck a copy of the character sheet, and Chuck jots down a few initial ideas on scratch paper before turning them into a fully fleshed out character. Before the creation process begins, he runs down his ideas with both Matt and the rest of the troupe, to be sure they fit with the chronicle and don't clash too severely with other players' characters.

Step One: Concept

The first concept that pops into Chuck's head for a political game about a revolution in the freehold is "firebrand." He decides that his character, rather than being a sneaky political manipulator or a brutish leg breaker, will be a passionate and vocal decrier of the Summer King's endless, unlawful rule. Before being taken into the Hedge, he was a civil rights activist, crusading for any cause that caught his eye: gay marriage, gun control, nuclear disarmament. What he lacked in consistency he made up for in passion and enthusiasm. He briefly considers playing one of the Fairest, but then decides to play off of the "firebrand" image more literally, and decides to go with an Elemental of the Fireheart kith. He likes the idea of the character's fierce, burning zeal glowing inside him, illuminating him like a candle and actually warming the air around him.

Chuck bats around a few ideas for names before settling on "Jack Tallow" as the character's changeling name. It feels like a good "fairy tale" name without being so ostentatious as to seem like an affectation.

Step Two: Attributes

Now Chuck must prioritize Jack's Attributes. As a passionate firebrand, Social Attributes are the obvious choice for primary. Knowing that a strong personality and quick tongue are only so useful without real wit to back them up, he decides to make Mental Attributes secondary. This leaves Jack's Physical Attributes as tertiary. That's fine with Chuck; he sees Jack as being much like a candle flame: bright and hot, but easily snuffed out.

In keeping with playing a character in the vein of Patrick Henry, Chuck immediately puts three of his five points into Jack's Presence, making him an extremely forceful, magnetic individual with a Presence of 4. His remaining two points he places in Manipulation, raising the score to 3; Jack knows when to ease off the fire and brimstone and apply a little subtlety. This leaves him with a below-average Composure of 1. Jack is a grand orator and a savvy dealmaker, but he tends to fly off the handle at the slightest provocation.

Next, Chuck has four points to assign to Mental Attributes. He decides that Jack is quick on his mental feet, but not exceptionally bright or focused in his endeavors. Chuck assigns two points to Wits, raising the total to 3. He the puts one dot each into Intelligence and Resolve, which puts him squarely in the average in those areas.

Finally, Chuck assigns his three points to Physical Attributes. He sees Jack as nimble and athletic, but frail of constitution — he "snuffs out" easily. With that in mind, Chuck puts two points into his Dexterity, raising it to 3, and the remaining dot in Strength, raising it to 2.

Step Three: Skills

Next, Chuck must assign Jack's Skills. Deciding that the priorities he selected for Attributes have served him well so far, Chuck assigns 11 points to Social Skills, seven to Mental Skills and four to Physical Skills.

Knowing that Jack will live or die by his oratory abilities, Chuck assigns four points to Expression. Three more points go into Persuasion, representing Jack's ability to not only lay down the rhetoric but also reasonably bring people around to his point of view. Thanks to Jack's extensive work with various oppressed and downtrodden groups, he has developed a genuine sympathy for his fellow man (or changeling), so two points go into Empathy. Chuck splits the last two points between Intimidation and Subterfuge. Jack doesn't like to outright lie or threaten to convince people of his position, but he's willing to bend the truth a little or drop vague hints of possible calamitous outcomes if his advice isn't heeded.

Moving on to Mental Skills, Chuck realizes that many of the causes Jack would have crusaded for are the sort of thing that get quietly buried or swept under the proverbial rug. To ferret them out, Chuck puts two points into Investigation, and two more into Academics to reflect Jack's research into his causes. Chuck puts one point into Politics; Jack is vaguely aware of the political ramifications of his actions, but generally relies more on the sledgeham-

mer of public opinion than the scalpel of realpolitik. Since escaping the Hedge, Jack has picked up a bit of occult lore, so one more point goes into Occult. Jack's last dot goes into Computer, since the Internet was a vital tool for his activism work.

Chuck has four points to distribute amongst his Physical Skills, and opts to adopt a "Jack of all trades" approach. He puts one point each into Athletics, Drive, Firearms and Larceny. Jack's fiery nature has made him light and nimble, and he's always had a soft spot for driving fast cars. Since he's protested in favor of some controversial issues in his time, Jack took a handgun course at a local shooting range and bought himself a gun shortly before he was taken. Finally, in order to get to the "real truth" behind the issues, Jack sometimes had to jimmy a lock or discreetly "borrow" confidential files.

Step Four: Skill Specialties

Chuck now decides on Jack's Skill Specialties, the specific areas in which he excels. To further reflect Jack's magnetic speaking ability, his first Specialty is in Expression as Oratory. For his second, Chuck chooses a Specialty of Cover-ups in Investigation; Jack has a talent for digging things up that other people would prefer to keep buried. Finally, his last Specialty goes into Firearms as Pistols. Jack isn't extensively trained in marksmanship, but before he was taken he made it a point to practice at the pistol range at least once a week.

Step Five: Changeling Traits

Next, Chuck addresses the unique supernatural Traits that define Jack's changeling nature. Chuck already decided on the Elemental seeming and the Fireheart kith in Step One. He jots down the blessing and curse of the Elemental seeming, and the Flickering Acumen ability of the Firehearts. For Jack's free Specialty, Chuck chooses to add (Quick Reflexes) to Athletics, emphasizing his "quick and nimble" view of his fire-infused body.

In looking over the descriptions of the changeling Courts, Chuck decides that Jack's passion and zeal fit best with the ideals of the Spring Court. His fiery nature and willingness stand up and fight for his beliefs might also mesh well with the Summer Court, but Chuck decides to stay with the Spring Court for now and makes a note that maybe Jack has a few friends in the Summer Court.

Now Chuck chooses Jack's Contracts, the supernatural bargains that give changelings power over this world. Chuck has a total of five dots to spend on Contracts. He spends three dots on the Elements Contract, naturally choosing the fire aspect of each clause; he writes down Cloak of Fire, Armor of Fire's Fury and Control Fire. His remaining two dots go toward the Vainglory Contract, gaining the clauses of Mask of Superiority and Songs of Distant Arcadia.

Jack's Wyrd starts at one dot.

Step Six: Merits

Chuck has seven points to spend on Jack's Merits. Because Jack's a member of the Spring Court, he gets one free dot in Mantle (Spring). Chuck briefly debates spending three of them to raise Jack's Wyrd to 2, but ultimately decides against it. Instead, Chuck invests two points in Contacts, selecting as his fields "civil rights activists" and "reporters." Jack still has a few friends within the activism scene, and he's leaked enough noteworthy stories in his day that there are reporters who owe him favors. Chuck puts two points in Eidetic Memory, reflecting Jack's ability to perfectly recall statistics and figures to support his position, and two more into Status (Freehold). Jack has no particular rank or standing within his Court, but his passion and idealism are generally respected by Miami's changelings, and he can get a little bit of help from fringe members in exchange for a few good words. Finally, to make things interesting, Chuck puts his last Merit point in Court Goodwill (Summer). Although not a member himself, Jack's fiery rhetoric endears him to some in the Court of Wrath, especially the lower tiers who have their own doubts about the Summer King. Matt makes a note of this choice and reminds himself to give Jack's conflicted loyalties some focus during the game.

Step Seven: Advantages

Once all of Jack's Traits have been chosen, Chuck can calculate Jack's Advantages. Adding together Jack's Resolve of 2 and his Composure of 1, Chuck marks Jack's Willpower as 3. Jack's Clarity begins at the standard seven dots; Chuck could reduce that by up to two points to gain five bonus experience points, but decides he'd rather not make that trade. Musing over the lists of Virtues and Vices, Chuck ultimately decides on Charity as Jack's Virtue and Pride as his Vice. Jack genuinely wants to make the world a better place and help people, but he tends to fall into the trap of thinking his way of making things better is the only way.

Jack's Stamina of 1 and his Size factor of 5 add up to give him a Health of 6. His Dexterity of 3 and Composure of 1 give him an Initiative of 4. His Wits and Dexterity are both equal, and so is his Defense with a 3. Lastly, Chuck adds Jack's Strength of 2 and his Dexterity of 3 to 5 (his species factor), giving Jack a Speed of 10.

Jack begins play with five Glamour, equal to his half the size of his pool.

Step Eight: The Spark of Life

Chuck now has a pretty good idea of who Jack is, from a fairly broad perspective. Now it's time to fill in the details. Chuck looks over the list of questions on p. 80 for inspiration to help round out Jack's history and character.

He decides that Jack lived in Miami before he was taken, and that he studied law and politics at the University of Miami where he became involved in several student-ac-

tivism groups. In keeping with Jack's low Resolve, Chuck decides that Jack was a passionate but easily distracted activist, who often moved on from one cause to the next as his interest waned. Chuck briefly considers placing Jack's mortal life in the 1960s, but after some consideration decides he prefers the story potential that comes from discovering friends and immediate family still alive and not aged beyond recognition, and so decides that Jack was taken just a few years ago. Chuck deliberately does not choose a human name, rationalizing that Jack doesn't recall it (and this way, Matt can introduce mortal relatives of Jack's without the name giving it away).

Chuck decides that it was Jack's "firebrand" attitude that attracted his Keeper, a cruel and heartless Princess of Winter. Jack's soul burned with zeal, and that warmth drew the Princess like a moth to a flame. Chuck leaves the details of Jack's imprisonment sketchy, deciding that Jack has vague memories of being used as a kind of living candle, of the agony of burning from the inside out to provide light and warmth whenever his Keeper fancied.

Jack's escape is the last major aspect of the character Chuck decides on. He envisions Jack, half-mad from the pain and from being treated as nothing more than a tool, deliberately starting a blaze while his Keeper left him unattended. In the chaos that followed, he escaped the Princess's other servitors and began his mad flight through the Hedge, burning through thickets he could not go through. He emerged, bloodied, burned and battered, in his old hometown, in Coral Gables near the University of Miami. Matt decides that the story of Jack's escape will make an excellent prelude leading up to his emergence in changeling society and meeting the other characters.

And that's it. Chuck is now ready to play, and Jack is ready to dive into the tumultuous politics and revolution of the freehold of Miami.

New Advantage: Wyrd

All changelings can feel the magic of Faerie pulsing through their veins. This transformative power within is called the Wyrd, and represents how much the character has been changed by the effects of Glamour. Most Lost characters begin play knowing how to tap into only a small fraction of this tremendous power. As they experiment with their new powers, however, they find their magic growing in strength, their memories of their servitude returning with greater clarity and even some of their fundamental human limits pushed aside, allowing them to develop all manner of astounding capabilities both magical and mundane.

Just as anything else from Faerie, this power comes at a price. Most changelings fled Arcadia in order to retain some semblance of humanity and individuality, but increasing a character's Wyrd essentially continues the transformation into the inhuman. The higher a changeling's Wyrd, the more volatile and intense his emotions become. Ultimately, his passions can become so intense that even friends and allies are put off by the intensity of the character's feelings. Maintaining the illusion of humanity becomes increasingly difficult as well, as elements of a changeling's true form begin to poke through their façade, further widening the rift with ordi-

nary life. As if that were not enough, a changeling with a high Wyrd finds that they become bound by certain superstitions and folktale weaknesses.

As part of the changeling template, changelings receive one dot of Wyrd, representing the transformation they experienced in Arcadia. Additional dots may be purchased with experience points, or initial Merit dots can be spent to add extra Wyrd dots (see p. 74). Increasing a changeling's Wyrd rating typically involves such activities as becoming more involved in the magical elements of her life, experimenting with her new powers and capabilities or traveling the Hedge.

Benefits of Wyrd

• Wyrd affects a changeling's ability to manifest her magical energy, representing how many points of Glamour a player can spend in a single turn. Wyrd also limits how much Glamour a changeling can contain at one time; the higher her Wyrd, the more Glamour she can store within herself. Changelings who have spent time learning to master their magical nature are capable of absorbing larger amounts of power than those that have not, not to mention able to use it more quickly and efficiently in times of duress.

• Changelings with Wyrd 6 or higher can increase their Attributes and Skills past five dots. Just as the heroes (and villains) of myths and fables, the changeling's mastery of her Wyrd has made her larger than life, allowing her to increase her Mental, Social and Physical capabilities to truly legendary degrees.

• Wyrd determines how many goblin fruits (p. 225) she can carry in the mortal world at any given time.

• A changeling's Wyrd rating also determines how many basic pledges (specifically, vows) she may have active at a given time. A changeling may only maintain a number of Glamour-infused vows at one time equal to her Wyrd +3. If she wishes to adopt a new vow but is currently at her maximum, she must either be released from one of her existing vows, requiring the permission of the other parties involved, or she can choose to break one of them and accept the penalties for doing so. If she attempts to craft another vow while at her maximum, it simply fails, and any other changelings involved are aware that the pledge was not mystically binding.

• A changeling's Wyrd rating also affects her dreams, specifically her recollection of her time in Faerie. The stronger her Wyrd becomes, the more she begins to dream of Faerie, her Keeper, her time in servitude and the other changelings she might have seen there. Some motleys form after members realize they have been seeing each other in dreams or even that they once were friends and allies during their time in Arcadia. While all changelings dream of Faerie from time to time, those with low Wyrd ratings (1–3) tend to forget them almost immediately upon waking, remembering only confusing and isolated fragments. A character with a stronger Wyrd rating (4–6) still forgets as many dreams as she remembers, but those that she does recall are preserved relatively intact, like clear but fading photographs. Those rare changelings with powerful Wyrd ratings (7–9) dream often of their time in Faerie and remember almost everything as clearly as though they were watching it unfold from just a few steps away. Lastly, those paragons with Wyrd 10 enjoy frequent dreams of Arcadia so real and unclouded it feels as though they are actually re-living the experience, which, given the treatment that many changelings endured, can be a rather dubious pleasure indeed.

As with most things related to dreams and omens, this capability is largely the province of the Storyteller, who decides when such dreams are appropriate as well as what images and symbols they contain. However, the player is free to suggest certain elements or themes as a way of exploring his character's personal history, explaining the develop-

Wyrd	Attribute/Skill/Contract Maximum	Max Glamour/Max Glamour per Turn	Incite Bedlam	Total Frailties
1	5	10/1		
2	5	11/2		
3	5	12/3		
4	5	13/4		
5	5	14/5		
6	6	15/6	One per chronicle	One minor
7	7	20/7	One per story	Two minor
8	8	30/8	One per session	One major, two minor
9	9	50/10	One per day	One major, three minor
10	10	100/15	One per scene	Two major, three minor

ment of certain Traits or even forging relationships between characters. A character might start to recall Faerie battles in which he wielded a blade and begin to improve his Melee rating, while two characters currently at odds might find a complication arising in their rivalry if they begin to remember a desperate alliance during their escape from Arcadia. The Storyteller is the final arbiter of such requests.

From a mechanical perspective, the changeling also adds her Wyrd rating to any rolls related to remembering or interpreting dreams. Just as any other character, the changeling still must decipher the unusual combination of symbolism, imagery and emotions that constitutes the "language" of dreams, but as her Wyrd rises, her fluency in this subtle tongue increases, making it easier to understand what the unconscious mind is trying to say.

•A character's Wyrd is used to resist the effects of many mystical powers, whether the tricks and Contracts of other changelings or the strange talents of the other supernatural denizens of the World of Darkness. The more dots she has, the more dice her player gets to make contested rolls against these powers. See p. 169 for more details.

• Wyrd also allows a changeling to resist the ravages of time. The higher her Wyrd grows, the longer her lifespan grows. For more details, see pp. 174–175.

Incite Bedlam

Although raising a changeling's Wyrd threatens to distance him somewhat from the ordinary humans around him, his attunement to the primal power within him also allows him to tap into raw emotional energies that even other changelings cannot normally access. By calling up his own extreme emotions, the changeling can channel that energy into a desired emotional response and send it surging through those around him, overwhelming nearby targets with highly concentrated passions and urges. Subjects who fail to resist become consumed by the passion the changeling has released and abandon other activities in favor of following the whims of their incited emotions.

Cost: 1 Willpower + 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Wyrd vs. subject's Composure + Wyrd

Action: Contested; resistance is reflexive. Affects a maximum number of targets equal to the changeling's dice pool before any modifiers.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The target does not feel what the changeling desires, and immediately gains a strong sense of antipathy toward the changeling. The target is immune to further uses of this power by that changeling for the rest of the story.

Failure: The target is unmoved.

Success: The target gets caught up in the emotion radiating from the changeling and is inclined to act on whatever behavior it inspires in her at the time (running from the most obvious source of danger while afraid, lashing out after becoming enraged, seeking pleasure while in the grip of the desire, etc.) The target remains in the grip of this emotion for the rest of the scene, and while not completely irrational, should a question arise, the target will always choose to act on instinct and emotional response rather than the dictates of logic and practicality. The target is not blind to danger and will not commit plainly suicidal acts, but depending on the situation and the emotion unleashed, his judgment may become somewhat impaired as to the risks of actions that are not as obviously self-destructive. The target does not recognize anything unusual about this emotional outburst or the behavior it causes while it is happening, though once the scene ends, he may question his sudden change of heart, and supernatural creatures might very well suspect an unnatural cause.

Exceptional Success: As a success, with the added benefit that subjects find a way to rationalize their behavior as stemming from their own desires, and will not think to investigate the matter further unless given a compelling outside reason to do so. Depending on the outcome of the situation, subjects may also find themselves revisiting it frequently in dreams or nightmares for some time afterward.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+3	The changeling is unleashing his Court's chosen emotion.
+3	The target has a major derangement (only counts once).
+1	The emotion is from the Court most closely related to the character's own (Spring/Summer, Autumn/Winter).
+1	The target has a minor derangement (only counts once).
+1	The target is already feeling emotions similar to those being unleashed.
+1	Each additional point of Glamour spent, up to a maximum of five.
+0	The changeling is Courtless.
–1	The target is relatively calm and relaxed.
–1	The emotion is from the Court of minor opposition (Summer/Autumn, Spring/Winter).
–3	The target is feeling emotions strongly in opposition to those unleashed.
–3	The changeling is unleashing the emotion of the Court of major opposition (Summer/Winter, Spring/Autumn).

Note that this is a wild, unrestrained release of emotional energy, with none of the safeguards or fine control of a proper Contract. Only the four major emotions represented by the Courts can be unleashed in this fashion

— desire, wrath, fear and sorrow — and Incite Bedlam is utterly incapable of sending out nuanced emotional messages or any kind of actual commands. Indeed, unless the character scores an exceptional success, the changeling might very well be targeted by some of the individuals caught up in this wave of emotion, so using Incite Bedlam to enrage a group of enemies is seldom a good idea. Naturally, a character may attempt to guide the behavior of the targets through other methods, such as offering up a scapegoat for an angry mob or shouting "run for your lives!" after unleashing a wave of fear through the crowd, but the Storyteller is the final arbiter of exactly how any given individuals react.

This power automatically targets those in closest proximity to the changeling at the time it is used, including fellow motley members or other allies, and this power always attempts to affect the maximum number of targets possible given the character's dice pool and number of individuals present — the character cannot choose to affect a smaller number of targets, selectively target individuals in the midst of a crowd or even bypass those standing closest to him in order to reach more distant targets.

Drawbacks of Wyrd

• **Visibility:** As a character's Wyrd rises, so, too, does her "attraction" to the True Fae. Those with little power are less likely to be targeted as valuable by any Gentry who don't already have a… vested interest in them. By contrast, once a changeling's Wyrd reaches 6 or higher, she becomes much more interesting to any True Fae that might stray across her path. Her raw power has potentially grown to rival that of some of the lesser beings of Arcadia, for one thing, and even those who still dwarf her mystical might still recognize that she has begun to show definite promise. A changeling who developed her Wyrd in hopes of being able to defend herself against her old captors might find them full of pride in her "accomplishments," since she has perhaps completed the work they began with her when they took her.

As with most things related to the Others, the Storyteller has control over how this mechanic manifests during play. It shouldn't be used to generate aimless and random True Fae encounters, but rather to place characters with high Wyrd ratings squarely in the sights of one or more Arcadian lords, who then begin weaving their schemes accordingly. While many changelings find themselves involved in some plot related to these arcane entities at one time or another, characters with Wyrd 6 or higher will be treated with special consideration, assigned roles of central importance to the twisted intrigues designed by the True Fae.

• **Addiction:** Changelings whose Wyrd rises to 6 or higher become physically addicted to and psychologically fixated on obtaining Glamour, requiring increasingly regular infusions of fresh Glamour in order to sate their

bodies' increasingly alien cravings. A character with Wyrd 6+ can go (11 – Wyrd) days before needing a new "fix" of fresh Glamour. If the changeling does not harvest a number of Glamour points equal to half her Wyrd before that interval is up, she suffers one level of lethal damage each day afterward as her body literally consumes itself in an effort to satisfy its hunger. This damage cannot be healed or prevented by any means until the character once again tastes Glamour.

Frailties

As a changeling becomes more infused with the power of Glamour, some of its stranger rules and limitations begin to apply to her as well. These quirks of her fae nature are called frailties. Frailties come in two forms, *taboos* and *banes*. A *taboo* is a behavioral restriction that either compels or prohibits a changeling to commit certain acts in specific situations. A *bane* is something that causes a changeling injury, usually an item but occasionally a type of person or situation. Damage caused by banes, both major and minor, automatically bypasses all forms of armor or magical protection and cannot be healed by any means until the character is removed from the presence of the bane.

A character may attempt to take action against the source of the frailty rather than avoid it or flee its presence, but to act so directly against something that weakens her so badly is extremely taxing on a character. She suffers a –3 dice penalty on all rolls related to working against the cause of a minor frailty and a –5 dice penalty on all rolls related to confronting the source of a major frailty.

Minor Frailty: This level represents a frailty that is highly inconvenient but unlikely to come up often in daily life. Taboos at this level tend to be triggered only by very specific circumstances, for example, while banes are usually uncommon items or situations that won't be casually encountered very often. Examples of minor taboos include being forced to pick up and count spilled grains of rice, or being unable to eat anything unless given verbal permission by one's host. Minor banes might be a painful aversion to the sound of church bells, exposure to wolfsbane or hearing a one's name said backwards. A character may resist the compulsion surrounding a minor taboo for one scene with the expenditure of a Willpower point, while exposure to a minor bane causes one automatic level of bashing damage per turn until the bane is removed or the changeling can escape its presence.

Major Frailty: This level involves taboos that are substantial impediments to important aspects of daily life, and that cannot easily be avoided in the course of a normal day. Likewise, major banes are typically much more common substances or circumstances, and will rapidly prove fatal to the unfortunate character who is exposed to them. Examples of major taboos could include being forced to walk backward at all times, inability to go outside while the moon is in the sky or being compelled to perform a favor for anyone who recites the character's true name. Major banes might include such things as being burned by religious items, feeling pain in the presence of children or that destroying an effigy of the character will cause him actual injury. Breaking a major taboo requires the expenditure of a Willpower point per *turn* the character acts against this custom, while exposure to a major bane inflicts one automatic level of lethal damage per turn until the changeling flees the bane's presence.

Needless to say, most changelings keep their frailties as secret as possible, lest their enemies find ways to use these limitations against them. Players and Storytellers should work together to design frailties that are interesting and appropriate for each character, though the Storyteller has the final say on what frailties are acceptable. Should ideas prove hard to come by, a wealth of potential frailties can be found in folktales, legends and myths, not to mention scholarly works about those same subjects. It is important to note that while these drawbacks should definitely present a challenge to overcome, they should always enhance players' enjoyment of the story, not make it feel like a chore to play their characters. With that in mind, create frailties that are intriguing, that embody the character's personal history and attitude, that make sense when one considers who the character is and what he is best known for. Handled correctly, frailties can add a fascinating layer to a character, as knowledge of a great weakness can throw a character's other qualities into sharp relief.

Decreasing Wyrd

Although this is a rare practice, a changeling may choose to voluntarily lower her Wyrd rating. Perhaps she has become frightened by the degree of her transformation, or disturbed at the disconnection it causes between her and her mortal associates. Occasionally changelings simply walk away from their old existence, and abandoning their power is just another way they try to distance themselves from their former lives. Whatever the reason for lowering a character's Wyrd, it must always be a choice made of her own volition — a changeling may be cajoled or coerced into lowering her Wyrd, but she cannot be outright mind controlled or otherwise compelled to do so. However unfair the choice might be, it must still be a choice.

Once the decision has been made, the process of lowering her Wyrd is deceptively simple: the changeling must cut herself off from the world of Glamour almost entirely. First she must rid herself of all Glamour points in excess of the absolute *minimum* required to avoid suffering from Glamour deprivation. From that point on, she cannot use Contracts, ensorcell mortals, cross into the Hedge, dream walk, employ supernatural Merits, use tokens, use any other magical abilities or even attempt to gather more Glamour than the smallest possible amount needed to survive. In effect, she must go "cold turkey" regarding all things related to Glamour; otherwise her Wyrd will continue to sustain it-

self on even the smallest shred of energy and her efforts will be wasted. Completely passive effects such as a seeming's bonus Specialty will not automatically break this rule, since the changeling cannot control when or how these powers manifest, but should they activate while she is attempting to lower her Wyrd she must do her best to downplay and ignore them as much as possible.

Assuming the changeling can maintain an existence without Glamour and fight off the temptation to replenish her power, Wyrd decreases by one dot after a number of months have passed equal to the character's current Wyrd rating. Thus, a character with Wyrd 9 must abstain from the magical world and uses of Glamour for nine months before her Wyrd rating will be lowered to Wyrd 8. It bears repeating that lowering a changeling's Wyrd requires a *voluntary* decision even if a changeling is caught in an unfortunate situation where he is completely cut off from Glamour and the magical world for a long period of time, his Wyrd will not erode unless he chooses to decrease it during that time. (He might suffer other problems due to a lack of Glamour but not Wyrd loss.) Some rare exceptions to this rule exist, usually as the result of particularly virulent curses or a changeling breaking potent oaths, but these instances are extremely rare and entirely at the Storyteller's discretion.

New Advantage: Glamour

Throughout their durance in Faerie, changelings are both exposed to and warped by Glamour, the energy that makes the miracles and horrors of that alien realm possible. Gradually, they learn the nature of Glamour, which is drawn primarily from the distilled essence of human sentiment. Whether stolen in the arms of an ardent lover, culled from the fury of the battlefield, collected in the wake of a good scare or plucked from the flowers on a grave, Glamour is primal emotion that makes possible the terrible wonders of Arcadia. For all the Gentry's power at shaping and commanding Glamour, however, it is also their inability to generate this precious resource themselves that forces the True Fae to continually steal mortals to serve them. In time, changelings learn to wield this resource themselves, and while they are seldom enchanters on the same scale as their Keepers, they soon learn to tap the power of the Glamour flowing through their veins in ways beyond the ken of any mortal.

Glamour is not a physical necessity, at least not for changelings of Wyrd 5 and below, but it can be very addictive. For those Lost unfortunate enough to have addictive personalities, harvesting Glamour can be the ultimate rush. Even the most intense physical experiences pale in comparison to the sensation of absorbing such primal emotional power. Some changelings resist these urges with the same force of will that brought them through the Hedge, taking Glamour only sparingly and steeling themselves against its allure. Others give themselves over to the addiction, indulging the rush constantly with little regard to what it leads them to do to get it. Yet others tread the ground between these extremes, unable to deny the matchless intensity of harvesting Glamour but unwilling to let that sensation control them. It is a tenuous balance, like so many others in the lives of the Lost.

A character begins play with a number of Glamour points equal to half his Glamour pool as determined by Wyrd (rounded up).

Spending Glamour

A number of common uses for Glamour include the following:

• **Powering Contracts:** Most clauses require at least one Glamour point to activate, and powerful clauses may require more. Unless otherwise specified in the description, a changeling may still cast clauses that require multiple Glamour points, even if the changeling cannot spend the entire amount in one turn the changeling simply must spend his action casting each turn until the required points are spent, and risk having it interrupted by intervening factors in the meantime.

• **Seeming/Kith Blessings:** Each seeming has a special blessing that allows a changeling to spend Glamour to receive a benefit related to her seeming's natural strengths; these are described individually for each seeming. In addition, certain kiths have their own individual advantages in addition to the general seeming blessing, which occasionally requires Glamour as well. Unless otherwise noted, both blessings may be activated simultaneously, provided the changeling can pay the required Glamour.

• **Activating Tokens:** Glamour can be used to "jumpstart" the strange enchanted objects of the fae. A changeling may spend a point of Glamour to forego the usual Wyrd roll to activate a token (see p. 201).

• **Incite Bedlam:** Changelings with a high Wyrd rating gain the special ability to release highly concentrated waves of emotional energy, sweeping up nearby individuals in a frenzy of uninhibited fervor (see p. 85). Unleashing this cascade of emotional energy requires the expenditure of a Glamour point.

• **Strengthening the Mask:** A changeling may spend a point of Glamour to strengthen the illusion of the Mask for a scene, preventing other fae from seeing his fae mien. His shadow still betrays him, however. For more information, see p. 172.

• **Dropping the Mask:** By spending his entire pool of Glamour at once, a changeling may temporarily dispel the Mask for a scene, allowing anyone to perceive his true mien. This ability is an exception to the usual limitation of only being able to spend a number of Glamour points in a turn determined by Wyrd. For more information, see p. 172.

Harvesting Glamour

There are several different methods changelings employ to replenish lost Glamour points, a process commonly known as "harvesting." The specifics of these processes are outlined below. It should be noted that except where specifically detailed otherwise, changelings cannot harvest Glamour directly from their own kind, or from True Fae or any other native denizens of Faerie or the Hedge. The inability of changelings to harvest the emotions of their own kind is just one more indicator of their lost humanity. This immunity also extends to those who have been driven into Bedlam (p. 85) by a changeling, due to the fae source of the emotions' strength.

Changelings may also attempt to harvest emotions and dream energies from other supernatural beings. However, doing so presents some unique risks and variables, depending on the type of being in question. Mages, psychics and hedge wizards are treated normally, though changelings who attempt to enter their dreams occasionally find such beings more lucid than their average victim. Werewolves and their ilk are treated normally unless the changeling is attempting to harvest anger in any form — any such attempts receive *double* the amount of Glamour for the number of successes rolled, but the changeling must also roll their Willpower or suffer a fit of violent hysteria for the rest of the scene. Ghosts and vampires provide minimal Glamour — no matter how many successes are rolled, a changeling trying to harvest Glamour from the emotions of these undead beings receives only a single Glamour point, and a rather hollow-feeling one at that. Prometheans provide Glamour in the ordinary fashion, although their emotions often feel curiously secondhand. Ultimately, the Storyteller is the final arbiter of what results from attempting to harvest Glamour from a particular supernatural being.

• **Emotions:** The most common way to harvest Glamour is to feed on human emotions. To do this, a changeling simply must find a human who is experiencing strong emotions and attempt to leech some of that energy. Both "positive" and "negative" emotions can potentially provide Glamour; the strength of the emotion is what truly matters, not the type. Exactly what kind of roll is required to gain Glamour in this fashion depends on the action or situation taken to obtain. For example, an Ogre who wishes to get a quick rush of fear might pick up a hapless victim and slam him against a wall, requiring a Strength + Intimidation roll, a Spring Court club kid might use Manipulation + Socialize to entice a naïve young thing to join him for a bit of lustful fun in a darkened corner and a retiring Darkling might use Composure + Empathy to soak up the sorrow of a funeral home while maintaining the pretense of a grieving relative. The Storyteller is the final arbiter of what traits are required for a particular harvesting roll. One Glamour point is obtained per success on a harvesting roll.

A harvesting roll may be modified by several factors. As a rule, momentary flashes of emotion and buried old feelings are not nearly as "nourishing" as fresher or more in-depth emotions. The Storyteller may choose to penalize harvesting rolls that involve generating mere flashes of emotion, such jumping out of the dark to startle someone, kicking someone in the shin to generate anger or mentioning a relative who died years ago. Likewise, rolls involving truly extreme or in-depth emotions, such as new love, fresh grief over a recently deceased loved one or full-out rage over a deadly insult may receive bonus dice to reflect the relative ease of harvesting such potent feelings. Multiple changelings may attempt to feed off the same source simultaneously, but each additional changeling subtracts one die from the harvesting roll; this does not represent a scarcity of available material so much as their efforts beginning to impede each other.

A changeling who is attempting to coax out the emotion of his Court receives an additional Glamour point in the event of a successful roll (not to exceed his Glamour maximum). Thus, a Winter Court Darkling seeking to feast on the sorrow of mourners at a funeral home would receive a bonus Glamour point if his roll succeeds, since sorrow is his Court's emotion. Lastly, feeding off the emotions of disturbed mortals or frenzied supernatural beings is a risky process while such lunatics often generate a great deal of emotional energy, it can also infect an unwary changeling with some of their madness. Any time a changeling harvests Glamour from a target currently suffering from an active derangement, the changeling must roll Resolve + Composure. Failure means that one of changeling's own derangements becomes active for the scene; if the changeling does not possess a derangement, then he suffers the target's active derangement instead.

Harvesting Glamour in this fashion doesn't actually drain energy; the mortal does not suddenly feel less emotional as the changeling harvests the mortal's feelings. Many changelings take comfort in this fact, interpreting the lack of visible harm as less of a violation. However, whispers tell of mortals who are subjected to regular harvesting over a long period of time eventually losing some indescribable, yet vital spark. While these ravaged souls remain the stuff of rumors, it is enough of a fear that many changelings avoid tapping the same resource too often, especially in the case of friends or loved ones. Just in case.

• **Dreams:** Another method of restoring lost Glamour points is to step into a mortal's dreams and attempt to absorb some of the emotional energy contained therein. Freed from the limiting wishes of the conscious mind, dreams tap directly into the strongest fears and desires of the soul, and thus provide an impressive font of emotional energy for changelings willing to brave the strange scenery, surreal logic and lurking horrors of the dreamscape. This method obviously requires a bit more preparation than some other

types of harvesting, since the changeling must use the necessary pledges or Contracts to gain access to a mortal's dreams, but it allows the changeling to control access to the source a bit more than hunting for emotions does, and leaves even fewer traces of the changeling's presence behind.

Harvesting Glamour from a mortal's dream typically involves a roll of Composure + Wits + Wyrd, making it potentially one of the most lucrative sources of Glamour as a changeling increases in power. Each success generates one point of Glamour. At the Storyteller's discretion, this roll may be altered to represent changing circumstances in the dreamscape or the demands of harvesting the Glamour of a particular dream. For example, a dream that centers around understanding the pain the dreamer felt as a small child might require Composure + Empathy +Wyrd instead, while feeding on the fear generated by escaping from a nightmare beast could change the roll to straight Dexterity + Athletics + Wyrd as the changeling struggles to outdistance the monster. Regardless of the situation, a changeling's Wyrd rating is added to harvesting rolls involving dreams, as their Wyrd aids the changeling in interpreting dreams and communing with this primal source of emotional energy.

The roll to harvest Glamour from a dream is most commonly modified by urgency. Unlike emotions, which can provide energy almost instantly, a changeling must typically spend a bit of time immersed in the energy of the dream in order to obtain Glamour. Drinking from the font of dreams allows a changeling to drink more deeply than most sources, but it does tend to be more time-consuming. Attempting to rush the process and gain Glamour before the dream has run its course typically involves the changeling taking a more active role to move along the action of the dream. Penalties are assessed depending on exactly how much the changeling wants to try to speed up the process.

• **Pledges:** Fulfilling obligations sworn with the weight of the Wyrd is another way that changelings commonly obtain Glamour; the exact amount of Glamour gained and the circumstances required to generate it depend on the specifics of the pledge in question. For more on the creation of pledges that bestow Glamour as a boon, see "Pledges," p. 181.

• **Hedge Bounty:** Not all Glamour is gained in congress with mortals or upholding vows sworn in the eyes of the Wyrd. Changelings may attempt to harvest Glamour from certain items found in the Hedge. Most of these items take the form of goblin fruits, although the meat of certain Hedge creatures is also said to impart Glamour to those who dare to consume it. In rare cases, changelings may even be able to harvest Glamour by "consuming" inedible objects or even more bizarre feats of harvesting. A forest made of shining crystal

might provide Glamour in the form of glass "fruit" that releases energy when shattered, for example, while humming a particular musical tune might impart Glamour within the confines of a strange realm. For more on goblin fruits and their effects, see pp. 222–225.

Modified Advantage: Clarity (Morality)

Changelings are no longer human, but neither are they fully fae. Upon returning to Earth, most changelings find themselves walking a fine line between two worlds. They cannot deny what they have become, but at the same time, it is their strong connection to this world that allowed them to return, and they feel a need to identify with and be accepted by the world around them.

Clarity tracks this delicate balance between the mundane world and the maddening realms of Glamour. A changeling with high Clarity is able to easily distinguish between the two worlds and might even become slightly more adept at spotting supernatural phenomena otherwise hidden from view. By contrast, a changeling with low Clarity finds her perceptions spiraling out of control. She starts having trouble distinguishing her dreams from reality, and starts mixing up elements from the two worlds. She might begin perceiving strange creatures from the Hedge in the ordinary world or incongruously normal fragments of mundane life amid the riot of Faerie. At first these mistaken perceptions are transitory and relatively harmless, but as Clarity slips, they interfere in her life more and more until it is all but impossible to exist sanely in either reality and she is reduced to a mere shell of a being.

Breaking Points

Whenever a changeling acts in a way that threatens her Clarity, the psychic turmoil is called a potential breaking point: her actions have threatened to destabilize the delicate balance of her dual existence. A loss of Clarity usually ensues from actions that disrupt a changeling's ability to think of herself in terms of her human identity as well as her new fae existence.

A changeling who commits an act that triggers a breaking point must make a degeneration roll to see if she loses a dot of Clarity. If an act would seem to be described at two different points on the chart, always use the lower of the two ratings to determine the act's severity. For example, a character decides on an impulse to kidnap a mortal child she sees wandering the woods, an act that would seem to fall under both the "impulsive serious crimes" listed at Clarity 4 and "kidnapping" at Clarity 3. Since Clarity 3 is the lower of the two ratings, it is the rating used to resolve the situation.

Starting characters begin with a rating of Clarity 7, to represent the strength of mind and memory that brought them through the Hedge and back into the realm of their birth. However, the world is never exactly what they remembered, and the shock of that realization opens the Lost up to quicker Clarity loss than before. Thus, characters can lose Clarity much more quickly in play than they did during the prelude, with their return being the catalyst. That isn't to say that all changelings retain a high degree of Clarity during their initial stay in Faerie, of course. It's just that those who don't never make it back at all. One theory holds that a changeling is reunited with his severed soul during his escape. The loss of the soul while in Faerie allowed the changeling to endure, but now that the soul is housed once more in the changeling's body, he is much more vulnerable. This suggestion is controversial among the Lost; it can't be proved, but neither can it be disproved.

Note that Clarity is not quite a system of morals. Acts that trigger a breaking point may be morally reprehensible or not. The true measure is whether or not these acts might awaken psychic traumas that distort the changeling's perspective, or push the changeling too far down the path of ignoring one of her two distinct selves. Impassioned or impulsive crimes often awaken troubling flashes of the mercurial Others and their ways, for instance. Kidnapping is a particularly dangerous activity for the Lost, as it awakens many a feeling that they would rather keep buried.

A failed degeneration roll may also mean that the changeling's player must make a Clarity roll to resist acquiring a derangement, if the changeling's Clarity is lower than 8. See the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 96–100, for information on derangements. The new derangement is linked to the lost dot of Clarity; the derangement persists until the character recovers the lost dot, regaining her perspective and sufficient Clarity to recover from such a devastating breaking point.

Note that a changeling is not immune to breaking points resulting from her being driven to satisfy the needs of her Vice. While changelings are passionate beings, they must still be careful to avoid the temptation to behave in ways that will upset their perspectives, or else the momentary rush gained from indulging their Vices will wind up costing them bitterly.

Clarity	Breaking Point
10	Entering the Hedge. Dreamwalking. Using magic to accomplish a task when it could be achieved just as well without. Minor unexpected life changes. (Roll five dice)
9	Using tokens or other mystical items. Going a day without human contact. Minor selfish acts. (Roll five dice)
8	Breaking mundane promises or commitments, especially to attend to faerie matters. Changing Courts. Injury to another (accidental or otherwise). (Roll four dice)
7	Taking psychotropic drugs. Serious unexpected life changes. Petty theft. (Roll four dice)

6	Revealing your true form to unensorcelled mortals. Going a week without human contact. Obvious displays of magic in front of witnesses. Grand theft (burglary). (Roll three dice)
5	Killing another changeling. Killing a fetch. (Roll three dice)
4	Breaking formal oaths or pledges. Extreme unexpected life changes (pregnancy, losing one's home, etc.). Impassioned or impulsive serious crimes (manslaughter). (Roll three dice)
3	Actively harming a mortal by ravaging their dreams. Going a month without human contact. Kidnapping. Developing a derangement.* (Roll two dice)
2	Killing a human. Casual/callous crime against other supernaturals (serial murder). (Roll two dice)
1	Spending time in Arcadia. Prolonged or intimate contact with the True Fae. Mortal identity is suddenly and unexpectedly destroyed, totally abandoned or otherwise fundamentally changed. Heinous acts of torture, depravity or perversion. (Roll two dice)

* Does not include derangements brought on by failed degeneration rolls.

Benefits of Clarity

Keen Senses

A changeling whose Clarity is 8 or higher receives a +2 dice bonus on all rolls related to sensory perception. Changelings with a high Clarity rating are used to paying close attention to their surroundings, and they are highly attentive to even small changes in the world around them. This bonus applies in all realms, even Arcadia.

Kenning

Changelings with a strong Clarity rating are so adept at sorting the mystical from the mundane that their ability to spot the telltale signs of supernatural phenomena becomes incredibly sharp. This heightened awareness is most commonly referred to as "kenning." A player whose character's Clarity rating is 6 or higher may choose to spend a Willpower point and ask the Storyteller to secretly roll the player's Clarity to detect the presence of the supernatural in the area.

Dramatic Failure: A potentially disastrous reading of the situation, as determined by the Storyteller. The character might fail to notice the presence of dangerous supernatural entities, or misidentify a harmless bystander as a powerful mystical being. Alternately, the character might simply suffer from some form of sensory overload that imposes a small penalty and renders this ability useless for the rest of the scene.

Failure: The character is unable to get a clear impression one way or another.

Success: Each success reveals the presence of one nearby supernatural being, item or magical effect, assuming there are any present to detect. This will not allow the changeling to detect anything that is being actively concealed with some form of magic — Contracts are required for something like that — but it will allow him to spot supernatural individuals even if they are not engaged in any unusual activity at the time.

Exceptional Success: As a success, with the added possibility that the changeling gets a hint regarding the true nature of the things detected, and might even become sensitive to the presence of mystically concealed targets. This should not be enough to

automatically locate hidden items or individuals, but sufficient to justify the changeling using other powers to detect them or otherwise react to their presence.

It should be noted that unless the changeling scores an exceptional success, she may recognize that a particular person is a supernatural being but will not automatically be able to tell exactly what type of creature the person, which means any potential contact is best handled very carefully and discreetly.

Drawbacks of Clarity

• As Clarity falls, a changeling begins to have more and more trouble distinguishing between levels of reality, and may even fall prey to hallucinations. The character suffers a cumulative –1 die penalty to Perception rolls for every two points below Clarity 7: thus, –1 at Clarity 5–6, –2 at Clarity 3–4 and –3 at Clarity 1–2.

• Should a changeling ever descend to Clarity 0, he becomes a hopelessly deluded lunatic and is removed from the player's control. Most of these unfortunate souls are driven catatonic by their visions, though a dangerous minority become twisted and sadistic agents of their own insanity, working feverishly to carry out all manner of perverse designs. A rare few simply disappear one night, never to be seen again… at least not in the same form.

Regaining Lost Clarity

A character who has suffered a loss of Clarity must work hard to regain her former perspective. A changeling's identity is more fragile than any outward displays of bravado or nonchalance might indicate, and the sensation of losing her grip on the difference between the two worlds she lives in is a terrifying one indeed. Combined with the devastating revelation that she might not know herself as well as she believed, rebuilding her Clarity becomes a long and patient process of seeking out stable reference points to ground her view of reality, as well as acting in ways that rebuild her identity and reinforce her own self-image. Thus, unlike mortals, who may sometimes be awarded Morality dots for penitence or good works, changelings must always spend experience points to raise their Clarity.

Merits

Some of the Merits presented in the **World of Darkness Rulebook** are still appropriate for changelings, while others are not really suitable or require additional explanation and consideration before purchasing. In addition, a selection of new Merits are available to the Lost.

Recommended: Mental Merits might represent one of the skills that made a changeling attractive to the True Fae in the first place; many pay little mind to mundane concerns and value those who can keep track of them. Danger Sense is extremely handy for changelings on the run. Most of the Physical Merits are good ways to express the effects of a character's physical transformation, though the need for some of them might be replaced by seeming abilities or Contracts. In the Social Merits, Inspiring and Striking Looks are perennial favorites, especially for the Fairest, and Contacts and Allies are good way to represent ties to the human community. A Retainer may be ensorcelled, of course.

Disallowed: Unseen Sense. Social Merits are not prohibited, but the problems of abduction and escape may require some additional detail to explain how the changeling managed to keep in touch with old connections or forge new ones after arriving back on Earth. In particular, Merits such as Status and Fame are harder to explain because they represent a level of prominence and accessibility that few changelings find desirable. Merits that represent friendly Storyteller characters (such as Ally or Mentor) cannot be taken to represent True Fae associates, for obvious reasons.

Court Goodwill (• to •••••)

Effect: This Merit reflects how well liked and respected you are in a Court other than your own. While members of a given Court will always be true to their own members and agendas above all, they are more likely to give you the benefit of the doubt in a dispute, or come to your assistance if it does not undermine their own position. Unlike Mantle, which represents a supernatural quality as well as a political one, Court Goodwill is entirely a social construct, and depends entirely on the opinions of the members of that Court. Mistreat them, and Court Goodwill can disappear in a flash; cultivate their friendship, and they might rally to your defense when no one else will.

Court Goodwill adds to dice pools for social interaction with members of the Court in question (though not supernatural powers based on Social rolls). Each two dots (rounding up) add a +1 die bonus to relevant rolls with members of that particular Court, so a changeling with Court Goodwill (Autumn) •• adds a +1 die bonus to Social rolls with a member of the Autumn Court. The Merit also allows one to learn some of that Court's Contracts, though the highest levels are generally reserved for members alone. As with Mantle, loss of Court Goodwill does not prevent the changeling from using any Contracts that she no longer meet the prerequisites for, though she suffers the usual penalties (see p. 124). This Merit may be purchased multiple times, representing a character's relationship with a different Court each time. A player cannot purchase Court Goodwill (Courtless); the Empty Hearts are not a social entity in their own right. Lastly, a character cannot purchase Court Goodwill with his own Court that is the province of the Mantle Merit.

Because Court Goodwill is a purely social construction, a changeling may choose to ignore an attempt by another character to apply Court Goodwill to a roll they are involved in, essentially snubbing him despite his reputation in their Court. For example, if an Autumn changeling tried to apply Court Goodwill (Summer) •••• to a roll against member of the Summer Court, the target could declare that he was ignoring the character's reputation and thus deny the Autumn changeling

those two bonus dice. However, such disrespect is a serious insult. Unless the snubbing character can prove there was a valid reason to do so the outsider was throwing his weight around in a supremely petty fashion, for example, or trying to use his leverage to get the character to act against the best interests of the Court more often than not, the momentary satisfaction of the slight costs the character dearly within his own Court. It might even result in a reduction of his Mantle rating as his reputation as a member of that Court slips, not to mention earn him the ire of the Court whose member he snubbed.

Different Seasons

When a changeling shifts from one Court to another, this transition is reflected in the appropriate Merits as well. First, the character's Mantle rating in his old Court is halved, rounded down and becomes Court Goodwill to his old Court instead. By the same token, any Court Goodwill the changeling had with his new Court is halved, rounded down and becomes his new Mantle rating.

Take the example of Jenny Iron, an Ogre of the Autumn Court who defects to the Summer Court. She previously had Mantle (Autumn) ••• and Court Goodwill (Summer) ••••; she's been fighting for Summer causes more than the Autumn of late. Now that she's a soldier of the Iron Spear, Jenny's previous Mantle (Autumn) becomes Court Goodwill (Autumn) •, while her Court Goodwill (Summer) becomes Mantle (Summer) ••.

It might seem a touch curious that changelings can retain any ties with their old Courts, but in truth most changelings are accustomed to such intrigues. Of course, if the shift is revealed to be true treachery of a more sinister sort, their Court Goodwill with their old friends will likely vanish in a hurry.

Harvest (• to •••••)

Effect: Glamour is a precious commodity, and one of the first things many changelings do upon coming to terms with their new existence is try to find some way to secure a steady supply. This Merit represents a relatively stable and consistent source of Glamour that the changeling is considered to have ready access to, allowing her to more easily refresh her supply of Glamour in times of need. This does not guarantee that the changeling will always be able to find the exact amount she needs — in all its forms, Glamour is an unpredictable energy at best — but it does give her a bit more security than a changeling who never knows where his next bit of Glamour will come from. Each dot of Harvest adds one die to certain rolls related to gathering Glamour.

A character must specify what type of Glamour-gathering activities this Merit represents when it is purchased. The different types available include but are not necessarily limited to Emotions, Pledges, Dreams and Hedge Bounty. Thus a character adept at gaining Glamour from mortals would take Harvest (Emotions), while a changeling receiving Glamour due to upholding pledges would possess Harvest (Pledges) and a savvy scrounger who knows where some of the best groves in the local Hedge can be found would have Harvest (Goblin Fruits). The bonus applies only to rolls related to that type of collection, so a changeling with Harvest (Dreams) would receive no bonus on a roll to gain Glamour from a mortal's waking emotions. The actual source of the Glamour can vary considerably, from a reserved room at the back of a local nightclub where the changeling brings her conquests (Emotions) to a secret glen in the Hedge where the goblin fruits ripen (Hedge Bounty).

This Merit may be purchased multiple times, but only once per type of Glamour gathering. Note that the changelings receiving Glamour from pledges with mortals are still limited to the maximum number of vows determined by their Wyrd rating (see p. 176).

Hollow (• to •••••; special)

Effect: A door under the old town bridge that opens up into a quiet forest grove. A broken-down old shack that contains a fabulous mansion for those who know the right secret knock. A town high in the mountains that can only be found by the outside world but once a century. All of these are examples of the pockets of reality that changelings call Hollows — places in the Hedge that have been cleared of thorns and shaped into a stable location for inhabitation. Some Hollows are little more than a clear patch of grass in the midst of the great Thorn maze, while others are dwellings quite elaborate and fantastical. Changelings actively create many of these locations through sweat and toil, while other Hollows are simply found and adopted in an almost fully formed state.

Although Hollows are always a welcome refuge from problems of the mortal world and Hedge alike, not all Hollows are created equal. A tiny cave in the Hedge might be easily overlooked by enemies but also be cramped and contain few escape routes. A fantastic Victorian mansion might be able to house an entire motley and be packed with all manner of amenities, but without the proper wards, the mansion will also act as a beacon for all manner of freeloaders and other undesirable entities. A Hollow's strengths and weaknesses are thus tallied according to four factors — size, amenities, doors and wards. Players who choose this Merit must also choose how to allocate these four factors when spending points. Thus, a player who spends four dots on this Merit might choose to allocate two to Hollow Size, one to Hollow Amenities and one to Hollow Wards.

Hollow Size is perhaps the simplest defining characteristic, governing the amount of raw space the Hollow encompasses. A Hollow with no dots in Hollow Size is barely

large enough for a pair of changelings to fit comfortably, and has little if any storage space.

- • A small apartment, cave or clearing; one to two rooms.
- •• A large apartment or small family home; three to four rooms.
- ••• A warehouse, church or large home; five to eight rooms, or large enclosure
- •••• An abandoned mansion, small fortress or network of subway tunnels; equivalent to nine to 15 rooms or chambers
- ••••• A sprawling estate, fantastic treetop village or intercon nected tunnel network; countless rooms or chambers

Having a lot of space doesn't always do much good if there isn't anything occupying it, which is where Hollow Amenities comes in. Reflecting the relative luxuriousness of the Hollow as well as how well-stocked it is with supplies and other material comforts, this rating gives an idea of how elaborate the Hollow is as well as what a character can reasonably expect to find within it at a given time. (A character who wants a humble cabin doesn't need to allocate much here, but a character who wants an elaborate treetop village stocked with delights should be ready to invest quite a bit.) A Hollow without any dots in Amenities contains few if any buildings or possessions — it might be big but it's mostly empty space. At the other end of the spectrum, a retreat with five dots in amenities is likely fully stocked with all manner of luxuries, and while most of these Amenities are made of ephemeral dreamstuff and thus cannot travel across the Hedge or even that far from their origin within it, they still make for a very pleasing stay. (In other words, Hollow Amenities cannot be used as a substitute for other Merits such as Resources or Harvest, and if the character wants the things found in his Hollow to travel outside of it, he must purchase the appropriate Merits to represent these riches.) While a high Hollow Amenities rating often entails a high Hollow Size rating, exceptions do occur for example, a changeling might not invest much in Hollow Size, but then make that small cabin a veritable wonderland full of excellent food, interesting books and a magical fireplace that keeps itself at the perfect temperature all the time. Likewise, a motley might invest a lot in Hollow Size to get a giant Victorian mansion, but without much spent in Hollow Amenities, it will be sparsely furnished and likely a bit rundown.

Although Hollows cannot have access to some high-tech facilities such as phone service, Internet connections or satellite broadcasts, some of the more impressive Hollows make up for it with minor magical touches. These magical elements should not mimic anything as powerful as Contracts, but can provide basic household services and serve as excellent descriptive details and flourishes to create exactly what the player desires for the look and feel of their Hollow. A game board with living chess or gwybdyll pieces that can play against a living opponent is a perfectly acceptable entertainment amenity, for example, as might be a battered arcade cabinet that changes every new moon to a different video game never seen in the mortal world.

- • A couple of homey touches, but otherwise quite plain
- •• A comfortable Hollow with a few notable features and decent fare
- ••• An elaborate Hollow with quite a few clever details and an excellent supply of refreshments and diversions
- •••• An impressive Hollow containing abundant mundane delights and even one or two noteworthy minor magical services as well
- ••••• A lavish dwelling with nearly every comfort of modern living as well as quite a few magical conveniences

Hollow Doors reflects how many entrances and exits a Hollow has, which can be equally important if a character is cut off from her normal access point in the real world or finds herself in need of a quick escape route while staying in the Hollow. Without any dots in Hollow Doors, a Hollow is assumed to have one entrance in the real world and one small entrance in the Hedge — the Hollow can be reached through either side. (A character may waive either of these "free" entrances if he only wishes the Hollow to be accessible from one side.) With each dot in Hollow Doors, the Hollow has one additional point of entry/exit, either in the real world or through the Hedge. For example, with the expenditure of multiple dots, each motley member might have a door in his own residence that allows him access to the group's private Hollow. Note that these doors must be tied to static access points in either realm — these places do not change.

Of course, a changeling might have the most gigantic and elaborate Hollow imaginable, but unless it is properly warded and secured against intrusion, it will most likely be lost to opportunistic scavengers in short order — or worse yet, subject to an unpleasant visitation from the Others. Thus, it is wise to invest at least a few dots in Hollow Wards, representing the precautions both mundane and magical that protect the Hollow from unwanted visitors. Each dot invested in Hollow Wards subtracts one die from all attempts by unwanted visitors to find or break into the Hollow; in addition, those inside receive a +1 die bonus per dot on their Initiative compared to those attempting to break in. Lastly, the more dots invested in Hollow Wards, the less likely the location is to be found by True Fae or creatures from the Hedge; each dot subtracts one die from any rolls made to find the Hollow.

Characters whose players spend no points at all on Hollow simply do not have access to any sort of special location in the Hedge. They might come as guests to another's dwelling from time to time, but if they wish to have regular access to any particular location, they must purchase this Merit on their own or pool points with other changelings who already own an existing Hollow. Characters with no Hollow points simply do not enjoy the mechanical benefits of having spent dots on a better living space in the Hedge.

Each aspect of the Hollow Merit has a limit of 5. In other words, Hollow Size, Hollow Amenities, Hollow Wards and Hollow Doors may not rise above 5 (to a maximum of 20 points spent on this Merit). The combined pool of points

is used to determine the cost in experience points for raising the Hollow Merit during play.

Special: The Hollow Merit may be shared among characters in a close-knit group. They might simply be a motley whose members are devoted to one another and are willing to pool what they have, or perhaps their mutual reliance on an individual or trust could bring them together to share what they have in common.

To share this Merit, two or more characters simply have to be willing to pool their dots for greater capability. A shared rating in the Hollow Merit cannot rise higher than five dots in any of the four aspects of the trait. That is, characters cannot pool more than five points to be devoted to, say, Hollow Size. If they wish to devote extra points to the Merit, they must allocate those dots to a different aspect of the Merit, such as Wards or Doors.

Shared Hollow dots can be lost. Motley members or associates might be abused or mistreated, ending relationships. Group members might perform actions that cast themselves (and the group) in a bad light. Ravaging creatures from the Hedge might damage part of the location, or some True Fae could discover the Hollow and decide to make it their personal residence for a time. If any group member does something to diminish the Hollow, its dots decrease for all group members. That's the weakness of sharing dots in this Merit. The chain is only as strong as its weakest link. The Storyteller dictates when character actions or events in a story compromise shared Hollow dots.

Characters can also leave a shared Hollow. A rift might form between close sworn comrades, or perhaps a character falls in battle. Or one could simply be kicked out of the Hollow by the others. When a character leaves a shared-Hollow relationship, the dots he contributed are removed from the pool. If the individual still survives, he doesn't get all his dots back for his own purposes. He gets one less than he originally contributed. So, if a character breaks a relationship with his motley, his two Hollow dots are lost by the group, but he gets only one dot back for his own purposes. The lost dot represents the cost or bad image that comes from the breakup. If all members agree to part ways, they all lose one dot from what they originally contributed.

The Storyteller decides what reduced dots mean in the story when a character leaves a shared Hollow. Perhaps no one else picks up the character's attention to the Hollow's mystical defenses, causing Hollow Wards to drop. The Hollow might not be tended as fastidiously, causing a drop in the Hollow Amenities value. Maybe a portion of the Hollow falls into disuse or even collapses, causing an effective drop in Hollow Size. Whatever the case, a plausible explanation must be determined.

A character need not devote all of her Hollow dots to the shared Hollow Merit, of course. A changeling might maintain a separate Hollow of her own outside the communal one represented by the shared trait. Any leftover dots that a character has (or is unwilling to share) signify what she has to draw upon as an individual, separate from her partners. For example, three characters share a Hollow and expend a group total of five dots. One character chooses to use two other dots on a private Hollow for herself. Those remaining two dots represent a Hollow entirely separate from what she and her friends have established together.

To record a shared Hollow Merit on your character sheet, put an asterisk next to the name of the Hollow Merit and fill

in the total dots that your character has access to thanks to his partnership. In order to record his original contribution, write it in parentheses along with the Merit's name. It is not important to note which aspect of the Hollow Merit on which those points are spent, as this allows greater flexibility should a character ever decide to withdraw from the community arrangement. The result looks like this:

Merits

Hollow (2)*	●●●●O
Hollow	●●●OO
Ally	●●OOO
	OOOOO

In this example, the character shares a Hollow Merit dedicated to the motley's communal refuge. He contributes two dots to the relationship, and the group has a total of four dots that are made available to each member. The character also has his own private Hollow Merit rated •••, which he maintains by himself. And, the character has Ally rated •• that is also his own Merit.

Mantle (• to •••••)

Mantle represents a mystical connection with the elements and emotions that a particular Court embodies. The higher a changeling's Mantle rating, the more he has come to embody that Court's ideal — even if he is a hermit who doesn't involve himself in local politics, a character with a high Mantle is still given at least grudging respect by his peers because of his obvious commitment to the values his Court cherishes. From a descriptive perspective, as a character's Mantle rises, his fae mien reflects this ascendance, displaying both literal and figurative signs of the season. A character with Mantle (Autumn) • might be followed by a slight brisk breeze, for example, while one with Mantle (Autumn) ••• might have illusory leaves kicked up as she walks and at last at Mantle (Autumn) •••••, the character might be illuminated by late afternoon light and surrounded by a reflective hush similar to that found in a library. Specific examples of how a Court's particular Mantle increases can be found in the "Courts" section in Chapter One. These trappings are not visible to mortals and have no real game effect, but should be used to enhance a character's description and convey a sense of how rooted in her Court she has become.

As a sign of brotherhood, Mantle adds to dice pools for social interaction with members of the Court in question. Each dot adds a +1 die bonus to relevant rolls with members of that particular Court. This Merit does not add to dice pools predicated on supernatural powers. Characters with no Court cannot purchase Mantle. Mantle also serves as a prerequisite for learning certain Court-related Contracts.

A character may learn clauses from the relevant Contract path of his Court, which generally require a certain amount of Mantle to learn, though he must still meet any other prerequisites as well. Should his Mantle fall or he adopt the Mantle of a new Court, he might no longer meet the prerequisites for some of his old Contracts; in that case, he must spend additional Glamour to activate those Contracts. (See "Changing Seasons," p. 94, and the note on Contract prerequisites, p. 174).

Each Court has certain mechanical and descriptive benefits for all its members developing a Mantle rating, as outlined in the Court descriptions in Chapter One. In addition to those benefits, each Court has a benefit reserved for its leader, an advantage most commonly referred to its "crown." A crown can only manifest in a freehold where there are at least a handful of members of a particular Court and they are able to choose a common leader, and generally manifests only during the appropriate physical season. Occasionally, a crown will manifest during the off-season if a Court is especially prominent or powerful in the area, as the Hedge reflects the Court's potency, or a changeling who is elected leader of the freehold might manifest his crown out of season if he is sufficiently popular. Note that the leader of a Court is not always the member with a highest Mantle rating. Ultimately, the Storyteller is the final arbiter of when and how a crown appears, but as a rule, only one crown may manifest in a given freehold at a time.

Blessing of the Green (Spring): A character who wears the crown of Spring may spend a Willpower point to bestow the Blessing of the Green, allowing her to add her Mantle rating as bonus successes to a single roll related to gathering Glamour. The changeling may use this ability up to a maximum number of times per session equal to her Mantle dots. A particular character may only benefit from one use of this ability per session, however. The Spring fae may cast this blessing on herself, or she may choose to bestow it on another with a touch, in which case the blessing must be used before the next sunrise or it is lost.

Challenge of the Black Spear (Summer): This benefit applies in one-on-one situations such as duels. By spending a Glamour point, the character with the crown of Summer receives a bonus to his Initiative rating equal to his Mantle dots for the duration of the duel, and is not considered surprised by ambushes or other unexpected trickery, though if the duel shifts to mass combat this Initiative bonus drops to a simple +1. The changeling may use this ability multiple times per session, up to a maximum number equal to his Mantle rating. However, this ability may only be used once against a particular foe per combat.

Harvest of Whispers (Autumn): Once per session, the Autumn leader may take a minute to reflect on what she has learned so far that session (and consult the Storyteller as to whether or not a particular bit of information qualifies for this ability), and then perform the Harvest of Whispers. For each valuable secret, important truth, revelatory fact or other *significant* piece of information she has uncovered this session, up to a maximum number equal to her Mantle rating, the character receives two Glamour points that are placed in a special pool

apart from her regular Glamour points. These harvested Glamour points can be spent *only* to power Contracts, activate tokens, facilitate dream travel or cross into the Hedge. These points cannot be used for any other purposes, including seeming abilities, and cannot in any way traded or given away; anything left in this pool fades to nothingness at the end of the session. This ability may allow the character to effectively exceed the limit of Glamour points she can possess as dictated by her Wyrd, but the number of Glamour points she can spend per turn is still limited normally. Furthermore, as long as a character exceeds her normal limit of Glamour, she is considered especially noticeable by beings that can detect Glamour or magical energy, so unless she wishes to attract undue attention, it is also best to ready a concealing Contract or two to help dim this radiance.

It is important to note that only new information learned that session can be used for the Harvest of Whispers even if a character learned something just last session, it's old news and doesn't qualify. Those who don the crown of the Autumn Court are expected to always be seeking out new and interesting information, not rest on the body of knowledge they've already accumulated. The Storyteller is the final arbiter of whether a piece of information is new, valuable or important enough to qualify for this ability.

Feast of Ashes (Winter): Once per session, a changeling wearing the crown of the Winter Court may devote himself to the Feast of Ashes, converting one point of Glamour to one point of Willpower, up to a maximum number of points equal to the character's Mantle rating. He may even exceed his normal limit of Willpower points in this fashion, though any excess points are lost at the end of the session. In addition, for the remainder of the scene in which this ability is activated, the changeling's Willpower rating is effectively increased by a number equal to his Mantle rating, making it extremely hard for others to undermine his confidence in his ability to survive.

New Identity (•, •• or ••••)

Effect: Your character has somehow managed to acquire documents supporting a new identity since his return. In this age of background checks, paper trails and bureaucratic scrutiny, this is an incredibly handy resource to call upon, especially for changelings who have returned to find their old lives stolen by their fetches, or who have returned years or even decades after being taken and must forge new lives simply because it is functionally impossible to re-enter their old ones. You are encouraged to work with the Storyteller to determine exactly how your character acquired his new identity. If your character doesn't seem to have any Merits or relationships that might explain how he got his new identity, presumably he had to ask a favor from someone else who did — if so, what did she want in return? Many great story hooks can come from the process of acquiring a brand-new identity.

The number of dots spent on this Merit determines how convincing and in depth the documentation surrounding this new life actually is. New Identity (•) represents an identity that passes casual inspection, but not much else — a character can go shopping and get around in most daily situations, but any kind of trained scrutiny such as from a police officer or bureaucrat immediately identifies her identity as a fake. New Identity (••) imparts an identity that will pass most forms of relatively cursory professional inspection, but cannot stand up to a sustained investigation — a police officer who has pulled the character over will not automatically pick up anything unusual if he runs the character's license plates or calls up her name in a database, but should the character be arrested and the police begin a formal investigation, her identity will quickly unravel. New Identity (••••) represents an identity that is essentially as real as any identity can be — it would take a truly dedicated, competent and time-consuming search by trained professionals to uncover any hint that the changeling isn't exactly whom she claims to be, at least as far as her documentation is concerned.

This Merit may be purchased multiple times at multiple ratings, each time representing a different identity, and an identity may also be upgraded later with the appropriate in-game explanation and experience expenditure. In the case of certain Merits such as Resources or Status, it might also be worth noting which identity these Merits are tied to, since a character may not easily be able to access or maintain them if that identity is compromised.

Token (•+)

Fae lore is replete with stories of objects with magical powers, either "liberated" from former masters in Arcadia, discovered deep within the Hedge or even forged by skilled changeling craftsmen. Though these objects are seemingly mundane to the mortal eye, the Lost see these useful but double-edged objects for what they are. A character with this Merit has one or more such tokens in his possession. Each dot in this Merit translates into one dot's worth of token, which can be divided up as the player sees fit. Thus, a character with Token •••• could possess one four-dot token, two two-dot tokens, one one-dot token and one three-dot token, and so forth. This Merit can also be used to purchase the expendable tokens called trifles at a cost of three trifles per dot, or even goblin fruits (p. 222) at the same rate.

In most instances, a character does not need to spend experience points for tokens acquired during the course of play, only those in her possession at the beginning of the chronicle. At the Storyteller's discretion, ownership of truly mighty tokens may require a partial or even complete investment of experience points, representing the time required to learn the complexities of using such epic items as well as safeguarding them from potential thieves.

For more on tokens, see Chapter Three (pp. 201–210).

Seemings

To survive is to carry scars. Traumas, both physical and psychological, can heal. The pain they cause can go

away, but they'll always leave something behind. It's true of physical wounds, and it's true of psychological wounds, too. Sometimes the scars we carry disfigure us both literally and psychologically, but survival implies recovery. As someone once said, that which does not kill us makes us stranger as well as stronger, and the changes wrought upon us by the traumas we have suffered leave a mark that is both a reminder of pain and a badge of honor, the proof of survival, the ability to truly understand the sufferings of others.

This is the way that the Lost view their seemings. They faced a season of suffering as the toys of the Fae, and they survived. They escaped. They found their way back to the world of humans. They were changed by what they went through. They carry their seemings like scars. Seemings are the permanent mark of terrible trauma. At the same time, they're a badge of honor. The changeling carries his seeming as freedom's prize, as if to say: *I got out alive. I tore my way through the Hedge and the marks have made me who I am.*

A changeling's seeming is entirely her own. Although the seeming reflects in some ways the Fae who originally stole the changeling from the human world (or in some cases, the tasks the changeling was given by his Keeper), it's only part of the story. An abusive parent instills something of his own personality in his hapless child, and even if the child overcomes the trauma of the abuse, those marks remain. But every survivor reacts to his trauma in his own unique way.

It's like that with seemings. The changeling's time in Faerie changed her very essence. The seeming she bears, the Faerie characteristics that make her who she now is, they reflect that. But it's still *her.* Even changed into something other than human, the changeling is still in some ways the same person. Older, wiser, her very essence changed, having made the first step toward growing up and healing, she becomes something that reflects what she has been through, but which is yet entirely separate.

A changeling who spent two decades as the drudge of a pitiless hag might herself have become rather hag-like, but where her Keeper was green and slimy of skin, red of eye and black of hair, the changeling's skin has become black and leathery, her eyes like deep green beads, her hair like sheets of pale wet fungal rot. A being resembling an *Ifrit*, all pointed features, red-hot flesh and flames for hair, steals a red-haired boy. In his five years of captivity, the boy grows big and powerful where his Keeper is wiry and sharp-faced. The boy's hot to the touch, just like his Keeper, but the boy's hair becomes gray and smolders like hot charcoal. Another of the fiery Other's thralls is made to dance for her new burning master, her face and limbs gradually developing inhuman grace and beauty as his servants anoint her anew with cosmetics that smell of faintly charred perfume. A girl is abducted by a bald, gray, long-fingered, huge-eyed being and subjected to a decade of frightful, pointless experiments. She escapes to find that her eyes have become huge and black, her hands are bony and her hair is gone, but her skin is now the purest shade of powder white. A fox-woman with nine tails takes a beautiful young man as her unwilling lover and thrall. Just as she, he can change into a fox, but his fur is red where hers was gray and his tails, of which he has only three, are long and bushy and tipped with white.

Seemings aren't really social groupings at all. A changeling might draw his fae mien from his Keeper, or from whatever tasks he was set to perform, so any similarity between two Others doesn't necessarily extend to their charges. The ever-changing Gentry can only be recognized on the grounds of what they do, rather than what they are, and a Fae who was 100 years ago a mischievous little goblin could today be a mighty king of trees or a graceful and cruel prince. The changelings the Fae caught in their web resist categorization in a similar way. The difference lies in that changelings describe each other by what they escaped.

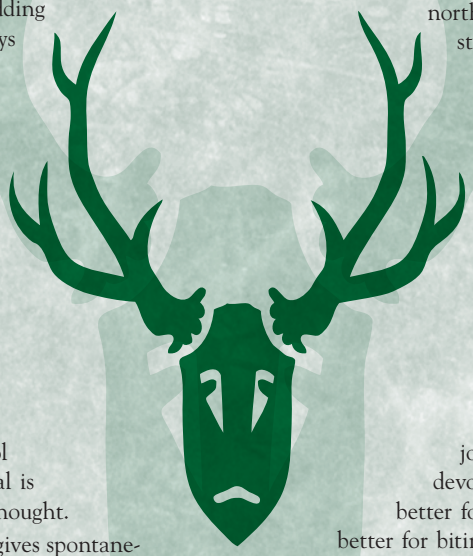
In the end, the different kinds of seemings and kiths that the Lost recognize are not so much social groupings as they are a vague, general descriptive shorthand for how different changelings have been changed by their experiences. The kiths that further subdivide the Lost who share a seeming are only slightly more specific sub-categories, and even they can't truly categorize the endless diversity of the fae.

All this doesn't mean that it isn't actually quite helpful for the Lost to think of each other in this way. Two adults who were both abused as children, for example, might have had different experiences, but they've immediately got things in common. It's the same with changelings. All Lost share the escape from Faerie in common, but some have more in common than others. A changeling who took on a seeming resembling a one-eyed giant from classic Greece and a changeling who looks like one of those blue-skinned man-eating trolls who once lurked under Scandinavian bridges have come out of their time in the land of the Fae with very different powers and features. But they've both experienced the rough end of a master-slave relationship with a brutish, lumpen master, and they've both found the resources within themselves to escape it. A young man but recently escaped from the bedchamber of some bright, cruel Lady of Diamonds and Emeralds and a young woman who finally slipped from the clutches of her dark, dashing Demon Lover only a few weeks ago have something to share.

It's no surprise that changelings who share similar seemings feel some affinity with each other. The seeming represents what a changeling has been through, but also what a changeling's strengths are. It represents what a changeling can become, both good and ill. A person can be destroyed by a traumatic experience… or can rise above it to become a person whose strengths are defined and proven by the refinement of suffering, through acceptance and growth. To accept a seeming is to accept the consequence of suffering and the prize of survival and escape, the final reward of having been strong enough to get out and make it back into the world of humans. To accept it as part of your self and to wear it well is to enter on the road to healing. To understand it and make it your own is to begin to truly grow up.

Beasts

A story tells of a man who, on the final leg of a long journey, sheltered from a storm in an empty palace. As he leaves, he takes a rose from a garden. The owner of the palace, a faerie in the shape of a terrible Beast appears and catches him, and tells him he must die. The man begs to live, for he has a daughter whom he loves, and the beast demands that the daughter come and stay with him. The man agrees, although he has no intention of sending his daughter away. When he returns home, he finds that his daughter has died. In truth, the Beast has taken her away and left a fake to die in her place. The Beast treats the girl well, certainly, but she cannot leave. One day, having lost all hope of escape, she agrees to become the Beast's wife. There is no ceremony, only an agreement, a veil and a wedding night. And on that wedding night, she lays with him, and she becomes like him, a Beast, forever, her memory and thought washed away in the flood of sensation, the tyranny of the *now*.



The fairy stories have it that love's first kiss redeems everything. The Beast becomes a man. The Frog becomes a handsome prince. It's a lie. The changelings who think of themselves as Beasts know it all too well. To kiss the Beast is to surrender yourself to sensuality and instinct. To love the Beast is to become like the Beast, lost to memory, self-control and ultimately consciousness. The animal is amoral. The animal is incapable of true thought.

It's a two-edged sword. The animal gives spontaneity, the simple joy of living that is lost to far too many humans. Colors are brighter, sounds are richer, smells and tastes are richer, more vivid.

The Beasts consider themselves to have taken the most difficult road back through the Hedge, for they have had to claw back their minds as well as their souls. For a Beast to return, he has to turn his back on the lush sensory life of the animal, and he has to regain control. He has to *think*, if only long enough to burrow, chew and wriggle through the thorny barrier and come back to the human realm. In every Beast, thought and sensation war for dominance. No matter what animal she holds an affinity with, a Beast lives in a state of paradox, a conscious, moral person infused with the unconscious, amoral power of the animal kingdom. Unable to be fully objective or fully innocent, the Beast straddles the divide between human and animal.

Of all the changelings, the Beasts are the most difficult to categorize. They're as varied in form and behavior as the animals whose essence they share. All Beasts, however, exist as interstitial figures, living on a threshold between human and animal, civilization and wilderness. Some stand apart from human society. Some throw themselves into the human world, revealing the wildness and the world of sensation at the heart of human interaction. Some express their connection to the world of sensation in other ways. A Beast's behavior and the place she creates in for herself in the world depends a great deal on the kind of animal she reflects.

A Broadback who takes the form of a frank, goat-legged satyr works as a DJ in a half-dozen parties a night, reveling in the joy and lust he creates on the dance floor, his unnatural constitution supporting his prodigious intake of alcohol and drugs. A Swimmerskin mermaid lives on a windswept northern coast, managing a Coast Guard station. For her Court, she keeps watch over the waves for what might rise. For herself, she watches the land for that human who might one day satisfy her need for love. A Hunterheart with the legs of a great elk and antlers on his brow works as a ranger in a great national park, lonely and yet well liked by his colleagues for his dedication and unassuming decency. Another Hunterheart, a Bad Wolf, works as a used-car salesman by day. By night, he prowls two legged through city night spots and pick-up joints, looking for a Red Riding Hood to devour in his bed that night, his big eyes the better for seeing her, his bright sharp teeth the better for biting. A Venombite falls into the role of a Black Widow, her heart a swarming mass of spidery passions. She runs a women's refuge. Woe to anyone who would threaten one of the Widow's charges. More than once, a known wife-beater's corpse has been found, his face twisted in agony, his face black and swollen. A Windwing swan-lady illustrates children's books, drawing detailed beautiful landscapes from memory and accepting other, more esoteric commissions from her Court.

Two Hunterheart fox-women, sisters who came back through the Hedge together, take separate paths. One works as a broker, playing the Nikkei for all she can get. The other does quite well as a confidence trickster, fleecing Shibuya hipsters for every penny they have and leaving them with smiles on their faces. Both get by on cunning, charm and nerve. A cheeky, cheery Steepscrambler Monkey King with a love for kung-fu dons a backpack and goes off to see the world. Trouble always seems to find him. He's not wholly sure where he's going, but he's well aware that the journey is mostly the point. A good-natured elephant-man, a Broadback Ganesha with a flair for good food, runs an Indian restaurant, where changelings meet and set aside their differences over his

incomparable *Saag Aloo* and soft, fragrant *naan* breads. A Runner-swift antelope-girl, long-legged and silky-skinned, is the best cycle courier in the city. She's able to take her bike places her colleagues wouldn't dare to go, and goes faster than most of her friends can believe. When there's a message the Court would have delivered quickly and without fuss, she's the only real choice.

Whether scary, funny or nurturing, the Beasts have a primal energy to them. They communicate an awareness of the senses, of the body. People who meet Beasts become intensely aware for a while of their senses, noticing smells, tastes and touch more than they would normally.

Appearance: A Beast always has some feature belonging to the animal she reflects. It's important to note that the Beast reflects the *idea* of the animal rather than the animal itself (so, for example, a leonine Beast can be a mighty, regal hunter, rather than the indolent scavenger that a lion really is). She might reflect more than one animal. She might reflect (as the archetypal Beast from the folktale) a category of animals that don't even exist. They're always very physical and solid, whatever form they take. Many Beasts have a strong odor of some kind.

The elephant chef is huge. He has small tusks, big ears and a trunk, but he also has the bright pink skin and big heavy-lashed eyes of the Hindu god. In his human form, he's still got rough skin, bright eyes and comically big ears, but no one's going to make fun of him, because he's built like the proverbial elephant. He smells of spices and earth. The satyr has goat-legs and small horns. As a human, he has extremely persistent stubble. He's really hairy, and his smell promises heat and sensuality. The Fox-Sisters both have fox-ears and huge bright eyes. The younger of them has two fox-tails. The elder has three. In human form, both have the same bright eyes and delicate pointed features. Both move in small-swift movements. Each one cocks her head to one side when she's surprised. The antelope girl has small impala-horns and the soft smooth hide of her animal covering her body. Her face slopes forward slightly, and her eyes are round and almost wholly black. As a human, she is graceful and long-necked. Her black skin glows, and smells of heat and health.

The Bad Wolf has sloping yellow eyes and fangs in a snarling maw. Darkly handsome in human form, he speaks in low, wheedling tones to his potential victim-lovers. The Monkey King looks just like the figure from the Chinese myth, all smiles and improbable poses. As a human, his hair is thick and short, and his skin is dusky. The Mermaid's skin is iridescent and covered in places with silvery scales. Her hair is green and woven with sea-shells and brightly colored seaweed. Her fingers and toes are webbed. In human form, she smells of the sea. Her skin is very pale and always cold. In both forms, she has eyes as green and as deep as the sea.

Background: The oldest version of the story of Red Riding Hood has the girl tempted into removing her clothes and getting into the bed with the Bad Wolf, where she is "devoured."

Red Riding Hood is very much the archetype of the Beast's victim. She was innocent, unknowing of where her actions would lead her. She was prone to wandering in out-of-the-way places, out of human view but well within the notice of a Fae Beast. And for all her innocence, the wild tempted her, drew her into that world of excitement and sensation that consumed her.

Many Beasts were innocent when they were taken in some way, as naïve when it came to the ways of the animal world as they were to the human world. Many were loners, with no human society to protect them from the things that would take them away from the world they knew. And many came to the world of the Fae, or at least they thought they came, of their own free will. They might not have understood what giving into to a world of sensation and instinct was going to mean, but a good proportion of them wanted it enough to willingly fall into the clutches of the Gentry.

Those few who escape are those whose innocence was not a weakness. Some were simply ignorant, and when, within themselves they realized what their time in the lands of faerie really meant, they regained themselves and escaped. Others have an innocence that simply refuses to be corrupted or destroyed, an innocence that can be wielded like a weapon. This bright refusal to be corrupted can give a changeling the strength to get out.

Escaping, some return to the wilds and return to living alone, but just as many, if not more, throw themselves into human society, as if to attempt to regain the benefits of civilization. It works, if only to an extent: the Beast might gain a veneer of civility, but spreads just as much wildness to the civilized world.

Durance: A Beast would have spent her time in Faerie with the mind (and sometimes the form) of an animal. There is no real consciousness of the past in this state, only the eternal vivid present. Because of that, a Beast's memories of his time with his Keeper are fragmentary and blurred, snatches of vivid colors, a vibrant swirl of hunger, pain, fear, violence and sex. Beasts who escape sometimes have vivid dreams of their durances. A dream disturbs and terrifies, and the Beast often wakes screaming as the dreams fade almost instantly.

Character Creation: Most Beasts concentrate almost exclusively on Physical Attributes and Skills. Which Skills and Attributes they concentrate on depends on what sort of animal the character has an affinity with. An antelope, wolf or mule Beast could concentrate on Stamina; a rabbit, mouse or spider might have a high Dexterity, and an ox or gorilla could just as easily focus on Strength. Regardless of focus, the Beast who doesn't have any dots in Animal Ken is rare indeed.

Physical Merits are also common, particularly those that represent innate physical qualities (for example: Natural Immunity, Strong Back, Iron Stomach, Giant or Fresh Start). Some physical Flaws might also be appropriate, depending on what kind of animal the Beast has an affinity with.

Blessing: The wildness that infuses a Beast gives her a supernatural affinity with animals. A Beast gains the benefit of the 8 again rule when using the Animal Ken Skill, and receives a free Specialty for the one animal that most reflects the Beast's seeming.

That same wild nature gives a Beast a powerful personal magnetism. A Beast's player can spend points of Glamour to add to dice pools involving Presence and Composure. Each point of Glamour spent adds one die to one dice pool.

Curse: Although the Beasts regained their consciousness when they came through the Hedge, their time as beings of thoughtless instinct has taken its toll on each of them, and most find it very hard to make use of academic or trained skills. A Beast's player suffers a –4 dice untrained penalty when trying to use a Mental skill in which the character has no dots.

Further, although Beasts can be very clever indeed, they're out of practice making those leaps of ingenuity that so character-

ize human genius. A Beast's player doesn't re-roll 10s when using a dice pool involving Intelligence.

Seeming Contracts: Fang and Talon

Concepts: Horse whisperer, cat burglar, animal rights activist, ox-sized college jock, homeless sewer rat king, man-eating loan shark, reptilian lawyer, grizzly man with a clue, hare-like professional athlete, dog soldier, queen bee of the sorority, eagle-eyed detective, penniless frog prince.

Kiths

Broadback — Changelings who are attuned to animals that are renowned for their endurance or stubbornness, such as camels, elephants, horses, mules, goats and the like. Their blessing is **Stoic Forbearance**: the changeling's player can spend one point of Glamour to add two to all dice pools involving Stamina, for the rest of the scene.

Hunterheart — Often, but not always, those changelings who have something of the predator about them: wolves, bears, cats, crocodiles, snakes and birds of prey, but also those that embody the hunter in a more conceptual sense. The Hunterheart's blessing is **Tooth and Claw**: the changeling can inflict lethal damage instead of bashing damage when fighting unarmed.

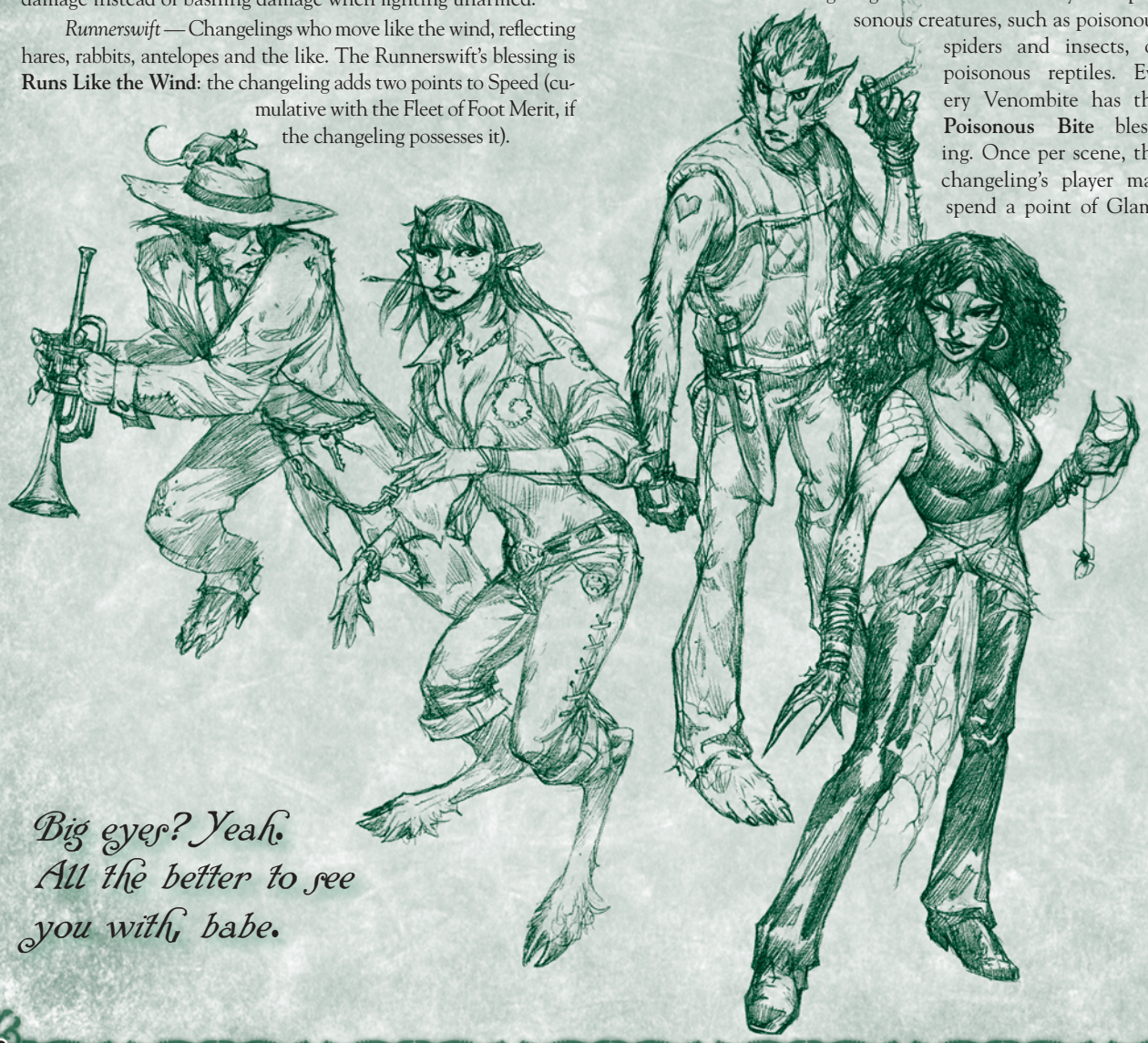
Runnerswift — Changelings who move like the wind, reflecting hares, rabbits, antelopes and the like. The Runnerswift's blessing is **Runs Like the Wind**: the changeling adds two points to Speed (cumulative with the Fleet of Foot Merit, if the changeling possesses it).

Skitterskulk — Changelings who have an affinity with flies, spiders, beetles, centipedes and other creepy crawlies. The Skitterskulk has the **Impossible Counterpoise** blessing: just as an insect, her sense of timing and reactions are second to none. When Dodging, the character triples her Defense Trait rather than doubling it.

Steepscrambler — Changelings who are at home in high places, and who are attuned to animals such as monkeys, raccoons, squirrels, some insects and some lizards. The Steepscrambler's blessing is **Gifted Climber:** she finds climbing easy, no matter how sheer the ascent. The character gains a +3 dice pool bonus when trying to climb any surface, and may attempt to climb even surfaces as slick as wet glass if they will support her weight.

Swimmerskin — Changelings who draw affinities with aquatic or amphibious creatures: seals, otters, ducks, salmon, and the like; mermaids, too. The Swimmerskin's blessing is **Natural Swimmer.** He can hold his breath underwater for thirty minutes, as if he had a Stamina of 7. He can't, however, hold his breath any longer than his Stamina score allows if he's out of water (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 49). He may also swim at his full Speed, just as if he were running.

Venombite — Changelings who have an affinity with poisonous creatures, such as poisonous spiders and insects, or poisonous reptiles. Every Venombite has the **Poisonous Bite** blessing. Once per scene, the changeling's player may spend a point of Glam-



Big eyes? Yeah. All the better to see you with, babe.

our and roll a normal brawling attack (Strength + Brawl – Defense + Armor). The attack causes no damage, but does deliver a lethal poison with a Toxicity equal to the changeling's Wyrd (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 180). The victim *can't* avoid taking the damage with a Stamina + Resolve roll.

Windwing — Changelings who are confined to the earth, with their hearts in the skies, drawing affinity with birds, butterflies and bats. The Windwing bears the blessing **Gift of the Sky**: although be he can't fly, the air bears him up. A Windwing may spend a point of Glamour to glide in the air for up to one minute per point of Wyrd; he cannot gain altitude without appropriate updrafts, but may move at his normal Speed. In addition, a Windwing takes only one point of bashing damage for every 15 yards fallen, and begins to take lethal damage only if he falls more than 150 yards.

Stereotypes

Darklings: They understand. They know that only half the world is asleep when it's dark.

Elementals: We hear the world's heartbeat and smell its blood. They hear the world breathe. We'd be damned alike if we weren't so damned different.

Fairest: Got a lot of vigor for something that doesn't look or smell like a real flesh-and-blood animal.

Ogres: You want to gobble me up? I'm not your meat, big fella.

The Wizened: Crafty little creatures. And usually on the other side of the walls from us.

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Vampires: Fangs. I know fangs.

Werewolves: No, they're not kindred spirits. Difference between us and them is we got our souls back.

Mages: Human bodies, inhuman souls. Nothing there I like or trust.

Mortals: No, my place is a pigsty. Let's go to yours. So. What was your name again?

DARKLINGS

When dealing with matters of Faerie, there are things that a person must do, and things a person must not. This is the foundation of many stories of the Fae, including this one. It begins with a hill, somewhere not far away, and they say that the Invisible Throng congregate there, three times a year. The rules are simple. From sunrise to sunset on that night, the people must not speak of the Invisible Throng, and from sunset to sunrise of that night, they must not leave their homes. Consider the young man of courage and curiosity, who would rather see the faeries for himself. He tells his sweetheart, the sweetest girl in 50 miles, that he wishes to see the faeries that morning, and she recoils in horror, and says that he must not speak of — but it is too late, and she has spoken of them, too. She cries, and says that she will not go with him. And she retires that night with her rosary and she prays. And the young man of courage and curiosity hides at sunset on the mound, in a tree. And he sees them, as they swoop from the sky in their hundreds, and without warning they descend upon the tree and sweep the young man of courage and curiosity away, and the tree with him. And one hour before dawn, the sweetest girl in 50 miles hears the voice of her sweetheart at her window, begging to be let in. She goes to the door and steps outside to embrace him, and she, too, is gone. One day the young man, still of great courage but no longer of great curiosity, will escape. His sweetheart never will. She is theirs forever.

Changelings know that their deeds have consequences, but few feel those consequences so keenly as the changelings who are called Darklings. Many were stolen away as the consequence of attracting the attention of the Fae. The Darklings' obsessive clinging to the solace of the night is the consequence of having been imbued with shadows. Their love of quiet is the consequence of having lived in a world where all was whispering, all was rustling and snapping twigs and creeping fear.

The Darklings believe that they found it hardest to escape from the lands of the Fae, because their way back was hidden from them. Of all the changelings, they were lost in an alien landscape, with no reference point to return to, with all paths shrouded in shadow. To escape, they had to be the ones who could survive in the shadows, to thrive there with creeping things and dark things and dead things that move. Having come back, they are the changelings who wait in the shadows.

A Tunnelgrub works in sewer maintenance. He rarely sees the light of day, but he's happy down there. Every so often, the Court asks him to lose something or hide something or keep something safe, and he knows exactly where to put it. He knows where the alligators are kept. A Leechfinger, thin and predatory, works as the night porter in a hospital. The hospital has a terrifying death rate, partly due to the things that spontaneously appear in the basement, and partly because of the night porter's special talent. His opinion is that the patients are dying anyway. Who cares if they die faster? An Antiquarian runs a secondhand bookshop in a rundown arcade. Everything's organized in the haphazard, impenetrable way that only the truly great antique bookshops affect, and yet the Antiquarian knows exactly where everything is. And then there's the private collection, the books that only the changelings get to see, if they know to ask and the price is right. A Gravewight works as a funeral director, his sweet decorum only just masking his searching eyes. Another Gravewight travels around the villages of central southern Uganda in the capacity of a church-licensed exorcist. Sometimes his methods are violent, but the ghosts know him and respect him. His Court has use of his ghost lore on occasion. A Mirrorskin, meanwhile, lives in an old house on the edge of a small town somewhere in Tennessee. He watches the town, and the local kids know him by a variety of nicknames.

One night not all that long ago, some children dared each other to go inside. Two went in, and both ran out screaming. One saw his dead father. The other saw his granddad. The kids don't go in there so readily these days, but the weird old man in the big rotting house, he's still watching. Another Mirrorskin accosts people on the street, picking their pockets with a smile, like a street magician — only not giving the money back. The police have been trying to catch her for months, but every time, the smiling pickpocket wears a different face. Some of the money goes to the Court. Not all of it, though.

Appearance: Darklings tend to appear somehow less solid, less substantial than other changelings. It's not that Darklings are transparent or anything. They just *feel* less solid somehow. Many (but not all) are thin, in their fae miens unnaturally so. Many are tall, and the ones who aren't are only shorter than normal because they're hunched over. Some have pointed ears and noses. Some have straight, lank hair. Their skin runs the gamut from deathly white to transparent, shadowy black or blue. Their eyes are almost always dark, like deep pits that reveal nothing. Sometimes, in their fae miens, they have freakish features, such as tiny horns or fangs, extra eyes and the like.

The sewer worker's skin, although pale, has a greenish tint, and his bloated face has a wide mouth, a broad, flat nose and tiny eyes. Small horns grow from his temples. Both of his hands have six fingers. To human eyes, he's flabby and pasty-looking, with blotches and acne. The murderous hospital porter is hunched and curved, looking like a great pale, leering question mark. His nose and chin are pointed together like some effigy of Mr. Punch, and his hair falls straight to his shoulders. In his human seeming, these features are less pronounced… but not much. The bookseller appears as a precise, decorous figure, all dressed in black. Her black, pupil-less, heavy-lashed eyes sparkle with good humor. Her mouth is small and precise. Her fingers are freakishly long. The funeral director's hands are like broad, flat shovels, his face pale, round and pockmarked like the moon. As a human, he's prim and small and softly spoken. The Ugandan exorcist, on the other hand, is huge and broad, like a vast grinning shadow, and if sometimes he's almost transparent, that only adds to his menace. Even when his fae mien is invisible, the only thing people remember of his face is that terrible smile, those terrible white teeth. The strange old man is bent almost double, but straightens when he creates a new face. He always speaks in a whisper. The pickpocket, on the other hand, is quick moving and fast-talking, smooth and young and charming, but has so many faces, she's not even sure which one is her own.

Background: Darklings are among those Lost who were stolen because they transgressed. They might not have known they were transgressing, or even that there were rules to break, but they went too far. Many crossed the line out of curiosity, and it's this curiosity, this need to find new things and to explore, that helped to bring many of them back out through the Hedge. This curiosity made them what they were: by investigating the dark, they became like the dark. Many Darklings are talented at finding things out, and many take on roles that depend upon them being observant.

Durance: The Darklings' memories of their time in Faerie are awash with shadowy fears. Vague, hulking forces loomed from the corner of the room. Small skittering things crawled across faces or became momentarily tangled in hair before dissolving. Wet, slithering things moved around in the background. Trapdoors and boarded windows with something behind them figure heavily in dreams of Faerie. Being sent on errands with no point, being forced to copy ancient codices of lore that made no sense while outside things shrieked and fluttered, being made to enter a cellar and being eaten, over and over again, being lost in mazes: all of these things feature heavily in Darkling dreams of Faerie. The dark places of the human world don't remotely compare.

Character Creation: Darklings are often nimble and cunning. They often have their highest scores in Finesse Attributes (Dexterity, Wits and Manipulation). Although physically weak and unprepossessing, many have reasonable ratings in Resolve and Composure, the better to have resisted the fears of the Fae night. Darklings often excel in Skills that require precision and training, such as Larceny, Stealth, Subterfuge, Academics and Crafts.

Blessing: Just as the shadows that infect them, the Darklings are as ephemeral and flighty as the dark itself. A player can spend Glamour to increase dice pools that include Wits, Subterfuge and Stealth — each point of Glamour increases one dice pool by one point. The character also gains the benefit of the 9 again rule on Stealth dice pools.

Curse: Darkness and twilight so define these changelings that their magic falters somewhat when the sun is in the sky (that is, not at night, or at twilight). Darklings suffer a –1 die penalty to all rolls to enact Contracts during daylight hours. The penalty increases to –2 dice if the sun is directly visible to them.

Seeming Contracts: Darkness

Concepts: Parapsychologist, nocturnal building superintendent, night-shift call center worker, chimney sweep, professional spelunker, lab assistant, amateur night-time naturalist, night refuge manager.

Kiths

Antiquarian — Those Darklings who surround themselves with dusty tomes of lore and the artifacts of long-dead lands and peoples. Dusty, quiet and diligent, they hold the **Keys to Knowledge:** the Antiquarians know where to find lore ancient and modern, and have a near-flawless memory for facts, trivial and not so trivial. Every Antiquarian receives the benefit of the 9 again rule on dice pools including Academics and Investigation. They may also spend a point of Glamour to gain the benefits of the Encyclopedic Knowledge Merit for one question. If the Antiquarian already possesses this Merit, he may spend one Glamour to add three dice to the roll.

Gravewight — Cold-skinned Darklings who draw comfort from consorting with the dead, both restless and in repose. The Gravewight possesses the **Charnel Sight:** the changeling can see the unquiet dead. For one point of Glamour, the changeling can see ghosts for the rest of the scene. The power doesn't extend to any other invisible beings that may or may not be present, and doesn't allow the changeling to touch the ghost or compel it to answer her unless the ghost chooses to allow that.

Leechfinger — The faeries who steal life from humans, grain by grain, drop by drop, with just a touch. Every Leechfinger knows how to **Sap the Vital Spark:** with a touch, he can steal the health of another to heal his own injuries. The character needs to touch the target (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 157), and the player spends a point of Glamour. The victim takes one point of lethal damage, and the changeling heals one point of lethal or bashing damage, or downgrades one point of aggravated damage to lethal. This blessing can be used once per scene per point of the Darkling's Wyrd.

Mirrorskin — Darklings who hide in plain sight from the eyes of humankind. Their bones are malleable, their faces like flowing quicksilver. The Mirrorskin's blessing is **The Mercurial Visage:** he can change the cast of his features to resemble (if not completely mimic) anyone he has met. The player may do this at will, gaining a +3 dice bonus to Wits + Subterfuge disguise attempts (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 87). This bonus applies to both mien and Mask.

Tunnelgrub — Those of the Darkling faeries who slide and slither through tunnels and sewers and chimneys, the better to do terrible things in the night. The Tunnelgrub has the ability to **Slither and Squirm:** she slips and slides and wriggles through tight spaces and out of handcuffs and other bonds. The player spends a point of Glamour. The changeling can get through spaces that are only just too narrow for her to get through, spaces that would otherwise leave her completely stuck. The changeling gets to roll Dexterity + Athletics to wriggle out of ropes or handcuffs. If it's a long distance, such as a chimney or a sewage pipe, the player needs to make an extended roll, earning at least three successes, perhaps more, depending on the length of the tunnel. A dramatic failure means that the character is stuck and can't escape on her own or try again using this talent (if the changeling is caught in the middle of a tunnel, this could be disastrous, because she can't get out on her own).

Stereotypes

Beasts: I wouldn't trust too much to those senses of yours if I were in your pelt. They aren't always as honest as you might think.

Elementals: You think that because you have this attachment to the world's bones that you have nothing to fear. I pity you.

Fairest: Watch your back. No, that's not a threat. Why should it be a threat?

Ogres: Absolutely. You go in first. I'll just stay out here and back you up.

The Wizened: It is a good thing to be wise, and diligent and useful. You work in the lights, I'll work nearby.

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Vampires: So like the Others. Watch them, carefully, from a distance, as hard as you can.

Werewolves: All the more reason to stay out of the moonlight.

Mages: Carefully, carefully. Let them think you know something they don't, or have something they want, and they'll tear open every shadow looking for you.

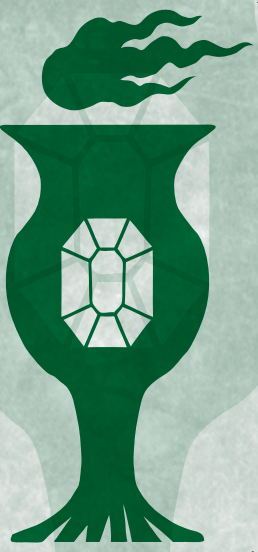
Mortals: You and the sun are friends. And you haven't a clue what that means.

No, you didn't hear anything. It was your imagination.

Elementals

This is a story about a *Rusalka:* a girl was taken by a cruel faerie who lived in the river, who forced her to become his bride. She stayed for a while, for a few years, no more, and in that time, he enchanted her and changed her, and she became a *Rusalka,* who lured the innocent into the river and gave them to her husband to eat. One day, she escaped her cruel husband and returns to her hometown by the river, to see her family and her sweetheart. But oh, the *Rusalka* had changed so much. Her hair was green now, and her skin was cold, and the rushing of the river was in her voice. And oh, when her cruel husband took her, he was cunning, and he left behind a false girl, who sickened and died in her place, and so her family did not recognize her, for they thought that she was dead. And oh, her sweetheart had married someone else and had forgotten her for another's caresses. So the *Rusalka* walked through the streets of her hometown, and could see that there was nothing for her there. And so she returned to the river, telling herself that her cruel husband would take her back.

And a day later, the pieces of a girl's dismembered corpse were washed up on the river bank at the edge of the town, one by one, and because no one knew who she was, they buried her in an unmarked grave. And there was no one to mourn.



You can never go back. Not really. Sure, a changeling can fight his way out through the Hedge and return to Earth, but it's never the same. The stuff of Faerie has worked its way into the changeling's blood. The changelings whose time in the land of the Fae caused them to embody the material aspects of nature feel this all the more painfully, because they have changed the most. The Elementals, as other changelings call them, believe that their journey back through the Hedge was harder for them than it was for any of the changelings, because the Elementals had changed the most. They had less reason to escape. Their humanity had been more damaged by what they had endured in the Fae realm. Similar to the poor *Rusalka*, the Elementals find themselves in a world that doesn't know them anymore; of course, the moral of her story is that you can't go back to the Fae, either, for they do not forgive.

Other changelings find the Elementals the hardest to understand. They're alien. The other changelings have taken the faerie side of their nature from creatures who, at least on some level, represent human dreams: beauties, horrors, tricksters and even animals represent something of ourselves. But the Elemental psyche is influenced by the desires of objects and forces.

A Woodblood Green Man runs a hotel in southern England, built around a Tudor inn at the corner of a forest. There's a live gallows oak tree in the back garden, and in its higher branches is the entry to a powerful trod. If members of the local Court come to him with the right price and his mood swings the right way, he'll bring out the ladder and show them where to climb. An Airtouched Djinn lives in an Indian community as an imam. The power of the words he uses in the mosque matches the wind in his hair and the tornado in his soul. Several members of his congregation are enchanted, and do the work of the Summer Court as much as the work of Allah. A Fireheart with the reptilian skin of a Salamander does much the same with a Baptist congregation in the Southern United States. He preaches hellfire and brimstone, sowing fear on behalf of the Autumn Court, spicing up private conversations with a few, select parishioners with a miracle or two. Another Fireheart, a member of the Summer Court, takes the form of an *Ifrit,* brazen-skinned and vicious. He runs a protection racket; he's adept at burning places down without it looking like arson. Sometimes he does jobs for less orthodox clients. A Winter Court Fireheart, meanwhile, a full-blood Kwakiutl, works as an electrician. When he's needed, he calls down the power of Brother Lightning on the enemies of his people and his Court. A Manikin girl with a clockwork heart and a new identity dances in Paris. No one dances *Coppelia* like her; her timing is without compare, and once a month, she dances for the Court. A coldly beautiful Snowskin Princess teaches third grade. She scares the children with stories that they'll never forget, driving shards of ice into every little heart that passes through her class. She gains a certain pleasure from making children cry and giving children nightmares, even while she knows that the truths they learn from her dark, sad, terrible fairy stories might one day protect them from the same fate she once suffered. A Waterborn with an Hellenic beauty works as a male prostitute in a waterfront area, barely keeping body and soul together, but when his Court needs him, he gladly runs messages back and forth across the bay, faster than any boat. An Earthbones with the lumpen body of a Paracelsian Gnome works as a gravedigger. He buries more bodies than his job might demand.

Appearance: All Elementals have something of their element about them. Mostly, that connection shows itself through the texture and color of the skin, through something in the eyes. The *Ifrit* is huge and muscular. His skin is metallic, like brass,

and hot to the touch. His eyes blaze so brightly, it's difficult to look directly at them. The preacher, on the other hand, although also a Fireheart, has white skin and hair that blazes like the blue flame of a gas burner, while the Lightning-Brother has skin as gray and cloudy as a gathering storm-cloud; electricity arcs and crackles across his skin and hair, and fills his eyes. The Snow Princess is beautiful but cold, with hair as white as the snow and bluish skin that glitters in the light with frost, her fingernails bright and sharp on cold, delicate fingers. Her eyes are colorless, like blank spheres of clouded ice. Her voice freezes the blood. The Djinn is vast and loud, like every bearded genie of legend. His beard is wild and full. His skin is the deep blue of the Uttar Pradesh sky in Summer. The Hellenic nymph looks like a slim, pale beautiful boy with the features of an ancient Greek boy. His slim, lithe frame is damp and cold to the touch; his hair is woven with sea shells and weed. His eyes are the deepest green. The gravedigger is broad and squat of frame, and his skin is made of hard, rough earth, speckled in places with patches of lichen and moss. His own eyes are so deeply set, they're lost in shadow. The Green Man has skin like Autumn and evergreen leaves for hair. The clockwork ballerina looks like an exquisite doll, made of porcelain and metal.

Some of this carries over into an Elemental's human appearance. The Snow Princess is a delicate, icily beautiful blonde with pale blues eyes and cold hands. The gravedigger is broad, rough-skinned and heavy-browed. The preacher is tall and thin and twitchy, like a flame that leaps from place to place, while the *Ifrit* is big and overpowering of manner. The Djinn imam is huge and bombastic. The Hellenic male prostitute has the look of a green-eyed, debauched Ganymede. The ballerina is precise and somewhat impassive. The Lightning-Brother's wild eyes and quick temper cause hair to stand on end.

Background: The Elementals were often those whom the Fae desired in some way, those whom they sought out and went to some effort to kidnap. Most Elementals were already exceptional in some way. Perhaps the changeling was beautiful enough to excite a Fae's desire. Perhaps they needed a guard or a servant of some kind. A musician or dancer could become the prize of a Fae who fancied himself a doyen of the arts. When Elementals come back, they still possess those talents that attracted the Fae to them in the first place, but now their element alters it in many ways, some subtle, some less so. Some, however, wandered into the Hedge on their own, in some ways bearing the marks of whatever thorny wasteland they wandered in before being taken to Faerie.

Durance: While most other Lost became the way they did through simply living in a Faerie's home and eating Faerie food and doing Faerie work, the Elementals were often deliberately changed, transformed into slaves of some kind or another, or features of the land until one day, they awoke to themselves and realized they had to escape. Their memories of Faerie are often difficult to understand. Some know that once, they understood what it was to be a tree, or a stone or a mound of earth. Some remember being lost to enchantment, becoming a clockwork doll or a lover made of ice. Others recall being lost in an environment now alien to them: perhaps the changeling served as a manservant in a flying city of glass or a blazing city made all of brass.

Character Creation: The variation between Elementals of even the same kith is vast, making it impossible to draw hard and fast rules. Elementals can focus on any Attributes or Skills, really, depending on what their element is and how it manifests itself. For example, the Fireheart preacher's fire manifests itself in the heat of his sermons — he has an emphasis on Social Attributes and Skills. On the other hand, the *Ifrit*'s fire is all too physical, and his Attributes and Skills are both primarily Physical. A Snowskin changeling could just as easily be a bruiser with shoulders like a glacier as a delicate but cruel lady with ice in her eyes and her heart. A Woodblood changeling could be as strong as an oak, or as delicate and graceful as a Victorian flower fairy.

Blessing: Elementals, touched as they are by the stuff of the world, are able to channel the forces and materials that define them into their bodies, giving them an uncanny ability to shrug off punishment. Once per day, the player can spend one point of Glamour to add the character's Wyrd rating to his Health dots for the rest of the scene. These follow the normal rules for temporary Health dots (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 173).

Curse: The Elementals are further removed from humanity than other changelings, and find humans harder to understand and to influence. An Elemental doesn't get the benefit of the 10 again rule on any dice pools involving the Manipulation Attribute and the Skills Empathy, Expression, Persuasion or Socialize.

Seeming Contracts: Elements

Concepts: Secretly incompetent firefighter, landscape gardener, logging saboteur, clockwork secretary, workaholic steelworker, tornado chaser, model with flawless skin, all-weather surfer, competitive mountaineer, deep-sea diver, extreme sports fanatic.

Kiths

Airtouched — The Elementals of wind, cloud, smoke and sky, who can be as healthy as a fresh breeze or as pestilent as the miasma that surrounds the dead. Their blessing is **Velocity of the Zephyr:** the player can spend one point of Glamour to add the character's Wyrd to her Speed or Initiative (player's choice) for the rest of the scene. This blessing can be invoked once for each Trait per scene.

Earthbones — Changelings who have the mark of earth and stone: lumpen Paracelsian Gnomes, sand spirits, dour men of peat and dwarfs made of mountain granite. Their blessing is **Terrestrial Might:** the Earthbones has shoulders that could bear the world. The player can spend Glamour to add to non-combat Strength-based dice pools, on a one for one basis (one point of Glamour adds one die to one dice pool, two points add two dice to the dice pool and so on).

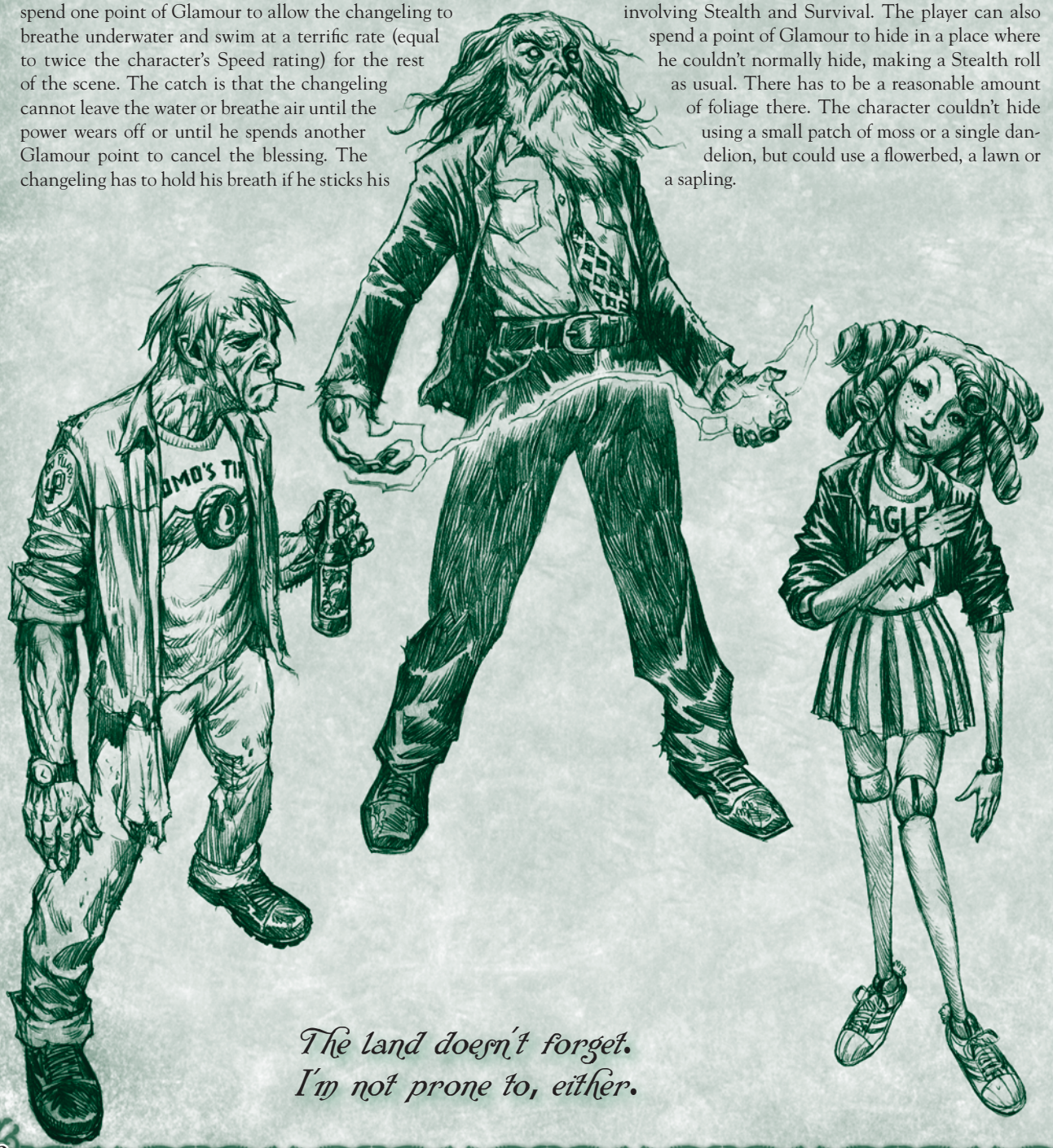
Fireheart — Elementals marked with fire, heat or electricity. Their blessing is **Flickering Acumen:** like a flame, the Fireheart's faculties are bright and constantly on the move. The player can spend points of Glamour to add to Wits-based dice pools, on a one for one basis.

Manikin — Changelings who have the character of human-made objects, such as *caryatids*, mannequins and other, stranger things, such as enchanted beings powered by clockwork or steam or living bodies made of mercury or glass. The Manikins' talent is the **Artificer's Enchantment:** the Manikin can learn Contracts of Artifice for (new dots x5 experience points) rather than the usual cost. The Manikin also may make untrained Crafts rolls at a –1 die penalty rather than the standard –3 dice.

Snowskin — The children of the cold, who can be as powerful as the Arctic ice or as delicate as a snowflake. The Snowmarked's blessing is **The Voice of Ice:** the changeling can imbue her voice with terrible cold, inspiring terror in those who hear. She is also a master at concealing her own emotions and goals under a cool veneer. The Elemental gains the benefit of the 9 again rule on Intimidation and Subterfuge rolls, and can spend a point of Glamour to re-roll a failed Intimidation roll.

Waterborn — Changelings who are imbued with the nature of the waters, soft and brutal, gentle and mighty: undines and nymphs, man-eating river demons, water babies, ladies of the lake. Their blessing is **The Gift of Water:** the player can spend one point of Glamour to allow the changeling to breathe underwater and swim at a terrific rate (equal to twice the character's Speed rating) for the rest of the scene. The catch is that the changeling cannot leave the water or breathe air until the power wears off or until he spends another Glamour point to cancel the blessing. The changeling has to hold his breath if he sticks his head out of the water (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook,** p. 49). If the changeling is made to leave the water completely before the scene is over, he begins to drown, automatically taking one point of lethal damage each turn until he is either returned to the water or he dies.

Woodblood — The children of plants: Green Men, flower fairies, spirits of mandrake, rose, thorns and all manner of medicinal herbs, fair and foul. The Woodbloods' blessing is the ability to **Fade into the Foliage:** in any outdoors area where there are plants growing from the earth (in a garden, for example, but not in a concrete yard with a couple of shrubs in pots), the character gains the benefit of the 9 again rule on dice pools involving Stealth and Survival. The player can also spend a point of Glamour to hide in a place where he couldn't normally hide, making a Stealth roll as usual. There has to be a reasonable amount of foliage there. The character couldn't hide using a small patch of moss or a single dandelion, but could use a flowerbed, a lawn or a sapling.



The land doesn't forget.
I'm not prone to, either.

Stereotypes

Beasts: You would almost share my heart if you weren't lost to the… impermanent side of nature.

Darklings: See that? That was me shivering.

Fairest: So what? You're a force of nature? Oh, I like you. You're really funny.

Ogres: Get out of my face before I do something you regret.

The Wizened: Dig all you want. Just not here.

• • •

Vampires: I think I'm going to be sick.

Werewolves: No, you're welcome here. Of course you are. So. When were you planning to move on again?

Mages: Difference between them and me? I'm not cheating. I *am* magic.

Mortals: You're overturning the land. You're cutting down the trees. You're choking the sky. So why am I so jealous of you?

FAIREST

This story concerns a young man, who dreamed of the love of a beautiful girl in his village. One night, he made a special cake from a recipe he learned from his grandmother, and he waited in the dark for a faerie to come and take it. The door opened; a dark, tall faerie came in. He said to the faerie, "Not for you," but he sinned in this: he shouldn't have spoken to her. So he sat and waited a little longer, and the door opened; a loathly hag stepped in. The hag reached out her hand for the cake, but the young man tapped her on the wrist and said, "Not for you." He sinned in this: he shouldn't have touched her. So he sat and he waited a little longer, and the door opened; a lady of unearthly beauty and grace stepped in, and he could say nothing, so stunned was he, and the lady said, "For me," and took the cake. She stayed with him after that, this lady. She granted his wishes, but somehow they were always twisted. He wished for money, and soon he married an ugly old woman, in the hopes that she would die and leave him nothing. The old woman proved healthier than he could have imagined, and was cruel and mean. The youth turned to his Fae lady again and wished the old woman dead. True to her word, the Fae lady brought the plague to the town, and the old woman died, but so did the young man's sweetheart. He gained the mean old woman's riches, but his love was dead, and he wished himself dead, and he fell into a deep sleep. He awoke in his coffin, buried six feet under the ground, and as he began to beat upon the wood, he heard a sweet, sweet voice say, "For me." And if anyone were to dig up his coffin, they would find nothing there but dried leaves and stones.

This is the way of the Fae, and it's the way of the Fairest: they take what and whom they will take, and they will have their fun first. It is their prerogative to be loved and admired, and their right to treat that love any way they will. Sure, they'll try to rise above it, but there's always the fact that they really are the fairest of them all. They won their beauty fairly. They deserve to be beautiful.

The Fairest consider their own flight through the Hedge the hardest to have effected. The world they were part of — or as much of it as they remember — was beautiful, a world of sweet pain and pleasant cruelty, a bittersweet paradise. Surrounded by beauty as they were, thralls to creatures a thousand times lovelier than anything on Earth, they had to focus all their thoughts on remembering what it was to be plain, to walk among the ordinary.

Those who do leave, then, are those who had enough of a sense of self to be able to abandon ecstasy, and they know it. They brought back their seeming from the Fae realm, and with it, they brought back cruelty, and this cruelty is sometimes amplified by the arrogance that comes from knowing that they were pure enough of heart and strong enough of will to escape.

Often, the Fairest believe that they should be far more influential and powerful in their Courts than they actually are, mistaking social prowess and ruthlessness for the qualities of leadership. Some manage, by sheer force of personality and charm alone, to rise to the top, but there are more Fairest in positions of authority than there are Fairest who know what they're doing.

But they have their place in changeling society. A Dancer works her magic around a pole in a gentleman's bar. The Court sometimes needs a patsy, or something done by someone disposable, and the patrons, ensorcelled by the pole dancer's routines, often serve the changelings' purpose. A Draconic Prince works for the People's Government in Beijing; although a stickler for social niceties, he's known to some of the people on the streets as a man who can bend the rules for the right price and the right reason. Many people in the city owe their homes, their health and the survival of their families to him, and the gratuities he receives aid the changeling Court. Most of all, he always seems to get away with it. Another Draconic changeling leads a coven of bored housewives by force of will, practicing the blackest of magic, keeping her followers divided but devoted to her. The Courts don't trust her all that much, but they need her resources and contacts at times, and they are inclined to overlook if she is too inclined to follow the lead of the old stories and pay a tithe to Hell. A Muse runs an art school in a bohemian corner of a provincial city. His students always seem to do much better work before they graduate. A Flowering Demon Lover strides through the club scene, manipulating its social politics and alliances, leaving relationships wrecked and friendships torn with suspicion. Although a minor player in his Court, here he's on top of his

game, trusted and admired in the bars and clubs, every guy's best friend… to their faces. Another Muse, an Indian *Deva*, works in Mumbai, an assistant choreographer for a half a dozen Bollywood studios. He's never at the top of the credits and never receives much recognition, but the films he works on are among the brightest, most exciting and most cheerful of them all. And hidden within the sumptuous song and dance routines are messages for those who know. A Bright One, an African American *orisha*, works as a recruiting sergeant for the Army. In the office, he's as bright as a button, and as optimistic as a Boy Scout, telling stories of heroism and organizing training exercises and tours of the local base. Sometimes there's a recruit who doesn't shape up, but the recruiting sergeant always seems to be there with the offer of work. Sure, it might not be with the Army, but there's always a place for a willing soldier.

Wherever the Fairest find themselves, they're prominent. They push themselves into everything they do. Sometimes their undoubted charisma is enough to carry an enterprise on its own. Sometimes it isn't. But then, of all the changelings, the Fairest are the least suited to being alone. Although sometimes haughty, and sometimes cruel, they are social beings, and when they rise above their shortcomings, they work surpassingly well as part of a team. The cruelty that made them can be redeemed, if only they'll let someone else close enough to make a difference.

Appearance: The Fairest are often tall, often slim and always good-looking, however they appear. They're never really conventionally attractive. They're striking, and memorable with it. They're also the changelings who as humans look the most like their fae miens. The pole dancer has full, sensual features and a knockout figure. Her eyes are an amazing shade of violet. Most people think she's wearing contact lenses. In her fae seeming, her hair is even longer than it is already, her ears are pointed and the fullness of her lips, the curve of her chin and the size and color of her eyes are exaggerated to an almost painful degree. The Draconic Prince has flaming red skin and sharp teeth, but they only serve to show what a striking man he is. As a human, he has a broad smile and perfect teeth in an angular face. The Demon Lover is always immaculately groomed, and he always smells good without ever using product. Again, in his fae seeming, his cruel beauty is emphasized to the extreme. His ears are pointed, and he has the look of a Victorian stage devil to him. The Draconic Witch resembles nothing more than a perfect, affluent suburban housewife; in her fae seeming, her perfect dress and jewelry become the accouterments of a dark, cruelly beautiful lady, with a cold satanic grace that freezes the soul. The *Deva* looks like a smiling Hindu god, all blue-green skin and liquid, heavy-lashed eyes. Those eyes appear much the same in his human seeming. The gung-ho *orisha* is a big African American man with a shaved head and a warm smile. In his fae seeming, he is taller and slimmer, his features angular, elongated and clear, like a Nigerian carving.

Background: The Fairest were not always those whom the Fae thought to take for lovers. Although most were pleasing to the eye, all had some talent beyond simple good looks. Some could dance, some had beautiful voices, some were artists or poets. The few who have made it back have often found that this one talent has consumed them. It's almost all they have, in a way. The arrogance that comes from having the strength of self to be able to freely return from bleak, beautiful Faerie is perhaps bolstered by insecurity. What if the talents they have are not enough to make them truly the most talented, the brightest, the most beautiful? After all, in the stories, the Fae sorceress is very rarely, if the mirror is to be believed, the Fairest of them all.

Durance: The Fairest find that the memories of their time in Faerie are brief, fragmentary. The Fairest have dreams of self-annihilating ecstasy, of perfect pleasure, intercut with moments of horror and fear. Romantic interludes segue into hellish agonies. A bed covered with radiant blossoms is suddenly drenched in blood, the flowers becoming hooks and chains that rend and tear. The perfect body, only glimpsed in fragments, becomes as cold as crushing stone. Threads of fragrant hair that cover the dreamer's face become strands of razor-sharp wire that slice his face away. And when the changeling wakes up, he screams and he doesn't know if he's screaming in agony or in bliss.

Character Creation: The Fairest often concentrate on Social Attributes and Skills, although they do not neglect their bodies, having reasonable levels in Physical Traits. Many have high ratings in Expression and Socialize. The Striking Looks Merit is particularly common among them. They're stereotyped by some of the other changelings as not being overly clever. While this isn't always fair, many of the Fairest do put Mental Traits on the back burner.

Blessing: These changelings really are the Fairest of Them All, and their magic only emphasizes this. The player can spend Glamour to improve dice pools that include Presence, Manipulation and Persuasion. Each point spent increases one dice pool by one point.

A changeling counted among the Fairest also suffers no untrained penalty for using Social skills in which she has no dots.

Curse: The Fairest, similar to the creatures who stole them, can be callous and unfeeling, vicious and prone to toy with others, even people who love them. Their inner balance suffers for this. One of the Fairest suffers a –1 die penalty on dice pools to avoid losing Clarity (for example, the player of a Fairest with Clarity 5 who kills another changeling rolls two dice to avoid losing Clarity, rather than three).

Seeming Contracts: Vainglory

Concepts: Charismatic but incompetent executive, professional athlete, lead singer in a band, amiable politician, catalog model, aging heartthrob, too-glamorous gangbanger, out-of-work actor waiting tables, high school beauty queen, low-table professional footballer, late night torch singer.

Kiths

Bright One — Changelings who came from light; will-o'-the-wisps, bright elves, White Ladies and other beings of

light and fire and ice from all over the world. Their blessing is **Goblin Illumination:** The player can, at will, illuminate an area the size of a smallish room (about 15' x 15' x 10' high) with a soft, pale light for the rest of the scene. Although the light centers on the changeling's left hand, it doesn't have the changeling as its source, seemingly coming from the air itself. The light doesn't move. If the changeling leaves the radius of the light, he leaves it behind. With the expenditure of a Glamour point, the light becomes painfully intense; anyone trying to target the Bright One treats him as partially concealed and suffers a –2 dice penalty (–1 die if the attacker is wearing sunglasses).

Dancer — Those among the Fairest blessed of particular agility and grace, for whom motion is itself beauty and art. Whether entertainer, courtesan, artist or murderer, the Dancer is happiest when moving to the sound of her inner rhythm. The Dancer's blessing is **Fae Grace**: she benefits from the 9 again rule on any Expression or Socialize rolls involving agility (such as juggling or dancing in a performance or social setting), and always adds one to her Dodge total when dodging attacks.

Draconic — Changelings who bear within them the blood of dragons or other Great Beasts of Faerie, including celestial bureaucrats and tithe-payers to Satan alike. Haughty and possessing a robust physicality, the Draconic Fairest have the secret of the **Dragon's Talon:** a Draconic changeling gains an extra die on Brawl rolls, striking with the power of a chimera's claw or manticore's sting. His player can also spend one point of Glamour to re-take one failed Brawl roll, once per scene.

Flowering — Flowers blossom on bare earth where these changelings have stood (although they take months to appear in the human world rather than seconds, as they did in Faerie). Their skin is soft like the petal of a rose or a chrysanthemum and bright with a bloom of health. The Flowering Fairest has a **Seductive Fragrance:** her skin, hair and breath carries the aroma of unknown blossoms from places unseen, the promise of pleasures unknown. Her bouquet seduces and lulls in equal measure. She gains the benefit of the 9 again rule on dice pools including Persuasion, Socialize and Subterfuge.

Muse — Their beauty inspires the arts. Whether a Rubenesque beauty, a sedate and delicate daughter of the Heavenly Ministry, a grotesquely beautiful masquer garbed in yellow tatters, or a Dark Lady who drives her beloved to destruction, the Muse inspires the creation of things of beauty and horror and love and hate and fear. The growth of confidence can precipitate a headlong rush to doom, and the Muse knows how to make it happen. The Muse's talent is **The Tyranny of Ideas:** the changeling's presence can give a human the confidence and talent to do things that he otherwise would not be able to do. For every point of Glamour the changeling spends, the human subject (and it must be human; it can't be another changeling or another supernatural being) gains +2 on one dice pool involving Expression, Persuasion, Socialize or Subterfuge.

You're going to buy me a drink,
and then I'm going to humiliate you.
And you know, and you're going to do it
anyway. Because I want you to.

Stereotypes

Beasts: Careful! You'll have someone's eye out with that.

Darklings: Well, we can't all be the lucky ones, I suppose.

Elementals: Are you free Friday night? Dinner? Some drinks maybe?

Ogres: Be my faithful brute, won't you? Come to me when I call, walk your own way when I need to be alone? Promise?

The Wizened: You're taking my money for this, you horrible little man. So stop bitching about it.

Vampires: Oh, they can be fair in their own way, and oh yes, they know about cruelty, but they're… not like us. Nothing of dead flesh could be.

Werewolves: Always, always keep your eye on the length of their leashes.

Mages: A little curiosity is flattering. A lot of curiosity isn't just oppressive, it's dangerous.

Mortals: I'm the fairest of them all. I am. Not you. Me. I don't care what the mirror says.

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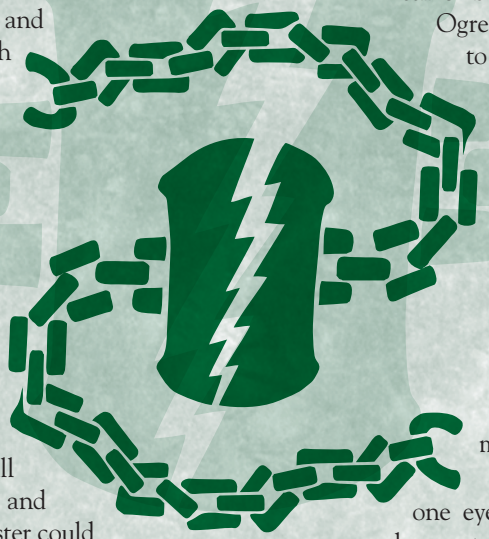
OGRES

The story goes that there was once a troll, a beast who dined on human flesh and carved knife-handles out of the bones. Business was good, and the troll decided that he needed assistance in his workshop. One night, he stole into a village and took away three sons of a shoemaker. The ogre worked the three boys in his workshop, on the drill and lathe and chisel and awl for long hours. Every day, at dawn, he beat them, and he fed them on scraps of raw flesh. One night, the eldest boy took one of the knives he had made for the troll and crept in upon him while he was sleeping. But the knife shrieked out loud and would not kill the troll, and the troll awoke and cooked the boy in a pie and forced each of his brothers to eat a slice, before he beat them so hard that they were all bruises. The second son made a pick so that he could open the lock on the door of the troll's workshop, and at night he crept to the door and picked the lock. But the troll was waiting behind the door, and he chopped the boy up and cooked him in a stew, and fed it to the youngest son before beating him so hard that his teeth were all broken and his mouth was all blood. The third boy worked so hard and so well in the workshop that the monster could find fewer and fewer reasons to beat him, and the knives the boy made were beautifully carved, and the troll found that he could sell them for more gold than he ever had before. One day, the troll came into the workshop, and he leaned over the boy's shoulder as the boy carved the knife handle, and the boy pointed out a detail of the carving, and the troll craned closer to look, and quick as lightning the boy turned his hand and stabbed the troll in the eye. And that was the end of the troll. The boy wanted to run away, but he turned back and saw that the workshop was now empty. And he didn't leave. He ate the troll's food and slept in the troll's bed. And now he dines on human flesh, and carves knife handles from the bones. And business is good. One day soon, he will need assistance.



The changelings who, for the want of a better term, are called Ogres understand this story, for it informs who they are. They know that abuse sometimes creates abusers, that the victims of brutality can sometimes become brutal themselves. By definition, the Ogres are those changelings who have been shaped by unthinking violence, and brutishness defines them.

This is not to say that Ogres can't be gentle or honorable, or possessed of restraint. It's just harder for them. They believe that their journey through the Hedge was the hardest of all the changelings because they had to escape from vicious, brutal captors, through locked doors, from chains and manacles, from regular beatings and the fear of beatings. To escape from that, every Ogre inevitably had to become hardened to the violence, and in Faerie, to become hardened to something is often to become that thing. Just as the shoemaker's youngest son, some changelings defeat their captors only to *become* them.

Most folklore traditions have stories of trolls, hags, giants and flesh-eaters, and the changeling Ogres reflect those, to a certain extent. Their tragedy is often that as they try to escape the violence that made them, they perpetrate it.

A big man, Cyclopean in stature, one eye missing and covered by a patch, works as a traveling salesman. Sometimes, when he thinks that no one's watching, he makes a meal of lonely people he meets on the road. The Court that uses him as a courier doesn't know this. A Gristlegrinder hag with teeth like iron and skin like green leather is the matron of a children's home. The kids are scared stiff she'll make good on threats to eat them up. She wouldn't, but the children she terrifies unknowingly gain a respect for the things of Faerie that might one day save them from ending up like the matron. Another Gristlegrinder, a tiger-jawed, wide-eyed Indian *raksha,* works as a police community support officer. The frequency of racist abuse and attacks has plummeted since he's been on the job. Partly, this is because of the rumors of the terrible things that happen to people who stray onto his turf. How long can it last? One of the more organized racist groups is thinking of retaliating. A Farwalker, a farmer, keeps kids away from the Deep Dark Wood at the edge of his land (and the gap in the

Hedge in the middle of it) with tales of the orange-eyed, black-tongued, sharp-toothed creature that hunts there. The farmer wouldn't hurt a fly, but he really looks the part. A Gargantuan *oni* demon, a tusked, scarlet-skinned brute, makes a living as a construction worker. If his Court wants something (or someone) buried, something placed in the fabric of the building, or something sabotaged, they'll come to him, although they won't expect subtlety. A craggy-chinned Stonebones climbs in the Rockies. He's been caught in avalanches and rockfalls, but somehow he never seems to be badly hurt. He knows the mountains like he knows his own back garden, and he's a superlative guide. A Water-Dweller works for the Coast Guard. He amazes his colleagues — and even himself — with the acts of heroism he engages in, and the feats of strength he sometimes manages to perform in service of his craft. What his colleagues don't know is that sometimes the Court would prefer that some boats stay sunk, that some crews drowned and sometimes the aspiring lifesaver finds his loyalties sorely tested.

Whatever place an Ogre finds in the world, she'll find that the only way to rise above the brutality that made her what she is to accept it and use it. Of course, there's a fine line between accepting something and embracing it, a line too many Ogres cross.

Appearance: Ogres are always brutish in some way. Some have bestial features (and a very few might even be confused with Beasts). Many are tall and broad, although by no means all. There are several short Ogres and almost as many skinny Ogres.

The Hag Matron has hair like wire and deeply wrinkled, leathery dark green skin, covered with warts and pustules. Her teeth are made of steel and catch the light when she bares them. As a human, she looks older than she is, and has an intimidating cast of feature. The *raksha* policeman has jaws like a tiger, and skin of the deepest blue. In his mortal guise, his eyes are incredibly compelling, and sometimes frightening. The Farwalker bogeyman is hairy, with shaggy black hair covering his body, an elongated snout with tusk, short spines covering his back and blazing orange eyes. In real life he's pretty scary-looking, too, the epitome of the intimidating land-worker. The Cyclopean salesman's one eye appears in the center of his forehead in his fae seeming. The Stonebones mountaineer has skin made of rocks, and eyes that peer out from beetling brows. Even as a human, he's craggy and weather-beaten. The Water-Dwelling Coast Guard member has tusks and green, scaly skin. The *oni* construction worker is bright scarlet, with the wild hair and grimacing mouth of the creature he resembles, wild hair and ugly features that persist to a degree when his seeming is invisible.

Background: The Ogres who make it back through the Hedge have to be, more than any other changeling, exceptional people. Not that the Fae are necessarily picky in whom they choose to abuse and brutalize: more that the Ogres are the ones who managed both to survive without being eaten, crippled or beaten to death *and* to avoid becoming so much like the monsters that took them that they wouldn't want to leave. They don't have to be particularly smart or cunning, but they are the kind of people who know their own mind. Most Ogres have an inborn streak of stubbornness that makes them faithful (if sometimes annoying) companions and terrible enemies.

Durance: Ogres' memories of their time in Faerie are often clearer than those of other changelings. Kidnapped by monsters, the Ogres became monsters. Some were forced to subsist on raw flesh. Some were chained to the hearth and forced to cook for awful masters. Some scrubbed floors until their knees grew scales. Some were made to fight. Some were chained up in dungeons and fattened up for the pot. All were abused in some way, and Ogres sometimes have flashbacks of verbal and physical abuse, brief painful moments where they relive in their heads the impact of a fist or foot, or the sting of a verbal barb.

Character Creation: Nearly all Ogres concentrate on Physical Attributes and Skills, almost to the exclusion of all else. Presence is a popular buy for Ogres who seem larger and more intimidating than their actual physical stature would imply. Physical Merits are also common, particularly the Giant Merit. Many Ogres take Wrath or Gluttony as Vices.

Blessing: Ogres are mostly big, often ugly and always capable of frightening displays of brute force. The player can spend points of Glamour to improve dice pools involving Strength, Brawl and Intimidate. Each point of Glamour spent adds one die to one dice pool.

Curse: Not all Ogres are necessarily stupid, but most are fairly gullible, weak-willed and prone to impulsive, thoughtless actions. An Ogre doesn't get the benefit of the 10 again rule on dice pools using Composure (with the exception of Perception rolls using Wits + Composure, which suffer no penalty). The character also suffers a –1 die penalty to Composure when using it as a Defense Trait (that is, when subtracting it from another character's dice pool).

Seeming Contracts: Stone

Concepts: Working-class Red Cap hard-man, arrogant giant CEO, shrill political activist, gung-ho Marine grunt, nightclub bouncer, understanding but non-nonsense bar manager, Bigfoot hunter, belligerent redneck, prizefighter, long-distance truck driver, deep sea fisherman.

Kiths

Cyclopean — The Cyclopeans are like the ancient hunters and herdsmen of legend who sought men for their cooking pots: changelings who resemble Cyclops of Archaic Greece, the one-legged Fachan of Scots legend, the three-eyed *oni* of Japan, the elephant-eared *raksha*s of India or the wind-borne footless Wendigo of North America.

Although many are crippled in some way, they have profound senses to make up for it. The Cyclopeans can **Smell the Blood:** the character gains the benefit of the 8 again rule on Wits-based Perception rolls. He can smell things that can't normally be smelled, meaning that even if some of his senses are deficient, his sense of smell makes up for it. Many Cyclopeans have Physical Flaws such as One Eye, Lame, One Arm or Hard of Hearing.

Farwalker — Changelings who resemble the abominable men of mystery, the possibly savage hairy creatures of the wilds whose existence straddles the divide between folklore and cryptozoology: the Sasquatch, the yeti, the Russian Alma, the Australian yowie and dozens of other wild men. Farwalkers have **The Elusive Gift:** the character gains the benefit of the 9 again rule on Stealth and Survival dice pools. Also, the player can spend a point of Glamour to retake a failed Stealth or Survival roll.

Gargantuan — Captured by giants, these changelings had to grow to a greater stature, perhaps being stretched on racks or forced to drink noxious potions. As humans, they appear less freakish, though many purchase the Giant Merit. Their blessing is **Spurious Stature:** once a day, the changeling can grow to colossal size. The player spends a point of Glamour, and adds the changeling's Wyrd score to her size for the rest of the scene. This supplies temporary Health dots (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook,** p. 175). Returning to normal size is painful, as if the changeling's skin is unable to contain the character's stature, and when she regains her normal height, the character takes one point of lethal damage.

Gristlegrinder — Man-eaters and gluttons, taking their cue from the English Black Annis, Scottish Red Caps or the *rakshas* of India, but also sometimes resembling more modern Ogres, such as the masked unstoppable lunatics of slash-and-stalk horror movies. Every Gristlegrinder has **Terrible Teeth** in his terrible jaws: the character's bite is a two lethal attack, though it does require him to grapple the opponent first.

Stonebones — Changelings who resemble the rocky giants of folklore, Nordic trolls, Native American mountain spirits and the like. The Stonebones are blessed with **Obdurate Skin:** once per day as an instant action, the player can spend one point of Glamour to harden the character's skin, making it like rock. The character uses his Wyrd as his armor rating for the rest of the scene. The character's rocky carapace does mean, however, that the character isn't as nim-

I smell the blood of —
Oh, I don't care. English, American,
it all comes out the same way.

ble as he was: the changeling suffers a –1 die penalty to all Dexterity-based dice pools while this power is active. In addition, his Defense is reduced by one for every two points of Wyrd past the first; –1 Defense at 3 Wyrd, –2 Defense at 5 Wyrd and so on. This blessing doesn't stack with mundane forms of armor.

Water-Dweller — Changelings who resemble the legendary water-demons of many cultures, from life-demanding river spirits through to the trolls of coastal caves and under-bridge shadows. The Water-Dweller can **Lie Under the Waves:** the character can hold her breath for 30 minutes, as if she had a Stamina of 7 (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 49). She is also accustomed to murk and darkness, and suffers no penalties to sight-based Perception rolls when underwater.

Stereotypes

Beasts: Hey! Hey! You didn't have to do that! I was just making a friendly offer!

Darklings: Say what you need to say to my face. I ain't scared of something that hides from me, and I ain't gonna be your friend if you won't shake my hand.

Elementals: Look. If I want to piss against your tree, I'll piss against your tree. That's natural, too.

Fairest: Has anyone ever told you — ? Oh. Right. Yeah. 'Course they have. So. What was it you wanted me to do?

The Wizened: Don't think I can't hear you down there. You can do things I can't, that's fine. Just don't act like I'm stupid.

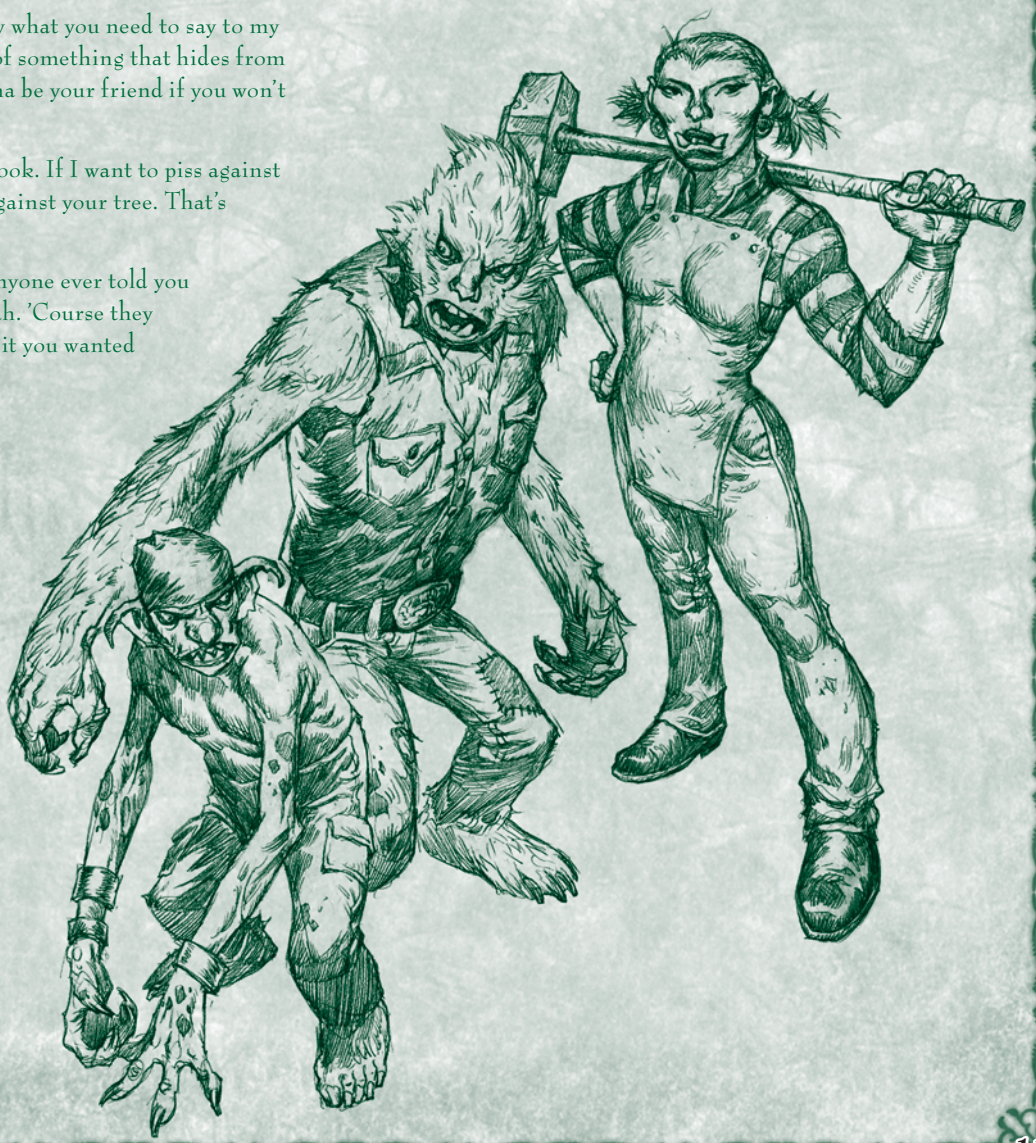
• • •

Vampires: Clammy little bastards. Maybe we're all monsters together, but I don't think they're my kind of monster.

Werewolves: I would have been scared shitless knowing these guys were out there, about a lifetime ago.

Mages: Now stand right here and try that.

Mortals: God, you're beautiful. On the other hand, you taste like chicken. What am I supposed to do?



Wizened

You know this story: it's night. A man drives along a lonely country road. He sees lights in the sky. They swoop down, engulf the car. He blacks out. When he comes to, he is driving along that same stretch of road. He's traveled maybe a quarter of a mile, but his watch says he's been gone five hours. It's nearly dawn. When he gets home, his wife notices that he is covered with little scars that look like healed-up burns. He says he's sore and itchy all over. Over the coming months, the man will begin to recall being taken into a strange circular room, and being experimented on by small, pale, dark-eyed creatures. It's a classic abduction scenario. Except… the truth is, this man who comes back with all his memories and relationships, he isn't a man at all. He's a thing made of sticks and stones, and he doesn't even know who he isn't. The real man is still in the clutches of the beings that took him. They're still doing their experiments. They're swapping his eyes around. They're repositioning his internal organs. They're taking out his hair one strand at a time and slicing off his nose and sewing on a different one. They're draining his blood out. And all the time he's conscious. And all the time, each different procedure is turning him into one of them. And worst of all, they are doing it to him for no reason. They're not learning anything. They're not even doing it for fun.

Whether gray-skinned abductors, child-seizing imps, vandal faeries or tin-mine knockers, many of the Fae marry practical talent and industry with undirected, pointless malice. Sometimes they are the sprites and goblins that bring people practical help and material wealth — if placated. But if offended, even only once, even accidentally, these same givers of aid bestow upon their hapless human victims a lifetime of misery.

The Lost who were kidnapped by such faeries have endured this strange malice. Trained by unreliable Faerie taskmasters, they have become nimble-fingered. They have become willing, tireless workers. But the spitefulness of their captors infects them. It twists them. It makes them somehow smaller. It diminishes them. This is why, no matter how they look, other changelings recognize them as the Wizened.

The Wizened consider their escape from the Fae realm to have been the hardest to effect. The cunning and viciousness of their captors was unmatched. Chained, ensorcelled, threatened, cajoled, tricked, tortured and mocked, the Wizened found their escape a labyrinthine problem that, for many of them, required multiple attempts before they could break free.

Many of the Wizened make a point of trying to rise above the malice that made them so small. Many do. Among the changeling Courts, the Wizened often the ones who get their hands dirty. They are the managers of households and the enforcers of etiquette. They are the "honest mechanicals," who toil to create things beautiful and useful. They are eloquent seers and healers. The paradox of their existence is that their skills place the Wizened in trusted roles within the society of changelings, while at the same time the fact of their origin engenders distrust. The most cheerful, decent and helpful of the Wizened was still made what he was by a being made of spite, and some changelings would believe that it only stands to reason that spite is the legacy they took from their Keepers in Faerie. In the end, this distrust can fulfill itself, as ill will directed against the Wizened inspires resentment in a changeling whose only sin was his deformity.

A Wizened Chirurgeon, once kidnapped by little gray men, works as a medical researcher in a university. When the Court needs her, her lab is a makeshift hospital for her fellow changelings whose injuries would inspire too many questions from ordinary medical institutions. A Brewer takes on the role of a homeless inebriate. He looks out for his own makeshift community and keeps an eye on the dead-end alleys and quiet corners of the provincial city where he lives, for things appear in these places and it's better to be prepared. It's a hard job, and sometimes, just so he can sleep, he indulges in his own elixirs. Alcoholism beckons. An Artist works in an animation studio, endlessly churning out CGI characters for ads and corporate motivators. Every so often, he slips a frame or two into his animations, a subliminal message for those who know. A Smith toils in the pit of the local auto shop, welding and hammering away like some ancient Nordic *Alf*. He makes few friends, thanks to his brusque manner, but his talent at completing a tune-up is undeniable, and his Court comes to him, whenever transport is an issue, or they have a need for more specialist tools than those an ordinary mechanic could supply. A Woodwalker, a recluse, lives in a cottage on a desolate moor. Stories of a Beast abound; he's its keeper.

Although the Wizened's work isn't always the most glamorous or the most immediately apparent, it is often the work that other changelings would immediately notice, if it were not done. If the Wizened were to suddenly vanish, many regional Courts would dissolve into chaos. The Wizened know this, but still they often fall beneath the notice of their more prominent changeling fellows. Which is, quite commonly, the way they want it.

Appearance: Every one of the Wizened is, in some way, smaller than she was when she was taken away. Being small often means be-

ing short — but not always. Some Wizened are tall and impossibly thin. Some aren't physically smaller than anyone else, but somehow *seem* smaller, as if they are insubstantial, as if they are somehow not quite *there*. It's very difficult to make general statements about what the Wizened look like. They bear the features of the "Little People" in all their infinite variety. Wizened captured in the West often have pointed ears, deeply lined faces, strangely-shaped noses and gimlet eyes. Some have hunch backs and prominent warts. Often, a Wizened changeling's skin is richly colored. It can be bright green, red or blue, or the deep rich color and texture of polished mahogany. Fingers are nimble and bony; fingernails are long and sometimes twisted. Some have hunchbacks. Some have animal feet.

The Woodwalker has a long beard and eyes that gleam like tiny specks of polished jet, in a face like a ruddy ancient oak. A Japanese changeling develops sparse hair and a leering, grimacing face, a wide mouth full of white, sharp teeth. The Chirurgeon might resemble the "grays" who kidnapped her, with a bald head, huge black eyes, a tiny mouth and nose and no visible ears. But then, she could just as easily look like a towering stick-figure in scrubs, a goblin surgeon with twisted limbs like brittle twigs. The Smith's face, smeared with oil, becomes like charred sycamore in his fae aspect.

To those who can't perceive the Wizened's seemings, the Wizened still seem small. Again, they're often short and often thin. That look of somehow not always being present stays with them.

Background: The Wizened are often the most unfortunate of changelings, for they were most often taken for no reason at all and no fault of their own. They were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. The faeries saw them and took them; that is all. Unluckier still are those who came to the faeries' attention because they encountered a faerie who appeared to be in trouble — like the man who found a little person under a rock and set him free, only to be hounded to death for his presumption that the Fae might need his help. The Wizened could be anyone.

Having said that, it takes someone as cunning and ingenious as the Fae themselves to escape from the Little People, and so Wizened changelings who return are most often those people who were already nimble of hand and quick of wit.

Durance: The Wizened bring back disjointed memories of random cruelties, of being the butt of tricks and experiments that seemed hilarious to the Fae, even if they couldn't appeal to any human sense of humor. Many Wizened dimly recall trying to escape over and over again, each time being outwitted by their spiteful captors, perhaps at times being allowed to think they had escaped before the fact that they were in Faerie all along was revealed.

Character Creation: The Wizened often concentrate on Mental Attributes and Skills, but not to the complete exclusion of Physical and Social Traits, particularly when it comes to Finesse Traits. Wizened characters often have good Dexterity and Manipulation in particular. Few Wizened, however, have above-average scores in Strength and Presence. Mental Merits are as common as Physical Merits are rare. Many of the Wizened have Envy, Greed or Wrath as their Vice. While the Flaw: Dwarf is appropriate for the Wizened, it's not compulsory. Although the Wizened have all shrunk to some extent due to their time in Faerie, few are *that* small.

Blessing: The Wizened are extraordinarily nimble. The player can spend one point of Glamour to gain the benefit of the 9 again rule on all dice pools involving Dexterity for the rest of the scene.

This same nimbleness enables the Wizened to avoid harm in ways other beings can't imagine. The player can also spend one point of Glamour to add the character's Wyrd dots to his Dodge total (normally calculated as double Defense), for the rest of the scene. This only applies when the character is dodging (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook,** p. 156).

Curse: Spite infects the Wizened. It comes out in their appearance, and in their manner. Their appearance, which is rarely attractive, and their general tendency not to be approachable means that the Wizened don't benefit from the 10 again rule on dice pools involving Presence. For the same reason, while Social Skills aren't completely barred to them, the Wizened suffer a –2 dice untrained penalty when trying to use a Social Skill in which they have no dots, rather than the usual –1.

Seeming Contracts: Artifice

Concepts: Creepy backstreet surgeon, paranoid UFO enthusiast, faithful laconic manservant, snooty *maître d'*, footpad for hire, reclusive artist, socially inept radio technician, antisocial Nethead, pawnbroker.

Kiths

Artist — The Wizened who create startling works of art and craft: seamsters, sculptors, painters and builders. The Artists' blessing is **Impeccable Craftsmanship:** the changeling enjoys the benefit of the 8 again rule on any dice pool using Crafts, and can choose to spend a point of Glamour to re-roll any failed dice on one Crafts roll (so if, for example, an Artist who rolls five dice and gets 1, 4, 6, 8 and 9 can spend a point of Glamour and re-roll the 1, 4 and 6). This blessing can be used only once per roll.

Brewer — Changelings who spent their durance in Faerie learning how to create mind-bendingly potent drinks or peculiar alchemies. Due to long exposure and gradual immunity, a Brewer gains four bonus dice to any Stamina roll made to resist poisons or intoxication. In addition, the Brewers know the recipe for **The Inebriating Elixir:** once per scene, the changeling can instantly ferment one pint of any drink with Glamour, turning it into a powerfully intoxicating brew. The changeling needs to be able to touch the container holding the drink to do this. The changeling's player rolls Wits + Crafts. If the roll is successful, the player may spend one Glamour point to invest the drink with a Potency rating equal to the changeling's Wyrd rating, plus the number of successes the player rolled. If the Potency of the brew is higher than the Health of the person drinking the brew, the person gets very drunk, and in five turns falls unconscious. If the Potency doesn't exceed the drinker's Health, the drinker must roll Stamina + Resolve, or suffer the effects of having drunk one more drink than her Stamina (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook,** p. 177). The brew's effects last for the rest of the scene.

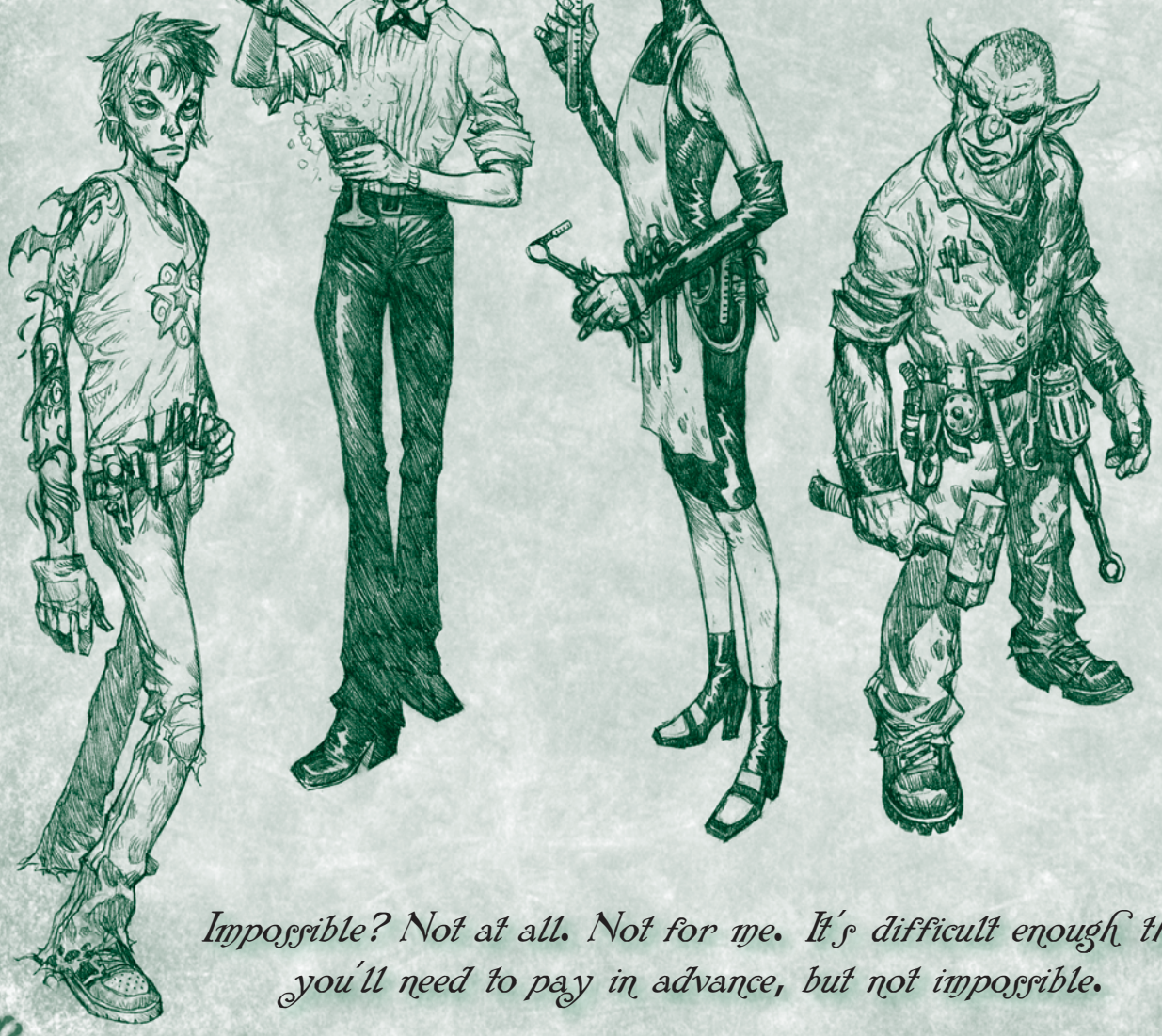
Chatelaine — Preternaturally skilled manservants, organizers and house-managers. The Chatelaine's talent is **Perfect Protocol:** the changeling gains the benefit of the 9 again rule on all Social Skill rolls which depend on manners, etiquette or proper social practice (such as in a formal ball, a business meeting or a changeling Court), even when using Presence. Further, the player can spend a point of Glamour to gain a +2 dice bonus to Manipulation and Presence dice pools for the rest of the scene.

Chirurgeon — Changelings who master surgery and pharmacy, sometimes from altruism, and sometimes simply because they can, ranging from scary back-street surgeons to strangely alien experimenters. The Chirurgeon's blessing is **The Analeptic Charm:** able to perform medical miracles, the changeling gains the benefit of the 9 again rule on Medicine dice pools. The Chirurgeon can also use the humblest tools well, and never suffers from penalties for poor equipment as long as at least something can be jury-rigged as a medical tool. Finally, anyone whom the changeling tends to for any length of time receives the benefit of the Chirurgeon's skills as if they were in a hospital intensive care unit (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook,** p. 61).

Oracle — Changelings who, like many imps and goblins, can, in a limited way, see the future. The Oracle's blessing is **Panomancy:** the changeling can, once per chapter, tell fortunes using any method she wants — tea-leaves, cards, bones, a crystal ball or anything else. The effect works the same as the Common Sense Merit (although the character can buy the Merit as well, if the player wishes).

Smith — Changelings who were forced to labor under the watchful eye of the most unimpeachable Faerie blacksmiths, tinkers and toolmakers. Their blessing is **Steel Mastery:** the changeling can use his supernatural skill with metallurgy to alter metal objects, improving them, even if improving them would normally be impossible. The player spends one Glamour and makes an extended roll of Dexterity + Crafts, with each roll representing half an hour of tinkering, polishing and hammering. If the changeling manages to gather four successes, he can alter a tool so that it gives a +1 equipment bonus. The item has to mostly be made of metal. The magic wears off after a day. No object this way can be improved more than three times. If the changeling tries to alter an object a fourth time, he destroys the tool, and it can never be used again.

Soldier — Members of the vast goblin hosts of the Fae, the Soldiers fought strange, inconclusive battles and now find that fighting comes easier to them. The Soldiers' talent is **Blade Lore:** living and breathing the lore of the blade, the Soldiers of the goblin hosts find it easy to master any weapon that carries an edge. A Soldier is considered to have a Weaponry specialization with any weapon that carries an edge, no matter what it is. This can't stack with other specializations the changeling may learn.



Impossible? Not at all. Not for me. It's difficult enough that you'll need to pay in advance, but not impossible.

Woodwalker — The Wizened who, like their captors, live within and protect the wilds, sometimes jealously, sometimes violently. Their talent is **Wildcraft:** the changeling gets the benefit of the 8 again rule on Survival rolls. Also, the Woodwalker can survive by eating any plant, no matter how poisonous (although poisons that are isolated and distilled from plant sources are still dangerous to him, because they're not strictly plant matter any more).

Stereotypes

Beasts: No. I'm not talking to you until you're house-trained.

Darklings: Come on out where I can see you. I think we've got a lot we could talk about.

Elementals: Look at you, raw and unshaped. Gorgeous. When they made you, it's like they unmade you and you came out better for it.

Fairest: If I envied you your pretty face, I wouldn't tell you. Is there anything more to you that's actually worth my jealousy?

Ogres: It makes me *tense* when you act like you're about to break something. And you *always* act like you're about to break something.

• • •

Vampires: Those are a bad job, they are. One wonders who decided to make something so dangerous and so flawed.

Werewolves: I don't know, I don't want to know. Find a brute or a beast or something if you need someone to talk to them.

Mages: There's something about us that drives them nuts. Have you noticed it? Whatever it is that makes them look at us with more than idle curiosity, it can't be good.

Mortals: It doesn't matter how hard I try, or how much better the work is. It doesn't *last* the way it does when you do it.

Contracts

The enigmatic powers of the changelings are curious — just as the Fae themselves — because these powers aren't innate abilities. Rather, supernatural changeling abilities, known as Contracts, come as a result of bargains struck between the Fae and the natural world. Indeed, they are literal contracts between the dream-folk and the worlds they inhabit. The nature of the Contract defines its appearance: a changeling who seems "fireproof" actually has a Contract with fire itself to cause him no harm, while a changeling who can fly might have either a Contract with the air to buoy him or with a bird to grant him its aspects.

What is important, however, is that the changeling does invoke the Contract with a bit of his own supernatural essence. In most cases, gaining the benefit of a Contract costs the changeling Glamour. With certain Contracts, a changeling must also or alternatively spend a point of Willpower, as invoking the Contract takes on an additional degree of focus. This is common among the more powerful Contracts, in which the results are so far beyond the pale of what the normal world expects to be possible, or when the natural forces behind the Contract are exceptionally reluctant to indulge their side of the bargain.

Contracts come in a variety of types. Each type is denoted by a symbolic element or governing entity that represents the Contracts associated with it. These elements or entities are, effectively, the signatories to the Contracts, the fire and air and birds described above. Some Contracts are open to all changelings: the "common" Contracts of Dream, Hearth, Mirror and Smoke. Other Contracts rely upon seemings or Courts, and their powers are more dearly gained by those not of the favored group.

Along these lines, Contracts are not generally something that a changeling strikes himself with something else. Rather, most established Contracts have been formed by a body of Fae or changelings. When a player buys a Contract for a character, that represents the changeling engaging his right to "accept" any one particular level or clause of a Contract to which he's entitled via citizenship. For instance, a Contract of Smoke available to all changelings would probably be something they were entitled to accept by virtue of being changelings, as they fell into the category of potential "party of the first part" when the Fae took them in and infused them with Glamour. Other Contracts are more specialized. Thus, when an ogrish patron made you a changeling with an Ogre seeming, you became eligible for the specialized seeming Contracts that were struck by the Ogres in particular. A changeling of another seeming would also be eligible to invoke an ogrish Contract, by the Byzantine ties of fae blood, but the more distant connection makes it more expensive to "initial the clause," so to speak.

In a literal sense, invoking a Contract translates to using a very specific application of the Wyrd to shape one's environment, even in the mortal world. Changelings perceive the satisfaction of Contracts as being adorned by the powers that negotiated them: they have visions in which they see faces in the fire, or hear bullets make noises like dying songbirds as they try to slow down or see a glittering shower of shadow fountain from a changeling's hand as he dulls a person's vision. A changeling's understanding of a Contract in effect is dictated by Wyrd, and anthropomorphizes the forces at work somewhat. Naturally, the higher one's Wyrd, the more pronounced this effect seems.

As is the nature of changelings, they rarely agree to a compact from which there's no possible way to extricate themselves. Even these Contracts they've made since time long forgotten have loopholes and technicalities that can occasionally allow them to circumvent the expenditure of Glamour. These are known as catches, and they allow for the invocation of the Contract at no cost to the changeling.

Another type of Contract, the Goblin Contract, operates by entirely different rules, and is more of a spontaneously agreed-to, single-time effect. (More information on Goblin Contracts may be found on p. 164.)

Certain Court-related Contracts have prerequisites of a certain level of Mantle before they can be purchased; in some cases, a high level of the appropriate shade of Court Goodwill can be substituted. This prerequisite is necessary only for the purchase of the Contract. If a character later loses Mantle or Court Goodwill to such a point that he no longer meets the prerequisites for purchasing the Contract, he can still use the Contract, although at a penalty. Activating a clause while unable to meet its prerequisites adds an additional charge of one Glamour for every dot of Mantle the character is short. Thus, if a character with Mantle (Autumn) • attempts to use Scent of the Harvest (which has a prerequisite of Mantle (Autumn) •••), he must spend four Glamour (two for the standard cost + two for the two dots of Mantle he's lacking).

The Contracts here are grouped by type. First come the general Contracts that all changelings have affinity for. Then come seeming-related Contracts, then Court-specific Contracts and finally the pernicious Goblin Contracts.

Universal Contracts

Contracts of Dream

While all changelings are capable to some extent of entering and manipulating a sleeper's dreams, the Contracts of Dream are a particularly potent means of doing so. They grant the changeling more power in the dreamscape, allowing her to control and direct a sleeper's dreams, and also to manipulate the nature of dreams themselves without means of a pledge. They may also grant some insight into the dreamlike nature of the Hedge. (For more on dreamshaping without Contracts, see p. 190.)

Pathfinder (•)

The first and most basic clause allows the changeling to divine the nature of the Hedge in a certain area. Pathfinder can

find Hollows, trods, paths to and from Faerie and other details of the local Hedge, such as what sorts of goblin fruits grow there.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling must have plucked a Thorn from the local Hedge and shed a single drop of blood while doing so within the last day.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Contract yields wholly inaccurate information about the Hedge, suggesting paths where there are none, marking poisonous fruits as beneficial or otherwise utterly confounding otherwise useful information.

Failure: The changeling learns no useful information about the local Hedge.

Success: For each success on the roll, the changeling learns a single pertinent fact about the local Hedge. In most cases, this information is just that — a statement about whether something exists. It doesn't necessarily point out *where* a Hollow or pathway might exist, just the fact of its presence. The distance in which such information-drawing is effective is the changeling's line of sight. Therefore, this power may be curtailed by a mysterious fog in the Hedge or a smoke cast by the Hedge's burning.

Exceptional Success: As with an ordinary success, but the achievement of the exceptional success yields information about the location of features known to be in the Hedge.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–1	The changeling has never witnessed the local Hedge before, as with visiting a new freehold or otherwise finding the "Hedge-scape" vastly different than what she may have expected.

Forging the Dream (••)

The changeling invoking this clause becomes as the director, cinematographer and editor of a movie, only the media in which she works is the dreaming mind of her subject. The changeling may literally change her subject's dreams to depict whatever the changeling wishes, from bucolic idylls to lewd romps to harrowing tribulations. She may plague her subject with vicious antagonists or rain a cascade of rose petals down: the details are fully under her control. The only limitation is that the changeling may never depict the subject's death, though she may certainly imply it.

Crafting dreams in this manner is very much an art form among changelings. Some prefer to work with overt themes, while others use subtle symbolism and soft focus

to create feelings more than literal episodes. Indeed, some changelings are so adept with dream-craft that they can provoke strong emotional responses from their sleeping subjects that they can glean Glamour from them.

The changeling must be able to see her subject in order to use this power. She needn't be in the character's actual presence, however, and some changelings use this power on subjects they view via video cameras or even from painted portraits or still photographs.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Wits + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling must stand or sit beside her subject, touching her own temple and that of the dreamer.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The attempt to manipulate the sleeper's dreams fails and leaves the changeling discombobulated, unable to tell the real world from the dream he was attempting to shape. For the remainder of the scene, the changeling is unable to focus sufficiently to expend any Willpower. Further, the sleeper (eventually) wakes from sleep remembering a distinct image of the changeling, even if she has no idea what he might have been trying to do.

Failure: The Contract fails to function but otherwise involves no sign of attempted use.

Success: The character may edit the sleeper's dreams and dictate their content, with the sole exception of depicting the sleeper's death. Each use of this Contract works for a single, vivid dream, which the subject recalls distinctly upon waking. If one of the Fae is in the sleeper's dream as well, the changeling must vie for control of the dream as usual (p. 198).

Exceptional Success: No additional effect.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–1	The changeling isn't in the immediate physical vicinity of the subject.
+1	The changeling knows the subject at least superficially, having exchanged words or introductions with him at least once.
+3	The changeling has a close, personal relationship with the dreamer.

Phantasmal Bastion (•••)

This clause bolsters the changeling's ability to participate in and withstand conflicts with other changelings in the dreamscape. Using this power conjures an elaborate suit or even edifice of "armor," or conjures a fanciful weapon, both of which exist only in the dreamscape. Both weapon and armor appear as the changeling wishes, though depictions of seeming, kith and Court are extremely popular expressions. (For more information on combat in the dreamscape, see pp. 198–199.)

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Invoking this clause involves no roll, but the changeling must choose which type of fortification she wishes to invoke. If she chooses a defensive augmentation, she gains a number of phantom points of Willpower for the purposes of determining how much damage in the dreamscape she may suffer before falling to exhaustion. These phantom Willpower points are lost first during the oneiromachy. If she chooses an offensive augmentation, she may double her Wyrd for the purposes of seeing how effective her attacks in the dreamscape are. A changeling may invoke this power for both offensive and defensive augmentation, at a cost of one Glamour each, but she may not "stack" multiple offensive or defensive augmentations.

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling carries a token of favor, such as a garter belt or ring, given freely to her by a living enemy or one of his loved ones or family members.

Cobblethought (••••)

Using this clause allows the changeling to reach into his subject's dreams and extract an item or image from them that then exists or plays out in the real world. The subject need not be asleep for the changeling to attempt this; he simply must have had a dream at some point in recent events, which allows the changeling a trove of such experiences and artifacts to draw from.

The exact nature and duration of the Contract's ability to echo the dreamer's thoughts depends on how successful the changeling is at invoking the power. In general, though, images and symbols will mostly as they did in the dream (as with a changeling who assumes the "costume" of an entity in the dream), while an item will appear by and large as it did in the sleeper's thoughts. Determining which objects may be available from the subject's dream is largely the Storyteller's responsibility, though the Storyteller may choose to let the player take more creative control of the subject's dreams, as long as such control isn't abused.

Items pulled from dreams in this way have a hazy, imprecise sensory quality to them. A dream-sword, for example, would feel like soft metal and fade around its edges, but would cut nonetheless. Objects are treated as normal, unexceptional equipment despite their appearance. The guise of a terrifying night-fiend might shift subtly each time onlookers see it. A murky fog drawn from a dream might leave a runner feeling as if he were plodding through oatmeal, even though he was running as fast as he could.

Items drawn from dreams in this manner are made of dreamstuff, and thus don't have to be reasonably carried by the changeling. That is, the changeling could conceivably draw out the fog mentioned above, a rainstorm from a dream, or even something bigger or heavier than a person, such as a life raft or a heavy wooden door. The limitation is a single object or idea, however — the changeling could not withdraw a full

castle (made up of walls, hallways, doors, stairs and towers) or a functional car (with its own distinct parts and pieces).

One more limitation is that this Contract may not draw people or thinking entities from dreams. While a changeling would be able to draw the *appearance* of an individual from a character's dream, this would manifest as a sort of "costume" that the changeling or another character would wear, and not the individual herself.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling must possess at least a single fiber of her subject's bedclothes, whether a thread from her pillowcase or a full nightshirt.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling reaches into the dreamscape to grab the object of her intentions, but instead pulls back something else entirely, and probably hostile. If it's an inanimate object, it's wholly inappropriate to the changeling's original intentions, and if it's some conscious creature, it probably reacts with appreciable hostility at being removed from its lair.

Failure: The Contract fails to function but otherwise betrays no attempt on the changeling's part to rifle the character's dreams.

Success: The changeling draws forth one concise image or object from the character's dreams. The image or object remains in reality for a number of turns equal to the number of successes obtained on the roll.

Exceptional Success: As with a normal success, but the object remains permanently in reality. In addition, the changeling may, at any time, banish the dream-item back beyond the wall of dreams.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–2	The changeling attempts to draw something from a dream that has seems too fantastical to exist in the real world (a gemstone made from crystallized starlight, the feathers of Pegasus).
–2	The changeling attempts to draw forth a very specific idea, appearance or item, such as the exact likeness of a dream-tormentor, or the locket the dreamer had when she was five years old that held her parents' photographs.

Dreamsteps (•••••)

The changeling climbs into the dreams of a nearby sleeper, briefly appearing in her sleeping thoughts, and then emerges from the shared realm of dreams in the proximity of another sleeper. He traverses an actual distance by using the landscape of dreams as a proxy for physical travel. This travel takes place instantaneously, or at least at the speed of thought.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling must carry a physical object that he crafted himself on the journey, which he leaves behind in the dreams of both sleepers. Both sleepers will remember this object, and will feel an inexplicable link to the changeling if they meet him in their waking lives, as they subconsciously recall this item connected to him.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The attempt to travel by dreamways goes horribly awry, with the changeling unable to extricate himself from the dreams at his leisure. Instead, the Storyteller should run a brief nightmare scene in which the dreamer and changeling are both tormented by dreams-turned-nightmares. After that, the changeling is forced out of the dreamscape in the proximity of a sleeper… *somewhere.*

Failure: The changeling is unable to enter the dreamscape and thus unable to use it as a shortcut in the physical world.

Success: The character enters the dreamscape and may use it to instantaneously traverse physical distances. The physical distance traveled is not greater than 10 miles per success obtained on the roll. The changeling emerges as close as possible to the physical place of his choosing: He emerges from the dreams of the sleeping individual closest to his ultimate destination.

Exceptional Success: As with a standard success (and the extra successes are their own benefit), but with the additional reward of being deposited exactly where he wishes to be. If any changelings understand exactly how this works, they aren't telling, and those dream-travelers who enjoy the luxury of the exceptional success describe the phenomena as if the stuff of dreams itself carries them exactly where they want to be and then recedes like an unseen ether.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–3	The changeling is rushed or fleeing and thus doesn't have time to gently part the veil of sleep (jeopardizing the slumber of the dreamer and the function of the Contract therefore).
+1	The changeling personally knows the dreamer at the beginning point of the journey.
+1	The dreamer at the point of entry is having particularly noteworthy dreams (whether of a pleasant or terrifying variety).

Contracts of Hearth

Hearth Contracts are a broad path of beneficial effects, boons that a changeling can grant to an individual or himself when he needs and extra edge or just a little bit of influence from something greater than himself. Folklore is rife

with fairies using powers similar to these, and they fit the archetype of "the fairies bless you in some way."

Unlike other Contracts, Hearth Contracts don't have a catch. They always cost some amount of Glamour and/or Willpower to invoke. To the contrary, Contracts of Hearth have a ban. That is, the Faerie entities that grant the favors of Hearth can, if their ire is aroused, turn those boons right around and use them to blight the individual. The specific bans are described here with each power, but the faerie host is notoriously ill-tempered when its goodwill is abused. Therefore, the Storyteller has a lot of leeway when to apply the punishment of broken bans. Such retribution always seems to come at the worst possible time.

Many changelings suspect that these bans came about because the Hearth entities with whom the Fair Folk made their original bargains somehow obtained for themselves the better part of the compact between themselves and the fae. It stands to reason, given the nature of these Contracts. (Note also that certain bans may be manipulated for the purposes of causing failure when success would normally be warranted. Granted, the changeling must know that his subject has already received the benefits of one of these Hearth Contracts, but such secrets are easy enough to discern. Indeed, using some of these Contracts in this reverse manner adds a bit of versatility to the Hearth powers. On the other hand, trying to force this ill fate on the same subject more than once alerts the powers of Fate to the fact that they're being manipulated. The punishment treatment then applies to the changeling attempting to invoke the anti-Contract, as opposed to the desired subject of the anti-Contract.)

Hearth Contracts don't involve dice rolls to invoke. They simply work, once their costs are paid.

Contracts of Hearth require the changeling invoking them to touch the person upon whom she wishes to place the blessing (or curse), unless the changeling wants to grant herself the boon. Rules for touching an individual can be found on p. 157 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

Fickle Fate (•)

It's easier to curse than to bless. The individual affected by Fickle Fate seems to perform poorly in whatever task he sets himself to. It's almost unheard of to invoke Fickle Fate for oneself — who wants to fail at what he attempts?

Cost: 1 Glamour

Effect: The subject of Fickle Fate makes the roll for his next actively attempted instant action, whatever it is, at a –2 dice penalty. Actively attempted actions are those things the character consciously undergoes the effort of doing, not things that occur automatically or reflexively. For example, jumping from a moving car or performing an oratory before the duke would be an actively attempted action, while seeing if wounds force a character into unconsciousness or reflexively resisting some supernatural power would not be.

Action: Instant

Ban: The character invoking Fickle Fate may not use it to affect the same subject more than once an hour. If he does, the Fickle Fate visits him on his next attempted action instead of his intended victim.

Favored Fate (••)

As with Fickle Fate, this clause alters the flow of fortune when a subject attempts an action. Favored Fate, though, makes for more appealing results: songs sound a little better, bullets find their mark and the acid-tongued critic thinks of *just the right thing to say* at the very moment he needs to say it. Favored Fate is a more lofty clause than Fickle Fate (that is, it's classified as a higher dot rating) because it's harder to create than destroy, and the results of this power are typically more positive.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Effect: The beneficiary of Favored Fate makes the roll for his next actively attempted instant action at a +4 dice bonus. Again, actively attempted actions are those things the character consciously undergoes the effort of doing, as described above.

Action: Instant

Ban: If Favored Fate is used to augment the same specific type of action — shooting at an enemy, climbing a balcony, chasing prey — before the sun has risen or set since the last attempt it affected, the powers that be frown on the abuse of their attentions. Each time this occurs, one action, decided upon by the Storyteller for dramatic effect, automatically fails, with no dice roll involved. This is just a standard failure and will not yield a dramatic failure result, so it's best used on actions that would normally not depend upon a chance die.

Beneficent Fate (•••)

By altering the attentions of fortune, the changeling guarantees success on his subject's next endeavor.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Effect: The subject of the Beneficent Fate makes no roll for his next actively attempted instant action. As always, actively attempted actions are defined as actions the character consciously undergoes the effort of doing, as described above. The character automatically achieves a single success on the attempt, as if she had made whatever roll was necessary and factored in all the modifiers before casting the dice. Obviously, Beneficent Fate may not help much in a contested action, as the one success it provides can be readily outstripped by the character's opponent. Attacks also inflict only one point of damage; a called shot to the head grazes the temple rather than inflicting an instant kill, for instance.

Action: Instant

Ban: A subject may benefit from the favors of Beneficent Fate only once per day. If the Contract is invoked on a

single character more than once in a single day, the subject's next actively attempted instant action is instead resolved with a chance die, regardless of what dice pool or modifiers actually apply to the roll.

Fortuna's Cornucopia (••••)

This clause provides a curious, open-ended blend of luck and the competence of the individual favored by it. It's often said that you get out of your efforts what you put into them, and nowhere is this more true than under the benediction of Fortuna's Cornucopia.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Effect: The beneficiary of Fortuna's Cornucopia makes the roll for his next actively attempted instant under the benefit of the 8 again rule. Actively attempted actions are those things the character consciously undergoes the effort of doing, as described above. The 8 again rule is described on p. 134 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

Action: Instant

Ban: If Fortuna's Cornucopia is visited upon an individual more than once in a single day, the Contract fails to grace the subject in its standard manner. If this blessing is invoked more frequently for the character, one action, decided upon by the Storyteller for dramatic effect, automatically results in a dramatic failure, with no dice roll involved. The fates treat these as general dramatic failures, not to be automatically construed as catastrophic failures or fatal failures. For example, a character may accidentally reveal his identity when he's trying to masquerade as someone else (as opposed to simply failing to convince his mark that he's another person).

Triumphal Fate (•••••)

The blessings of Triumphal Fate are significant, as suggested by the name of the clause. Simply put, any effort made under the auspices of Triumphal Fate is bound for roaring success.

Cost: 1 Glamour + 1 Willpower

Effect: The recipient of the Triumphal Fate doesn't make a roll at all for the action designated by the changeling invoking the power. Instead, he achieves an exceptional success on that action. Note, however, that Triumphal Fate works only on extended actions. As well, it doesn't work on extended, resisted actions. Only a singular effort on the part of the individual may gain the benefits of the Triumphal Fate, such as writing a symphony, researching a lost secret or building a device. The Triumphal effort also occurs in as short a time as possible: whatever the normal die roll time measurement is, the effort takes only one increment to perform. Note also that this Contract generates the *minimum* number of successes necessary to create an exceptional success.

Although the product of a Triumphal Fate is indeed superior, Storytellers are encouraged to sow a seed of doubt into those results. Such flaws shouldn't be obvious, as the Triumphal Fate certainly earns its name, but because the masterpiece came as a result of supernatural blessing and not the true innovation of the creator, some degree of that artifice should be evident to a fellow master who inspects the work. For example, the symphony might have a single hollow note, the lost secret may omit a tiny danger or drawback (while exposing all others), or the device might require more electrical power than it seemingly should. In all cases, these flaws should be evidence of the imperfect powers that generated them, and not massive design failures that would make an opus a laughingstock.

Action: Instant

Ban: Triumphal Fates come only rarely, and those who would supplant the Muses with whatever inscrutable powers that inspire this Contract's successes are in for an ugly surprise. If any character is set to be the beneficiary of a Triumphal Fate more than once within a period of a year and a day, the action designated for the Triumphal Fate is doomed to be a dramatic failure instead of an exceptional success. The architects of Fate aren't stupid, though, and a changeling who attempts to deliberately set up a failure in this method is going to find *himself* the recipient of disaster, instead. In fact, trying to wrangle this Contract in that manner probably generates a result beyond what mere rules can suggest. But believe us, if there were such a thing as a "horrendous failure, and malignant aftermath" on a die roll, changelings who try to contrive a situation like this would earn it.

Contracts of Mirror

The symbolic element of Mirror grants changelings who master its Contracts the ability to perform acts of self-modification and shapechanging. As might be expected, these Contracts are popular among the fae, who might use these powers for anything from convenience to misdirection to outright deceit.

Riddle-Kith (•)

This clause has its roots in purely fae intrigues, allowing changelings to interact with one another without being recognized. It works with the fundamental nature of changeling physiology to allow a changeling to seem as if she hails from some kith or seeming other than her own. Riddle-Kith works exclusively on the general features of a mien, meaning that it creates *only* the impression that the individual is of a certain seeming. In other words, it won't allow the changeling to selectively alter her features, nor will it permit the changeling to emulate a specific changeling, but it will give a clear impression of belonging to an entirely different seeming or kith. The new appearance is notably different from the old. For instance, a storm-attuned Elemental resembling a Japanese goblin who chooses to look like an Ogre wouldn't look like an *oni* of similar coloration, but is much more likely to

look European or otherwise significantly unlike himself. This Contract doesn't affect the Mask.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling must have dined with a member of the selected kith within the past week.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling loses all control of her attempted illusion, instead appearing simply as something utterly unnatural. She may acquire a hodge-podge of beastly features, or her skin may mottle or spall off. The ultimate effect is that the changeling simply looks horrendous for the duration of the scene instead of looking as if she belongs to a distinct seeming, imposing a –1 die penalty to all Presence dice pools (except those related to Intimidation) during that time.

Failure: The Contract changes nothing about the changeling's appearance.

Success: The changeling takes on the features of a seeming or kith of her choice, though what features, exactly, the Contract bestows are up to the Storyteller. This power lasts until the next sunrise or sunset, whichever comes first, though the changeling may choose to end the Contract before that if she wishes.

Exceptional Success: As with a standard success, though the changeling may choose the exact array of features this Contract grants her, so long as they're congruous with the seeming she chose.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–2	The character has never seen a member of the seeming in question in person, and instead relies on descriptions or legends of the seeming.

Skinmask (••)

The changeling alters her flesh to appear as another individual. This change affects only a single limb or other aspect of the character, so only her hands or her face or her back can be made to resemble that of another person. This clause is often used to enhance disguises, though it is sometimes used to emulate unique birthmarks, signature tattoos, etc. It affects both Mask and fae mien.

The feature so modeled must be a real feature that exists on a known subject, and it must come from a human (or at least partially human) source.

Changelings can use this Contract multiple times to reproduce multiple features, but the cost must be paid each time and the roll must be made each time, as well.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Stamina + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling appropriates an object belonging to the individual whose features she plans to reproduce.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Contract fails grotesquely, disfiguring the changeling instead of mirroring the model. This may result in a distortion on the face, a withered limb or a horrendous discoloration of the skin. For the remainder of the scene, the character suffers a –1 die penalty to any Presence-based dice pools (except those involving Intimidation) when the disfigurement is visible.

Failure: The changeling fails to emulate the desired feature.

Success: The changeling emulates the feature in question so that it passes inspection by those who would best know the modeled subject. This power lasts for the duration of the scene, though the changeling may choose to end the Contract before that if she wishes.

Exceptional Success: The changeling has so mastered this particular expression of the other character's physical aspect that she doesn't have to roll to re-attain this particular feature if he invokes this Contract at a later time. He must still pay the cost as normal, though.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–2	The character has never actually seen the feature in question, as with, "Well, she has a birthmark the color and shape of a wine stain just above her bellybutton."

Transfigure the Flesh (•••)

This clause allows the changeling to adjust the size of her body, either shrinking or growing as she chooses.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Stamina + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling must steal a garment of clothing either far too large or far too small for her to wear. This garment need not correspond to the change made. That is, a changeling doesn't need to specifically steal a small garment if she intends to shrink.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character succeeds only in crushing or hyper-extending her internal organs, and suffers a point of lethal damage in the failed attempt to alter her body size.

Failure: The Contract fails, and the changeling is unable to modify her size.

Success: The changeling chooses either to shrink or to grow. The character's Size then increases or decreases by an amount equal to one-half of the number of successes obtained on the roll (round up). The character may choose to alter her Size by less than this amount, if she wishes. Note that when the character's Size changes, so, too, does her Health change, which may have some impact on the character's well-being if she's suffered any damage. This Contract lasts for the remainder of the scene, though the character may choose to end the Contract at any time before that.

Exceptional Success: As with a normal success (as extra successes increase the versatility of the power), only the character's Health remains at her regular score if she chooses to shrink herself.

Oddbody (••••)

The changeling re-aligns her body's makeup so that one particular feature becomes something other than human. Examples include forming bestial claws, growing skin like bark or elongating legs.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Strength + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling consumes the threads of a caterpillar's cocoon.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The clause fails hideously, maiming the changeling for a brief period of time. The character suffers two points of lethal damage and is unable to move for three turns. For five turns thereafter, she may move at only half her normal Speed.

Failure: The Contract fails to provide the manipulated feature.

Success: The changeling creates a unique bodily feature of her choosing. Whatever the feature, the mechanical effects must be *one* of the following (the changeling's choice):

- The feature acts as a natural weapon, granting a one lethal damage bonus.
- The feature acts as natural armor, effectively duplicating the effects of chain mail (see p. 170 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).
- The feature grants a +3 Speed bonus.
- The feature grants a +4 Initiative bonus.
- The feature renders the character immune to damage penalties.

Whatever the feature is, it lasts for the remainder of the scene, until the changeling consciously chooses to revert her features back to their normal state, or until the changeling uses this clause again to gain a different feature.

Exceptional Success: As with a standard success, only the Contract is so effective, the Oddbody effect confers the benefits of two features as described above.

Chrysalis (•••••)

Under this clause, the changeling is able to become something wholly other than herself. She may take the shape of any inanimate object roughly her size, and thereby become that object.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Strength + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling must commission the creation of an object she wishes to mimic.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling succeeds only in distorting her body and causing herself grief during the process of transformation. Instead of becoming the object, the character blacks out from the pain of the change. She remains unconscious until the player succeeds at a Stamina roll, which may be attempted once each minute.

Failure: The Contract fails to transform the character into the desired object.

Success: The changeling transforms literally into the object of her choosing. The character acquires all the properties of that object, though with added mobility. For

example, a character who becomes a man-sized rock is extremely durable and also extremely heavy, while a character who becomes a clock tells time as a normal clock would. A character may also combine this power with other powers that affect her Size or composition, as with Transfigure the Flesh, to allow her to vary the size of the object she becomes.

Changelings who become objects in this fashion are limited to simple machines and basic materials. As well, they cannot become fanciful substances (though they can *appear to be* fanciful substances) or complex devices. Thus, a character is fine to become a canoe, a pillar of marble or a roulette wheel, but "a pile of stardust" or "a nuclear bomb made out of dark matter" is beyond the Contract's reach.

As an object, the character has a normal person's sense of her surroundings. In addition, he has limited functional capacity in his purpose as the object — the roulette wheel could determine its own results, for example, the clock could set its own time and the canoe could propel itself into the current of a river. A chair could walk from place to place, bending its legs. The canoe could not fly, however, and the chair could not sprout "hands" at the ends of its arms or the pillar reshape itself into a statue.

This power lasts for the duration of the scene, though the changeling may choose to end the Contract before that if she wishes.

Exceptional Success: The character may change from one object to another while the Contract's power lasts as an instant action.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–2	The object or substance is something with which the character is unfamiliar or has only read about or seen on television.

Contracts of Smoke

Stealth, invisibility and soundlessness are the purviews of Contracts of Smoke. Many myths and legends attribute unwitnessed travel to the fae, and changelings themselves are no strangers to the benefits of moving without the notice of those who might wish to keep them under supervision. What better way to escape a promise than to have simply slipped away unnoticed when the promise needs to be redeemed? After all, if the changeling can't be there when the individual invokes it, how is the changeling supposed to fulfill it?

The Wrong Foot (•)

This Contract allows the changeling to change the nature of the marks he leaves when passing through a certain locale. The clause is one of the oldest remembered among even the True Fae, and several fairy legends exhibit Good Folk who left cloven-hoofed tracks or the scent of curdled milk behind them. Indeed, certain seemings even use this Contract to augment their presences, as with some Fairest who leave a sweet, natural perfume in their wake or loathsome Tunnelgrubs who deliberately ooze a trail of slime to unsettle others.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: No roll is necessary. When The Wrong Foot takes effect, evidence of the changeling's passing change to resemble something other than the visitation of a human-like entity. This may be tracks similar to a bird's three-toed foot, a bloody mist, drips of lavender extract — whatever the character chooses. Note that this Contract always creates the same result, so the character should think about how he wants this to manifest before the first time he uses it, and should clear it with the Storyteller before it comes into play. This substance or mark supersedes all other evidence of passage, so footprints will vanish but the slime-spray will take its place in every case, whether or not the ground was soft enough to hold a footprint. The Wrong Foot does not change the appearance of previously made marks, however. Therefore, this limits the practical application of the Contract in numerous situations, so many changelings have come to rely on The Wrong Foot to leave a sort of "calling card," whether or not they wish to obfuscate pursuit. Once activated, this Contract functions for the duration of the scene.

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling licks his thumb and smudges it on a mirror, thereby leaving another mark of his own passing.

Nevertread (••)

When the changeling invokes this clause, all traces of his passing vanish. He leaves no footprints in mud, sand, snow or any other surface that would normally hold a mark. Likewise, his wet feet leave no prints on dry ground. Even grass trampled underfoot or flour scattered on the ground leaves no evidence of the changeling's movements.

Note that if the changeling remains present at the site of his Nevertread attempts, he may still be discovered by other means. This power does not render him invisible, it just obscures the signs left by his movements.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling must have spent at least an hour barefoot within the past day.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Instead of becoming more difficult to detect, the changeling makes a botch of the procedure, dragging mud or river-reeds or clumps of snow across his trail. Attempts to track the changeling suffering a dramatic

failure on the attempt to invoke Nevertread occur at a +2 dice bonus, by whatever method they occur.

Failure: The changeling is unable to obscure marks of his passage.

Success: The changeling erases all traces of his passing. This may simply make it impossible to witness where the character has gone, or it may inflict a –2 dice penalty to attempts to track him, at the Storyteller's discretion, based on the situation's circumstances.

Exceptional Success: For all intents and purposes, the character was never there. He's impossible to track by the method of determining where he may have moved.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–2	The environment is especially susceptible to retaining marks of passage, such as sticky mud, a new snowdrift or wet cement.
+2	The environment is notably resistant to holding marks of passage, as with deep water, Astroturf or hardwood floors.

Shadow Patch (•••)

Light seems to avoid the changeling when he invokes this Contract, and darkness congeals around him.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Wits + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling must have spent at least an hour away from natural light (away from windows, open doors, etc.) within the past day.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Shadows actually recede from the character, making her more visible. The character suffers a –2 dice penalty to all Stealth-based dice pools that are based on sight (rather than any other sensory detection) for the duration of the scene.

Failure: The Contract fails to function but otherwise creates no detrimental effect.

Success: The character swaths himself with shadows that dampen light, sound, smell and other perceptual stimuli. For the remainder of the scene, he enjoys a +3 dice bonus to Stealth-based dice pools.

Exceptional Success: The bonus is increased to +5.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–1	The environment lacks shadows longer than the height of a man.
+1	The environment consists solely of natural *or* artificial light, such as a park playground or a windowless warehouse.

Murkblur (••••)

The changeling creates a smoky caul over the eyes of his subject, effectively blinding her. Naturally, the subject is aware of this, as her eyesight rapidly becomes so poor as to distinguish more than very bright sources of light.

The changeling's intended target must be within her line of sight for this Contract to work.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Wyrd vs. Resolve + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling swallows the eye of an animal or insect while invoking the Contract.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Contract fails spectacularly and painfully, causing a burst of light in the changeling's own vision that stuns her for the following turn.

Failure: The Contract fails to blind the intended subject.

Success: The subject's vision fades to darkness. The blindness lasts for the duration of the scene.

Exceptional Success: As with a normal success, only the changeling can terminate the temporary blindness at any point of her choosing before the end of the scene.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–1	The changeling can see her target but not her target's face.
+1	The subject wears glasses or contact lenses (or needs to), or otherwise has some mechanical vision correction or visual impediment.

Light-Shy (•••••)

This clause grants the changeling the ultimate power of the Smoke purview: it makes him truly invisible. Even mechanical observers such as security cameras won't detect him.

Cost: 1 Glamour + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling must have told a meaningful lie to someone very important to him in the past day, something that could hurt their relationship if the lie was discovered.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character remains visible to everyone but himself. Indeed, he is wholly convinced that he is, in fact, invisible, and only interaction with an outside party will let him know the true nature of his lack of success invoking this Contract.

Failure: The changeling remains visible, unaffected by the intended Contract.

Success: The changeling becomes truly invisible, unable to be seen. It is as if the world genuinely believes he isn't there — he won't show up in photographs, on video cameras, on infrared scans, anything. This Contract affects only sight, however. If he coughs, the changeling may be heard, and if he smells of grave-dirt, the scent will continue to put people off in the vicinity. This power lasts for a number of minutes equal to the number of successes rolled, though the changeling may choose to voluntarily end the invisibility earlier that that at his discretion.

Exceptional Success: As with a normal success, only the invisibility remains active for the duration of the scene.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–2	The character attempts to vanish from plain sight, using the power when he's the subject of attention of onlooking characters.
—	The character invokes the Contract when he's among others but not necessarily the focus of anyone's attentions.
+1	The character is unobserved by any other individuals when he invokes the Contract.

Seeming Contracts

Contracts of Artifice

Artifice Contracts are the blessings to magically create, repair or destroy physical objects, especially objects made by humans. Wizened who use these Contracts are the source of many legends about helpful fae craftsmen. Due to these Contracts' give-and-take nature, they work best when performed for others.

Brief Glamour of Repair (•)

With neither tools nor spare parts available, the character can still repair any device. More than half of the device must be intact for the character to use this Contract. The repair is almost always temporary. The changeling must perform or help perform the repairs to use this Contract.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Wyrd + Craft

Action: Instant or Extended

Catch: The Contract must fix an item owned and used by another, which the character has never used. For example, the changeling using this Contract could repair a friend's car the changeling had ridden in but never driven.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Contract damages the device or vehicle further, providing a –3 dice penalty to future repair attempts.

Failure: The Contract fails to function but does no harm.

Success: Even lacking tools and parts, the character repairs the device easily, which he can replace with leaves, sticks, bits of wire, tape or objects found in her pockets. In addition, if the repair requires an extended action, the Contract halves the number of total successes required. However, these repairs only last for the next full day. At the end of this time, the device reverts to the same state it was in before the Contract was used.

Exceptional Success: The repair occurs as an ordinary success, except that the repair is as durable and functional as if performed using the correct parts and tools.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–1	No necessary parts or tools are present.
+1	All necessary tools are present.
+1	The changeling does not personally know the object's owner or primary user.

Touch of the Workman's Wrath (••)

The character can disable or even seriously damage a device or vehicle with a single touch.

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Larceny + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The owner of the device either stole or attempted to steal something of value from the changeling or attempted (maybe successfully) to cheat the changeling in a business deal.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The device is unharmed, but to anyone watching, the character was obviously attempting sabotage.

Failure: The Contract fails, and the device is unharmed.

Success: By casually touching the device, the changeling damages it such that it requires minor repairs or adjustments to be used. These repairs require an extended action, with one roll made every minute. The number of successes needed to complete repairs is equal to the number of successes rolled + half of the changeling's Wyrd score (rounded up).

Exceptional Success: By casually touching the device for a turn, the changeling damages it such that it requires major repairs to be used. These repairs require an extended action, with one roll made every 10 minutes. The number of successes needed to complete the repairs is equal to the number of successes rolled + the changeling's Wyrd.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–1	The device is especially well built.
+1	The device is flimsy or ill maintained.
+2	The character can touch the device for more than a minute.

Blessing of Perfection (•••)

By briefly handling and adjusting a weapon, vehicle or other device, the changeling can bless an object, making it easier to use and more efficient. To use this clause, the changeling must tinker with the item for a few turns. The changeling can use the same Contract to bless any action (including all rolls of an extended action intended to repair, modify or build a device or computer program, treat an illness or injury or create a work of art. This clause can be combined with Brief Glamour of Repair. Using this Contract to help repair a device and blessing the same object requires two separate uses of this clause.

Cost: 3 Glamour, or 3 Glamour + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Wits + Wyrd

Action: Extended (one roll per turn, eight successes needed)

Catch: The changeling is blessing or repairing an object used and owned by someone the changeling does not know well, in return for some favor.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling accidentally curses the device, causing a –1 die penalty to all uses of it for the next full day.

Failure: The clause fails, leaving the device unaffected.

Success: The object gains a bonus equal to the changeling's Wyrd to all die rolls made using it for the next full scene. If the changeling expends one point of Willpower and uses the power of Promise Leaves from the Hedge to further bless the item, this blessing lasts until the sun next rises or sets (whichever comes first). The Willpower and the Promise Leaves must both be used before the roll is made.

The changeling can also use this clause to improve how he performs his various crafts. If the changeling uses this clause on an appropriate Crafts, Medicine or Computer action, he can add his Wyrd to all the roll or rolls involved.

Exceptional Success: If this Contract is used to bless an object, the object gains the listed bonus for all die rolls made using it until the sun next rises or sets (whichever comes first). If the changeling expended one point of Willpower and used Promise Leaves when performing this Contract, the item gains a permanent bonus equal to half of the changeling's Wyrd (round up). Alternately, if the changeling uses this Contract to bless a Crafts, Medicine or Computer roll action, she automatically adds an additional +2 dice bonus to the roll or rolls involved.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+2	Taking at least one minute per roll on the extended task.
–1	Using substandard tools to make a repair roll.

Unmaker's Destructive Gaze (••••)

The character stares hard for a moment at a vehicle, weapon or device, causing the object to cease working until the user unjams or restarts it.

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Presence + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling has an opportunity to touch and examine the object for at least a minute.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The fickle Contract temporarily improves the device. For a number of turns equal to the changeling's Wyrd, all attempts to use the device gain a +1 die bonus.

Failure: The Contract fails, and the device is unharmed.

Success: When the changeling stares directly at a vehicle, weapon or other device within 20 yards, she causes it to briefly cease working. A car might stall, a gun jam or a computer crash. The user must spend a full turn making a normal repair roll (typically Intelligence + Crafts) with the object to restart, unjam or otherwise get it working again. The number of successes on the changeling's roll acts as a penalty to the user's roll. On a failure, he has not succeeded in unjamming the device but may attempt again on the next turn at the same penalty. No specialized skills, tools or spare parts are needed to restart the device. This Contract works equally well on items that have no moving parts, such as knives, which experience minor, easily repairable damage, for example, having their blade to slip from their handle that renders the item useless until repaired.

Exceptional Success: The changeling's glance causes the vehicle, weapon or other device to need minor repairs or adjustments before it can be used again. These repairs require 10 successes on an extended action, with one roll being attempted once every minute. Repair rolls suffer the changeling's successes as a penalty.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–2	The changeling cannot see the device or weapon clearly.
+2	The changeling touches the device while performing this Contract.

Tatterdemalion's Workshop (•••••)

Although the powers of the fae do not create anything truly new, they excel at combining existing elements. This clause allows the character to create a complex and useful device out of unlikely parts, for instance, building a hovercraft from a motorcycle engine, an inflatable air mattress and some tubing and heavy gauge wire. The character can create the item swiftly and with unlikely tools and equipment, but in all cases the item

must be possible and the parts must physically be able to be used in this manner. Wands that throw bolts of lightning or belts that lift the wearer by means of anti-gravity are impossible, as is building a car without anything that could be used as tires or an engine. Similarly, if the character wants to build a bomb, he must possess something explosive, and if he wants to build a suitcase nuke, he requires a large supply of plutonium.

Cost: 4 Glamour or 4 Glamour + 2 Willpower

Dice Pool: Wyrd + Crafts

Action: Extended (the target number and frequency of rolls are variable)

Catch: The changeling creates the vehicle or device in her own workshop with her own tools. A changeling must use a workshop regularly for it to count as hers.

Roll Results

but in the attempt he breaks one or more parts so that they cannot be used again.

Failure: The Contract fails, and the various parts are unaffected.

Success: The character can create a new device out of vaguely appropriate parts, such as a working ultra-light plane out of a lawn mower or motorcycle engine and some copper pipe and canvas, or a machine pistol out of a nail gun and some other mechanical parts. Creating this item is always an extended action. The character can make one roll every minute when building any small handheld item such as a pistol or a power drill, and every 10 minutes when creating a device as large as a small car, hang glider or ultra-light plane. Devices larger than Size 10 cannot be created using this Contract. The Storyteller sets the number of successes required to create this item, which varies from five to 10, depending upon the complexity of the device and the quality of available materials.

This device functions for one scene as well as a normal device of the type being duplicated. If the changeling expends one point of Willpower and uses the power of an item from the Hedge to further bless the item, this blessing works until the next sunrise. At the end of this time, the item falls to pieces, and these pieces are sufficiently worn and tattered to be unusable.

Exceptional Success: The device functions until the next sunrise. If the changeling also expends one point of Willpower and uses the power of an item from the Hedge to further bless the item, then the item is built sturdily enough to last indefinitely.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–3	The materials are both poor quality and relatively sparse.
–1	The materials are either poor quality or relatively sparse.
+1	The materials are abundant or high quality.
+3	The materials are abundant and largely high quality.
+2	A wide selection of tools is available.
–1	Few tools are available.

Contracts of Darkness

The Darklings have pacted with the power of darkness itself to shelter and nurture them. Darkness Contracts are used to hide the changeling, to induce dread in mortals and to produce effects associated with darkness, night and the terror of a ghost story come true.

Creeping Dread (•)

This clause causes those affected to become less resistant to fear or intimidation. The target or targets initially feels a mild shudder of fear and then becomes considerably more susceptible to any event that could make them afraid or intimidated, including anything that might trigger a Phobia derangement.

Cost: 1 Glamour or 2 Glamour + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Wyrd – Resolve

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling is using this clause to frighten intruders into her dwelling.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The target or targets gain +1 die to resist fear and are immune to this clause for the next scene.

Failure: The Contract fails and has no effect on the target or targets.

Success: The target or targets feel mild fear and experience a penalty equal to the changeling's Wyrd to all Resolve or Composure rolls to resist fear or intimidation. If the changeling spends one point of Glamour, this clause affects one target the changeling can see clearly. If the changeling spends two points of Glamour and one point of Willpower, the clause affects everyone within three yards per dot of Willpower the changeling possesses. In both cases, this effect lasts for one scene.

Exceptional Success: The penalty to rolls to resist fear is equal to the changeling's Wyrd +2.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The surroundings are dark and spooky.
+2	The target or targets are already somewhat afraid.
–1	The targets are vigilant and expecting trouble.
–1	The surroundings are brightly lit and not conducive to fear.

Night's Subtle Distractions (••)

This clause allows the Lost to avoid notice by enhancing physical conditions that limit perception. A dark night seems darker, background noises that obscure the changeling's footsteps seem louder, distractions become more distracting and strong smells can even block a bloodhound's ability to track the changeling.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Wyrd + Stealth

Action: Instant

Catch: The clause is invoked outdoors at night.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The targets are unaffected. Instead, the Contract affects the changeling and everyone she attempted to exclude from the Contract for the next scene.

Failure: The Contract affects no one's perceptions.

Success: This clause affects everyone within 50 yards of the changeling. The changeling is not affected, and can also choose to keep anyone in physical contact with her from being affected. Everyone else within range doubles all environmental penalties to Wits rolls involving perception, including Wits + Composure rolls, as well as Wits + Skill rolls to notice events or Wit's + Investigation rolls to intentionally search for something. In a quiet, well-lit room or hallway, there are typically no environmental penalties, and this Contract provides only a –1 die penalty to these rolls. This Contract affects perceptions, not actual environmental conditions. Darkness does not actually become darker, and sounds don't actually become louder. Only the targets' perceptions are changed. This clause lasts for the next scene and affects the individuals nearby when it is performed. If someone new arrives, she will be unaffected. However, anyone affected will continue to be affected, even if he moves more than 50 yards from the changeling.

Exceptional Success: The Contract affects everyone in range that the changeling does not protect, including people who come within range later. The changeling does not have to be in physical contact with those she wishes to spare from the Contract's effects.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–1	Total environmental modifiers to perception are no more than –1.
+1	Total environmental modifiers to perception are –3 or higher.

Balm of Unwakeable Slumber (•••)

This clause causes all sleeping targets the changeling can see or hear to be nearly impossible to wake. Targets remain sleeping through loud noises, or being shaken moderately, moved or even tied up, handcuffed and shoved into a car trunk. Targets awaken if harmed, but will otherwise remain asleep. When using this Contract on mortal targets, use the highest Resolve for all of them.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Wyrd vs. Resolve + Wyrd

Action: Resisted

Catch: The target is asleep at home in his own bed, and the Contract is performed between sunset and sunrise.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The target wakes up.

Failure: The target's sleep is unaffected.

Success: When this clause is used on one or more sleeping targets that the changeling can see or hear, the target becomes almost impossible to awaken until the time they are accustomed to waking. The targets can be shouted at, picked up or manhandled without waking. However, anything that does one or more points of any type of damage instantly awakens the sleepers — repeatedly slapping targets or shaking them vigorously enough to hurt will also wake them up. Dense smoke, intense heat or other situations causing targets to cough, choke or fight for their lives will awaken them normally. Nothing else, including the screams of a terrified loved one, can break their slumber.

Exceptional Success: When the targets wake up, they remain groggy for another full scene, suffering a –2 dice penalty to Speed, Defense and all actions.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+2	The target is deeply asleep.
–1	The target is taking a nap and is not planning to sleep for more than a short time.

Boon of the Scuttling Spider (••••)

This clause allows the Lost to run along any solid surface, such as a wall or ceiling, like a scuttling spider.

Cost: 3 Glamour

Dice Pool: Wyrd + Athletics

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling is climbing a wall made of stone or wood outdoors, at night.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character stumbles and must make a Dexterity + Athletics roll to avoid falling down. She cannot use this clause for the rest of the scene.

Failure: The Contract fails to work.

Success: The character can now walk and run along walls or ceilings or along slick or ice-covered surfaces that would normally be treacherous to attempt to cross. The character can only move along solid surfaces capable of supporting her weight. She can move at normal speed, and can attack, dodge and gains her full Defense while moving in this fashion.

Exceptional Success: The character moves so swiftly and easily that she adds +1 to her Defense when using this clause.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The surface the character is attempting to climb is rough, with many handholds and footholds.
–1	The surface the character is attempting to climb is smooth and polished, with few handholds or footholds.
+1	The character is barefoot.

Touch of Paralyzing Shudder (•••••)

The character fills the target's body with involuntary shudders of fear and revulsion that cause her to move in a slow and clumsy fashion. The target's muscles respond more slowly and weakly, causing even the strongest and swiftest opponents difficulty.

Cost: 2 Glamour + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Presence + Wyrd vs. Resolve + Wyrd

Action: Reflexive

Catch: The target is both alone and already afraid of the changeling.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The target is immune to this Contract for the rest of the scene.

Failure: The clause has no effect.

Success: The changeling must touch or be touching the target to use this Contract. The target's Speed, Defense, Initiative and all of the target's dice pools involving Strength and Dexterity are halved (round up).

Exceptional Success: Round down when halving the target's new Speed, Defense, Initiative, Strength and Dexterity pools.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The changeling touches the target's bare skin.
–1	The target is wearing actual armor, and the changeling did not touch his skin.

Contracts of Elements

These Contracts allow changelings to control the elements. Contracts of Elements are purchased separately, each Contract attuning itself to one particular element. For example, a character assigning all his beginning five dots in Contracts could purchase Elements •• (Water) and Elements ••• (Ice), or Elements • (Fire), Elements •• (Earth) and Elements •• (Metal). Purchasing more dots of any given Contract of Elements does not increase the others. However, the Elemental seeming's affinity applies to all Contracts of Elements, allowing them to purchase multiple Contracts of Elements at reduced cost. In addition, learning new versions of already known clauses is half the cost (round down) of learning a new Contract. For example, a character with Elements ••• (Fire) and Elements •• (Smoke) could purchase the third dot of Smoke at half cost, as he already knows Control Elements (Fire). However, a character with Darkness •••• and Elements ••• (Mist) would not pay half cost for the fourth dot in Elements, as Darkness doesn't provide the specific Calling the Element clause.

The range of possible elements includes the traditional Western elements of Air, Fire, Water, and Earth, the five Chinese elements, and less traditional options such as smoke, electricity, glass or shadow. The only limit is that the element must have some direct physical manifestation, and must be a base material rather than a particular form of object. For example, electronic data is not a possible element and cannot be affected by any elemental Contract. Ceramics may be a possibility (such as for a clay-affinity Manikin), but "pottery" would not.

Cloak of the Elements (•)

This clause protects the Elemental from the natural manifestations of any single element. The changeling be-

comes comfortable in weather associated with this element and is protected against damage by its more extreme manifestations. A character protected from fire has no trouble walking through Death Valley at noon in Summer, someone protected from water remains warm and dry during the worst thunderstorm, someone protected from wood can walk through thorny underbrush unharmed and at a normal walking pace and so on.

In addition, the Cloak of the Elements protects the changeling against direct damage from the element in question. Against direct damage caused by the element in question, this clause subtracts one point of damage per point of the changeling's Wyrd. Cloak of the Elements (air) would protect against damage suffered from being caught in a tropical storm or tornado, while an earth-cloak would protect against thrown rocks or falling to earth, a glass-cloak would protect against cuts made by broken glass and so on. However, the clause cannot protect against damage from objects created or modified with the intention of harming someone. The glass-cloak could shield its user against incidental damage from shards of fallen glass, but not against a beer bottle that was broken for the purpose of a bar brawl. A metal-cloak might protect against a fireplace poker, but not a sword or even a pipe that was detached for the purpose of serving as a weapon.

The Cloak of the Elements lasts for a scene.

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling bears some symbolic representation of the element in question, such as a souvenir T-shirt depicting a mountain for earth or a small mirror for glass.

Armor of the Elements' Fury (••)

The character clothes himself in a frenzied and damaging manifestation of his chosen element, providing limited armor and damaging anyone who touches him. This Contract sheathes the character in fire, unnaturally cold ice, razor-sharp metal spikes, a crackling aura of electricity or something similarly dangerous. The character can control the extent of this manifestation, limiting it to her hands so she can attack others, start fires or cool drinks by touch, or she can completely cover herself with the element. This element does not harm the character or anything she is wearing.

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling touches the element when he invokes the clause. For ubiquitous elements such as air, the element must be fairly vigorous, that is, a strong breeze or the wind from a large fan.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The element briefly harms the character, causing dice of lethal damage equal to the half the character's Wyrd, which can be reduced by armor.

Failure: The character fails to call up the element.

Success: The character surrounds herself with a damaging manifestation of the element. The character does half of her Wyrd (round up) lethal damage by touch, and anyone or any object that strikes her suffers this same damage. The changeling cannot combine this attack with a punch or any other conventional brawling or melee attack. Instead, the character must use the element to attack the target. The dice pool for this attack is Dexterity + Brawling + half of the character's Wyrd.

This elemental sheath also provides the character with one point of armor useful against all attacks, including attacks by the summoned element. The character can cause the element to cover only a small portion of the character, such as one hand and forearm or her head, but attempting to reduce its size further causes the element to vanish and ends the Contract. Otherwise, the element surrounds the character for the next scene.

Exceptional Success: The character can maintain this effect until the sun next rises or sets (whichever comes first) and can summon or dismiss the element during this time without ending the Contract.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	A large amount of the element is present when the Contract is invoked. For ubiquitous elements such as air, the element must be particularly vigorous, for example, a gale wind.
–1	None of the element is present when the Contract is invoked.

Control Elements (•••)

The changeling takes control of the element attuned to the Contract, causing the element to move and act in a directed fashion. A breeze blows in a specific direction, electricity in power lines turns on, off or surges to blow circuit breakers and wooden or metal chairs lurch slowly across floors.

Cost: 3 Glamour

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The area is completely dominated by the element — air on top of a narrow bridge, water on a lake or ocean, fire in the middle of a forest fire, electricity at a substation or generator and so on.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The element reacts in a wild, unpredictable and dangerous fashion for the next scene.

Failure: The character fails to control the element.

Success: The changeling successfully controls the element. The changeling must be within Willpower x 2 yards of the edge of the area of the element he wishes to control. The amount of element controlled can be determined from the following table:

Successes	Mass	Volume (liquid)	Area (gas or intangible)
1 success	20 lb.	Milk jug	5-sq. yard area
2 successes	50 lb.	Gas tank	10-sq. yard area
3 successes	200 lb.	Bathtub	15-sq. yard area
4 successes	500 lb.	Average Jacuzzi	20-sq. yard area
5+ successes	2,000 lb.	Large hot tub	30-sq. yard area

The character can shape any solid, gaseous or intangible element such as water, mist or fire into any simple form, making solid walls of water or hiding half a room in deep mist. However, she cannot create a vacuum in a room that is not airtight or perform similarly impossible acts. The changeling can also cause non-solid elements to move at a Speed of up to 20. When the changeling is manipulating solid elements such as wood, stone or metal, inflexible objects can only lurch or hop along at a speed of one yard per turn.

The changeling can also control the operation of any mechanical (but not electric or electronic) device made primarily of her element. Objects that roll, or have joints, wheels or articulated legs can move as fast as a human with Strength and Dexterity both equal to half of the changeling's Wyrd (round up). Flexible objects such as rope or wire can slither like a snake at a similar speed and can also trip or entangle anyone nearby. The material has an effective Strength equal to the number of successes rolled for purposes of tearing itself free of any containers or moorings; it is much easier to control a loose sheet of metal grating than to have metal reinforcements tear themselves free from concrete.

Controlling electricity allows the changeling to control the operation of any electrical or electronic device that has access to a power source, even when turned off. This control including turning lights or alarm systems on or off and opening electronic locks, but not any sort of complex control.

The changeling cannot increase the amount or power of the element present, but can direct it to move in unusual ways. He can cause a fire to burn or leap in a particular direction, create a breeze that blows only in part of a room or cause electric current to turn off a device or even arc out from a socket and shock someone standing nearby. Elements such as fire and electricity can do damage, but only as much as the amount present can normally do. However, the changeling can direct the element to attack anyone within range. The changeling controls the element for a scene.

Exceptional Success: No additional bonuses.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	Large amounts of the element are present.
–1	Little of the element is present.

Calling the Element (••••)

The changeling calls the associated element from a distant location. The changeling must either know the location or see the source of the element he is calling and the element must physically move toward the character in as natural manner as possible — fire leaps, water splashes from a basin or falls as rain from the sky, wind blows, rock erupts from the ground…. If physical barriers prevent the element from reaching the character, it gets as close as it can, such as rain falling on the house that a changeling was in when he called water from the clouds. Once the element is present, the changeling must then use the Control Element clause if he wishes to also control the element.

Cost: 4 Glamour

Dice Pool: Wits + Wyrd

Action: Extended (one roll per turn); the target number is five.

Catch: The changeling is calling the element solely to awe and impress viewers, perhaps as part of a performance.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The element moves in an erratic, perhaps dangerous, direction.

Failure: The changeling fails to call the element.

Success: The character successfully calls the element. The changeling can affect the same amount of the element he could control with the Control Element clause. The element comes toward the character or to any location within Wyrd x 10 yards of the changeling that the changeling designates. The changeling can cause fires to spread and leap in his direction, winds of speeds up to Wyrd x 10 miles per hour, to blow or cause electricity to arc from a junction box, or even down from the sky, if a lightning storm is occurring. Solid objects such as trees or lampposts that are attached to the ground or to some other object cannot break free, but can bend in the character's direction. Unattached objects bounce or roll slowly toward the character. A changeling who controls metal could cause a vehicle made primarily of metal to roll toward them. Also, the changeling can cause stone or running water to erupt from the ground. The changeling controls the summoned element for one full scene.

Exceptional Success: No additional advantage.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The changeling calls the element with verbal entreaties and large, obvious gestures.
–1	The changeling uses neither words nor gestures to call the element.

Become the Primal Foundation (•••••)

The changeling literally becomes a living manifestation of the Contract's associated element. The transforma-

tion takes only one turn. The character's clothing and small objects close to his skin, such as phones or wallets, blend into this elemental form.

Cost: 4 Glamour

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The character must sit and contemplate a large amount of the specific element for at least half an hour immediately before transforming.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling partially transforms into the element for a turn, suffers lethal damage equal to half of his Wyrd points, then reverts to his normal form.

Failure: The changeling fails to change her form.

Success: The changeling becomes a living embodiment of the element — a sentient breeze, an animate puddle or a living current in a river, a living, self-mobile fire, a small tree or a living, animate statue made of wood, stone, metal or glass.

The character retains all Mental and Social Attributes and Skills. If she transforms into a solid element, for example, a statue of stone, this form has all of her physical attributes and Health, but she adds half of her Wyrd (round up) to her Strength and gains armor equal to half of her Wyrd. This increased Strength does not increase the character's Speed.

Characters who transform into air, water, fire or other formless elements have no physical characteristics but triple the character's normal Speed. Elemental forms capable of damage either do lethal damage equal to half of the changeling's Wyrd (round up) or bashing damage equal to the changeling's Wyrd, depending upon the nature of the element. Fire always does lethal damage, while water and electricity always do bashing damage. To attack in elemental form, the character makes a normal attack roll using either Brawl or Weaponry (the character's choice).

Taking non-solid form makes the changeling largely immune from harm. If this element form is destroyed or seriously damaged (like a fire being extinguished), the changeling automatically reverts to his normal form. Due to the shock, the changeling also loses two points of Willpower and cannot use this clause for one full day. Otherwise, the clause lasts for one scene, at which point the character must once again assume his normal form. The character can voluntarily resume his normal form, but doing so ends the Contract.

Exceptional Success: The character can remain in elemental form until the sun next rises or sets (whichever comes first), unless forced out of this form by damage to it. He can also end the effects at will.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The changeling is in the presence of large amounts of the element.
–1	Little or none of the element is present.

Contracts of Fang and Talon

Changelings use these Contracts to emulate and become closer to specific animals. Contracts of Fang and Talon are purchased separately, each Contract attuning itself to one specific type of animal. Canines, felines, sea mammals, predatory birds, fish, sharks or even bony fish are all sample possibilities. The character may choose to attune to a particular species, or as widely as a general family of animals; he could take affinity with Wolves or Canines, but not with Carnivora or Mammals. For example, a character assigning all her beginning five dots in Contracts could purchase Fang and Talon ••• (Canines) and Fang and Talon •• (Birds of Prey), or Fang and Talon • (Oxen), Fang and Talon •• (Equines) and Fang and Talon •• (Goats). Purchasing more dots of any given Contract of Fang and Talon does not increase the others. However, the Beast seeming's affinity applies to all Contracts of Fang and Talon, allowing Beasts to purchase multiple Contracts of Fang and Talon at reduced cost. In addition, learning new versions of already known clauses is half the cost (round down) of learning a new Contract. For example, a character with Fang and Talon •• (Snakes) and Fang and Talon • (Lizards) could purchase the second dot of Fang and Talon (Lizards) at half cost, as she already knows Beast's Keen Senses (Snakes). However, a character with Hearth ••• and Fang and Talon •• (Bats) would not pay half cost for the third dot in Fang and Talon (Bats), as she hasn't yet learned the specific Pipes of the Beastcaller clause.

Tongues of Birds and Words of Wolves (•)

The changeling can communicate with the general type of animal represented in the Contract. This communication is partially empathic, but the changeling must either whisper to the animal in her own language or attempt to imitate whatever sounds the animal uses to express itself. Most animals make some sort of noise while responding, but they need not do so. Animals tied to the changeling by kith or this Contract instinctively feel a kinship with the changeling and readily communicate unless immediate circumstances, such as an obvious threat, intervene. Simpler, less intelligent animals communicate with less complexity. Mammals and birds are relatively easy to speak with. However, reptiles, invertebrates and most fish can provide only very simple information, such as whether or not any humans recently came near or the general location of fresh water.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Wyrd + Animal Ken

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling gives the animal a new name.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character angers or scares the animal he tries to approach and cannot use this clause for one full scene.

Failure: No communication occurs.

Success: The changeling can speak to all animals of the specified type for the next scene.

Exceptional Success: The animal feels affection and loyalty toward the character. The animal is actively helpful and volunteers information unasked if it considers that information important (so far as its intelligence allows).

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The character imitates the animal's sounds and body language.
–1	The animal is frightened or hurt.

Beast's Keen Senses (••)

The changeling gains the senses of a specific type of animal, selected when the changeling learns this clause. This clause enhances the changeling's natural senses, and may well grant him entirely new senses such as a viper's infrared pits or a bat's echolocation.

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Wits + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling sees or touches an animal of the type being imitated.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character's senses become slightly muddied and confused. The character experiences a –1 die penalty to all Perception rolls for the next scene.

Failure: The Contract fails, and the character's senses are unaffected.

Success: The character gains a +2 dice bonus to all Wits rolls relating to perception for the next full scene. In addition, he gains the chosen animal's most notable sensory ability — a wolf or dog's sense of smell, including the ability to identify people and track by scent, an owl or cat's night vision and so on. If the character's particular animal has no significant exceptional sense (such as a goat or monkey) , he instead gains a +4 dice bonus to all Wits rolls relating to perception. These bonuses last for the next full scene.

Exceptional Success: The character gains an additional +1 die to all Perception rolls for the scene.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The changeling is touching an animal of the correct type.
+1	The changeling is wearing a mask or other large image (such as a painting on the back of a jacket of an animal of the correct type).
–1	The environment is one that the animal would find uncomfortable and unnatural, such as a jungle animal in winter snow.

Pipes of the Beastcaller (•••)

The changeling can command the animal specified in the Contract. The character can call any single animal of this type that she can see or hear, causing the animal to come rapidly to her aid, and then instruct the animal on what she wants it to do. Particularly small animals may be called in groups. The changeling can call and command up to a dozen tiny animals, such as rats, mice or small bats, if she can see or hear them all. Changelings can also call an entire hive of insects such as bees or wasps. The animal (or animals) obeys to the best of its ability, but its nature and intelligence might cause the animal to interpret its orders in unusual ways. The animal attempts to carry out commands for the next full day, after which it ceases to obey the character. The animal will not cooperate with anything obviously self-destructive, such as standing still in front of an oncoming car. Large groups of small animals such as rats or bees act as one and cannot be split up to perform different tasks.

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Wyrd + Animal Ken

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling asks the animal to guard or watch the changeling's dwelling.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The animal either attacks the character or completely misunderstands the instructions and does the exact opposite of what he commands it to do.

Failure: The character cannot communicate with or command the animal.

Success: The animal can both understand the character's wishes and obeys the character's orders to the best of its abilities.

Exceptional Success: The character retains an empathic bond with the animal, allowing him to roughly sense its location and emotional and physical condition. For the next full day, the character can spend one point of Glamour to communicate for one scene with the animal at any distance.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The changeling offers the animal appropriate foodstuffs.
–1	The animal is frightened or injured.

Tread of the Swift Hooves (••••)

The character gains the Contracted animal's mode of locomotion. This clause allows characters emulating unusually swift animals to run faster, characters emulating aquatic animals to swim better and faster and characters moving like flying animals to jump and glide inhumanly well. If the animal is noted for being able to move exceptionally well in several different ways, such as a type of monkey that excels at both climbing and jumping, the character must choose which type of movement he wishes to gain when he learns this clause and must learn a new version to gain the other ability.

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The character is touching an animal of the correct type.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Contract fails. The character suffers a –1 die penalty to Speed for the scene.

Failure: The Contract fails, and the character is unaffected.

Success: The character gains the movement capabilities of the animal. Swift runners such as horses or dogs allow the changeling to double her Speed. Aquatic animals allow the changeling to swim as rapidly and as easily as she can walk or run and hold her breath 10 times as long (including any modifiers from the Strong Lungs Merit). Flying, gliding or jumping animals allow the changeling to quadruple her jumping distance and fall any distance without harm. Climbing animals such as monkeys allow the changeling to gain +5 to all climbing rolls and climb at five times normal speed. This enhanced movement lasts for one full scene.

Exceptional Success: The character's enhanced movement lasts until the sun next sets or rises, whichever comes first.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The changeling wears a mask of the animal or a large garment made from its skin.
–1	The clause is invoked someplace the animal is never naturally found.

Cloak of the Bear's Massive Form (•••••)

The changeling can physically transform into the animal bound to the Contract. The transformation takes one turn. The character's clothing and small objects close to his skin, such as phones or wallets, blend into this animal form.

Cost: 4 Glamour

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling is in the natural habitat of his associated animal and touching or within touching distance of at least one of these animals.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character partially transforms, becoming a clumsy half-human being who suffers a –2 dice penalty to all Strength and Dexterity pools and a –2 dice penalty to Defense and Speed. The botched transformation lasts until the character can take two consecutive turns to shift back.

Failure: The Contract fails, and the character cannot transform.

Success: The character successfully transforms into the correct animal. The character can remain transformed for up to a scene or can choose to revert to her normal form at any time. Transforming back into the normal form requires one turn, and ends the clause's effects.

The character's Health alters if her Size and Stamina change. In animal form, the character automatically gains animal senses, exactly as if she had performed the *eagle's gleaming eyes* clause. The creature's Physical Attributes replace the changeling's, but she retains her Social and Mental Attributes. Her Skills also remain the same. The changeling gains some measure of the animal's instinctual drives and motor control, so she can run, fly or swim normally. While in animal form, the character can speak all human languages she knows, and can also communicate normally with animals of the species she has become.

Exceptional Success: The character can remain transformed until the sun next rises. If she has taken the form of an animal with a smaller Size than her own, she retains her full Health as if her Size had not changed.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	In the animal's natural habitat
–1	Inside a well-lit building closed off from the outside world

Contracts of Stone

Ogres and other changelings use these powers to enhance their might, becoming even more savage and deadly opponents. The clauses of this Contract are simple and direct, having as little subtlety as the stone bound in the ancient pact.

Might of the Terrible Brute (•)

The character's muscles bulge and ripple with added power. He may use his strength more effectively through a combination of leverage and brute determination.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Strength + Wyrd

Action: Reflexive

Catch: The character fights multiple opponents simultaneously with his bare hands, not using weapons or tools of any sort.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character strains his muscles and suffers a –2 dice penalty to his next action involving Strength.

Failure: The changeling's Strength is unaffected.

Success: The changeling adds a number of additional dots to his Strength for this action equal to the number of successes rolled.

Exceptional Success: The changeling also gains the 8 again quality for the next action he takes using a Strength-based dice pool.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The character yells, grunts or boasts loudly about her great strength.
–1	The character acts calm, restrained and sedate.

Ogre's Rending Grasp (••)

The character can focus his inhuman prowess against an inanimate object. Using this Contract, the changeling can rip down a wall with his bare hands or bash in the sturdiest door with a lead pipe. The changeling must either touch or be able to clearly see an object to use this clause upon it.

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Strength + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling is attempting to remove a barrier, such as a door or a wall.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character strains his muscles, suffering a –2 dice penalty to all Strength-based dice pools for the next scene.

Failure: The object's Durability is unaffected.

Success: The changeling subtracts one point of Durability per success achieved on the roll. Note that this clause does not affect the object's Structure. The reduced Durability applies to all attacks on the object and lasts for one scene.

Exceptional Success: No benefit other than that gained from 5+ successes.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The character attacks the target without taking time to think about it.
–1	The character has carefully studied the target to determine the best way to destroy it.

Display Grandiose Might (•••)

The Ogre can boost his Strength by a significant degree for tasks not involving combat. The character can run, climb, jump and lift heavy objects far more effectively than normal.

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Athletics + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The character is using this clause for the express purpose of showing off his physical or athletic prowess to others, perhaps to gain some prize or to win acclaim, but not for any more practical purpose.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character strains his muscles and functions as if his Strength was half normal (round down) for the duration of the scene.

Failure: The character's Strength is unaffected.

Success: The character gains additional dots of Strength equal to his Wyrd. The character can only use this added might for non-combat purposes. If the character attacks an opponent, the affects of this clause instantly end. Otherwise, it lasts for one full scene and provides bonuses to Speed, to lifting objects, breaking down or holding back a door, climbing, jumping and all other Strength dice pools not including combat. Attempting to break inanimate objects does not count as combat.

Exceptional Success: Along with bonuses already provided, the character gains the 9 again quality to all appropriate Strength rolls for the scene.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The character is dressed in a way that shows off his muscles and physique.
–1	The character is dressed in a way that hides his physique.

Gluttonous Feast of Health (••••)

Ogres are noted for their prodigious appetites. The character can heal damage though the consumption of prodigious amounts of food and drink.

Cost: 3 Glamour

Dice Pool: Stamina + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The character is offered large amounts of food by a stranger.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character makes himself ill with the effects of gluttony and inflicts a point of lethal damage on himself.

Failure: The character eats and drinks his fill but gains no special benefit from the effort.

Success: Each success on the roll converts two levels of lethal damage into two levels of bashing damage or one level of aggravated damage into two levels of bashing damage. To use this clause, the character must spend at least an hour

in an orgy of gustatory excess. The food's quality is irrelevant — fast food is just as effective as a five-star feast. The character suffers no ill effects from this mass consumption of food. This clause automatically reduces the worst damage first.

Exceptional Success: Other than more levels of damage being downgraded, no special bonuses.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The character eats continuously for three or more hours.
–1	The only food and drink available are relatively low-calorie fare.
+1	The available food is especially rich, hardy and abundant.

Red Rage of Terrible Revenge (•••••)

Transforming rage into physical prowess, the changeling is filled with passion and fury and gains unparalleled Strength and resistance from harm.

Cost: 3 Glamour + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Resolve + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling is using this Contract to gain justice or revenge for a loved one being killed or badly hurt.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character becomes frightened rather than furious and attempts to flee combat if possible. If this is not possible, he suffers a –2 dice penalty to all actions for the next scene.

Failure: The character fails to invoke the Contract.

Success: Each success adds one each to the changeling's Initiative, Stamina, Strength (which also adds to her Speed), gives him one point of armor, and reduces the wound penalty taken from both bashing and lethal damage by one. The character experiences rage and savage determination to gain victory over his enemies. While he knows friend from foe and can decide which weapons to use and whether to kill or capture an enemy, he will not retreat unless facing overwhelming odds and will never forgo an attack in order to dodge. This battle-fury lasts for one scene and may only occur during or immediately before a combat.

Exceptional Success: No benefit other than that gained from 5+ successes.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The changeling is heavily armed or wearing armor.
–1	The changeling is unarmored and using only improvised weapons.

Contracts of Vainglory

These Contracts draw on Glamour to make the changeling more impressive and awe-inspiring. Several of these clauses allow the changeling to reveal his true mien to mortals in a fashion that neither risks lowering his Clarity nor allows the mortals to remember it clearly. The Striking Looks Merit provides the listed +1 to +2 dice bonus to all Contracts of Vainglory.

Mask of Superiority (•)

The changeling convinces a single subject that she is his professional superior or someone of superior social status. This clause cannot compel anyone into obedience, only deceive him.

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Wyrd+ Intimidation – Resolve

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling pretends to be a socialite or similar celebrity whose fame comes from high standing or good looks alone.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The subject takes extra offense to the changeling's obvious lies, perhaps viewing her as dangerously deluded.

Failure: The illusion fails. The subject sees the changeling as she is.

Success: The changeling can either convince the subject that she is a high-ranking person in the subject's workplace, or simply that she is a celebrity, someone important and worthy of notice and respect. The changeling doesn't control who the target sees, only the general "someone in his workplace" or "a celebrity." If the subject is expecting someone important to come and talk with him, he assumes the changeling is this person. This Contract does not force any particular action on the subject, but most will behave deferentially. Along with this effect, every success rolled adds one bonus die to all Social rolls to impress, intimidate or command the target. This effect lasts for one scene or until someone else convinces the target that the changeling is not who she claims to be.

Exceptional Success: In addition to the above effects, the target is firmly convinced of the changeling's importance and will argue with anyone who claims otherwise. In his certainty, the target gains +1 die to all rolls to convince others of the changeling's importance.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The changeling is dressed appropriately for the position she claims.
–1	The changeling is dressed inappropriately for the position she claims.

Songs of Distant Arcadia (••)

Some Gentry keep slaves to provide them with more refined forms of entertainment. This clause allows changelings to become consummate performers, preternaturally skilled storytellers or inhumanly eloquent speakers.

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Presence + Expression

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling is giving a performance in front of a wealthy and powerful audience.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character's confidence in her ability is utterly misplaced. She receives a –2 dice penalty to all Expression or Persuasion rolls for the next scene, but believes she is giving an excellent performance.

Failure: The changeling gains no bonus to speeches or performances.

Success: The character gains a number of bonus dice equal to her Wyrd to all Expression and Persuasion rolls for the next scene.

Exceptional Success: The changeling delivers an inhumanly excellent performance, adding a number of automatic successes equal to her Wyrd to her next Expression and Persuasion roll, as well as adding the usual bonus dice to all other Expression and Persuasion rolls for the next scene.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1 to +2	The changeling is wearing an unusually fine costume, or using especially well-made instruments or other accoutrements.
–1 to –2	The changeling is dressed in an unassuming fashion without special props or accoutrements.

Splendor of the Envoy's Protection (•••)

The Gentry sometimes send the finest on diplomatic missions where they must be both impressive and difficult to harm. The changeling temporarily abandons the Mask, revealing her fae mien to all mortals (and other beings) within sight. However, using this clause does not harm the changeling's Clarity, because his appearance dazzles mortals with amazing glory rather than confusing or frightening them. Mortals can clearly see they are talking speaking to a creature of inhuman appearance, but this merely impresses them to the extent that mortal onlookers are incapable of attacking the character except in self-defense.

Cost: 3 Glamour

Dice Pool: Presence + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: This clause is invoked at a formal party containing at least a dozen people.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character appears clumsy and ill mannered, suffering a –2 dice penalty to all Presence or Manipulation rolls for the next scene.

Failure: The character's appearance is unchanged.

Success: The character appears in her true form. Onlookers are awed, but not frightened. The character gains the equivalent of the four-dot version of the Striking Looks Merit. This bonus adds to any others, such as if the character already has the Striking Looks Merit. In addition, as long as the changeling does not brandish a weapon or attempt to harm anyone, ordinary humans cannot attack her. They can attempt to block her path, but they cannot actually harm her except by accident. Supernatural beings may attack the changeling by making a successful reflexive Resolve + Composure roll before each attack. This Contract lasts for one scene, unless the character attacks someone or aims a weapon at someone with threatening intent. Either action instantly ends the Contract's effects, but the character can order others to attack without necessarily dispelling the effects.

During this time, cameras and other electronic devices will not show or record the character's true form. Afterwards, human onlookers still consider the changeling as striking and impressive, but either remember her appearance as a wondrous costume or forget that she looked at all inhuman. Supernatural onlookers remember the changeling's true form, however. This clause affects everyone who sees the character during this scene, not merely those present when it was first invoked.

Exceptional Success: This effect lasts until the sun next rises or sets (whichever comes first).

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1 to +2	The character is wearing exquisite and expensive clothing.
–1 to –2	The character is wearing shabby or cheaply made clothing.
–2	The character is wearing a visible weapon.

Mantle of Terrible Beauty (••••)

The changeling appears in her fae mien to all onlookers in a fashion that makes her appear both frightening and terrible. Onlookers see the changeling as a great and terrible version of her normal seeming, but afterwards cannot remember the exact details of what she looked like, only that she filled them with utter terror. As a result, invoking this clause does not risk a changeling losing Clarity.

Cost: 2 Glamour + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Intimidate + Wyrd vs. the subject's Composure + Wyrd

Action: Contested

Catch: The character is fighting a duel or some other combat that has been agreed upon in advance by both sides.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling looks harmless. All attackers gain confidence, giving them one additional die to all attacks on the changeling for the next scene. The changeling also cannot affect anyone within range until the sun next sets.

Failure: The clause fails to invoke.

Success: This clause affects everyone within three yards per dot of the changeling's Wyrd. One contested roll may be made reflexively for a crowd of mortals based on the highest Composure present. Supernatural beings should each make their own resistance rolls. If the changeling rolls any successes, he fills the affected targets with a mixture of terror and awe. If he rolls more successes than a target, the person must flee the changeling's presence in utter terror. Those who fail this contest but cannot flee are at a –2 dice penalty to all actions due to fear. They also cannot spend Willpower to gain three extra dice on any rolls, or +2 to any Resistance traits. (Willpower can be spent to activate capabilities or powers that require it, however.)

Anyone who rolls as many or more successes as the changeling need not flee, but the changeling awes and frightens them, causing a –2 dice penalty to all rolls to attack or attempt to harm the changeling. The changeling also gains +2 dice to all rolls to Intimidate everyone within range. The changeling's awe-inspiring appearance persists until the changeling decides to resume her normal appearance or until the end of the scene, whichever comes first. Record the number of successes rolled for the changeling when this clause is activated, and compare it to any rolled for newcomers to the power's area of effect. This awe cannot be used selectively, and affects all characters near the changeling (save those bound to her by a motley pledge or who share her Court). This clause cannot be used more than once on any subject in a single scene.

Exceptional Success: All who roll fewer successes than the changeling must either flee or cower helplessly until the awe ceases. Those who roll as many or more successes are at a –2 dice penalty to all actions.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1 to +2	The changeling's clothing, accoutrements or weapons are especially flamboyant and impressive.
–1 to –2	The changeling's clothing, accoutrements or weapons are bland, shoddy or ill kept.

Words of Memories Never Lived (•••••)

The changeling gives a speech or performance, such as a song or play, which profoundly affects the minds of listeners within 50 yards of the changeling. Although the changeling can augment her voice with a microphone, videos or recordings do not contain the fae magic present in the actual in-person performance. Once the character succeeds in preparing the audience, she can begin weaving a speech or other performance that warps their memories and supercharges their emotions.

Cost: 3 Glamour + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Wyrd+ Expression + vs. the subject's Composure + Wyrd

Action: Extended and Contested (five successes; each roll represents one minute). If the changeling has not achieved the needed number of successes in a number of rolls equal to her Presence + Expression, the audience loses interest. One contested roll may be made reflexively for a crowd based on the highest Composure present. Supernatural targets may make their own resistance rolls.

Catch: The changeling is attempting to convince the audience of something that she believes to be factually correct.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The audience turns hostile. Those who are so inclined may turn to violence.

Failure: The performance is uninspired and has no effect on listeners.

Success: The character tells, sings or demonstrates an emotionally charged story. Listeners fall into a light dream-like trance. The events of this story affect them deeply, and they remember the events being described either as having happened to them or as something they personally witnessed or heard from a trusted friend. The audience reacts to the described events as if to vivid reality, but will not likely take any action they would not normally perform under strong provocation. The changeling cannot control how the audience reacts to their new memories. The effects of this performance last until the sun next rises. A crowd verging on riot told a story about how the events angering them have a reasonable explanation will likely calm down and disperse. Similarly, the members of a peaceful community meeting could be moved to mob violence if told that a neighbor is secretly a serial killer plotting to kidnap and kill their children.

Exceptional Success: The performance so completely touches the audience's hearts that they follow any simple and not obviously foolish or suicidal suggestion that the changeling makes about how to react to the story.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1 to +2	The changeling is wearing or using unusually fine costumes, instruments or other accoutrements.
+1	The character has three or more dots in Presence.
+2	The targets are an audience expecting and eager to see a speech or performance.
–1 to –2	The changeling is dressed in an unassuming fashion and without special props or accoutrements.

Court Contracts

These Contracts are derived from the pacts the Court founders made with their respective seasons. Each Court has two associated Contracts, the Fleeting Season Contract (associated with emotions) and the Eternal Season Contract (associated with more physical aspects of that season).

Court Contracts also have prerequisites that a character have the right Court's Mantle at a rating equal to one less than the rating of the clause. When a clause has a required Mantle rating, characters from other Courts may substitute the appropriate Court Goodwill rating at two dots higher. Anyone may learn a Court Contract's one-dot clauses — they are teasers, and they occasionally draw new members to a Court.

If a character's Mantle or Court Goodwill ratings change (most likely because the character has changed Courts), the character will find it harder to use his Contracts due to something similar to a no-compete clause. If a character's Mantle or Court Goodwill rating ever falls below the amount required for a particular clause, he must pay the difference in extra Glamour points every time he uses it. This extra cost cannot be circumvented in any way, even if the character is somehow able to use a catch or otherwise reduce the cost of the clause. In addition, the clause can no longer generate an exceptional success result even if the player rolls exceptionally well, the extra successes are still counted but the result is treated as equivalent to a regular success and receives no additional benefits.

Repeated use of a clause without meeting the Mantle or Court Goodwill prerequisites nettles the appropriate Court. If a character uses a clause that he is no longer "entitled to" within the sight of a member of the appropriate Court, the Court becomes wroth with him. He can no longer gain any bonus Social dice from appropriate Merits when dealing with members of that Court, until he has somehow regained their favor (usually by accomplishing some difficult task for the Court's benefit).

Fleeting Spring

The Contracts of Fleeting Spring allow changelings to manipulate and evoke feelings of desire within others.

Cupid's Eye (•)

This clause takes the first step in fulfilling a person's desires — or teasing him and stringing him along — by revealing what those desires are.

Prerequisites: None

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Wits + Wyrd vs. subject's Composure + Wyrd

Action: Contested

Catch: The character has kissed the subject within the past 24 hours, or the subject's object of desire is the character.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling receives false impressions, becoming absolutely sure that the subject's desire is something it is not.

Failure: The character cannot discern the subject's desires.

Success: The changeling learns one of the subject's desires. See the suggested modifiers list that follows for specific depths to which this power can plumb.

Exceptional Success: Exceptional success at Cupid's Eye provides the character with two desires of the targeted level, or the knowledge that there is only one desire at that level.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The character has a pledge with the subject.
—	The character discerns a desire currently in the forefront of the subject's mind.
–1	The character learns a desire not currently concerning the subject.
–1	The character learns a specific *kind* of desire (sexual, employment, etc.).
–2	The character discovers a desire the subject recognizes but generally keeps hidden.
–3	The character finds a desire the subject hides even from himself.

Growth of the Ivy (••)

Humans are fickle creatures, changing desires with the day or the season. This Contract allows the character to direct a subject's desires somewhat.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Spring) • *or* Court Goodwill (Spring) •••

Cost: 2 Glamour; add 1 Willpower for a supernatural subject

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Persuasion + Mantle (Spring) – subject's Resolve

Action: Contested; resistance is reflexive.

Catch: The character is acting to make the subject desire her or is doing so to resolve a pledge.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The target develops an active dislike for or aversion to the subject of the intended desire.

Failure: The subject's desires do not change.

Success: The subject's desires change in a manner of the character's choosing. See the suggested modifiers list that follows for guidelines on how a character may affect the target. The change lasts for one day per success rolled, though natural interaction may be able to prolong the desire beyond the point where the supernatural effect ends.

Exceptional Success: The change is instead permanent. The inflicted desires remain until the character chooses to release them, and they may then become natural.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The character changes a momentary desire.
—	The character changes a long-term desire.
—	The character changes a desire to something similar (e.g., lust for one man to lust for another).
–1	The character changes a desire concealed from others.
–1	The character changes a desire moderately (e.g., from wanting a cat to wanting a Nintendo).
–2	The character changes a desire the subject conceals from himself.
–2	The character changes a desire significantly (e.g., a desire for the Nobel Prize becomes the desire for a family).
–5	The character eliminates a desire or creates one from scratch.

Wyrd-Faced Stranger (•••)

The changeling appears as whomever the subject most desires to see at that moment.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Spring) •• *or* Court Goodwill (Spring) ••••

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Presence + Subterfuge + Mantle (Spring) vs. subject's Composure + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The character has recently offered food to the target and the target has accepted, or vice versa.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The subject instead sees the character as the person he would *least* like to see right now. The character is not aware of the failure.

Failure: The character appears as herself, and she is aware of the failed attempt.

Success: The subject recognizes the character as the person he would most like to see at the moment. The character has no say over who she becomes, she just knows that she is recognized as the desired individual. This lasts for one scene.

When using this power on a group of observers, the changeling chooses one as the subject but subtracts the highest Composure in the group from her roll. Success indicates that all observers see her as the same person.

Acting in ways foreign to the visage donned allows reflexive Wits + Composure rolls from people who know whomever the character is pretending to be. These rolls suffer a dice penalty equal to the successes on the character's activation roll but gain a +1 or +2 dice bonus for actions flagrantly out of character.

Note that the changeling does not always appear as someone the subject knows. The character may appear to be the dark, handsome stranger the target was secretly wishing would appear and whisk her away or the "federal agent" that the beat cop wants to take a murder off his hands. In such cases, the changeling's actual appearance becomes whatever the subject assumes the desired person would look like.

Exceptional Success: The deception lasts as long as the changeling would like to maintain it.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The character knows the subject's current desire(s).
—	The character approaches the subject "blind."

Pandora's Gift (••••)

The changeling creates an object that another person truly desires out of nothing but emotion, dreamstuff and random materials.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Spring) ••• *or* Court Goodwill (Spring) •••••

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Wits + Craft + Mantle (Spring)

Action: Extended (2+ successes, based on the complexity and size of the object; each roll represents 10 minutes of effort)

Catch: The subject has recently (within one week) given the character a gift. This gift comes with no strings attached, including any expectation of this gift.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character creates the desired object, but it is destined to fail its wielder at an appropriately dramatic moment — the gun jams at the last minute, the masterpiece painting discolors in the sun or the key breaks off in the lock.

Failure: The character makes no progress.

Success: The character makes progress toward creating the desired object. The number of required successes is equal to the object's Size + rough complexity, 1 being no moving parts and 10 being a high-precision pocket watch. Things created through this Contract last for the rest of the scene (or longer, based on modifiers) before returning to their original states. Until that time, they function perfectly as normal.

Exceptional Success: The character makes significant progress toward creating the object.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	Exceptionally appropriate materials
–1	Exceptionally inappropriate materials
–1	Object is exceptional (per point of equipment bonus above normal)
–1	One-hour duration
–2	One-day duration
–3	Two-day duration

Waking the Inner Faerie (•••••)

The changeling makes a target pursue his greatest desires, regardless of other considerations.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Spring) ••••

Cost: 3 Glamour + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Expression + Mantle (Spring) vs. Composure + Wyrd

Action: Contested and Extended (subject's Willpower in successes, one roll is made each turn); resistance is reflexive.

Catch: The subject of the Contract has voluntarily and without coercion confided his desire(s) to the character.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Contract backfires, affecting the character for one scene instead of the subject.

Failure: The character rolls fewer or equal successes than the subject. The character makes no headway.

Success: The character rolls more successes than the subject and makes headway. If the character reaches the required number of successes, the target feels the immediate impulse to try to achieve one of his greatest desires. He abandons other responsibilities and rational thinking to obey that urge. See the list of suggested modifiers below for guidelines on the effect's duration.

Exceptional Success: The character rolls many more successes than the subject and makes great headway.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The character knows what the target's greatest desires are.
+1	Five-minute duration
—	One scene's duration
–1	One-hour duration
–2	One-day duration
–3	Two-day duration

Eternal Spring

The Contracts of Eternal Spring provide powers of growth and rejuvenation to the changeling, just as Spring brings growth and rejuvenation to Earth.

Gift of Warm Breath (•)

The character's power rejuvenates a single living target, filling the target with energy and vigorous life.

Prerequisites: None

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Resolve + Survival + Mantle (Spring)

Action: Instant

Catch: The subject of the Contract has freely offered the changeling some form of sustenance since the last sunrise.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The subject suffers starvation and fatigue as if he had been without food and sleep for a number of days equal to the changeling's Wyrd, and without water for half that long. (See the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 175–176 and 179–180, for information on such things.) For things that can endure longer periods of deprivation without penalty, increase the base time until they are adversely affected (cacti, for example).

Failure: The character does not aid the subject.

Success: The Contract's subject gains energy. He becomes as healthy and alert as though he has just risen from a full night's rest and had a full breakfast. All fatigue penalties disappear, and any bashing damage or damage suffered from food or water deprivation is fully healed.

Exceptional Success: The subject gains +1 Stamina for the duration of the scene.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–1	Each point of fatigue penalty the subject suffers
–1	Each point of damage from deprivation the subject suffers

New Lover's Kiss (••)

The character calls a rain down from even a cloudless sky.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Spring) • *or* Court Goodwill (Spring) •••

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Survival + Mantle (Spring)

Action: Extended (5+ successes; each roll represents five minutes of imploring the sky)

Catch: A mortal human has commented, within the character's hearing and within the past hour, that it looks like rain.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The extended roll fails. It does not begin to rain, and the character cannot use this Contract again for 24 hours.

Failure: The character makes no progress toward her goal.

Success: The character progresses toward making it rain. The character chooses the number of successes required ahead of time. Five successes yields a light, pleasant rain. Every additional five successes increases the ferocity of the precipitation until, at 25 successes, the character summons a true deluge that could flood local lakes and rivers and wash away unsecured objects.

Exceptional Success: The character makes exceptional progress toward her goal.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	Extensive cloud cover
–1	Exceedingly clear day

Warmth of the Blood (•••)

The power of Spring is strong enough to heal injuries and soothe pain. This clause allows the changeling to channel the verdant might of Spring into a person's body, mending his wounds. This power works only on living creatures of flesh and blood.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Spring) •• *or* Court Goodwill (Spring) ••••

Cost: 1 Glamour + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Wits + Medicine + Mantle (Spring)

Action: Instant

Catch: The target has honestly professed a heartfelt and deep love, romantic or familial, for the changeling.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The clause's effects go astray. One point of damage is upgraded from bashing to lethal; if all wounds are lethal, one is upgraded to aggravated.

Failure: The clause takes no effect.

Success: Each success on the roll allows the changeling to downgrade one of the target's lethal wounds to a bashing wound, or to remove one bashing wound entirely. Thus, a changeling who rolled four successes could turn two lethal wounds into bashing wounds (two successes) and then remove both bashing wounds (two more).

Exceptional Success: The changeling may also use successes to convert aggravated wounds into lethal wounds. Each aggravated wound converted to lethal requires the expenditure of an additional point of Glamour.

Yesterday's Birth (••••)

The changeling endows a living object or creature with a season's worth of growth and maturing in an instant.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Spring) ••• *or* Court Goodwill (Spring) •••••

Cost: 1 Glamour or 3 Glamour + 1 Willpower dot

Dice Pool: Wyrd + Medicine

Action: Instant

Catch: The character spills two drops of blood on the target object and cups it in her hands.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The target object dies in an obvious manner. Seeds are immediately overcome with rot, and insects fall over with bloat. Birds or mammals of Size 2 or larger do not die, but are wracked with hunger.

Failure: The target object does not grow.

Success: The target object grows the same amount it would over a full season with optimal care. The object ends its growth as if it were in the height of Spring, so plants are flowering. Insects lay grubs in this time (if they are able), which also grow. Subjects of this Contract require a great deal of sustenance during or after the growth, equivalent to about three full days' worth. Plants in soil of only moderate fertility or less may drain their resources and soon begin to wither.

This clause can be used on human beings, but the changeling must pay three points of Glamour and one Willpower dot. This cost cannot be averted by invoking the clause's catch.

Exceptional Success: The target object experiences up to a full year's worth of growth (as much between one season and one year as the changeling desires). The full cycle of the year is visible and may provide fruit or other benefits.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	Object fits entirely in the palm of the hand (peach pit, mayfly grub).
—	Object is approximately Size 1.
–1	Each point by which the target object/creature is greater in Size than 1.
–1	Each additional object (affecting a group of seeds or a small group of ants).

Mother of All Deaths (•••••)

The character makes the region around her extraordinarily verdant and rouses it to fight on her behalf.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Spring) ••••

Cost: 3 Glamour + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Presence + Empathy + Mantle (Spring)

Action: Instant

Catch: A man bled to death on this soil within the past year.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The plants the changeling attempted to control turn on her. They make a single grappling attack on her each turn for the rest of the scene. See below for more details.

Failure: Nearby plants gain a few years' worth of new growth over the next few minutes, but most of it dries up within the next hour and the plants to not move abnormally.

Success: Plants around the changeling grow at an extraordinary rate, quickly enough for vines, roots and the like to grow around people and entangle them. Each turn, the character may designate one grapple attack on any creature or target within 10 feet of a plant in her sight in addition to her normal action. She may sacrifice her normal action to designate two grapple attacks, and if she does that she may also sacrifice her Defense for a third. Plant grapple at-

tacks use a dice pool of the changeling's Wyrd + 1–3 equipment bonus for the plant (vines are excellent, branches less so). This lasts a number of turns equal to the changeling's Wyrd rating. Over the next hour, all but one year's worth of the new growth dies off.

Exceptional Success: The plants fight for the character for the rest of the scene, and all new growth remains afterward.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	Bountiful plant life (rainforest)
—	Moderate plant life (rural area)
–1	Weak plant life (city trees)
–1	Controlled plant life (city park)
–3	Sparse plant life (city street with occasional fenced-in trees)

Fleeting Summer

The Contracts of Fleeting Summer give a changeling the ability to influence the wrath of those around him.

Baleful Sense (•)

The character senses the greatest source of wrath nearby.

Prerequisites: None

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Wits + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The character is angry when he invokes this clause.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character becomes enraged, and the clause pinpoints only him.

Failure: The character cannot locate wrath in his vicinity.

Success: The character becomes aware of the greatest concentration of wrath (in any form) within a mile radius. He knows the direction and approximate distance, and approximately how many people are involved.

Exceptional Success: The character also learns the cause of the anger and approximately how many people are intimately involved.

Goblin's Malignance (••)

The character redirects the subject's wrath onto a new target, most likely himself.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Summer) • *or* Court Goodwill (Summer) •••

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Persuasion + Mantle (Summer) vs. Composure + Wyrd

Action: Contested

Catch: The current victim of the subject's wrath owes the character a favor, or the subject has red hair.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The subject's anger redoubles, ensuring that she will focus on her victim for the rest of the scene. No attempt to change her focus works for that length of time.

Failure: The character fails to redirect the subject's wrath.

Success: The character redirects the subject's wrath onto a target of the character's choice. The target must be present, and the subject must be aware of the target. As an exception, the character may always make himself the target of the subject's wrath, which explicitly makes the subject aware of the character.

Exceptional Success: Subjects of this clause rationalize the change of focus and anger to themselves after the fact. ("He was on her side," "I knew he was talking trash about me," etc.)

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+3	The subject redirects anger *onto* the character.
–1	The subject has no reason to be angry at new target.
–2	The subject likes or is loyal to new target.
–3	The subject redirects anger *off* the character.

Friendless Tongue (•••)

The character incites a person to uncontrollable wrath through innocent-seeming conversation.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Summer) •• *or* Court Goodwill (Summer) ••••

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Subterfuge + Mantle (Summer) vs. Composure + Wyrd

Action: Extended (successes required equal to the subject's Willpower; each roll represents one minute of conversation with the subject); resistance is reflexive.

Catch: The clause's subject wears a ring on the left hand.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The attempt fails. The subject realizes what the changeling is trying to do and reacts naturally.

Failure: The character garners no successes.

Success: The character gains successes. If his total number of successes equals or exceeds the subject's Willpower, the subject becomes intensely incensed at whomever is the focus of his attention. This will often be the changeling, but in a group, the character's comments may rouse anger at someone else principal in the discussion, or the subject's attention could be on an old flame at the bar even while she listens to the character talk.

Exceptional Success: The character is at +2 dice bonus when using other Fleeting Summer clauses on the subject for the rest of the scene, and +1 die bonus when using Friendless Tongue on the subject for the rest of the month.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The subject is easily roused to anger.
+1	The subject has "issues" with her current focus.
–1	The subject is extremely unlikely to become angry at her current focus under normal circumstances.

Sundown Eyes (••••)

The character drains wrath from those near him, calming even the most furious combatants.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Summer) ••• *or* Court Goodwill (Summer) •••••

Cost: 3 Glamour

Dice Pool: Presence + Socialize + Mantle (Summer) – subjects' highest Composure

Action: Instant

Catch: The character is suffering wound penalties and has taken at least two points of lethal damage.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The attempt to calm the situation backfires. Each of the character's opponents gain a +1 die bonus to attack the character on their next actions.

Failure: The attempt fails.

Success: The character drains the wrath from the people nearby. Combat ceases and does not begin again for at least a number of turns equal to the character's Wyrd. Add one die to attempts to make peace (or prevent a return to open combat) per success on the roll. The character may not use this Contract again for the rest of the scene.

Exceptional Success: Combat ends. Even if the people involved cannot resolve their differences, they refuse to use violent means of interacting with one another for the rest of the scene. The character may not use this Contract again for the rest of the scene.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	A significant fraction of combatants fight reluctantly.
—	Two people are targeted.
–1	Four people are targeted.
–2	Eight people are targeted.
–3	Twelve people are targeted.
–4	Twenty people are targeted.

The Flames of Summer (•••••)

The character drives his anger into the realm of rage, making it impossible to disturb and lending extra strength to his wrath.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Summer) ••••

Cost: 2 Glamour + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Stamina + Animal Ken + Mantle (Summer)

Action: Instant

Catch: The sun is within five minutes of its zenith, and the character has called out a formal challenge to an opponent.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The attempt to inflame the character's anger fails, and the character may not try again for a full week.

Failure: The attempt fails.

Success: The attempt succeeds. The character becomes implacable in his anger, incapable of being swayed by reason or calmed down for the rest of the scene. He attacks the targets of his wrath without hesitation or mercy and may not take rational or thoughtful actions. He adds a +2 dice bonus to all Physical rolls for the duration. The character also ignores all wound penalties for the duration and need not roll Stamina to remain conscious when his last wound box is marked with bashing damage.

Exceptional Success: The bonus to Physical rolls rises to +4.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The character is expected to fight.
+1	The character is up against losing odds.
–1	The character's opponent is (perceived as) inferior.

Eternal Summer

These Contracts provide changelings with physical manifestations of Summer, including great heat and bright sun.

Son of the Hearth (•)

The character is comfortable in all temperatures, and may even heat a chamber with his power.

Prerequisites: None

Cost: 1 Glamour, or 1 Glamour + 1 Willpower (see below)

Dice Pool: Wyrd + Survival

Action: Instant

Catch: The character spits on a fading ember or spark.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Rather than remaining comfortably warm, the character treats his surroundings as very hot or very cold (whichever is more appropriate) and may not activate this Contract again. See the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 181, for rules on temperature extremes.

Failure: The character fails to keep out the cold or conquer the heat.

Success: The character heats himself or expels excess heat to avoid growing too hot. He remains at a personally comfortable temperature. If he spends a point of Willpower, he can keep an entire room at the same temperature (and thus avail his companions of the same warmth). The effects last for one hour.

Exceptional Success: The effects last for a full day. With the point of Willpower, the area around the character remains comfortably warm no matter what (i.e., heated air will not be lost when doors are opened).

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–1	Every 20 degrees below zero or above 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
–1	The space to be heated is Size 10.
–2	The space to be heated is Size 20.

Ulf's Heart (••)

The character shines the light of high Summer on his surroundings.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Summer) • *or* Court Goodwill (Summer) •••

Cost: 1 or 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Strength + Occult + Mantle (Summer)

Action: Instant

Catch: It is within five minutes of midnight.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character becomes unable to see for five minutes.

Failure: No light appears.

Success: The character shines with a light as bright as the Summer noonday sun. The light illuminates an area 200 yards around the character and does not hinder his vision. It *does* significantly hinder any attempts at stealth the character may make. This is not true sunlight and cannot harm creatures susceptible to light (such as vampires), but it might frighten them. The light remains for the rest of the scene, but the character may spend two points of Glamour at activation to instead summon the light for a full hour.

Exceptional Success: The character may also dim the light at will for the Contract's duration, allowing at least the possibility of stealth.

Noonday Grasp (•••)

The character borrows some of Summer's immense strength to increase his own.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Summer) •• *or* Court Goodwill (Summer) ••••

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Stamina + Brawl + Mantle (Summer)

Action: Instant

Catch: The character eats a chunk of naturally formed ice.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character loses a dot of Strength for the rest of the scene.

Failure: The character fails to bolster his Strength.

Success: The character successfully increases his Strength by one point, plus one point for every three successes after the first (to a maximum of three points). Note that increased Strength may change other values, such as Speed. The increase lasts for the rest of the scene.

Exceptional Success: The character also increases his Stamina by one for the rest of the scene.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The sun is in the sky and clearly visible.
–1	It is after dark.

Solstice Revelation (••••)

Channeling the light of the sun at its most intense, the changeling reveals all that is hidden around him. Darkness and illusion can hide nothing from his gaze.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Summer) ••• *or* Court Goodwill (Summer) •••••

Cost: 3 Glamour

Dice Pool: Presence + Occult + Mantle (Summer)

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling is using the power within five minutes of noon.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The improperly channeled energy of Summer sears the changeling rather than revealing what's hidden. The changeling takes one point of bashing damage, and receives a –2 dice penalty to any rolls involving vision for the remainder of the scene.

Failure: The power of the sun eludes the changeling.

Success: The character floods the area with light, up to a radius of 100 feet. Anywhere the light shines, the ability to hide or disguise oneself is reduced to a chance roll, and previously hidden or disguised characters must make a chance roll or lose their obfuscations. Those attempting to hide or disguise themselves with supernatural powers must make a Stealth + Wyrd roll (substituting Blood Potency, Primal Urge or similar Traits, if possessed) at –5 or lose the protection of those powers as well. Even the Mask flickers and weakens; anyone who could not normally see through the Mask may make a standard perception test to see the fae miens of any fae or tokens they look at. The light lasts for one turn per success, after which any characters may attempt to conceal themselves once more.

Exceptional Success: The revelatory light lasts for two turns per success, and the changeling may choose to dismiss it at will.

The Lord's Dread Gaze (•••••)

Channeling the destructive power of the relentless Summer sun, the changeling sears his enemies with sunlight.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Summer) ••••

Cost: 3 Glamour (+ 1 Willpower, optional)

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Athletics + Mantle (Summer) – subject's Defense

Action: Instant

Catch: The character's target is wearing or touching elemental gold.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character's blazing strike misses his target, and the character's lack of control causes him to strike something he had hoped not to harm.

Failure: The beam of sunlight misses its target but fades to harmlessness without doing other damage.

Success: A sunbeam heavy with potent Glamour lashes out from the changeling to strike his foe. It inflicts lethal points of damage equal to successes on the activation roll. If the changeling spends one point of Willpower, the damage is aggravated. Against creatures susceptible to sunlight, this attack may have additional affects (inflicting aggravated or additional damage, for example). The Ranges for this attack are 10/30/50 and inflict penalties as normal.

Exceptional Success: No special benefits other than a great deal of damage.

Fleeting Autumn

These Contracts provide the changelings who wield them power over aspects of fear.

Witches' Intuition (•)

The character dredges knowledge of one fear from the subject's mind or subconscious.

Prerequisites: None

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Wits + Wyrd – subject's Composure

Action: Instant

Catch: The Contract's subject does not know the character's name.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character fails to discern one of the subject's fears. Worse, the next time the character speaks to the subject, the character will accidentally let the subject know one of hers.

Failure: The character learns no fears.

Success: The character acquires knowledge of one of the subject's fears. See the list of suggested modifiers below for guidelines on what fear the character learns.

Exceptional Success: The character learns two fears of the targeted level, if there are two such fears to be had.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The character has a pledge with the target.
—	The character discerns a fear currently in the forefront of the target's mind.
–1	The character learns a fear not currently concerning the target.
–1	The character learns a specific *kind* of fear (i.e., Halloween monsters, school-related, etc.).
–2	The character discovers a fear the target recognizes but generally keeps hidden.
–3	The character finds a fear the target hides even from herself.

Tale of the Baba Yaga (••)

Through the course of conversation or oratory, the character makes a concept as supernaturally frightening as she can, instilling individuals or entire crowds with an unnatural fear of that thing.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Autumn) • *or* Court Goodwill (Autumn) •••

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Intimidation + Mantle (Autumn) – subjects' highest Composure

Action: Extended (one success per person to scare; each roll represents five minutes of fright-mongering)

Catch: The unnatural fear the character evokes is based upon a myth, urban legend or actual threat with which all subjects of the Contract are familiar.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character does not influence her subjects as desired. Instead, they find her silly, and she suffers a –1 die penalty to all Social rolls to influence them for the rest of the scene or night (whichever is longer).

Failure: The character fails to induce supernatural fear.

Success: The subjects develop a temporary fear of the intended topic. Without further stimulus, this only manifests as some jittery conversation, on-edge whispers and a few people getting a thrill from the story. Should they be faced with a believable manifestation of that fear, this Contract evokes a supernaturally strong fear in all affected individuals. They are afflicted with mind-numbing terror, fleeing from the built-up monster for one turn per success. If they cannot flee, they cower (but are not denied Defense).

Exceptional Success: The character's seed bears a rich harvest. Add the character's Wyrd rating to the number of turns the subjects must flee or cower.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	Spooky ambiance (graveyard, skeletal orchard)
–1	Every five people in crowd/at party *not* subject to the Contract
–1	Comfortable, safe ambiance (lit dining hall, kindly dean's office)

Heart of the Antlion (•••)

The character uses her Contract with Autumn to steel herself against all manner of fear, natural or supernatural.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Autumn) •• *or* Court Goodwill (Autumn) ••••

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Resolve + Investigation + Mantle (Autumn)

Action: Instant

Catch: The character consumes a spider or other vermin that has literally been scared to death.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character becomes more susceptible to fear. Add two dice to any external attempts to scare her until the next sunrise.

Failure: The character gains no special fortitude.

Success: The character becomes strong against fear. Mundane attempts to frighten, scare or intimidate her automatically fail. Supernatural attempts to frighten her suffer a penalty equal to the number of successes scored on her roll. This lasts the rest of the scene.

Exceptional Success: The protection lasts until the next sunrise.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The character invokes the clause in a supportive environment (i.e., surrounded by friends, in a comfortable sanctum or under the reassuring sun).
–1 to –3	The character invokes the clause when she is already nervous (i.e., surrounded by zombies, in a vampire's haven or lost in a misty graveyard at night).

Scent of the Harvest (••••)

The character reassures friends and allies, protecting them against fear just as she protects herself.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Autumn) ••• *or* Court Goodwill (Autumn) •••••

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Presence + Expression + Mantle (Autumn) (– subject's Resolve for any who resist)

Action: Extended (one success per subject; each roll represents one minute of support)

Catch: Two of the subjects' greatest fears are each other.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The attempt to bolster the character's allies fails. The character cannot try again until the next sunrise.

Failure: The character makes no progress.

Success: The character makes progress. If she reaches the required number of successes, she completes the effort. Affected allies are completely immune to mundane efforts to scare them, and supernatural efforts suffer a dice penalty equal to the dice penalty the character took invoking the Contract. This lasts the rest of the scene.

Exceptional Success: The protection lasts until the next sunrise.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The character's allies are in a supportive environment (i.e., surrounded by friends, in a comfortable sanctum or under the reassuring sun).
–1	Each point of dice penalty to rolls that would cause supernatural fear (to a maximum of the character's Wyrd).
–1 to –3	The character's allies are already nervous (i.e., surrounded by zombies, in a vampire's haven or lost in a misty graveyard at night).

Mien of the Baba Yaga (•••••)

The character takes on the aspect of one of her subject's great fears.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Autumn) ••••

Cost: 3 Glamour + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Wits + Empathy + Mantle (Autumn)

Action: Instant

Catch: One of the subject's great fears is actually the character.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character temporarily sees the subject as one of the character's greatest fears. She suffers one point of bashing damage.

Failure: The character fails to become her subject's nightmare.

Success: The changeling, to all observers, takes on the aspect of one of the subject's great fears. The character cannot see what this is without a reflective surface. The subject of the Contract suffers points of bashing damage out of fear equal to the successes rolled, and may only flee or cower in fear for a like number of turns. He is not denied his Defense. This visage may frighten others as well, but holds no special power over them. (Except that it might, if used with Tale of the Baba Yaga, above.)

Exceptional Success: The subject of this Contract loses a point of Willpower and loses access to his Defense until the end of the next turn.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The character has been building up the subject's fear.
+1	The locale has appropriate ambiance (e.g., abandoned school for the fear of a teacher).
–1	Someone has been bolstering the subject against this fear.
–1	The locale is unsupportive of the fear's appearance (e.g., Freddy Krueger at a sunny picnic).

Eternal Autumn

Changelings who use the Eternal Autumn Contracts affect harvests, autumnal natures and weather.

Last Breath Isaac (•)

The character brings a plant to its ripest point of the year, ready for harvest. Changelings often use this clause to gather food when necessary, but some also find it a way to gather more baneful fruits such as mistletoe berries.

Prerequisites: None

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The plant or tree is unclaimed, or the changeling has permission to harvest from it (to any degree).

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The plant withers a little and will bear no harvest for the next year and a day.

Failure: The character fails to make the plant bear fruit.

Success: Over the next minute, the plant bears a ripe harvest. A pumpkin plant grows a few plump pumpkins, an apple branch grows heavy with juicy apples and so on. This Contract can only affect parts of the plant around which the character can put her hand. She can affect the branch of an apple tree by putting her hand around it (and the entire branch from that point out is affected), but not the whole tree. Likewise, she could only target some branches of a blueberry bush unless she could circle her hand around its very base.

Exceptional Success: The entire plant is affected, even when the character could only target a portion.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	Within a month (either way) of the plant's natural harvest season
–1	The month opposite the plant's natural harvest season

Withering Glare (••)

The character can wither any plant to any degree with a simple glance. Her gaze will also sicken animals that cross her glare.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Autumn) • *or* Court Goodwill (Autumn) •••

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Presence + Science + Mantle (Autumn)

Action: Instant

Catch: The plant bears the changeling's name (or common moniker) on it somewhere, carved into the bark or written on a tag.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character fails to harm the target and suffers one point of bashing damage.

Failure: The character fails to affect the target.

Success: The character makes the plant progress toward Winter or toward death as she desires, but she cannot make the plant grow more Spring-like or healthier. She may make the plant instantly shed its leaves or retract into a bulb as though it were the deepest Winter, or make it shed its needles, leaves or petals and completely dry up into a state of near-death. Plants forced into the Winter season remain alive and prove it with the advent of true Spring, but only the most skilled gardener could bring a plant back from near-death.

If this clause is used against an animal, including a human being or even a supernatural entity, this clause inflicts one point of bashing damage for every success. Armor does not protect against the glare, though Defense still applies.

Exceptional Success: The character can completely kill a plant. She may also choose to make the plant act as though it were Winter for a full year and a day, recovering only when Spring comes after that time.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	Plant is not overly robust or well cared for.
–1	Plant is remarkably robust and well cared for.

Brother to the Ague (•••)

The life of the world wanes with the advent of Autumn. This clause inflicts the same fate on a changeling's enemy.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Autumn) •• *or* Court Goodwill (Autumn) ••••

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Medicine + Mantle (Autumn) – subject's Stamina

Action: Instant

Catch: The character can name two diseases that the subject has suffered (or is suffering) and one that the subject fears.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Rather than enervating an opponent, the character loses energy herself. She suffers a –1 die penalty to all dice pools as if she had stayed awake for 30 hours straight and suffers one point of bashing damage as if she had been deprived of water for several days. (See the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 175–176 and pp. 179–180, for more information on water and sleep deprivation.)

Failure: The character fails to weary the subject.

Success: The subject takes one point of bashing damage per success, as from dehydration. In addition,

he suffers a –1 die fatigue penalty to all dice pools for every two points of the character's Wyrd (rounded up). The subject actually becomes tired, so his fatigue penalties only disappear after sleep. The subject does not actually become severely dehydrated, so his bashing wounds heal naturally.

Exceptional Success: The subject actually *does* become dehydrated, so points of bashing damage inflicted through this Contract do not heal until the subject has rehydrated.

Riding the Falling Leaves (••••)

The changeling becomes a temporary avatar of Autumn, transforming into a colorful spray of dry Autumn leaves. This ability is typically invoked to move inconspicuously or evade harm.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Autumn) ••• *or* Court Goodwill (Autumn) •••••

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Survival + Mantle (Autumn)

Action: Instant

Catch: The character catches a naturally falling leaf at the moment of the clause's activation.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling's innards temporarily transform into leaves, but not the entirety of her body. She takes two points of bashing damage from the shock.

Failure: The transformation does not take place.

Success: The changeling's body transforms into a spray of dry Autumn leaves. Despite the fragmented physicality of this form, the changeling is still a single entity, and the leaves are highly resistant to being separated or scattered. These leaves are also resistant to damage, though the changeling can still be injured in this form. While in this form, she receives an additional six Defense; this does not apply to attacks that could conceivably damage a great many falling leaves at once, such as fire or being sucked into a large fan. The character may fly in this form at –3 Speed, gaining altitude on unseen thermals. She may also pass through openings too small to admit her ordinary form. However, while riding the leaf-form, the character cannot manipulate physical objects or cause any damage.

Exceptional Success: The character's Defense bonus rises to eight, and she may fly at her full Speed.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–1	Spring
+1	Winter or Autumn

Tears of Autumn (•••••)

The character calls a hailstorm from the sky, which can be light enough to just keep people off the streets or heavy enough to inflict major damage.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Autumn) ••••

Cost: 3 Glamour

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Occult + Mantle (Autumn)

Action: Extended (5+ successes; each roll represents 10 minutes of commanding the sky)

Catch: The character holds a key encased in ice that finishes thawing at the start of the ritual.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The attempt to command the weather fails. A localized hailstorm of the desired strength forms, just large enough to hover overhead of the changeling and drop hailstones on only her. This lasts for one full hour, and time spent indoors (or otherwise safe) does not count.

Failure: The character makes no progress.

Success: The character makes some progress. If she accumulates successes equal to or greater than the required number, the hailstorm begins anywhere within her line of sight. Five successes summons a minor hailstorm with stones that might sting but do no harm. For every 10 additional successes required, the character causes the hailstones to do one point of bashing damage to anything caught in them each turn, to a maximum of three points of bashing damage. The hailstorm lasts for a number of minutes equal to the changeling's Wyrd, and covers an area equal to 100 yards radius per point of Wyrd.

Exceptional Success: The character makes excellent progress.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	Already cloudy and cold
–1	Not cloudy at all
–1	Completely unseasonal

Fleeting Winter

The Fleeting Winter Contracts allow a changeling to manipulate the signature emotion of the Court: sorrow.

The Dragon Knows (•)

The character can tell why a person is sorrowful, guessing her regrets with but a glance.

Prerequisites: None

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Wyrd + Empathy – subject's Composure

Action: Instant

Catch: The character looks into the subject's eyes for a moment.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character cannot figure out why the subject is sad, but it afflicts the character as well. His mood lasts the rest of the scene and inflicts a –1 die penalty on his Social dice pools.

Failure: The character fails to discover the subject's regrets.

Success: The character discovers the root of the subject's sorrow. This Clause reveals only the cause of the sorrow the subject feels *now*, and returns no result at all (even if successfully used) if the subject is not currently experiencing sorrow (or sadness or another similar emotion).

Exceptional Success: If the subject is not currently sad but was within the last hour, the character finds out the cause of *that* and why it ended.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The emotion is evident.
–1	The subject is hard to see.

Slipknot Dreams (••)

The changeling forces a person to forget about her sorrows just long enough to deal with the matters at hand.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Winter) • *or* Court Goodwill (Winter) •••

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Subterfuge + Mantle (Winter) – subject's Resolve

Action: Instant

Catch: The subject has accepted something from the character within the past 24 hours.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The subject becomes even more sad, making it even more difficult to deal with her.

Failure: The character fails to put off the subject's sorrows.

Success: The subject completely forgets why she feels sad, or even that she was sad just a moment ago. She acts as though everything were perfectly all right for a number of minutes equal to the successes rolled.

Exceptional Success: The character *may*, if he so desires, cause the subject to remain blissfully ignorant for a full hour.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	Minor or distant sorrow (goldfish died, weeping over the state of the world)
–2	Deeply personal tragedy (entire branch of the family dead in accident)

Faces in the Water (•••)

The subject remembers a sad memory from her past and dwells on it, filling herself with sorrow.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Winter) •• *or* Court Goodwill (Winter) ••••

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Investigation + Mantle (Winter) – subject's Composure

Action: Instant

Catch: The subject is carrying a photograph (or other image) of an older relative or ancestor on her person.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The attempt fails, and the subject is immune to the character's Fleeting Winter Contracts for one full day.

Failure: The subject remains unaffected.

Success: The subject recalls one sad or painful memory, and it causes her sorrow. The character has no influence over what memory surfaces. The subject's Social rolls suffer a dice penalty equal to half the number of the character's successes; the same penalty is applied to people attempting to influence the subject. The recollection and sorrow last for one scene.

Exceptional Success: The character may also choose to trigger another such event (which may or may not be a different memory) at a set time within the next 24 hours.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The subject has a doleful personality.
–1	The subject is naturally upbeat.
–1	Something good *just* happened to the subject.
–3	The subject has no genuinely sad memories (a truly innocent child, for instance).

Fallow Fields, Empty Harvest (••••)

The character eliminates a person's ability to experience positive emotions for a significant period of time.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Winter) ••• *or* Court Goodwill (Winter) •••••

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Intimidation + Mantle (Winter) vs. Composure + Wyrd

Action: Contested; resistance is reflexive.

Catch: The character has made the subject happy (or happier) within the last 10 minutes.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The subject remains capable of positive emotions and becomes immune to the character's Fleeting Winter Contracts for one full day.

Failure: The character does not affect the subject.

Success: The subject loses all capability to experience positive emotions such as joy, happiness and variations thereon for one day per success rolled. She becomes unable to regain Willpower by acting on her Virtues or Vices, and suffers a –2 dice penalty to all Social rolls.

Exceptional Success: The subject's positive emotions remain deadened until the changeling releases them.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The subject is already sad.
–1	The subject is experiencing positive emotions currently.
–2	The subject's positive emotions are notably strong.

Every Sorrow a Jewel (•••••)

The character magnifies the emotions of a person already feeling sorrowful to such extremes that the subject becomes incapable of taking any action.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Winter) ••••

Cost: 3 Glamour + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Persuasion + Mantle (Winter) vs. Composure + Wyrd

Action: Contested; resistance is reflexive.

Catch: The subject has tasted one of the changeling's tears.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The subject remains only moderately sad, but the character is momentarily overcome with great sadness. He loses his Defense until his next action.

Failure: The character fails to inflate the subject's emotions.

Success: The subject's sorrow grows to unmanageable proportions. She can do nothing beyond curl up and feel terrible for a number of turns equal to the successes rolled. The subject may take no actions and may not move but retains her Defense. This Contract affects only subjects already feeling sorrow.

Exceptional Success: The subject's emotion so overwhelms her that she loses her Defense for the Contract's duration.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+2	The subject's sorrow is already great.
+1	The subject's sorrow is strong.
–1	The subject's sorrow is quite minor.

Eternal Winter

Changelings who wield the Eternal Winter Contracts control the cold strength of the season itself.

Jack's Breath (•)

The character cools a room considerably, or an area roughly the size of a room.

Prerequisites: None

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Wyrd + Survival

Action: Instant

Catch: The character hears someone shiver or tastes someone's sweat.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The room grows warmer instead of colder.

Failure: The character fails to cool the room.

Success: The room cools by a degree decided by the character before the dice roll. See the list of suggested modifiers below for guidelines on how far a character can reduce the temperature, and in how large a room. The cooling lasts for one scene before the room gradually returns to normal temperature.

Exceptional Success: The cooling lasts as long as the character desires before returning to normal.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–1	Every 20 degrees Fahrenheit of cooling.
–1	The room is Size 20.
–2	The room is Size 40.

Touch of Winter (••)

Liquid freezes with just a caress of the changeling's fingertips.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Winter) • *or* Court Goodwill (Winter) •••

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Science + Mantle (Winter)

Action: Instant

Catch: The character first spells out a name or idea he hates with the liquid on a dry surface.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character's hand grows very cold, and the character suffers a point of bashing damage from early frostbite.

Failure: The character fails to freeze the liquid.

Success: The liquid freezes over. The liquid has an effective Strength (for purposes of supporting people on a frozen pond, for example) equal to the number of successes rolled. (See the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 47, for Strength and weight information.) This Strength is effective over a few square feet, not the entire surface, so a group can walk across the frozen pond as long as they give each

other distance. A character may distribute his weight (cutting it approximately in half) by lying down on the frozen surface. See the list of suggested modifiers for guidelines on the area this Contract freezes. The liquid's surface remains frozen until it melts naturally.

Exceptional Success: The character may instantly return the frozen liquid to its original liquid form, as long as he chooses to do so within the same scene.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	Liquid is already near its freezing point
—	The area of a bathtub
–1	The area of a driveway
–2	The area of a swimming pool
–3	The area of a parking lot

Riding the Devil's Jawbone (•••)

The character surrounds himself with an aura so cold that it can disable his enemies.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Winter) •• *or* Court Goodwill (Winter) ••••

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Stealth + Mantle (Winter)

Action: Instant

Catch: There is a bell ringing within 20 feet of the character.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character grows instantaneously cold himself, suffering two points of bashing damage.

Failure: The character fails to activate the clause.

Success: The character blankets everything within 20 feet under a cloak of intense cold. Anyone other than the character within that field, which moves with him, suffers a –1 die penalty to all actions while in the freezing aura. Multiple changelings invoking this clause do not increase the level of cold, but the penalty may increase with further exposure. For every five turns someone spends inside the aura (cumulative), that penalty increases by one. Penalties immediately disappear when the aura fades or when a person steps outside the aura, but return at full current strength if the person is again caught inside it. The field lasts for a number of minutes equal to successes on the roll, or until the changeling falls unconscious or dies.

Exceptional Success: The field lasts the entire scene, or until the changeling falls unconscious or dies.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+2	Already quite cold
+1	Already chilly
–1	Warm day
–2	Heat wave

Fallen from the Timbers (••••)

The character calls a great shaft of cold air and partially frozen particles to materialize above an enemy and fall upon her.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Winter) ••• *or* Court Goodwill (Winter) •••••

Cost: 3 Glamour

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Athletics + Mantle (Winter) – subject's Defense

Action: Instant

Catch: The Contract's target wears silver jewelry that has religious meaning for her.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: A small wind of sharp ice particles cuts the character and causes one point of lethal damage.

Failure: The character fails to materialize his attack.

Success: The blast of cold and ice inflicts points of lethal damage equal to the successes on the roll. The target of the attack also suffers a –1 die penalty to all actions for the rest of the scene due to the extreme chill.

Exceptional Success: The attack inflicts a great deal of damage. The penalty from cold escalates to –2.

Witch's Paradise (•••••)

The changeling summons a lasting snowstorm over an extended area.

Prerequisites: Mantle (Winter) ••••

Cost: 3 Glamour + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Presence + Occult + Mantle (Winter)

Action: Extended (5+ successes; each roll represents five minutes of exhorting the sky)

Catch: The moon is in the sky, and the character can hear a wolf howling.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The attempt fails. The weather lightens and gets a little warmer.

Failure: The character makes no headway.

Success: The character makes some headway. If he accumulates the required number of successes, the snowstorm begins. Five required successes summons light flurries over a one-mile radius for one hour. Each additional five successes drops the temperature by 10 degrees Fahrenheit, increases the wind strength by five miles per hour, doubles the storm's radius or increases the duration by one hour.

Exceptional Success: The character makes great headway.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+2	Already lightly snowing
+1	Already cloudy
–1	Warm out
–2	Completely unseasonal

Goblin Contracts

Goblin Contracts are some of the shady goods that circulate among the underbelly of fae society. All are easy to learn and cost little Glamour. They are inexpensive because they are also intrinsically flawed. All Goblin Contracts come with a price — something harmful or problematic that happens to the changeling after the Contract is used. No known Contracts or other powers allow the changeling to escape paying this price. Dramatic failures rolled when performing Goblin Contracts usually result in the character paying the price without receiving any benefit. Unlike other Contracts, Goblin Contracts are not chained and can be bought in any order. A changeling can purchase a three-dot Goblin Contract without knowing any one- or two-dot Goblin Contracts. They also cost fewer experience points to purchase (see p. 77). However, a beginning character may purchase only one-dot Goblin Contracts during character creation.

Trading Luck for Fate (•)

The character knows the result of some random or otherwise impossible-to-determine event. In return, she experiences some sort of bad luck within the next several hours. The character cannot use this Contract again until this bad luck occurs.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Wits + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: Using this Contract to win at gambling.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling pays the Contract's price but gains no benefit.

Failure: The character experiences neither good nor bad luck.

Success: The caster knows the outcome of something random or similarly unknowable in her immediately vicinity, such as which of four streets the people she is pursuing fled down or which roll of scratch-tickets to buy to win between $10 and $25. The Contract cannot answer open questions (such as "Where can I find my target?"), only questions that select one of several obvious possibilities. This Contract cannot cause anything otherwise impossible to occur and cannot predict anything with odds of less than one in 100. During the next day, the changeling will experience a single incidence of bad luck — being cut off by a clumsy pedestrian while chasing someone, having an expensive suit of clothing ruined by being splashed by a passing car or having a cell phone run out of power at an inopportune time. This bad luck is never life threatening, merely distressing and inconvenient. At worst, an incident of bad luck will do two or three points of bashing damage to the character.

Exceptional Success: The character makes an unusually accurate guess, winning $50 at the lottery, guessing the next two turns that someone fleeing will make.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	Taking a few minutes to carefully examine the situation
–1	Making an instant guess

Shooter's Bargain (•)

The changeling can bless a ranged weapon such as a bow, crossbow or gun so that two of the next three shots fired will be exceptionally accurate. However, one of these three (chosen by the Storyteller and unknown to the player or character) will automatically be a chance roll.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The character is fighting a duel or some other combat that has been agreed upon in advance by both sides.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling pays the Contract's price but gains no benefit.

Failure: The blessing fails, and the weapon is unaffected.

Success: The character blesses a specific weapon so that two of the next three shots it makes hit with unusual accuracy. Each success reduces one die of ranged combat penalties normally due to the target's distance (range penalties), position (such as being prone), size (for very small targets) or environmental factors such as darkness, snow, cover penalties or anything else that doesn't directly work directly upon the changeling. However, one of the next three shots is cursed and will instead automatically be a chance roll. Neither the blessings nor the curse affects shots that are not made with the intent of hitting the target or where the gun fires blanks.

Exceptional Success: Beyond greatly reducing the penalties to ranged attacks, no further bonus is gained.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The character is using a weapon she has owned for at least a month that serves as her primary ranged weapon.
–1	The character is using a weapon she has never used before.

Diviner's Madness (••)

The changeling gains an accurate image of the past or the future of some person or place. Afterwards, she temporarily goes somewhat mad. All madness lasts for one day. At the end of this time, the changeling also forgets the contents of the divination.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Wits + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: Divining the past or the future of someone the changeling is in love with.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling gains one of the severe derangements listed below for one day.

Failure: The changeling experiences no visions or madness.

Success: The changeling can have a vision of the past or the future. She first declares a target, a person, place or object that she has visited, met or touched at least once. She can make herself the target. If she views the past, she can examine the target's past with flawless clarity, seeing anything that has occurred. Each success allows the changeling to view up to one turn of time in that place in real time, beginning with the moment declared when the Contract was performed. Alternately, the character can ask a simple question about the target's future and gain a general answer. Examples of proper questions include: "What time will Joseph Klein arrive home tonight" or "Will the North Park Strangler kill someone tonight?" (given a brief prior encounter with the Strangler). Improper questions get incoherent answers. Each success grants the changeling an answer to one question about the target's future. Additional successes allow follow-up questions, allowing the changeling to get more specific details, such as asking if Joseph Klein will stop on his way home tonight or the exact time or location of the Strangler's next murder.

Performing this divination also causes temporary madness. If the changeling rolls three or fewer successes, she gains one of the following severe derangements: Megalomania, Multiple Personality, Paranoia or Schizophrenia. With four or more successes, she gains one of the following mild derangements: Narcissism, Irrationality, Suspicion or Vocalization. Regardless of successes rolled, this madness lasts for one full day.

Exceptional Success: Beyond the advantages gained by rolling multiple successes, no special bonus is gained.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The subject of the divination is present.
–1	The changeling knows the target moderately well (such as a co-worker), or has visited him regularly.
–2	The changeling has encountered the person, place or object several times.
–4	The changeling has only encountered the target once.

Fair Entrance (••)

This Contract allows the changeling to open any door as easily as the owner, instantly disarming all alarm systems and locks. However, by using this Contract, the character ensures she will be left similarly vulnerable. The next time someone with hostile or malevolent intent tries a lock on a dwelling or vehicle regularly used by the character, the lock is open and any alarm systems fails to function. However, any cameras that passively record all who enter or leave a region will record the character.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Wyrd + Larceny

Action: Instant

Catch: When used to open the door to the dwelling of a personal enemy — someone who the character knows, who knows the character and who has admitted his enmity to the character.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling pays the Contract's price but gains no benefit.

Failure: The Contract fails to work, and the character need pay no price.

Success: The Contract opens the desired door. If examined, the door the character opened shows signs of having been opened, and cameras or recording equipment will reveal the intrusion. Later, one of the changeling's doors or other locks suffers the same effect. Using this Contract multiple times before the price is paid attracts people with malicious intent to the character's dwelling and vehicle and makes attempts to break into or steal them far more likely.

Exceptional Success: The desired door shows no trace of having been opened by the character, and any cameras or recording equipment associated with the door do not record the character's presence.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–1 to –3	Especially complex or secure locks
+1	Carrying an article of clothing or a photograph of someone who regularly unlocks the door

Fool's Gold (••)

A common fae deceit, this Contract can make one object appear to be another by covering it with the Mask. This Contract's most common use is to trick foolish, greedy mortals into accepting worthless dross in payment for valuable goods or services; in this day and age, however, that can be dangerous, as the Contract leaves its dupes aware of who tricked them. The Gentry like to be remembered, after all.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling uses this Contract to deceive someone who has been dishonest to or broken his word to the changeling in the past 24 hours.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling fails to conceal the object behind the Mask, and cannot attempt to use this Contract again for 24 hours.

Failure: The changeling fails to conceal the object behind the Mask.

Success: The changeling makes an ordinary, mundane object appear to be another object of similar size and shape. This is, specifically, granting the object an aspect of the Mask (see p. 172), and all the rules governing the Mask apply. A weapon cannot be made to look completely non-threatening, for example, and armor can be disguised as some less suspicious form of protective clothing (such as sports padding) but not as ordinary clothing. This Contract cannot affect anything too large for the changeling to carry comfortably.

This effect is a purely psychological one on the part of mortals interacting with the object, just as the Mask covering a changeling's mien. A dry leaf disguised as a $100 bill will look and feel exactly like a $100 bill to any mortal who interacts with it, but it will not stand up to counterfeit detection measures. Likewise, a playing card disguised as a platinum credit card will not read if swiped through a reader and does not access an actual account. Since this illusion is an effect of the Mask, ensorcelled mortals, other changelings and any other beings able to see through the Mask are automatically immune to this power.

The transformative effects of this Contract last until the end of the scene. If the no longer Masked object is in the possession of a mortal or supernatural being affected by the Mask (for example, if the changeling used phantom money to pay for something), that individual develops a certainty that the changeling was somehow connected to the Masked objects.

Exceptional Success: As an ordinary success, except that the Mask lasts until the next sunrise and witnesses do not gain a Wits + Composure roll to recognize the changeling's involvement.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–3	Disguising an object of no inherent value as something of great worth (a pebble on a string for a diamond necklace)
–2	Disguising an object of no inherent worth as something of moderate worth (dry leaves for $20 bills)
–1	Disguising multiple similar objects (a handful of bottle caps into a handful of Spanish doubloons)
–1	Disguising an object of moderate worth as something of great worth (semiprecious necklace for diamond necklace)
—	Disguising an object of minor value as one of moderate value ($5 bill for $20 bill)

Burden of Life (•••)

As long as the changeling does so swiftly, he can heal someone from an injury or catastrophic event such as a heart attack. However, the healing causes the changeling to take on the burden of that person's life. For the next full day, all damage that would harm that person applies to the changeling instead. The changeling cannot heal herself with this Contract.

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Empathy + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The target was injured during the act of saving the character from harm.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling pays the Contract's price but gains no benefit.

Failure: The changeling neither heals the target nor takes on the burden.

Success: For every success rolled, the target heals two points of damage. This Contract heals aggravated damage first, and if all of that is healed, the Contract heals lethal and then bashing damage. If the subject had taken at least four levels of lethal damage, and is healed of at least four levels of lethal or aggravated, the life burden is activated. For the next full day, all damage that the target would suffer instead affects the changeling. No armor, Contracts or other protections can prevent this damage from affecting the changeling. During this time, the target is immune to all damage save that delivered by cold iron. Self-destructive targets can swiftly kill or seriously injure the changeling. A changeling can use this Contract as often as desired, but for a day after using it, he cannot have this Contract used upon him — all such attempts automatically fail. A single target cannot benefit from this Contract more than once a day.

To use this Contract, the changeling must touch the target within a number of turns of the injury or event equal to the changeling's Wyrd.

Exceptional Success: Regardless of severity, the target's injuries are completely healed.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+2	The target literally saved the changeling's life, sustaining the injury.
+1	The changeling injured the target.
–1	The changeling is only slightly acquainted with the target.
–3	The changeling has never encountered the target before.

Delayed Harm (•••)

The character can avoid any single lethal or aggravated attack she can see coming. However, the next lethal or aggravated attack upon the character is worse than it normally would be. This Contract may be used after the attack is actually rolled.

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Wyrd

Action: Reflexive

Catch: The character is attacked while unarmed or otherwise not immediately able to defend herself.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The attack affects the changeling normally, but all successes on this attack roll are also added to the next attack doing lethal or aggravated damage that strikes the character.

Failure: The Contract fails to work, and the character need pay no price.

Success: Each success subtracts one point of damage. If sufficient successes are rolled, the changeling is unharmed. Each subtracted point of damage is then added to the next lethal or aggravated attack that injures the character. If the attack "blocked" was aggravated and the next attack suffered is lethal, the character takes two additional points of lethal damage. This Contract functions only on attacks doing lethal or aggravated damage, and cannot be used to block damage incurred from using this Contract.

Exceptional Success: The attack fails to strike the character but is rolled anyway to determine the number of successes to be added to the next attack.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+2	The attack being blocked would incapacitate or kill the character.
+1	The character is already injured.
–1	The character is wearing armor.

Good and Bad Luck (••••)

The character can make a single lucky guess, at the price of a bout of bad luck. The guess can determine which apartment in a building holds a sniper, or uncover a lottery number or computer password. However, the chance of determining the correct guess must be one in 10,000 or better — sufficient to guess four digits in a password or win approximately $500 at lottery or gambling. The bad luck is similarly impressive, striking only when it would do the worst harm.

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Wits + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The character is using the Contract to best a single well-known rival or enemy.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling pays the Contract's price but gains no benefit.

Failure: The changeling finds neither good nor bad luck.

Success: The character makes a single lucky guess with odds no greater than one in 10,000. However, the next roll he fails while under significant stress, including the physical stress of combat, the emotional stress of important social expectations or simple time pressure, automatically becomes a dramatic failure. Because of the power inherent in this Contract, only an important failed roll becomes a dramatic failure. However, this bad luck almost never waits more than a month to strike.

Exceptional Success: The guesser can make a one in 100,000 guess, potentially winning as much as $5,000.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The character has at least two or three minutes to consider her guess.
–1	The character has only a few moments to make her guess.

Call the Hunt (••••)

This dread Contract is its own price. The changeling calls a Fae hunting party. The character can only use this Contract within clear sight of an entrance into the Hedge, and the Wild Hunt emerges from that point in the Hedge. This Contract sends what seems to be a call for aid by a powerful and important Fae; when the hunting party discovers otherwise, they will certainly look into who called them.

Cost: 1 Glamour + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Presence + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The character is actually in the Hedge.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The hunting party hears the call but is aware that it was made by the changeling. They may come anyway, specifically to hunt the changeling who called them.

Failure: The Contract fails, and the hunting party is not called.

Success: The character calls the Wild Hunt, and it arrives within 10 minutes.

Exceptional Success: The hunting party arrives the turn after the character performs this Contract.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The changeling yells loudly for the hunt to come.
–2	The changeling performs this Contract while deliberately hidden.

Lost and Found (•••••)

This Contract allows the character to escape from almost any situation, but his current location becomes known to another enemy.

Cost: 2 Glamour + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Presence + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling is escaping a well-known enemy who has been after her personally for more than a year.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling pays the Contract's price without benefit.

Failure: The Contract fails, and the character does not escape.

Success: Through some coincidence, the character can escape pursuit or captivity. A distraction may draw off pursuers. The character may find her bonds are not as tight as she thought, that someone left the cell door open or keys within easy reach and her guards are asleep or busy. As long as some possible coincidence allows her to escape capture or pursuit, she automatically escapes. However, as soon as the character has escaped, another of the character's enemies, or at minimum someone looking for her for some malevolent purpose, such as a bounty hunter or an agent of the Fae, coincidentally discovers the character's current location.

Exceptional Success: In addition to the escape, the character's captors or pursuers cannot find any trace of how she escaped or where she went. These traces are still visible to the new enemy that finds her location.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+3	The changeling is escaping pursuit instead of capture.
+1 to +2	The changeling is poorly guarded or in a flimsy prison.
–1 to –2	The changeling is well guarded or in a well-built cell.
–4	The changeling is imprisoned in a way almost impossible to escape from.

Supernatural Conflict

When supernatural entities such as changelings use their powers on one another, the strength of their very nature may help them resist the other's abilities. Contracts with contested rolls allow the defender to add his Wyrd to the dice pool to resist the Contract. Essentially, the power of the changeling's inner supernatural nature gives him some added resistance against magical or supernatural powers. Thus, the roll to resist a contested Contract is the appropriate Resistance Attribute + Wyrd.

This holds true even when supernatural entities other than changelings clash. If a vampire were to attempt to bend a changeling's will with its unholy powers of mental domination, the changeling would roll Resolve + Wyrd to resist. The same is true in reverse; if the changeling were to retaliate with the Friendless Tongue Contract (which requires a Composure + Wyrd roll to resist), the vampire would substitute its Blood Potency trait for Wyrd and roll Composure + Blood Potency to resist.

Canny changelings should therefore be wary of those other supernatural creatures that stalk the World of Darkness. Though the Lost may be protected by some degree by their Wyrd, they aren't the only ones who can draw on preternatural reserves of inner strength.

STAWICKI
2007

hat Consuela girl is creepy. She don't blink. I swear she don't. She just watches you while you talk, never says a word, and then when she does, it's either 'Yes' or 'No' or she makes some weird little sound like she got a fly in her mouth.

"Marley told me Consuela was good at getting rid of pests. You know I got roaches, but I can't afford no exterminator. So when I saw Consuela again, she was hanging around outside the building, looking at the alley across the street like she was waiting for something. And we talked — well, mostly I talked — and we agreed.

"I said, 'You get rid of the pests in my apartment. How much you want?'

"She said. 'Not much.' And she pointed to my charm bracelet. 'One of those, once in a while.'

'Once in a while?' I said

'You know they'll be back.' And she's right, you know? Can't keep pests away for long. And I've got hundreds of charms. I don't even wear 'em all. I didn't ask her why she didn't want no money.

"No, I don't know where she stays. I thought she stayed down with Marley, but I saw him the other day, and he didn't want to talk about her. Said something about her and that alley, like he caught her in there making something? I don't remember what he said, I was in a hurry. Sounded like he said she was making a web.

"Anyway, that's her knocking, so you need to leave, Anthony. She's gotta kill these damn roaches, and she can't be doing that with your big ass on the couch. Don't be talking like that! You know she can hear you!

"Damn, Anthony, you're such a pest sometimes."

Chapter 3
Special Rules and Systems

My staff has murdered giants
And my pack a long knife carries
To slice mince pies from children's thighs
For which to feed the fairies.
— Tom O'Bedlam, traditional song

Mien and the Mask

A changeling's true face is something hidden from most of the mortal world. Although the changeling's physical body has been changed, ordinary humans and even most supernatural beings are unable to see the Lost for what he has become. They see instead the Mask, an illusion made of Glamour that hangs around each changeling and provides a human guise. The illusion is quite complete, able to deceive even film and digital media with only the occasional faint blur or aftereffect.

The Mask is not a choice. It protects and disguises the Lost even when they would have it otherwise, even beyond death. The Mask seems to be another expression of the ancient pacts struck by the Fae to protect them and theirs from the eyes of common men and women. Though the Lost are no longer "the Gentry's" in many ways, apparently changelings are still close enough for the purposes of this bargain. So they appear to be who they were instead of what they have become… for the most part. There's always just a hint of the changeling to the Mask, be it skin that reminds someone just a bit of strong oak wood or eyes that sometimes seem to reflect light just like a cat's, if even for an instant. The Mask may appear a few inches taller or shorter than the changeling's true mien, or add or subtract 20 pounds or so. However, the Mask remains close to the mien's actual size; an Ogre with the Giant Merit is clearly overlarge, even to mortal eyes.

Clothing and equipment are not generally protected by the Mask, unless they are of fae origin. A silver-skinned Darkling who wears a tattered, dirty wedding dress appears to be a pale Goth girl wearing a tattered, dirty wedding dress, and an Elemental wearing a rapier seems to be an ordinary human wearing a rapier. The most common exceptions are fae tokens, which always seem to be more mundane versions of the objects in question — a battleaxe looks more like a fire axe, or a magnificent cloak appears to be a cotton shawl. The Lost have learned the art of fashioning fine clothing from the stuff of the Hedge as well, and a costume of fine Hedgespun is a mark of status. (For more on "Hedgespun," see p. 203.)

Anyone who is protected by the Mask can also see right through it. A changeling can see another's fae mien, and she can see his in return. The Fae can also see through the Mask, regrettably, and some of them have learned ways to conceal their own true forms from a changeling's eyes. Even when a changeling looks in the mirror, he sees himself as Faerie has remade him. Any changeling may spend a Glamour point to view a person or thing's Mask instead of its true mien; this glimpse of illusion lasts for only about half a minute.

Affecting the Mask

The Mask can be temporarily strengthened against the eyes of other fae. By spending a Glamour point as a reflexive action, a changeling can fortify the Mask so that other fae cannot see his true mien without the use of some supernatural power. Even this disguise is imperfect, however. When a changeling strengthens the Mask, other fae who see his shadow see the shadow cast by his true form.

A changeling may also temporarily disrupt the Mask in a flare of Glamour, although at a dangerous cost. By expending the entirety of his current store of Glamour, whether he has one Glamour or 100, the changeling may burn away the

Mask as a standard action. (This ability is an exception to the usual Wyrd-imposed limits on Glamour spent per turn.) Observers may see a strange flare of light or creeping darkness leak from the person's skin before tearing it away and revealing this not-so-human thing standing before them. For the remainder of the scene, the changeling no longer possesses the Mask, and will appear to anyone just as he is. To raise the Mask once more, the changeling must gain at least two Glamour points, and spend one of them as if strengthening the Mask. Disrupting the Mask is a deliberate and taxing action; the Mask doesn't fall from a character who drops to 0 Glamour by some other means, and a character with no Glamour to spend in the effort cannot drive the Mask from him. As this ability leaves the changeling temporarily helpless, and may trigger Clarity loss, the Lost are very hesitant to use the ability outside a position of total trust.

Mien

The physical changes made to the Lost are impressive-looking, but not radical. Though a Beast may have claws and fangs, they aren't powerful enough to inflict lethal damage. A Fireheart's flaming hair doesn't burn objects held over his head or set off smoke detectors. However, the minor alterations made to a changeling's body aren't entirely cosmetic. Each changeling gains a free Specialty either to Athletics, Brawl or Stealth rolls (chosen at character creation) to represent these small physical changes. These physical aspects can affect the mortal world, of course, even if humans don't see the true cause. The elongated nails of a Hunterheart may do additional damage when he rakes with his talons, but his human victim thinks he's attacked by a lunatic with sharp nails rather than a beast-man with actual claws. A Snowskin's flesh feels cold as ice, but her lover assumes she must simply have poor circulation. Even as the Stonebones' child runs her fingers across her father's horns, she thinks of herself as merely caressing his brow — a blindness that can hurt her father deeply.

Membership in a Court or an entitlement can further change a character's mien, adding mystical trappings that reflect the mystical bonds of their allegiance. These trappings are creations of Wyrd alone, and do not have a physical manifestation… for the most part.

As the changeling's Wyrd rises, though, the elements of his mien begin to leak through the Mask. A powerful Winter Court changeling who carries an aura of cold around him sends chills down the spines of nearby humans and may lower the temperature of his immediate area by a few degrees. While this still doesn't increase the changeling's seeming or kith qualities into supernatural prowess, it does make it a bit more difficult to walk among humans without drawing notice.

Damage and Healing

The changeling's oeuvre is finesse. The fae are naturally predisposed to trickery and guile as a means of bypassing problems. In some cases, this is because their bodies are fragile by compare, like a half-remembered dream clouding the mind of a waking sleeper.

Their beauty can hide cruelty, however, and the most brutish among them have no fear of violence. The Lost are not strangers to blood and pain, and understanding how damage affects them is an important part of the game.

Damage Types

Changelings suffer from bashing, lethal and aggravated damage in the same manner as normal mortals. For example, punching a changeling's jaw would cause bashing damage, shooting him in the stomach would cause lethal damage and certain supernatural sources (such as a vampire's fierce Claws of the Wild) would cause aggravated damage.

Changelings have no inherent bane or anathema. Thus, nothing inherently causes them to suffer aggravated damage from exposure, as sunlight and fire affect vampires. Changelings do have an innate aversion to cold iron (see below), but that's a unique case.

Damage Sources

In a similar sense, the same types of things that cause damage to mortals cause damage to changelings. Changelings suffer from deprivation, disease (though see "Longevity and Decrepitude," below), drugs, electrocution, physical violence, falling, fatigue, fire, poisons and extreme temperature as do most other people, as described on pp. 175–181 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

Recovery

Recovery from injury takes the same time for changelings that it does for normal mortals. Because changelings' bodies aren't too terribly different from mortals, damaged tissue repairs itself and broken bones knit at about the same rate for changelings as they do for those untouched by the "other" nature of Faerie. However, changelings often make use of certain curatives harvested from the Hedge, called goblin fruits, to heal their wounds. For more information on goblin fruits, see pp. 222–225.

Changelings recover one point of bashing damage per 15 minutes, one point of lethal damage per two-day period and one point of aggravated damage per week. For more information on healing, see p. 175 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

Scars and Wounds

At the player's discretion, a character may form a "signature" scar around the mostly healed site of an especially important wound. While this won't be the case all the time, the character might like to wear as a badge of honor the scar beneath his eye from when he fought the treacherous duke, or the rift in her breast where the goblin crow sought to pluck out her heart.

Scars of this nature tend to reflect the character's seeming. A Stonebones' scar might be a hard, rocky keloid while a Bright One's wound might issue a light that's mildly visible from even beneath her blouse.

There's no cost to do this. It's just a way of allowing players to customize their characters' appearance to remind them of significant events in their lives.

Cold Iron

Those who know the secrets of the Fae tell a curious tale about the Fair Folk's weakness to cold iron. Long ago, a powerful Other made a Contract with iron itself, but that creature failed to honor the terms of the Contract. Thereafter, iron swore itself as an enemy to the prodigal people, cold and unyielding in its grudge against them. This elemental animosity passed down to the changelings, as well.

In effect, an item made from relatively pure iron (not steel) ignores defenses contrived by the fae and their magics. A protection Contract will not offer any safety from an iron weapon, for example. A changeling wearing fae armor will find it's no protection from a spike torn from a wrought iron fence. Iron pure enough to be called "cold iron" is used very rarely in the modern world, and most Lost who look for a weapon to use against their fellows must often hunt through antique stores to find items with the distinctive grain or forge it themselves.

Iron weapons forged by hand have even more power. Mass-produced, machine-cut knives are not "cold iron," nor is metal that has been conjured, transmuted or even shaped by magic. The most damaging iron has been hammered into its shape with nothing but muscle, a hammer and patience. Hand-forged iron confers an additional benefit, but only against the Gentry — True Fae suffer aggravated damage from hand-forged iron weapons. Even contact with hand-forged iron causes discomfort to the Others. Against changelings, hand-forged iron works the same as pure iron.

Luckily for changelings, pure iron, especially hand-forged, is somewhat rare in most modern environments. Objects built from metal for durability are typically made of steel or other alloys. Iron is less common, less practical and even regarded as a bit "primitive" in certain contexts — consider the somewhat coarse look of a hand-wrought iron fence when compared to a mass-produced chain-link fence. Especially among weaponry (where iron is most likely to come into play), iron is the exception rather than the rule. Iron implements can be had relatively easily, but they'll probably have to be special ordered or created by custom work.

Longevity and Decrepitude

Time passes strangely in Faerie. A hapless traveler who stumbled through the Hedge into a midsummer's party and stayed a few hours might find that weeks or even years had passed upon his return. A changeling stolen on her second birthday might return through the Thorns 19 years later to find her fetch only seven years of age.

So, too, does time occasionally pass oddly for those changelings who have made it back to our world. Particularly as a changeling's Wyrd increases, the forces of fate and time have less sway over her.

Wyrd itself fluctuates for each changeling as well, though, making its effects difficult to pinpoint at a glance by the casual observer. The old man with the rheumy eyes and fluttering white beard might be 70 years old, or he might be over 100.

In addition, as a changeling's Wyrd increases, the influence of fate abates somewhat over him. Disease, illness and infirmity all affect the character less than they would otherwise.

The following table depicts the increased longevity in years that a character might experience as his Wyrd increases. The table also includes the dice pool bonus the character receives to ward off the effects of sickness or other

physical decrepitude. Note that these bonuses apply to illness and the effects of aging or physical deterioration only. The bonuses do not apply to resisting poisons, shrugging off damage or withstanding spells or other magical effects directed at the character. They might, however, affect the aftermath of such effects. For example, if a mage inflicted a Temporal Pocket or Faerie Glade effect on the character, the character wouldn't receive any bonus dice to resist the effects of those rotes, but any concomitant effect that might visit the character afterward as a result of his advanced age would receive the bonus dice.

Wyrd	Longevity	Infirmity Bonus
1	+10 years	+1
2	+20 years	+1
3	+30 years	+1
4	+40 years	+2
5	+50 years	+2
6	+60 years	+2
7	+75 years	+3
8	+90 years	+3
9	+105 years	+3
10	+130 years or more	+4

If a venerable or diseased character's Wyrd ever decreases, that may spell his doom, as his changeling's body is no longer able to stave off the ravages of fate and time with the weakening of his ability to shape them.

Pledges

The word-bond carries tremendous weight among the fairies, and even the renegade changelings understand the importance of one's pledge. An oath is never given lightly, a promise never casually made, for who knows when the Wyrd may entangle those words, tying them to the speaker's destiny?

Among the many secrets of the Others changelings bore with them when they fled is the understanding of how to entangle words in the Wyrd. This is more than simply a means of making sure both parties uphold their ends of an agreement, however — the art of pledge-craft is an ancient one. Those who uphold their word with honor and forthrightness shall reap rewards of the world; those who fail to do so are punished appropriately.

Unlike the highly formalized Contracts of the fae, pledges are simple agreements made between two or more parties. The precise terms, tasks and boons for adhering to the agreement and penalties for failing to do so are outlined when the pact is made, and the changeling invests a tiny bit of his Wyrd into the agreement. The terms of the pledge can be veiled in casual language, thus binding an unsuspecting participant if the changeling is sufficiently crafty. The wording of the sample pledges provided later (p. 158) represent both a more open and formal pledge, and one veiled in more casual language.

Whether these pledges are between the members of a motley, the oath of vassal to liege, the pledge that ensorcells a mortal or grants a changeling access to the dreams of another, pledges define the relationship not simply among the Lost, but between an individual changeling and the rest of the world. Skilled and artistic pledge-craft is well respected among the fae, and other changelings looking for a bit of advice in the creation of oaths may approach those who demonstrate acumen in the art.

Crafting Pledges

The Wyrd is the very essence of comparison and reciprocity — the Wyrd is not truly a thing in and of itself, but is rather the relationship between all things. Relationships, community, interaction, comparison — these are all things of the Wyrd.

It is perhaps why the Fae seem so alien to humans. They are creatures of the Wyrd and see themselves only in comparison with other things. The Fae are creatures of terrible passions and extremes, because they must be *more than*.

The ancient Others do not contemplate their essential nature the way humans do; the Fae never wonder what their place in the universe is. They cannot, after all, help but be intimately aware of it — the Wyrd shows them where they stand in relation to all other things. The Mistress of Fallen Leaves is more beautiful than her mother, less kind than her daughter, more like the Autumn than the Winter and more generous than her neighbors.

These interactions — these ways of perceiving the self only in relation to other things in the world — frame the basis for the pledges of the fae. The pledges help solidify the interactions between disparate parts of the world, making individuals work together in unity. Selectively infusing the ties that connect all things, all people, all places and all times together, the fae are capable of creating a singular whole: the oathbound.

Changelings carried this technique with them from Arcadia. They don't recall all its uses in the lands of the Fae, but tangled memories suggest that pledges rule all manner of interactions there. Some suggest that the denizens of Faerie are not capable of acknowledging one another exists, unless they are bound up in some kind of oath together. This implies the Fae are not capable of acknowledging one another's existences — or perhaps simply the existences of lesser entities and things in Arcadia — unless the Fae and the thing in question are bound up in a mutual oath.

Combining Pledge Aspects

The aspects, or building blocks, of pledges are rated at three levels of power: lesser, medial and greater. Generally speaking, the simplest of pledges has a task, boon, sanction and duration of equal power. In practice, though, this is generally a bit more complicated than that, because any given pledge may have multiple aspects.

Generally speaking, two lesser aspects combine to form a medial aspect. Likewise, a lesser and a medial aspect, or two medial aspects combine to form a greater aspect.

Types of Pledges

Pledges are divided into the following three categories: vows, oaths and corporals. The type of pledge determines how the pledge is invested. Normally, the typical pledge (which is a vow) is invested into the Wyrd of the changelings involved. A changeling may have a maximum number of such vows invested equal to his Wyrd rating +3. This is the not the full limit of the changeling's pledges, however; other kinds of pledges may be invested into other aspects of the changeling, from his true name to his connections to mortals and the fae.

Vows

A vow is the most basic sort of pledge-craft. The changeling simply swears to accomplish some goal or fulfill some task, outlining what is expected of the other, their rewards for adhering to their pledges and the curses they can expect for failing to do so. A vow is invested into the changeling's Wyrd.

Oaths

An oath involves not simply the declaration of an intention to perform some duty, but the pledge is sworn by one's true name, on the name of one's former True Fae captor (if known) or in the name of a higher power the changeling believes in. Failure to adhere to this oath results in an additional penalty, levied by the Wyrd, based on the nature of the oath. Oaths are actually invested in the names the oath is sworn on; see below for specifics. No name (whether personal name, Keeper's name or the name of a higher power) can bear more than one oath for any given changeling. Non-changelings do not receive any additional penalties when forswearing an oath; the pledge is bound to the name sworn on by the changeling parties only.

- *True Name, Obscured:* This oath assumes that the changeling still has a fetch that also answers to his name. Swearing an oath on his true name, the changeling invests the power of that pledge into his very name, rather than his Wyrd. Though the changeling's true name is shared by another, the changeling still have the right to swear oaths by it. Unfortunately, if he breaks this oath, he proves himself unworthy of that name in the eyes of the Wyrd, which

Pledge-Crafting

The step-by-step process for creating pledges follows:

Step One: Determine the tasks involved for each party of the pledge. Tasks are rated with a negative number that reflects how onerous the task is to complete: lesser tasks (–1) are relatively simple to fulfill, while greater tasks (–3) are quite epic in scope.

Step Two: Determine the boons involved for each party of the pledge. Boons are rated with a positive number that reflects the benefit of the reward for holding true to one's word: lesser boons (+1) are minor rewards, while those who hold greater boons (+3) may find their very lives changed dramatically by their possession.

Step Three: Determine the sanctions involved for each party of the pledge. Sanctions are rated with a negative number reflecting the power of the curse that befalls the oathbreaker: lesser sanctions (–1) are annoying hindrances, while the terrible punishments of greater sanctions (–3) are the stuff of legend.

Step Four: Determine the duration involved for each party of the pledge. The duration is rated with a positive number reflecting the length of time the Wyrd binds the pledge to the fate of those involved: lesser durations (+1) exist for short time, while pledges of greater duration (+3) are bound up for at least a year and possibly longer (+3).

Step Five: The sum of each party's tasks, boons and sanctions must sum to zero when added to the duration of the pledge. This may require some adjusting of other aspects to make the expectations of each party equitable.

Step Six: Determine the invocation cost for the pledge. All pledges cost one point of Willpower to invoke, plus any additional modifiers for specific aspects.

Step Seven: Determine the type of pledge involved for the pledge as a whole; all those taking part in the pledge must be eligible to make that kind of pledge (i.e., non-changelings may not make mortal corporals), instilling the power of the pledge's Wyrd into either their own Wyrd (in the case of a vow), into a name (in the case of oaths) or into an object symbolic of their connections with others (in the case of a corporal).

Step Eight: The terms of the pledge are described to all parties, and all agree, paying the necessary invocation cost. The Wyrd settles the pledge into the fate of all parties, and the pledge is sealed.

strikes him with weakness the next time he encounters his fetch. He loses any and all resistance to the fetch's Echoes, and his Defense drops to 0 for the length of the encounter. He also receives a dice pool penalty equal to his Wyrd for the length of the encounter. These limitations last for one scene, and are activated the next time he encounters his fetch in person. The fetch automatically senses the weakness in the wayward, and knows that his chances to strike are at their best in that moment.

• *True Name, Unsullied:* The changeling with no fetch must honor his true name above all, for it is tightly bound up now in his Wyrd and honor. Such an oath is invested into his true name, rather than his Wyrd. However, the failure to adhere to an oath sworn on a rightfully recovered true name jangles the threads of fate that tie to that name. In a sudden discordant moment, his Wyrd shatters all Wyrd-invested pledges he currently maintains, and he is penalized as though he'd voluntarily broken all of those pledges. Those who share in those pledges with him are instantly aware that he has violated an oath on his true name, and are likely to be wary dealing with him in the future — it is a grievous thing to falsify one's own name.

• *The Name of the Keeper:* Rather than investing a pledge into his Wyrd or his own name, a changeling may invest the name of his Keeper with an oath — or rather, he may invest the connection between himself and his former Keeper with the oath. Swearing an oath in the name of one's former True Fae captor is a dangerous thing. In Arcadia, changelings who swear this oath understand that if they fail to live up to their end, their master will force them to do so, at the ends of a Thorn lash, if necessary. Those changelings who gain their freedom run an even greater risk swearing by the names of their former Keepers, however; violating this oath sends an immediate chord of resonance through the Wyrd, passing through the Hedge and into the Fairest of Lands, immediately alerting the changeling's former Keeper to the whereabouts of his erstwhile servitor.

The former Keeper gains a die bonus equal to the oathbreaker's Wyrd rating to all rolls that have to do with finding and recovering the changeling. This bonus does not become active immediately; the True Fae may invoke the benefit when he chooses, within the next year and a day, enjoying the bonus for one full scene. Only pledges sworn by changelings may be Name of the Keeper Oaths.

• *The Name of a Higher Power:* Regardless of what the changeling calls the Divine, he swears an oath by it and his belief in it, investing his honor with his belief. Though this may be the name of a deity or other culturally appropriate spiritual name (such as that of a spirit, ancestor or tradition), the changeling may also simply name a concept or virtue that he upholds and considers important: Honor, Faith, Justice. Such an oath is literally sworn in the name of the changeling's faith and belief, investing the pledge into that aspect of his soul, rather than his Wyrd or name.

Should this oath be broken, the changeling is immediately filled with a tremendous sense of despair, losing all current Willpower points. In addition, the next time he must make a roll to avoid losing Clarity, he receives a one-die penalty to this roll — the Fae believe in nothing and faith is a mark of mortals. The spurning of mortal faith is a trademark of the Others, and can endanger Clarity.

Corporal

A pledge sworn with a corporal involves at least one of the parties swearing on a physical symbol of some association. It might be the token of rulership carried by his freehold lord, a token that represents his affiliation with his motley. Ultimately, this can be sworn for any association the changeling bears. These corporals come in one of five varieties: mortal emblems, seeming emblems, courtly emblems, title emblems and nemesis emblems. As with oaths, the primary use of corporals is in the investment of a pledge into something other than the changeling's Wyrd. Non-changelings do not receive any additional penalties when forswearing a corporal; the pledge is bound to the emblem sworn on by the changeling parties only. At any given time, a changeling may have only one of each kind of corporal active and invested.

• *Mortal Emblem:* The symbols of mortal associations are precious things to changelings. These are, in many ways, tangible representations of the changeling's longing to be human again. Others may consider them silly or frivolous, but they are certainly not. Mortal corporals can be nearly anything: a holy text (representing membership in a church or religious community), the lease for his apartment, a membership card for a nightclub, video rental place, country club or gym or some other similar distinctly mortal establishment. It must be something that he attends or frequents entirely out of mortal interest — the nightclub owned by a local member of the freehold does not qualify. Rather than investing the pledge into his Wyrd or name, the changeling may invest it into his connections with the mortal world. The most powerful emblems are those representing family ties, but few Lost are brave enough to swear on something as precious as a wedding ring… given the risks.

Should he break this corporal pledge, his Wyrd lashes out and works to separate him from the establishment or community. Within the next few days, events fall into place that cause him to be ejected or excluded from the organization. The video rental place closes his account, recording him as owing several hundred dollars, and the system won't allow him to open another even if he pays it. His landlord finds him in violation of an obscure part of his lease, and ejects him. The preacher from his Bible study group approaches him and suggests that he might be better served with another congregation.

For anyone else, this kind of separation is of little import. But the changeling — who invested the power of his Wyrd in his membership there — can only watch as another connection to his lost humanity crumbles away, leaving him a stranger among mortals. This necessitates a roll

to resist losing Clarity; this is a roll made with four dice, regardless of the changeling's Clarity. This roll receives a –2 dice penalty if the corporal was broken as part of the changeling's life among the fae, rather than his mortal life: sacrificing mortal concerns in favor of fae ones is a sure path to loss of Clarity. If this pledge was broken fulfilling a Virtue, the changeling's player gains a +2 bonus to this roll; if the pledge was broken fulfilling a Vice, the roll receives a –2 dice penalty.

Generally, the changeling may only have one mortal corporal active at any given time. However, if the changeling possesses a Merit such as Allies, Contacts, Resources or Status that reflects the mortal institution she is pledging by, she may elect to invest that Merit with the power of this corporal. She may select to do this only once per Merit (or once per dot in Contacts, as appropriate). Thus, the changeling has the potential to swear a mortal corporal once for each appropriate Merit, plus the "free" such slot associated with an aspect of her mortal life not associated with a Merit. Should the changeling break a pledge bound into a Merit, she not only suffers the possibility of losing Clarity, as above, but also loses the Merit entirely (or the dot in Contacts, as appropriate).

• *Seeming Emblem:* The changeling who swears on a seeming corporal swears on something symbolic to himself and his existence as a changeling, swearing an oath on his own nature. Woe to the changeling who breaks such an oath: it is tantamount to forswearing his very fae nature. Such an oathbreaker loses a point of Wyrd immediately. Generally, both parties of a seeming pledge swear on their own emblems, if they are both fae. Changelings with Wyrd 1 cannot swear this particular pledge, as they cannot invest enough of themselves into the corporal.

• *Courtly Emblem:* The changeling who swears on a courtly emblem swears on something symbolic of his association with one of the changeling Courts, investing the power of the pledge in either his Mantle Merit when swearing by his own Court or his Court Goodwill Merit, when swearing by a Court to which he is aligned. (Lack of the appropriate Mantle or Merit precludes this pledge.) Violating this pledge causes the changeling to immediately lose all his dots in Court Goodwill, or reduces his Mantle rating in half. For the next moon, members of that Court who encounter the oathbreaker immediately sense he has broken faith with that Court, and treat him accordingly.

• *Title Emblem:* A title emblem is invested into a changeling's entitlement, imbuing his connection with others of his entitlements with the power of the pledge. Violating this pledge causes the changeling to immediately lose the benefits of this entitlement, and sends a ripple of Wyrd through those of his entitlement he meets, marking him as an oathbreaker and betrayer of his entitlement. The mechanical benefits of his entitlement return when he gains a point of Wyrd, but the esteem of his fellow changelings is broken; traditionally, the entitlement peerage has the right to give the oathbreaker a task to perform — one that upholds the ideals of the entitlement and returns him to their good graces. Such tasks are given out rarely, and never lightly. To offer an oathbreaker amnesty is to suggest that one has less respect for the creed of the entitlement as well.

• *Nemesis Pledge:* Swearing on the emblem of another changeling, however, binds that changeling as a punisher to the pledge; this role is referred to as the "nemesis" of the pledge, and the would-be nemesis must agree to this role. When the nemesis emblem is sworn, the changeling who has agreed to fulfill this function uses a Contract or other ability. The oathbreaker suffers the effects of that power, without resistance, per the pishogue sanction of a power equal to the task, below. In addition, the nemesis becomes immediately aware which party has broken the oath.

Tasks

The tasks of a pledge express the expectations of one or both parties to the pledge. In short, the task details what the sworn must or must not do.

Alliance: Establishing an alliance is a common use of pledges. Such pledges outline the level of support the oathbound expect from one another, with rewards and punishment appropriate to the aid provided. In many ways, alliance tasks are combined ban and endeavor tasks, both requiring and forbidding certain actions. Alliance tasks are two-way affairs; that is, all the oathtakers swear to adhere to that level of alliance with regard to one another. Pledges in which one side takes an oath to not harm the other involve ban tasks, or endeavor tasks, in which one party pledges to defend another.

— *Lesser:* A minor alliance is also referred to as a "peace pact." It is not actually an agreement to aid one another; it is simply a pledge to not hinder one another. The oathbound are not required to go to one another's assistance, or to prevent others from harming the other, or even tell them when they know of plans by a third party to do so. A minor alliance is a simple agreement to not hinder one another, nothing more. Thus, minor alliance tasks are considered to contribute a numerical value of (+0) when determining the balance of the pledge — they almost never have a boon associated with them. *(+0).*

— *Medial:* A moderate alliance is likely the most typical kind of alliance. The oathbound are expected to help one another when necessary, whether that aid takes the form of sanctuary, food, money or similar offers of assistance. Oathtakers of a moderate alliance should be willing to be hurt to aid their ally, or to hurt others, but death (either inflicting or being killed oneself) is too much to expect of this oath. *(–2).*

— *Greater:* The deepest of alliances, the greater alliance is a pledge to aid one another unto even torture and death. No force should make the oathbound of a greater alliance

violate their oaths, including death (though in reality, many epic betrayals of the greater alliance have come about as a result of death threats, often to loved ones). The oathbound are expected to treat one another as closer than kin, giving of their resources and assistance freely — although those who abuse this often become social pariahs. *(–3).*

Dreaming: The dreaming task permits the changeling who swears it to enter into the dreams of the other oathtaker. Each pledge must indicate the direction in which this guardianship travels: a changeling might incorporate the dreaming task into the oath that ensorcells a mortal, allowing him to guard his dreams, while a motley pledge might include the dreaming task, allowing them to safeguard one another's sleep. Likewise, a knightly oath to a lord may incorporate the dreaming task into a fealty task — in such a case, the vassal can enter the dreams of the lord. *Medial (–2).*

Endeavors: Endeavor tasks are active requirements of the pledge. A pledge to perform some specific action involves the use of the endeavor task in pledge-crafting. There are three tiers of endeavors.

— *Lesser:* A lesser endeavor is rarely difficult to accomplish. It consists of either frequently doing something that requires hardly any time or effort at all or the performance of a single task that makes slight demands on the one so bound. Some lesser endeavors involve keeping a patch of flowers in one's yard clear of dandelion blooms or carrying a package from one part of town to another and delivering it to someone there. *(–1).*

— *Medial:* Medial endeavors take some effort to accomplish. They consist of some kind of constant activity that requires a small sacrifice of time or resources to accomplish or the performance of a difficult task (or one which may result in harm). Some medial endeavors include keeping an item safely hidden, doing some manner of tedious chore on a daily basis or carrying something either through dangerous terrain or to another city or geographic region. *(–2).*

— *Greater:* A greater endeavor can be quite epic in its requirements to accomplish. Such endeavors consist of an activity that can only be accomplished through significant attention and effort, or a single task of tremendous difficulty (or one that may result in death). Some greater endeavors include time-consuming and dangerous chores such as regular guard duty or traveling to other continents to deliver something. *(–3).*

Ensorcellment: The ensorcellment task may only be performed for a mortal. The changeling infuses the mortal with Glamour, lacing his soul with the weaves of Wyrd that allow him to see the world of the fae. Seemings become apparent to him, and the things of Glamour and Wyrd that changelings live with every day leap into full immediate apparency. Ensorcellment is both a task (for the changeling) and a boon (for the mortal); other tasks and boons may be paired with ensorcellment as part of pledge-crafting, but granting ensorcellment without it acting as both task and boon is impossible.

When a pledge with this task takes effect, the changeling must expend one point of Glamour, in addition to any other costs associated with sealing the pledge. This expenditure actually invests the Glamour into the mortal. It remains there for as long as the pledge that ensorcells the

mortal lasts. The changeling who ensorcelled the mortal may, at any time, reclaim the point of Glamour by touch. Doing so dispels the ensorcellment, however, and constitutes the violation of the pledge that ensorcells him. See p. 279 for more rules on the ensorcelled. *Medial (–2).*

Fealty: The fealty pledge is a powerful and unique pledge task. Only an oath involving an acknowledged lord of a freehold may incorporate the fealty task. In this, the lord binds the one taking the oath to obey the laws of the freehold and to work according to his talents and abilities to defend the freehold in all ways. Any pledge that incorporates fealty always includes the vassalage boon and the banishment sanction. In addition, the fealty task is a task for both liege and vassal.

When the lord of a freehold first participates in a fealty-tasked pledge, he must invest a dot of Willpower (though he may pay eight experience points to regain the dot). After that point, any further pledges that incorporate the fealty task are considered "invested" into this same initial expenditure, allowing the lord of the freehold to take part in many more oaths than he normally might as part of his duties. Should the lord voluntarily step down from his position, however, he recovers the dot of Willpower (or regains the eight experience points) thus invested. This is not the case if he is overthrown, however, or otherwise forced from power. This must be done as part of a ceremony where at least half of his vassals are present.

Though most fealty pledges simply incorporate fealty, vassalage and banishment, some lords incorporate other pledge aspects into the oaths they demand of their vassals. Occasionally, these are universal addenda, such as the paranoid tyrant who adds the vulnerability sanction to those who betray their oaths of fealty or the civic-minded freehold that incorporates an endeavor task to spend one day of the week working to improve the lot of the homeless. More often, though, these are technically other oaths folded into the investment of the fealty pledge — for instance, a liege may maintain a standard fealty pledge, but use a different one for those who swear to act as part of his bodyguard, incorporating additional tasks and commensurate boons and sanctions. *Greater (–3).*

Forbiddance: The forbiddance task outlines what the oathbound are forbidden from doing, lest they become oathbreaker. Sometimes referred to as a "ban task," the forbiddance is used in situations to prevent actions or situations from being brought about by one or both of the parties involved in the pledge.

— *Lesser:* A lesser forbiddance prevents the oathbound from performing some action that is simply avoided. Situations in which the opportunity to perform the action come up only rarely, and there is no difficulty in not taking that action. Agreeing to avoid entering a certain building, not consuming a certain specific food or drink or avoiding using a specific name or phrase are all examples of lesser forbiddances. *(–1).*

— *Medial:* The actions censured by a medial forbiddance are somewhat more difficult to avoid, whether because they are more common or because the oathbound is likely to desire to perform that action. Situations in which the opportunity to perform the action come up more often, and it may serve as some inconvenience to avoid that action. Never entering a particular neighborhood or using the subway, not eating a specific category of food (such as beef, wheat or citrus) or not speaking to a specific type of person (such as policemen) or about a specific topic (such as sports) are all examples of medial forbiddances. *(–2).*

— *Greater:* Greater forbiddances are truly dire, and invariably change the way an oathsworn lives her life. Situations in which the opportunity to perform the action come up frequently, and it is quite difficult to avoid taking that action. Being banished from a city or geographical region, never again touching fruit or meat and oaths of silence and chastity are all greater forbiddances. *(–3).*

Boons

The boon of a pledge describes the expected reward for fulfillment of the task of a pledge. These may range from a measure of Glamour to enchantment of mortal senses to small magical benefits granted not by the changelings in question per se, but by the Wyrd itself.

Adroitness: The skill of one's hands may be increased by the Wyrd as a reward for holding to the terms of a pledge. In many cases, these boons are intended to grant the oathbound the ability to more fully adhere to his pledge: a sworn bodyguard's skill at arms or alertness is enhanced, while a hacker on a quest to acquire information for a changeling may find his aptitude with technology boosted. The oathsworn gains a +1 bonus to all rolls involving a single Skill (defined by the pledge) while he benefits from this boon. *Lesser (+1).*

Blessing: When the parties of a pledge hold to their word, the Wyrd rewards them appropriately, granting beauty, riches, skill at arms or one of many other benefits. The one thus rewarded gains one or more dots in a Merit, which persist as long as the pledge remains intact. Whether investing a mortal to act as his bodyguard, or playing faerie godmother to an orphan whose hard life has softened his heart, the changeling may grant tremendous boons to those who uphold their word. The man who serves the fae well may find himself with a bounty of money that he need never work for, and the plain woman might be made beautiful. Changelings receive blessings of diminished power when compared to mortals, however. This boon may only increase Merits that deal with the mortal world — Merits that reflect involvement in the supernatural world (such as Court Goodwill) may not be increased by means of this boon.

— *Lesser:* A lesser blessing grants a one- or two-dot Merit to humans who do not possess the Merit at all, or increases an existing Merit by one dot. This will only grant

a new Merit of one dot in power to a changeling or other supernatural entity, but may still increase an existing Merit by one dot. *(+1).*

— *Medial:* A medial blessing grants a three- or four-dot Merit to those who do not possess the Merit at all, or increase an existing Merit by two dots. Changelings and other supernatural beings may only gain a new Merit of two dots in power, but may still increase an existing Merit by two dots. *(+2).*

— *Greater:* A greater blessing grants a five-dot Merit to those who do not possess the Merit at all, or increase an existing Merit by three dots. Changelings and other supernaturals may only gain a new Merit of three dots in power, but may increase an existing Merit by three dots. *(+3).*

Ensorcellment: See the entry under "Tasks," on p. 179. *(+2).*

Favor: Performing a task in exchange for a later favor of equivalent importance is a time-honored tradition. Doing so can be risky, of course. Effectively, the one who is bound to perform a favor is bound by Wyrd to perform some task of equivalent power at a later date. Favors are rated as lesser, medial and greater in power. The one who owes the favor is bound by Wyrd to grant it, so long as it is within the bounds of what is owed, when it is asked at that later date, or suffer a Curse sanction of the appropriate power, levied by the Wyrd itself. *Lesser (+1), Medial (+2)* or *Greater (+3).*

Glamour: Not every changeling has access to the reserves of Glamour that drip into the world of mortals from Arcadia. Most changelings have to make do with pacts of Glamour. Between changelings, this is something of a rare boon, for it involves the literal and immediate transfer of Glamour from one changeling to the other when the boon is invoked. Some lieges grant a one-time Glamour boon when they take fealty from a vassal, while others demand a tithe of it from their subjects on a regular basis.

Glamour gained in this way is dependent on the pledge's specifics. However, no more Glamour than the lowest Wyrd rating of the changelings involved may be transferred at any one time. Alternately, this transfer may happen at intervals, one point of Glamour at a time. This transfer may not happen more often than once a week, and this boon may only transfer a number of points of Glamour equal to the highest Wyrd rating of the changelings involved over the duration of the pledge.

Example: Cold-Eye Meggie, the Winter Dowager of a traditional cycling seasonal Court, requires the Glamour boon of fealty from her vassals. She has a Wyrd of 6. She rules the court for the three months of Winter. On the dark moon and full moon of each such month, her vassals contribute one point of Glamour to her, bolstering her power to protect them.

When mortals are involved, however, things are different. The mortal need not know how to manipulate Glamour, or even know it exists. A pledge between mortal and changeling that includes the Glamour boon grants Glamour to the changeling, power tinged with the flavor of the pledge itself. In this fashion, a changeling may gain up to a single point of Glamour per day, depending on the pledge involved. As long as the pledge remains unbroken by the oathbound, the Glamour continues to flow.

Note that even if a pledge's fulfillment has a physical component — as with the shoemaker leaving a saucer of milk for the changeling in return for having all his shoes cobbled overnight — that component is not truly the source of Glamour. The act of upholding the oath actually provides the energy, not the item. Therefore, another changeling could not get Glamour by stealing the saucer of milk left out for a friend, or could not offer the milk to another to give him Glamour, because neither the saucer nor the milk is really magical — they are simply physical tokens representing the oath's fulfillment. *Medial (+2).*

Vassalage: Those who are granted vassalage as their reward are considered members of a freehold, and gain access to the unique blessing associated with that freehold while they are within its borders. See below for more information about freehold blessings. The vassalage boon can only be granted to pledges that incorporate the fealty task. *Greater (+3).*

Freehold Blessings

The word "freehold" can be used to describe anything from a ragtag cluster of tenuously allied Courtless to an elaborate feudal community headed by a Court of self-made nobility. However, a freehold that is properly reinforced by the Wyrd (usually through the work of the Great Courts) can grant a measure of power to all those who have sworn loyalty to the anointed ruler. This benefit usually takes the place of a small die modifier, a blessing to one particular activity.

In order to manifest these benefits, the ruler of a freehold must be "appropriate" in a fashion that matches the Wyrd forces of fate and time. In areas where the seasonal Courts hold sway, this means the ruler must reflect the season of the area; a Summer Court changeling must govern during the Summer, passing the mantle to an Autumn courtier when Autumn comes, and so on. These blessings of vassalage are the primary motivator for the rotating seasonal Courts that have become so prominent. If a freehold's ruler loses his "divine right" (such as a Spring Queen refusing to yield the throne when Summer comes), the freehold benefits are lost. In addition, a ruler who breaks pledges of vassalage in this fashion is said to bring ill luck on his domain; a broken pledge is worse than never having sworn a pledge at all.

This may be simple changeling superstition, but Wyrd makes many superstitions real.

The specific benefits vary greatly from one freehold to the next, but the three following are the most common.

• *Subtlety.* This blessing grants vassals a +1 bonus to all rolls that involve concealing their fae nature from others. Loss of this blessing often results in a rise in outside interference, with many potential enemies feeling drawn to the area.

• *Fortitude.* Vassals with this blessing receive a +1 bonus to all rolls made to resist Clarity degeneration; the pledge of vassalage offers support and strength. Loss of the benefit makes degeneration rolls even more difficult to endure.

• *Fertility.* This blessing grants vassals a +1 bonus to rolls made to harvest Glamour, as the wellsprings of emotions flow freely. Loss of the blessing seems to bring a time of drought on the land, as Glamour withdraws in the wake of broken pledges.

Sanction

The sanction of a pledge describes the punishment that lies in store for those who forswear their pledges. In the case of some oaths and corporals, there is no additional sanction, due to the seriousness of breaking those pledges. Between changelings, the sanction of a pledge must be pre-established.

However, when a pledge exists between mortal and fae, the fae sealing the pledge may simply decide to include the possibility of a sanction. Should the mortal violate the pledge, the changeling may pronounce a sanction of the appropriate power at that moment, laying a curse on the oathbreaker. Should the changeling break the pledge, however, Wyrd lashes out, leveling a sanction of the appropriate power. Generally, Fate works strangely in such instances — when the changeling is most suffering the effects of this curse, the Wyrd arranges for the betrayed mortal to catch a glimpse of the changeling's misery, filling the mortal with the understanding that this has come about as a result of the changeling's treachery.

The duration of a sanction, unless described otherwise below, is the duration of the pledge the sanction was safeguarding. Thus, breaking a pledge that had a duration of the "moon" invokes the sanction for a full 28 days, even if the pledge was broken on the 27th day of its course. If this sanction is against a mortal, at the end of the sanction's duration, the changeling has the option of spending a point of Willpower and continuing to empower the punishment against the mortal. Doing so invests the sanction into a point of the changeling's Wyrd, though, as though it were a pledge of itself.

Banishment: Those who face the sanction of banishment must flee the domain of the lord they have betrayed, for his servants stand to gain by harming or killing the traitor. Any changeling who bears a fealty to the lord who has pronounced banishment may gain a point of Glamour for acting to harm the traitor in a scene, as long as that harm occurs within the freehold's borders. A changeling who manages to kill the oathbreaker while he is within the freehold gains an amount of Glamour equal to the oathbreaker's Wyrd.

This sanction does not happen automatically — the lord of the freehold must pronounce the sanction of banishment before a gathering of at least one-quarter of his vassals. Though other vassals do not have any way of knowing this has happened, save by word of mouth, the oathbreaker sanctioned by it immediately feels the pronouncement of banishment settle on his shoulders. In truth, banishment is the most arbitrary of the sanctions, because it can be pronounced at any time by the lord who holds the vassal's fealty — banishment is not levied by Wyrd. However, a lord who pronounces banishment idly soon finds those willing to swear fealty to him diminishing in number. *Greater (–3)*

Curse: The curse sanction instills incompetence and terrible luck on the oathbreaker. A thousand little difficulties plague his everyday life. This sanction is laid the moment the pledge is broken. Curses of varying power stack; two lesser curses are equivalent to a medial curse, and three lesser curses (or two medial curses) are the equivalent of a greater curse. In such an instance, the newly potent curse lasts for the longest duration of the various stacked curses.

Various blessings and powers that grant luck can work to offset these curses. The 9 again rule's ability reduces the power of the active curse by one step, while the 8 again rule's ability reduces the power of the active curse by two steps. In such instances, the character's roll does not gain the benefit of the 9 again or 8 again effect, which is expended reducing the power of the curse in that instance.

— *Lesser:* A lesser curse sanction negates the 10 again rule for the oathbreaker. He may not re-roll 10s to garner additional successes for the duration of the sanction. *(–1).*

— *Medial:* A medial curse sanction reduces the possibility of success; only a result of 9 or 10 on the die is treated as a success. A result of an 8 or less is a failure on the die. *(–2).*

— *Greater:* A greater curse sanction is a terrible fate; only a result of 10 on the die is treated as a success. A result of a 9 or less is a failure on the die. In addition, should a given die roll result in no successes, it is treated as a dramatic failure, though the oathbreaker may spend a point of Willpower to negate this, making it a simple failure instead. *(–3).*

Death: The oathbreaker invokes his death by violating the oath. As soon as the oath is broken, the betrayed party immediately loses a permanent dot of Willpower

(which may be purchased back by spending eight experience points), and the traitor feels the weight of his doom settle onto his shoulders. Within a number of days equal to the Wyrd rating of the one he betrayed (one week if mortal), the Wyrd will arrange events to cause a fatal — and often ironically appropriate — accident to claim the life of the traitor. If he manages to convince the one he betrayed to forgive him before his doom claims him, the one he betrayed immediately recovers the lost Willpower dot (or the eight experience points), and the doom is lifted. But the forgiveness must be genuine, and uncoerced. *Greater (–3).*

Flaw: The sanction of the Flaw is a curse that is left to the Wyrd to inflict. Those establishing the oath may either swear to accept the judgment of fate, or to call a curse down on themselves should they fail to be true. Effectively, pledges that have the flaw sanction either establish a Flaw (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 217) at the sealing of the pledge, or they simply call upon the Wyrd to punish them as appropriate. Phrases such as "may Fate strike me blind should I betray this oath" and "let the tongue of he who proves untrue likewise betray him" are used to choose the nature of the Flaw. The one that violates this oath receives that Flaw within a week of his betrayal.

If the choice is left to the Wyrd, the Storyteller may choose the nature of the Flaw, focusing on a Flaw thematically appropriate to the pledge broken: an oath to remain silent may actually cause the oathbreaker to gain the Mute Flaw, while a pledge that is broken because the oathbreaker was seduced may result in a Deformity Flaw, to prevent anyone from wanting to seduce him again. The oathbreaker gains this Flaw permanently. *Medial (–2).*

Pishogue: Some changelings prefer to take revenge for broken pledges immediately, and with their own power. Such oathtakers prefer the pishogue sanction, allowing them to weave the powers of their Contracts into the pledge. Such powers sit over the heads of those in the pledge like the sword of Damocles, waiting for a violation of trust to strike. The Contract is activated as the pledge is sealed, requiring a minimum expenditure of one point of Glamour.

Should the pledge be broken, the sanction takes effect, and the Contract lashes out and strikes the traitor, who does not gain any resistance roll or passive defense — choosing to violate the pact is the same as giving permission for the pishogue to strike, in the eyes of the Wyrd. In addition, the one who wove the pishogue immediately knows that the pact is broken.

• *Lesser:* A lesser pishogue is a one- to two-dot Contract. These are minor inconveniences and punishments, levied for the least of offenses. *(–1).*

• *Medial:* A medial pishogue involves the activation of a three- or four-dot Contract. Alternately, weaving two activations of a lesser pishogue into one sanction is considered a medial pishogue; the two activations must be paid for separately, at a minimum of one point of Glamour apiece. *(–2).*

• *Greater:* A greater pishogue levies terrible powers on the head of an oathbreaker, typically that of a five-dot Contract. Alternately, weaving multiple activations of lesser pishogues into one whole may result in a greater pishogue: three lesser pishogues, a lesser and a medial pishogue or two medial pishogues are the equivalent of a greater pishogue. *(–3).*

Poisoning of Boon: The poisoning of the boon works by not simply stripping the oathbreaker of the benefits he enjoyed from the pledge, but by reversing them. The exact nature of this sanction depends on the boon being poisoned:

• *Adroitness:* The Skill granted by the pledge not only goes away but inflicts an additional –1 die penalty to all rolls with that Skill for the duration of the sanction. *Lesser (–1).*

• *Blessing:* The blessing sours. Not only do the bonus points go away with the violation of the pledge, but the rating of the Merit originally blessed drops by a similar amount for the duration of the sanction. The oathbreaker receives terrible misfortune for a while. If this drops the rating of the Merit to below what is necessary to use the Merit (such as dropping Striking Looks to one dot or lower), a minor penalty comes along with it; those rolls that the Merit once assisted are now treated as though they were under the effects of the lesser curse sanction. Thus, an eroded Danger Sense gains that penalty to rolls to avoid ambushes, an eroded Fighting Style suffers anytime Brawl or Weaponry (as appropriate) are employed and an eroded Striking Looks receives the penalty to all rolls that Striking Looks normally benefits. The precise nature of this curse is based on the Storyteller's preferences, as long as the result is appropriately thematic to the oath broken, with just the right touch of irony. The business man who idly enters into a deal with a changeling only to find the money come rolling in is a fool who then ignores his obligation to his "good neighbor"; not only does the money stop simply appearing, but his fat bank accounts suddenly run dry and the money in his wallet and home safe turn into autumn leaves, as dried and crackly as his fortunes. The poisoning of a blessing is of a power equal to the blessing it once granted. *Lesser (–1), Medial (–2) or Greater (–3), based on original blessing.*

• *Ensorcellment:* The poisoning of an ensorcellment is terrible, indeed. The mortal continues to perceive the things of the fae world, as normal. However, they take on a terrible aspect, feeding upon his own fears and insecurities. Changelings of even the most innocent miens become terrible, sinister monsters to him, and the truly fearful of the fae are sanity-shattering horrors. In addition, he suffers from terrible nightmares, his dreams poisoned by his oathbreaking. For each week that a mortal suffers a poisoned ensorcellment, he must make a Resolve + Composure roll, at a penalty of –1 die per week of poisoned ensorcellment. Failing this roll inflicts an appropriate derangement on the mortal.

In addition, when he encounters the things and entities of Glamour, he must make a Resolve + Composure

roll, at the same penalty, or react in great terror. Some may collapse into gibbering catatonia, while others flee blindly, heedless of dangers before them. *Medial (–2).*

• *Favor:* The poisoning of a favor simply reverses the roles of debtor and owed, enforced by the Wyrd. Failing to perform a stated task in return for an unstated debt twists about; the oathbreaker then owes the one betrayed an unstated task, collectible at any time. *Lesser (–1), Medial (–2) or Greater (–3), based on original favor.*

• *Glamour:* When a boon of Glamour is poisoned, there is always the loss. In the case of a deal between the fae, the normal exchange is reversed — the would-be recipient instead loses a similar amount of Glamour, which is rendered to the one betrayed. If this is the result of a deal between mortal and fae, the fae simply loses a point of Glamour when he would have normally gained it. *Medial (–2).*

Poisoning of the boon may not be applied to the vassalage boon. However, there are tales of a freehold's blessing being poisoned if the ruler goes awry (see p. 181).

Vulnerability: The sanction of vulnerability is terrible, stripping the defenses of the one punished. Traditionally, an oathbreaker who receives the vulnerability sanction is also assumed to have incurred the righteous wrath of the one he betrayed. Thus, even between members of a freehold normally forbidden to enact violence upon one another, the one betrayed is permitted to seek his vengeance — if the oathbreaker desired continued protection from him, it is generally agreed that he would have kept his oath. There are two kinds of vulnerability sanctions: the vulnerability to Glamour and the vulnerability to violence.

• *Glamour:* When the sanction of vulnerability to Glamour is laid, the one punished loses his normal resistances to the Contracts and other powers of the one he betrayed. The oathbreaker may not make opposed rolls against such powers, and none of his Resistance Attributes passively apply to any dice rolls made to activate such powers upon him. Likewise, his Defense is considered a 0 for the purposes of being targeted by Contracts and similar Wyrd-based Abilities, but not against normal attacks. This does not apply to all power uses — this penalty only comes into play when the betrayed party uses such Abilities against the oathbreaker. *Medial (–2).*

• *Violence:* The sanction of vulnerability to violence leaves the oathbreaker open to terrible violence. Against physical attacks made by the one the oathbreaker betrayed, the oathbreaker has a Defense of 0 for the duration of the sanction. In addition, the righteous attacks of the betrayed negate any Contracts or other Wyrd-based powers that grant some kind of bonus to Defense or armor against his attacks. Only physical, worn armor grants any kind of bonus. *Medial (–2).*

Duration

The duration of a pledge details the length of time the pledge remains in effect. Most of these are cyclical adjudications of time, rather than something measured in hours.

Day: The pledge that lasts a day is a simple thing, often casually sworn at a whim. The terms of a pledge sworn for a day last for 24 hours. *Lesser (+1).*

Week: The pledge that lasts a week is among the most common of pledges — such oaths last for precisely seven days, to the hour. *Lesser (+1).*

Moon: A pledge sworn for a moon lasts 28 days, the turning of a single lunar month. Such pledges are the most common of the vows that changelings consider serious — the dedication of an oath for a full turning of the moon is usually understood to mean that those involved in the pledge take the oath quite seriously. *Medial (+2).*

Season: Traditionally, swearing a pledge for a season is performed at a solstice or equinox event of some kind. When a pledge is made for a season outside of one of these astronomical events, the pledge is understood to stand in effect for precisely 89 days, or one-quarter of a normal year. In freeholds where a different ruler holds power over each of the seasons, oaths of fealty are generally made for a season. *Medial (+2).*

Year and a Day: Swearing the year-and-a-day pledge binds the word of those participating for 366 days exactly. The wording is an ancient necessity of the Wyrd — it is said that those who swear an oath for only a single year risk the oath coming unfrayed in those years where the timekeeping of men did not agree with the passage of time in the world around them: intercalary, or "leap" years. Swearing for a year and a day alleviates this difficulty. *Greater (+3).*

Decade: The decade oath lasts for 10 years and 10 days precisely. It is rare to find oaths sworn for this duration — they are usually pledges of tremendous importance and power. Most changelings prefer to simply swear pledges on a yearly basis or so; agreeing to swear an oath for more than a year reflects great dedication. *Greater (+3).*

Lifelong: A lifelong oath lasts until the death of one of the oathbound. Lifelong oaths usually achieve some measure of nearly legendary repute in changeling society; those whose dedication runs deep enough to dedicate themselves to a pledge for the rest of their lives are seen as simultaneously somewhat foolish and noteworthy. Swearing a lifelong oath requires the expenditure of a permanent dot of Willpower from one of the oathtakers in addition to any other invocation expenditures. *Greater (+3).*

Generational: It is almost unheard-of for a pledge to be sworn on a generational basis. When this is done, the pledge stays in effect for the lifetime of the oathbound. But even with death, this pledge is not released, for the onus of the responsibility passes on with the next generation — the children of the oathtakers are themselves bound up to fulfill these oaths as well. This may not necessarily be the physical children of the oathtakers; in changeling society, this is most often an heir acknowledged before the rulers of a freehold. Though this is a greater duration, one of the oathtakers must spend a permanent dot of Willpower (in addition to any other invocation expenditures) in order to use this

duration, and both must be in agreement. The oath lasts for a number of generations equal to the Wyrd of the oathtaker that spent the Willpower. *Greater (+3).*

Eternity: It is said that the Others possess the ability to bind up pledges for all eternity, forcing those so bound to adhere to their words even after their bodies have given up life, or into subsequent incarnations. This power is well and truly beyond any known changeling, and even the most puissant of great Fae lords are capable of invoking it only rarely. *Unknown.*

Sealing the Pledge

Once the pledge is spoken and the parties involved agree, one party — generally the one who proposed and formulated the oath — spends any Willpower necessary to bind the oath. For a moment, the hearts of those involved flutter, as though on the edge of panic. The oathbound feel, for just a moment, tied into a grander web of connections than most individuals understand exists and then the feeling fades.

Those watching with the means to perceive auras see red bands settle into the aura of those who share in the bond. When oathbound are within line of sight of one another, tiny red threads of Fate connect the bands to one another.

Adding Another to a Pledge

It is possible to add an additional participant to a pledge once it has already been sealed. This is a simple matter of gathering all the participants who are party to the pledge, and "swearing in" the new party. All the participants must spend a point of Willpower at that juncture to add the newcomer to the pledge, while the newcomer spends the normal invocation cost for the pledge.

The exception to this rule is the fealty task for a pledge, which allows only one participant in the pledge — the lord of the freehold — to add others to the same oath. This is a unique property of the fealty task, however.

Building a Pledge

	Lesser	Medial	Greater
Tasks	Alliance (–1)	Alliance (–2)	Alliance (–3)
—	Dreaming (–2)		
	Endeavor (–1)	Endeavor (–2)	Endeavor (–3)
—	Ensorcellment (–2)		
	Forbiddance (–1)	Forbiddance (–2)	Forbiddance (–3)
	—	—	Fealty* (–3)
Boon	Adroitness (+1)	Blessing (+2)	Blessing (+3)
	Blessing (+1)	Ensorcellment* (+2)	Favor (+3)
	Favor (+1)	Favor (+2)	Vassalage (+3)
		Glamour (+2)	
Sanction	Curse (–1)	Curse (–2)	Banishment (–3)
	Pishogue (–1)	Flaw (–2)	Curse (–3)
	Poisoning of Boon (–1)	Pishogue (–2)	Death* (–3)
		Poisoning of Boon (–2)	Pishogue (–3)
			Poisoning of Boon (–3)
			Vulnerability (–3)
Duration	Day (+1)	Moon (+2)	Year and a Day (+3)
	Week (+1)	Season (+2)	Decade (+3)
			Generational* (+3)
			Lifelong* (+3)

Note: Pledge components marked with an asterisk (*) always add to the base cost of invoking the pledge.

Sample Pledges

The following are some of the pledges most commonly found in use by changelings, and examples of the wording they may use.

The Reaper's Pledge

— Let our prosperity be joined. The sweat of my brow shall be your riches; the depth of your gratitude shall be my power. For one week, this is our vow. May thy wealth dry up

if you are untrue; may fortune rise against me if I am. This we swear.

— A favor for a favor. I'll get things done for you this week, you just give me a little something to indicate we're still friends. If you can't do that much, then you'll be all the poorer.

Type: Vow

Tasks: Endeavor, Medial (–2, changeling performs one task that contributes to the prosperity of the mortal); Endeavor, Lesser – 1, mortal must set out or otherwise give the changeling a token of appreciation)

Boons: Glamour (+2, changeling gains one point of Glamour per day of performing the task); Blessing, Lesser (+1, mortal gains +1 Resources)

Sanction: Curse, Lesser (–1); Poisoning of Boon, Lesser (–1, the changeling performs the task and the mortal fails to set out the token, his Resources are reduced by 1)

Duration: Week (+1)

Invocation: 1 Willpower

Whether a brownie cleaning a house in exchange for a dish of milk, a fieldling who promises to guard the flock from wolves in exchange for a bit of bread and honey each night, or a harmless-seeming old neighborhood fixture offering to keep the street clean in exchange for a beer, the synergy between mortals and the fae provides sweet Glamour. In return for performing some task on behalf of the mortal, the changeling asks for some token gift easily within the ability of the mortal to pay.

It isn't the token that is important, but the Glamour that comes of the deal. Capturing the imagination and sense of wonder involved in these deals with mortals reaps a sweet Glamour that tastes of Spring and innocence. For each day that the changeling performs the agreed-upon task during the duration of the pledge, he gains a point of Glamour when he takes up the mortal's token.

Oath of the Rose and Thorn

— By my true name, I grant you sight for one moon. See the things of dream and wonder with eyes opened like the blossom of the rose. By your true name, you grant me the right to ask a boon, within the cycle of that moon. Swear that you shall grant it to me, so long as it does not bring you harm. Swear that you will keep this knowledge beneath the rose. And let he who is forsworn in this wake to find the thorns of this oath in him. Madness and ill luck follow you if you are false; I shall grant thee a boon, and be followed by misfortune should I prove false. Do you agree?

— Are you sure you want to see what's on the other side? Be sure. Say yes, and I'll show you the way to the people who've hidden themselves from you all along. You'll get one moon, one month. But be sure. Swear it on your name that you won't tell anyone else, or you'll wish you'd never met me.

Type: Oath, True Name

Tasks: Forbiddance, Medial (–2, mortal must not reveal the changeling's true nature to anyone, or reveal anything of the fae world); Ensorcellment (–2, changeling)

Boons: Ensorcellment (+2, of the mortal); Favor, Medial (+2, generally used immediately, with the changeling asking medial alliance of the mortal)

Sanction: Poisoning of Boon, Medial (–2, both)

Duration: Moon (+2)

Invocation: 1 Willpower (both) + 1 Glamour (changeling)

The lovely, willowy woman gives her paramour a rose. She offers to tell him a secret, but he must keep that secret. He swears, and she swears, and they both prick their thumbs on the rose, and let a single drop of blood fall on the already red petals. When he looks up, his lady-love is a creature of dappled sunlight through willow branches, her dreadlocks transformed into long, whip-like branches swaying in the breeze, and her eyes are the deep green of forest moss.

Perhaps one of the oldest known pledges among changelings worldwide, the Oath of Rose and Thorn is used when introducing a mortal to the world of the fae. This oath is a short-term ensorcellment, meant to grant the Sight to mortals without demanding too much of them in return, save silence and the willingness to do a favor for the changeling who granted him such wondrous visions. The rose is used as a reminder — and a symbolic enforcer — that what he sees and learns are to be kept *sub rosa*.

Pledge of Horn and Bone

— By this token of my wayward self, I'll stand at the Gates of Dream. To my right, the Tower of Horn. To my left, the Tower of Bone. I shall grant you safe dreams, fine dreams, wonderful dreams. You shall grant me a sip of those dreams, to tide me well for the night. What say you?

— Go ahead and sleep. I promise you'll rest easy. Even when you're dreaming, I'll watch over you. Your pleasant dreams are all the reward I need.

Type: Corporal, Personal Emblem

Tasks: Dreaming (–2, changeling), Forbiddance, Medial (–2, changeling may not speak of what he sees in the mortal's dreams to another)

Boons: Glamour (+2, changeling)

Sanction: None (+0)

Duration: Moon or Season (+2)

Invocation: 1 Willpower

One of the simplest of pledges, the Pledge of Horn and Bone is simply an oath to protect the dreams of a mortal. There is little expectation of the oneiropomp himself crafted into the pledge save silence about the mortal's dreams, however — there is no endeavor task assumed above. Every evening that the changeling enters the dreams of the mortal and works to make them calm, pleasant and safe from fae incursion, the oneiropomp emerges from the dreamscape and gains a point of Glamour.

The Ancient Pact

— Take this token, as a sign of our pact. Let our dreams mingle — I in your sleeping dreams, you in my waking. Friends, then, and beyond friends. Let this token be our pledge in this Ancient Pact. Will you be bound?

— You and me, against the world. Thicker than blood. No matter what, and damn the one who breaks the friendship.

Type: Corporal, Court Token

Tasks: Endeavor, Medial (–2, the mortal swears to aid the changeling in any way the mortal needs, provided doing so doesn't endanger him), Forbiddance, Medial (–2, the mortal swears to never speak of changelings to those who are not changelings or other ensorcelled); Dreaming (–2), Ensorcellment (–2)

Boons: Blessing, Medial (+2, mortal is granted either a three- or four-dot Merit, or a +2 to a Merit he already has), Ensorcellment (+2, mortal); Blessing, Medial (+2, the changeling shares in the mortal's blessing), Glamour (+2, changeling gains one point of Glamour per day)

Sanction: Curse, Greater (+3, both)

Duration: Lifelong (+3)

Invocation: 1 Willpower (both) + 1 Willpower dot (mortal or changeling)

The Ancient Pact is the general term for any pledge that binds the fates of a mortal and changeling tightly together. This commitment is considered a very powerful, emotionally charged one, akin to a marriage or becoming blood-brothers. Those of the changeling's Court are called upon to honor that pledge, as well, acknowledging the importance of the mortal to their fellow. Because of this, the Lost almost never offer the Ancient Pact to a mortal without consulting with their elders in their Court, and those elders almost never acquiesce unless that mortal has performed some deed or rendered aid for the Court.

When the Ancient Pact is enacted, the changeling gives the mortal a token symbolic of his Court: traditionally, these tokens are a rabbit's foot or piece of silver jewelry depicting an antlered stag for the Court of Spring, a boar's tusk or piece of gold jewelry depicting the sun for the Court of Summer, a raven's feather or a piece of copper jewelry depicting a leaf for the Court of Autumn and a wolf's fang or a piece of pewter jewelry depicting the moon for the Court of Winter.

There is a variation of the Ancient Pact known as the Household Rite wherein a mortal is welcomed into the service of a motley as a whole, rather than a single changeling. Such pledges are almost never sworn on a Court token cor-

poral, however, and are traditionally considered the concern of the motley, rather than a Court proper.

In many ways, such an oath demands much more from the mortal than it does from the changeling. In return for safe dreams and the continued ability to remain among the changeling's world, the mortal must aid the changeling. However, the changeling's blessings — which often come in the form of increased riches or influence of some kind — usually make this easier. Meanwhile, the changeling is simply required to ensure the mortal remains ensorcelled.

Breaking this oath comes with dire consequences. In many ways, it is easier for the mortal to betray this pledge — a slip of the tongue, or unwillingness (or inability) to render aid to the changeling, and a curse settles on his shoulders as the world of Glamour fades from his sight. The changeling, on the other hand, will only break this oath if he refuses to soothe the dreams of the mortal, or by actively choosing to snatch away the ensorcellment. Changelings warn those who would bind a mortal to the Ancient Pact that they should consider carefully — they will literally be stuck with this mortal for the remainder of one of their lives.

Good Neighbors Pact

— Peace, then, peace between us. On our true names, we unclench our fists and clasp empty, peaceful hands, until the turning of the season. Let he who betrays this oath suffer the powers of the betrayed — enter into this pact truthfully, or not at all. So be it.

— No more bad blood between us. Let's call a cease-fire, on the basis of our own good names. A whole year and a day without hostilities, and let the guy who breaks this promise get what's coming to him at the other's hands.

Type: Oath, True Name

Tasks: Alliance, Lesser (+0, both)

Boons: None (+0)

Sanction: Vulnerability, Glamour (+3, both)

Duration: Year and a day (+3)

Invocation: 1 Willpower

Sometimes referred to as a "gentlemen's agreement," this oath is simply a vow to leave one another in peace for the turning of the year. Though changelings are capricious and prone to vendettas, sometimes circumstances require that feuding neighbors set aside their differences. After all, if the True Fae succeed in destroying the freehold in which the feuding changelings live because of their inability to work together, their little disagreement will ultimately amount to nothing but foolishness.

In such instances — or sometimes at the insistence of a ruler who is sick of trying to mediate between quarreling vassals — those involved in the feud may bind themselves to a good neighbors pact, agreeing to leave one another be. The traditional penalty for breaking this oath is vulnerability to the Contracts of the rival and the unspoken permission for the betrayed to take advantage of that vulnerability.

The Motley Pledge

— Hand to hand we stand, and side by side. Though my brother and I may quarrel, none may quarrel with my brother and not quarrel with me. This is my oath: friendship, assistance

and the blessings that come of both, until the year has spun anew. May our prosperity desert us, and our talents fail us, should we break this vow of brotherhood.

— We had our families taken from us, but now we're family, bound by more than blood. I swear to stand by each of you as you swear to stand by me, for a year and a day, and accepting all curses that may fall on me if I lie.

Type: Vow (though sometimes changelings swear nemesis emblem corporals, using one another's personal emblems)

Tasks: Alliance, Greater (–3, all)

Boons: Adroitness (+1, all), Blessing, Medial (+2, all)

Sanction: Poisoning of Boons, Greater (–3, poisoning both Adroitness and Blessing boons)

Duration: Year and a day (+3, though many long-established motleys bear Lifelong durations)

Invocation: 1 Willpower (all)

Though not all motleys use this motley pledge (or even us a pledge at all), this is perhaps the most commonly sworn pledge to bind motleys together. Some elements in changeling society don't even consider a group of changelings a true motley until they've sworn a motley pledge.

The boons of this pact usually manifest in traits that the motley hold as important together: if they are a group of high society movers-and-shakers, their pledge may grant them a bonus to Socialize and two dots in Resources. Likewise, a gathering of martial changelings dedicated to defending their freehold from Fae incursions may gain a bonus dot to Weaponry and two additional dots in the motley's token Fighting Style.

Of course, those who break this pledge not only lose the blessings of the motley, but suffer a loss of their own personal ability for a time — in stepping away from the motley and its preferred focus, the oathbreaker sacrifices some of her own ability and skill. To turn her back on her motley is to turn her back on the things the motley embraces.

Commendation

— I swear, by this token of my liege, that I shall be faithful to him, to cause him no harm unjustly and to give of my skills to the best of my ability for the good of the freehold. I shall render up to him the proper homage of Glamour in its proper time, and may I be banished forever from the warmth of his hearth should I be forsworn.

— I swear on this token that I'll be loyal to this freehold and its master while I benefit from its protection. I agree to render my fair share of Glamour and stand up in defense when needed.

Type: Corporal, Nemesis Emblem

Tasks: Fealty (–3, both)

Boons: Vassalage (+3, vassal); Glamour (+2, vassal must render a tithe of Glamour equal to the liege's Wyrd at some point during the year)

Sanction: Banishment (–3, vassal); Poisoning of Boon, Medial (–2, liege must offer up an amount of Glamour equal to what he would have drawn)

Duration: Year and a day (+3)

Invocation: 1 Willpower (both) + 1 Willpower dot (liege; paid only when he first takes part in an Oath of Fealty as liege)

The pledge between liege and vassal is the cornerstone of changeling society, forming the bonds between the lord of a freehold and those who acknowledge his sovereignty. Unlike feudal commendations, the changeling vassal isn't expected to offer his fighting ability to the lord's defense of the holding. Rather, the changeling who offers an oath of fealty to a freehold lord offers up his best skills and talents for the benefit of the holding.

Thus, a fighter may indeed bring his combat skills to the defense of the domain, but an artist may offer his talents to the lord and his retinue, a musician or actor might provide festival entertainment and a fine cook might be willing to cater certain events. It is assumed that those who have taken this oath will work not simply on behalf of the liege, but to aid one another — the skilled weaponsmith may provide his finest work to those who defend the freehold, while the changeling skilled with computers makes sure that networks set up on behalf of the court are secure and working properly.

The Knight's Oath

— On bended knee, I swear to protect my liege and freehold, to serve the good of both, though it may cost me my life. I shall serve faithfully and with honor, for the span of ten years. I give my oath, by this symbol of my standing in the Court of [Name], to hold this oath, lest death claim me. May my fellows shun me if I prove false.

— I swear my services as a soldier of the freehold, on this badge of my honor. I swear to be faithful, brave and strong, by sword or by bullet, in wilderness or street, in fire and in ice.

Type: Corporal, Courtly Emblem

Tasks: Endeavor, Greater (–3, Knight swears to protect the liege and freehold, even at cost of life), Fealty (–3, knight); Fealty (–3, liege)

Boons: Glamour (+2, Knight receives Glamour from liege), Adroitness (+1, Knight receives benefit in a combat ability), Vassalage (+3, Knight); Blessing, Lesser (+1, liege)

Sanction: Death (–3); Curse, Lesser (–1, liege)

Duration: Decade (+3) or, in some cases, Lifelong (+3)

Invocation: 1 Willpower (+1 Willpower dot if the oath is sworn at Lifelong duration)

Quite a bit more complex than the simple commendation pledge is the knight's oath. Where the commendation is equivalent to simply joining the populace of a freehold, this oath (which has many names, depending on the culture of the freehold) is an oath to lay down life and limb for the good of the liege and freehold, to join the liege's

household and become part of his retinue. This is an oath neither given nor taken lightly.

The liege's requirements are relatively minor, in comparison — though he holds the fealty of the Knight, as the liege does with any other in his freehold, the Knight owes him far more than he owes the Knight, by the terms of the pledge. In return for this sacrifice, however, the Knight reaps tremendous rewards, gaining Glamour from his lord at least once a month, as well as a skill at arms or any other talent for which the liege is accepting him as Knight — there are Knights who serve as computer hackers, skilled drivers and spokesmen on behalf of their lords.

The Heart's Oath

— These are my words to you. In Winter, let me warm you. In Spring, let me sate your passion. In Summer, let me defend you. In Autumn, let me soothe your fears. Let me be your beloved, and you mine, loving you and no other, til the end of my days. I will be true to you, and you to me, never betraying — by word or deed — our love. Let our hands and hearts be bound, in this, our pledge of love.

— There is not now, and there never will be, anyone for me but you. I swear my undying devotion to you not because it is expected of me, but because I can think of no truer way to express the power of my love. My heart is yours to cherish or to break. Take it, and take me with it, for all the rest of my life.

Type: Vow

Tasks: Alliance, Medial (–2, both), Forbiddance (–2, both, to never betray their love by word or deed)

Boons: Blessing, Greater (+3, both), Adroitness (+1, both)

Sanction: Poisoning of Boon (–3, both)

Duration: Lifelong (+3)

Invocation: 1 Willpower + 1 Willpower dot

Though lovers often exchange vows to be true to one another, the Heart's Oath is rarely seen. Tantamount to a marriage, the changelings in question do not seek out another to bind them in love, but choose to do so of their own volition and Wyrd. The Wyrd blesses such strong unions with prosperity and increased ability to face their difficulties (with the adroitness boon often granting bonuses to Empathy or Expression), but a terrible curse and unraveling of fortunes awaits those who break these vows.

Vernal Motleys

Interestingly, the Heart's Oath has been used to seal a compact of love between more than two changelings at the same time. Sometimes referred to as "vernal motleys," some groups of changelings do not gather to pursue common agendas, hone mutual skills or for any of the other reasons many motleys form. Instead, vernal motleys form when changelings find themselves in love with one another. Such polyamorous families are often short-lived — the natural problems that plague mortals who attempt to live such a lifestyle are only aggravated by the tempestuous nature of changelings. But those that remain together, despite difficulties, are often some of the strongest, most resilient motleys in a freehold. Such families of fae find solace and healing from their time in Arcadia.

Dream-Shaping

Dreams surely are difficult, confusing and not everything in them is brought to pass for mankind. For fleeting dreams have two gates: one is fashioned of horn and one of ivory. Those which pass through the one of sawn ivory are deceptive, bringing tidings which come to nought, but those which issue from one of polished horn bring true results when a mortal sees them.

— Homer, *The Odyssey*

The world of dreams is quite real to creatures of the Wyrd. There is some strange connection between the Arcadian stuff of the Hedge and the dreams of mortals. Principles of manipulation carry over, teaching the changeling to manipulate the other: learning to survive in the twisted Hedge teaches changelings to manipulate the stuff of dreams, and understanding the labyrinthine logics of the dreamscape often aids changelings in making it through the Hedge alive.

Changelings wield tremendous influence over their own dreams, capable of molding and shaping them with great aplomb. Every changeling, by virtue of the tiny knot of Arcadian essence he holds within him where his soul used to be, is a lucid dreamer of incredible proficiency. Changelings are capable of turning their own dreams into the fulfillment of every whim and desire they may wish to experience. This practice is referred to as *oneiromancy* by changelings. Though the word originally refers to the act of divination through dreams, changelings use it to refer to dream-shaping and similar techniques.

Where changelings differ from normal lucid dreamers is in the changelings' ability to enter the dreams of others. A changeling may apply his knowledge of oneiromancy to foreign dreams as well; such is the power of the Wyrd. A changeling or other creature that enters the dreams of another is called an oneiropomp. Skilled oneiropomps are capable of discovering the approach of the fae through the signs the oneiropomps find in the dreams of mortals. Oneiropomps are also capable of helping those whose dreams these changelings guard to find more meaning and fulfillment in their dreams.

The World of Dreams

Dreams share a connection with the Hedge and Faerie, on some level. Experienced oneiromancers understand that the stuff that makes up the Hedge and that which forms dreams

are similar, sharing a connection through the Wyrd. In both environments, the Wyrd is strongly manifested, embodying past and future, destiny and fate into one strange, interconnected whole. In many ways, dreams act as the microcosm to the Hedge's macrocosm. The dreams of thinking creatures can be manipulated because they share, in some way, in the nature of the Hedge and Arcadia itself. Ancient pacts that allow the Fae to cross through the Hedge also permit those who share in their fae nature to touch the dreams of mortals.

The only thing that sets the rules of a dreamscape is the mind of the dreamer himself. Anything is possible within its boundaries, and only another mind — guided by its ties to the Wyrd — is capable of altering that dreamscape. Wyrd-touched minds are always capable of oneiromancy, the art of manipulating their own dreams (sometimes called lucid dreaming by modern enthusiasts). More than that, they are capable of altering the dreamscapes of others, if they are invited into those dreams through the use of a pledge that includes the dreaming task aspect.

Dreams and Willpower

After a night of slumber, all characters in the World of Darkness regain a point of Willpower. At the Storyteller's option, those characters who are denied a rest period of full REM sleep — the pattern of sleep that coincides with the dreaming state — may not regain that point of Willpower. Characters who are heavily drugged or magically prevented from dreaming sleep may thus continue to carry the stress of their daily lives with them, relying on other means of recovering their sense of self.

Dream Intensity

Not all dreams are the same. Some are powerful, intense experiences that snatch up the dreamer and hapless oneiropomps and take them for a ride, forcing them to experience the fullness of the dream's intended course until it is completed. Other dreams are wisps of imagery and vague symbolism, poorly remembered when away, and often only half-noticed while asleep. Such dreams are easy manipulated by skilled oneiromancers.

The power level of a given dream is referred to as its Intensity. At the onset of dreaming, the Intensity is determined by rolling the dreaming character's Wits + Resolve. The number of successes gained in that roll determines the Intensity of the dream.

Dreaming and Characters

Because dreaming will invariably become relevant in a game of **Changeling: The Lost**, a Storyteller should take a few moments to consider the sorts of dreams his Storyteller characters have. Just as a person's likes, dislikes, ambitions and fears are relevant when creating an interesting character for characters to interact with, changelings can tell a lot about someone by interacting with their dreams. Thus, the Storyteller is advised to jot down a few quick ideas about the nature of a character's dreams.

Likewise, players should think about the kinds of dreams their characters experience — many motleys have dream-pacts as part of their pledge, and so changelings frequently become very familiar with the dreams of their motley-mates. The kinds of dreams a character has say something about that character, and the truths held in the dreaming world tend to become known within a motley. Fears, hopes and even sexual fantasies are frequently common knowledge within a motley, though most changelings are careful to keep such information in the group alone.

Recurring Dreams: What kind of recurring dreams might a character have? The kinds of recurring dreams that a character has can say something about that character's personality or psyche. For some reason, some concept — portrayed symbolically in dreams, of course — has its hooks in the sleeping mind, which dwells on that concept. Sometimes, this is simply a reflection of the character's own interests, neuroses or stressful life situations, but sometimes, there are other factors at work.

Though the Intensity of a recurring dream is determined as normal each time it is dreamed, the Wits + Resolve roll to determine that Intensity benefits from the 9 again rule.

Memory Dreams: Many people experience a variety of memory dreams, subconscious recollections of things that happened during their waking hours. Which memories the subconscious squirrels away to dredge up during REM sleep can likewise tell something about the dreamer. Often such dreams aren't faithful recollections, but are colored by the associations the dreamer has with the dream, what emotions they experience in remembering the dream and other similar personality "tints." Sometimes the dreamer himself isn't aware of why he continually remembers a certain event from his childhood, or why a specific hallway from his high school years recurs even in dreams that aren't about old alma mater. Many oneiromancers can discover the reasons behind the recurring dreams through careful exploration of the dream itself.

Similar to recurring dreams, the Wits + Resolve roll to determine the Intensity of a memory dream benefits from the 9 again rule. Should the dream be a recurring memory dream, it benefits from the 8 again rule.

Wish Fulfillment: The human subconscious is, in many ways, the source of such human experiences as hopes and desires, whether sublimated or open. Therefore, it is no surprise that many dreams feature some kind of wish fulfillment, allowing the dreamer to experience her fond-

est wishes. Making love with someone she is infatuated with, the opportunity to get back at someone who has hurt her, the chance to reunite with a loved one who died while they were quarreling — most people experience some sort of wish fulfillment dream occasionally. The meanings behind those dreams are often obvious, but sometimes the wish fulfillment is expressed in symbolic terms: dreams of flight may represent freedom from a constricting or binding situation, while dreams of being pregnant may represent a creative urge unfulfilled.

Prophetic Dreams: The Wyrd touches all things, running through the fabric of dreams as surely as it runs through the furthest mad reaches of Arcadia. In the Wyrd, the past and the future merge, and fate looms. Therefore, it is no surprise that dreams sometimes contain glimpses of the future. Some oneiromancers believe that many dreams are prophetic, reflecting the future in the same way that many divination methods do: as something that absolutely will occur if events continue based on the exact moment in time when the divinatory process is used. Of course, free will is the biggest source of those changes in events, and so they are hints at best. Still, prophetic dreams are quite common among those touched by the Wyrd, and many changelings experience them.

While in a dream, a changeling who suspects his environs to be prophetic may make a Wits + Occult + Wyrd roll with a bonus equal to the Intensity of the roll. Success indicates whether or not the dream itself is indeed prophetic, but provides no other information about it. An exceptional success indicates not only whether the dream is prophetic but also gives an indication to the changeling of how a prophetic dream might be both avoided and assured to occur. If a changeling makes any changes whatsoever to the dream through the use of oneiromancy, the dream ceases to actually function as a prophetic dream. Many oneiromancers consider it terribly unlucky to alter genuinely prophetic dreams.

A dreamer who experiences a prophetic dream and then later sees that prediction come true may regain a point of Willpower. Such moments infuse the dreamer's sense of self and assurance in his dream experiences, even as they generally send a shiver down the spines of those who don't believe in such things. Changelings who experience both a prophetic dream and later see it come true may instead regain a point of Glamour, bolstered as they are by the sudden contact with the power of the Wyrd.

Nightmares: What wish fulfillment dreams are to hopes and desires, nightmares are to insecurities and fears. Most dreamers experience the occasional nightmare — a dream that contains imagery, experiences or memories that provoke a fear response. Such dreams are quite terrifying and, in the case of recurring nightmares, can actually contribute to poor health and psychological stress. Nightmares are intensely personal. What creates great fear in one person may simply be an odd dream for another. Therefore, the kinds of nightmares a character experiences tells much about what he fears, hates or generally has negative associations with. Similar to many dreams, however, nightmares can be tremendously symbolic: what appears to be simply a strange dream about clowns and playgrounds may actually be symbolic associations with being abused as a child to the dreamer.

When determining the Intensity of a dream, a nightmare of Intensity equal to or

greater than the dreamer's Willpower results in a terrifying ordeal so severe the dreamer likely wakes sobbing or screaming. The dreamer does not regain any Willpower points from slumber after a night of rest that includes such night terrors.

In addition, the deranged often have more horrific nightmares. Reduce the number of successes required to prevent Willpower recovery by one per derangement the victim possesses. Thus, a dreamer with two derangements and a Willpower 5 need only experience an Intensity 3 nightmare to prevent the recovery of Willpower. Such dreams will always feature traits associated with the derangement in question, however: a phobic's nightmares are often haunted by the thing he is afraid of, and the schizophrenic may come face-to-face with the supposed source of his hallucinations quite frequently in his dreams.

New Mental Flaw: Nightmares

Some peoples' psyches are naturally predisposed toward nightmares. In such dreamers, the more intense the dream is, the more likely she is to experience nightmares — the intensity of the dream unnerves the dreamer, and what began as a simple dream of some other kind takes a dramatic shift into the nightmarish. In game terms, any dream with an Intensity higher than the dreamer's Resolve becomes a nightmare. These nightmares retain the beginning dream's Intensity, however, meaning that such dreams are quite likely to leave the dreamer ill rested the next morning.

Oneiromancy

The arts of dream manipulation are practiced by many changelings. Though all have the ability to shape dreams, not all bother to hone the skill. True oneiromancers seek to understand the nuances of the human condition, as expressed through dreams. The Skill associated with oneiromancy is Empathy — because changelings were once mortal, their manipulation of dreams is, of necessity, half psychology. They do not have the potency of Wyrd to wholesale reshape dreams the way the True Fae do, but if changelings understand what dreams mean and how they work, they can get the same result from a mortal dreamscape.

Entering Dreams

A changeling can always enter his own dreams, without any difficulty. Moreover, he can always enter the dreams of his fetch by simply spending a point of Willpower as the changeling enters slumber. Many Lost torment their fetches, seeking to terrify them and disturb their rest in the days just before attacking them. Of course, the difficulty is that this can backfire: a fetch whose dreams are invaded too often may discover the techniques for invading the dreams of the changeling in return, and some fetches may have dangerous, murderous dreams.

Each time a changeling invades the dreams of his fetch, the Storyteller should roll the changeling's Presence + Wyrd. This is an extended roll, made once for each time the changeling invades the dreams of his fetch. The target number for this roll is equal to the fetch's Willpower; once it is equaled or exceeded, the fetch realizes the oneiric connection between himself and the changeling, and may learn to spend a point of Willpower himself to haunt the dreams of his changeling tormentor. A fetch that has learned this technique very quickly becomes a capable oneiromancer, as capable as any changeling while in the fetch's own dreams, or those of the wayward the fetch replaced.

Changelings may enter the dreams of others through the use of a pledge, using the dreaming task. Motleys commonly enter one another's dreams to keep a concerned eye on their brethrens' dream-lives, and changelings often work dreaming tasks into the pledges they use to ensorcell mortals. Changelings often seek to bind up other mortals in dreaming-based pledges, too — doing so allows changelings to keep track of certain elements of the population, useful for presaging the arrival of the Faerie Hosts into the changelings' neck of the Hedge.

Entering the dreams of one bound to a dreaming task through the use of a pledge is an exercise of Wyrd, rather than innate power; thus, a changeling must spend a point of Glamour to enter the dreams of those the changelings are pledged to protect, rather than the point of Willpower the changelings use to haunt their fetches.

To enter the dreams of another, a changeling must enter a deep, meditative sleep. Because this requires a connection to the dreamstuff of the Hedge, where the Wyrd runs thick, the changeling must either be in a Hollow or the Hedge itself — though, unsurprisingly, lying down and taking a nap while on a jaunt through the Hedge is considered more than a little foolhardy.

Then, the changeling's player makes a normal meditation roll (see "Meditation," p. 51 in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**), except that the target number depends on the destination dream, per the chart below. The changeling may add his Wyrd to the roll.

Target Number	Destination Dream
8 successes	Personal Dreams
12 successes	Fetch's Dreams
16 successes	Dream-tasked Dreams

Though a changeling does pass through his own dreamscape as he follows the lines of Wyrd to the dreams of others, he need not use this technique to simply enter his own dreams and control them as he sleeps. The oneiromancer is a complete master of his own dreams and needs neither special meditative sleep techniques nor the presence of the Hedge in order to manipulate his own dreamscape.

It is worth noting that a changeling who engages in dream-travel does not actually leave his body in any way. He is in a deep reverie, following the paths of the Wyrd to the dreams of others, with his own dreams as a gateway. If a loud noise occurs nearby or something disturbs his body, a reflexive Resolve + Composure roll is required to stay within his dream-state. If the roll fails, he immediately awakens, yanked from this reverie.

Likewise, an oneiromancer can choose to exit a dream at any time with a successful Resolve + Composure roll and an instant action. However, the one whose dreamscape serves as the setting for a dream-visitation is not so fortunate. Non-lucid dreamers have no control over whether or not they can end the dream. A lucid dreamer or oneiromancer can make a Resolve + Composure roll to awaken, as above, but this roll can be reflexively opposed by a present oneiromancer's Wits + Empathy + Wyrd roll; indeed, multiple oneiromancers may reflexively use Teamwork to assist one another in keeping the sleeper asleep until they are finished with their goals there.

Dream Riding

Dream riding is perhaps the simplest and least intensive form of oneiromancy. A dream-riding changeling enters the dream of another and makes simple changes to events and the environment around him. He can introduce fairly dramatic changes, altering the appearance of the dream's setting, how its dream-inhabitants act and all manner of other changes. The integral dream itself remains relatively the same, however.

Working changes to the dream is accomplished through the use of a Wits + Empathy + Wyrd roll, with a penalty equal to the Intensity of the dream being altered. The changeling views the dream happening around the dreamer from a disembodied vantage just above the dreamer's head; it is a change to make himself appear within the context of the dream, and another change to make himself appear to be someone or something else within it.

The oneiropomp must be careful to not use too heavy of a hand, however, lest he disrupt the dream. Should the oneiromancer ever roll a number of successes on a dream riding roll that is greater than the Intensity of the dream, his changes were too much for the dream to remain whole, and it unravels. The oneiromancer may spend a point of Willpower to prevent this happening. The oneiromancer also has the option of voluntarily giving himself penalties to this roll, but once he has determined his dice pool, all the successes from that roll count. It can be something of a delicate juggling act to keep a weak dream intact.

Most of the time, changelings simply dream ride in order to observe what is going on, not doing much to change the content of the dreamscape. Naturally occurring dreams have value in and of themselves, and a wise oneiropomp understands this. From within the dream, a changeling may use dream riding to perform a number of simple actions.

Analyze the Dream: By making minute, weak changes to see how the dreamscape reacts to them, the oneiromancer can determine if the dream in question is a full nightmare, recurring dream, memory dream or wish fulfillment. This requires an instant Wits + Empathy roll, at a penalty equal to the Intensity of the dream. The oneiromancer makes tiny changes and looks for the signs that indicates the kind of dream — memory dreams immediately reinforce aspects of the dream that are remembered rather than imagined, nightmares slightly twist introduced aspects into darker manifestations, recurring dreams are harder to introduce random events into because their pattern is already set, while wish fulfillment or normal dreams are relatively simple to change.

In addition, with a Wits + Occult + Wyrd roll, with a bonus equal to the Intensity of the dream, the oneiropomp can determine if the dream is prophetic or not. If the oneiromancer performs any changes whatsoever to a prophetic dream, however, even the changes used to determine the type of dream, its prophetic ability is nullified — it ceases to be a true message from the Wyrd, and simply becomes another dream once the oneiropomp has tampered with it. Thus, the first thing that wise oneiropomps do is analyze a dream to see if it is prophetic before making any changes to it. Even a change as simple as appearing within the context of the dream can ruin its prescient quality.

Convince the Dreamer: With a Wits + Empathy + Wyrd roll that requires a whole night of work, the oneiromancer may alter dreams subtly, injecting subliminal suggestions into the dreamscape for later use. For each success on the dream riding roll, the changeling may "store" an extra die in the psyche of the dreamer. When interacting socially with the dreamer at a later date, the changeling may tap into these subliminal clues, pitching his voice to a certain tone, using a certain phrase or wearing a certain scent, using as many of these dice as he pleases on any Manipulation-based roll in dealing with the dreamer.

These clues remain embedded in the dreamer's psyche for one week, fading at the end of that period. Only a single "batch" of subliminal clues may rest in the psyche of any given dreamer at one time — establishing a new set of suggestions overwrites the previously stored ones.

Learn about the Dreamer: By watching several nights' worth of dreams, an oneiropomp may learn quite a bit about a dreamer. This requires an extended Wits + Empathy + Wyrd roll, with one roll permitted per night. During these nights, the oneiropomp may not alter the content of the dreamscape whatsoever. Every five successes on this roll reveals one of the following details about the dreamer: her Virtue, her Vice, one of her derangements, her Willpower, one of her Merits (Mental or Social only) or one of her Flaws (Mental or Social only). It can also reveal the use of mind- or emotion-altering supernatural powers on the dreamer within the past month, as well.

Psychotherapy: An oneiropomp with the knowledge to do so may actually use the dreams of a subject as a means of treating psychological or mental problems. This is a standard Wits + Empathy + Wyrd roll, with a penalty equal to the Intensity of the dream in which the work is performed. Each night of work by the oneiropomp is the equivalent of a week of normal psychotherapy.

Scour the Intensity: Though this is rarely used, the oneiromancer may actually scour the Intensity of the dream, reducing the power of its hold over the dreamer's psyche. Most oneiromancers use this to lessen the power of nightmares, allowing the dreamer to experience the nightmare (and thus perhaps get the kind of catharsis that some people gain from their bad dreams) without finding themselves exhausted the next day. This requires a Wits + Empathy + Wyrd roll, at a penalty equal to the Intensity of the dream; each success reduces the Intensity of the dream by 1. If the Intensity of a dream is scoured below 1, the dream ends abruptly, and the dreamer awakens. This may only be performed once per dream.

This can also be used to scour away the Intensity of dream-poison, reducing the hold of the True Fae over mortals they control through the contagion-dreams. This is a Wits + Empathy + Wyrd roll, at no penalty. This roll is opposed by a roll of the dream-poison's Intensity. If the oneiromancer wins this contested roll, each of his successes over that of the dream-poison reduces the Intensity of the dream-poison by 1. If the contagion-dream wins, however, the oneiromancer takes one point of Willpower damage per net success (see "Oneiromachy," below for details of Willpower damage).

Search for Dream-Poison: Searching for the subtle signs of dream-poison is a time-consuming and often difficult task. It is an extended Wits + Empathy + Wyrd roll, at a penalty equal to the Intensity of the dominant dream that evening. Each roll takes a single night of work, and requires a number of total successes equal to the Intensity of the contagion-dream. Most oneiropomps regularly search the dreams of those they watch for the taint of the True Fae.

New Mental Merit: Lucid Dreaming (••)

Prerequisites: Non-changeling, Resolve ••• or higher

Effect: Your character has the ability to control his own dreams, subtly shaping them according to his wishes. For all intents and purposes, your character is considered to have the ability to dream ride (as above), but only in his own dreams. He is also capable of engaging in oneiromachy, or dream-combat, with oneiropomps who enter his dreams.

Lucid dreamers cannot use any of the special actions associated with dream riding (such as Scour the Integrity, Analyze the Dream and the like); their changes are limited to simple environmental changes. However, the changes a lucid dreamer makes to his dreams have no chance of disrupting the dream, either, granting lucid dreamers unprecedented control over their own dreams even if they can't perform quite the same feats that true oneiromancers can.

Dreamscaping

Dreamscaping is far more involved than simply riding a dream. A dream-rider simply experiences the dream as it already exists, making small changes here and there. A dreamscaping oneiromancer, however, is literally creating the dream in its entirety, using his raw Glamour and the power of his Wyrd to shape a dreamscape from the latent stuff of the dreamer's dreamscape. There is a limitation to this ability, however — because it relies on the confluence of the dreamer's own dreamscape and the creative endeavors of the oneiromancer, an oneiropomp cannot actually dreamscape his own sleeping hours. Thus, many motleys assist one another with the creation of dreamscapes meant to bolster and nurture one another.

In order to do this, the dreamer must not be actively in the middle of a dream. Thus, an oneiromancer who enters a dreamer's dreamscape before she enters REM sleep may take the opportunity to shape his will into the fallow, unattended dreamscape, setting the stage for his own psychodramas. However, the mind of a dreamer fights such unnatural intrusions. A dreamer's psyche has its own unknowable agenda, and fights any changes to the symbolic, subconscious presentation the psyche has in store for a sleeper.

To dreamscape a fallow psyche, the oneiromancer spends a point of Glamour and makes a Wits + Empathy + Wyrd roll, opposed by the sleeper's Wits + Resolve roll. This contest immediately triggers REM sleep — if the changeling's roll wins, he shapes the dreamscape into a scenario of his own choosing at an Intensity equal to his net successes. If the dreamer's psyche wins, it begins a dream of an Intensity equal to the net successes on the Wits + Resolve roll.

A somewhat easier way of dreamscaping is to scour a dream already in progress, using dream riding. Once the Intensity of the dream has been reduced to 0, the oneiromancer may immediately craft his own dream, resulting in a swift and strange transition from one dream to the next for the sleeper. Though this is easier to accomplish, it is more demanding in terms of Glamour: the changeling must pay two points of Glamour to weave a dreamscape in the wake of a scoured natural dream, instead of the normal one point.

There are several benefits to creating dreams of whole cloth. The dreaming mind serves a purpose, relieving stress to the psyche, triggering a variety of physiological functions that normally lie dormant, providing incredible access to the subconscious and generally providing something of a "power down" cycle for the machine that is the human body. Dreamscapes may be crafted to do any one of the following. In addition, it is said that some entitlements teach unique forms of dreamscaping that no one else knows or is empowered to use. Any single dreamer can only benefit from a Glamour-crafted dreamscape once per night — thus, an oneiromancer could craft a healing sleep dreamscape and then a stress relief one, but the dreamer would only gain the mechanical benefits of the first dream.

Healing Sleep: By creating a dream that interacts with physiological processes, the oneiromancer may speed the dreamer's healing. With a healing sleep of any Intensity, the time the dreamer spends asleep counts as a full day of rest. Thus, if the sleeper experiences a true day of rest and then a night of healing sleep, he is considered to have gained two days of rest toward the purpose of healing wounds. If the Intensity roll is an exceptional success, the healing sleep counts as two days of rest alone.

Stress Relief: Tapping into the subconscious affirmations of self that some dreams embody, the oneiromancer who knows a dreamer's Vice and Virtue can shape her dreams to assist her recovery from stress — in game terms, he can shape dreams that allow her to recover Willpower. A stress relief dream allows the dreamer to recover a point of Willpower as though she'd fulfilled a Vice, in addition to that normally gained from dreaming. If the Intensity roll is an exceptional success, the stress relief dream allows the dreamer to recover all her Willpower, as though she'd fulfilled a Virtue.

Sleep Teaching: Much of teaching involves more than simply the flow of information — most students learn in different ways. These techniques are what allow the students to truly process the information on a subconscious level. An oneiromancer may take advantage of the easy access to the subconscious of a dreamer to augment the learning process, crafting a dream that serves to teach the dreamer. Jokingly referred to as "montage dreams" by some changelings, a single sleep teaching dream acts as a full day of learning on a given topic. If the Intensity roll is an exceptional success, the sleep teaching dream actually grants the dreamer an experience point that can only be spent to increase the given Skill, Merit or Contract being taught. A dreamer may not gain additional such experience points for that Skill or Merit again, until the first experience point has been spent increasing the trait in question.

Nightmares: Though most oneiromancers rarely use dreamscaping to create nightmares, many changelings enjoy tormenting their fetches with horrible visions of their inevitable deaths. Dreamscaped nightmares are treated as normal nightmares, in terms of the effects of their Intensity on a dreamer.

Dreamweaving

The last kind of oneiromancy is dreamweaving, the craft of creating dreams outside of a sleeper's mind and storing them in an appropriate object for later use. An oneiromancer who wishes to use dreamweaving must find an appropriate object to serve as a vessel for the dream. The object's nature must be appropriate to the kind of dream he desires to create, and will most likely feature in the dream itself somehow. A soft, cuddly teddy bear might be an excellent vessel for a healing sleep dream, while a clown doll with a sinister grin and missing one eye serves perfectly for a nightmare. Oneiromancers often use objects that can be in contact with the sleepers while they are asleep: stuffed toys, blankets, underclothes and jewelry are all popular objects, as are small things that might be tucked up under pillows.

Once the vessel is chosen, it is invested with a point of Glamour. Then, within an hour of investing the vessel with the Glamour, the oneiromancer must begin creating the dream the vessel holds. This is similar to dreamscaping, except that the oneiromancer is not resisted by an active psyche — the oneiromancer is literally sculpting a dream into an empty void. The process for doing so is far more intense, however, requiring a great deal of time; after all, there is no innate dreamscape to draw upon for the form of the dream in the vessel, so it must be far more carefully created. This is a process then can take days.

This is an extended Intelligence + Empathy + Wyrd roll to create this dream, with each roll taking one day. The successes on this roll accumulate to form the Intensity of the dream contained in the vessel. In order to unleash the dream, the sleeper need only lie down to sleep with the object in contact with her. This causes the dream to unweave in her psyche naturally, as though the dream were naturally hers. Thus, the dreamer does not fight the onset of the dream. If the dreamer is unaware of the vessel as the source of strange dreams, however, the Intensity of the dream is opposed by a Resolve + Composure roll as the dreamer enters sleep.

One of the true benefits of dreamweaving is that any dreamer may experience the dream — not simply one to whom its creator is bound by Wyrd. Thus, a vessel that holds a woven dream may be used by any changeling, fetch or human bound in a dreaming-tasked pledge. This allows oneiromancer-craftsmen of tremendous skill to weave dreams into vessels and sell the fruits of their labor — many Goblin Markets boast several sellers of dreamweave vessels. It is worth noting that an oneiromancer can dreamweave for himself; being outside of his actual dreamscape allows him to create an idealized dream for himself to experience.

A vessel may contain any of the kinds of dreams that may be created with dreamscaping. In addition, however, the practice of creating the lattice of woven Glamour within the vessel permits the creation of one of the most powerful kinds of dreams: the Wyrd-dream.

Wyrd-Dream: A Wyrd-dream is a dream that serves as a means of transferring the use of a Contract to the dreamer. Only dreamwoven vessels are capable of containing such powerful dreams — the complexity is significantly beyond the ability of most oneiromancers to effectively weave while within a dreamscape. It is said, however, that some True Fae are capable of weaving Wyrd-dreams in the dreams of those they've poisoned.

Creating a Wyrd-dream begins with the investment of the vessel with a point of Glamour, and then the activation of the Contract to be captured and placed within it. The normal Contract roll is made as normal; if the Contract's activation was too weak for the oneiromancer's liking, he must allow the Glamour within the vessel to fade, as it is already tainted by the first use of the Contract. Of course, activating the Contract a second time receives the normal one-die penalty for trying the same action in consecutive turns, and the vessel must be prepared again with another point of Glamour. Only Contracts that can be used on targets other than the Contract's user may be invested into a Wyrd-dream: thus, Contracts that permit shapechanging and other effects used only by the wielder cannot be granted to others.

The target number for the dreamweaving is at least equal to the number of successes rolled on the activation of the Contract. Most oneiromancers create much higher Intensity dreams, to account for any reductions in Intensity that may occur as a result of an unknowing sleeper's Resolve + Composure roll reducing its power. When the Contract activates in the dreams of the sleeper, it is as though the oneiromancer used the Contract, with a number of successes equal to the original successes rolled for the Contract, or the Intensity of the dream, whichever is lowest. If the sleeper gets a resistance roll of some kind, those successes are subtracted from the Contract's success as normal.

These dreams always reflect the nature of the Contract in question. A Contract that grants some kind of blessing or luck might be represented by an idyllic dream in which fortune smiles on the dreamer, while a curse or Contract with negative effects likely manifests as a nightmare (though without the above mechanical notes to nightmares — the use of a negative Contract on an unwitting dreamer is bad enough).

Personalized Dreams: If the oneiromancer knows a specific dreamer well — having used the "Learn about the Dreamer" dream riding action on multiple occasions, or has known the dreamer for years — the final Intensity of the dream is increased by the oneiromancer's dots in Empathy or Wyrd, whichever is greater. This bonus applies only to

the dreamer it is intended for, however; if the bonus is used on a dreamer other than the one it was intended for, *reduce* the final Intensity of the dream by a similar amount. Many changelings create such "emergency" vessels for those the changelings protect, placing healing or protective Contracts into them, or providing vessels with soothing dreams.

Analyzing Vessels: With an extended Wits + Composure + Wyrd roll, a changeling can ascertain that an object is a dreamwoven vessel. The target number equals the Intensity of the dream within it, and each roll requires 10 minutes of study.

Oneiromachy

According to some older changelings, the arts of oneiromachy — or "dream battle" — are an ancient tradition among the Fae. Simply altering dreams and cleansing the psyche of a dreamer of the presence of the Fae is not enough when the True Fae itself is within the dreams, and changelings often bring battles to the slumber of their hated fetches (and vice versa).

The oneiromancer's ability to transform the reality of the dream is the basis for the ability to engage in oneiromachy. Normally, violence that happens within the context of a dream exists solely to serve some other, often symbolic, purpose. Therefore, violence that does not serve the psyche of the dreamer is somewhat traumatic — the sleeper whose dreamscape serves as a battlefield automatically loses a point of Willpower due to the psychic trauma of the event, whether it is simply a single blow or a vast and terrible battle waged between a motley and one of the Others.

War may be waged in one of two ways within the context of a dream: personally and environmentally.

Personal Attacks

Personal attacks involve the creation of a dream-form (per dream riding) and attacking as though in reality. The weapon the dreamer envisions himself wielding doesn't matter — his own connection with the Wyrd is all that matters. Thus, dream attacks are made using the character's best Power Trait (Intelligence, Strength or Presence) + his combat skill of choice: Athletics for thrown attacks, Brawl for unarmed combat, Firearms for guns and bows and Weaponry for handheld weapons. This attack receives an "equipment bonus" equal to the attacking character's Wyrd.

In dreams, a skilled oneiromancer truly shines, reflected by the use of his highest Traits in both the attacks above, and in his defenses (see "Dream Defenses," below). A physically skilled character is likely to rely on what some refer to as "body memory," a reliance on subconscious memory of how the body reacts in a given situation. A mentally skilled character is capable of applying tremendous imagination and quick-thinking to situations in a dreamscape, while a socially skilled character exudes sheer force of will and personality, sufficient to turn aside lesser assaults and deliver grievous attacks of his own.

Environmental Attacks

Other oneiromancers prefer to use the environment of the dreamscape itself against their opponents. These attacks, similar to those of personal attacks, receive an equipment bonus equal to the oneiropomp's Wyrd, but they do not necessarily rely on typical combat skills. The fluid nature of the dreamscape waits to be summoned and put to use by the skilled oneiromancer, who may use any of the following skills as weapons.

Using normal dream riding techniques, the oneiromancer can effectively make Wits + Empathy + Wyrd attacks. These changes are quick and flash, relying on a stunning imagination on the part of the oneiropomp. The sudden appearance of wild animals, storms, terrible and ancient sorceries and curses that descend on a foe — all of these forms of attack are the auspice of environmental attacks.

Though the environment is used as a weapon, and the oneiromancer may describe huge, epic devastation as part of his attack, such attacks do almost nothing to anyone save the target himself. Regardless of the "special effects" involved, these are still techniques of oneiromachy, attacking the dream-self of one foe at a time.

Dream Defenses

There are two other changes to the combat statistics in the dreamscape; those present have a Defense and Armor different from those in their normal world.

Defense: Defense is derived entirely from the highest of the character's Finesse Traits (Wits, Dexterity or Manipulation).

Armor: A character receives an amount of armor equal to its highest Resistance Trait (Resolve, Stamina or Composure).

Dream Damage

Damage inflicted in dream-combat is not real. Instead of taking points of Health as damage, oneiromachic damage is inflicted as Willpower points of damage. When an attack scores an exceptional success, however, the target does take a single point of bashing damage, often waking bruised, or bleeding from mouth or ears afterwards.

The final blow to a foe in oneiromachic combat can do more than drain the psyche — the final blow can actively wound the psyche for a short time. If an opponent is dropped to 0 Willpower exactly, he simply awakens, gasping for breath. If, however, the damage dropped the defeated foes' Willpower by one to four points below 0, the target awakens with a mild derangement for a single day, or has an already-extant derangement upgraded to a severe derangement for one day. If the damage was sufficient to reduce him to an effective –5 points of Willpower, the duration of the derangement (or the derangement upgrade) is extended to a full week.

Stunting

Creativity and quick thinking are the key to winning oneiromachy. The combatant who takes advantage of his own Wyrd connections, who uses knowledge of the dreamscape he is in to his benefit and who applies wicked creativity that overwhelms his foes will emerge victorious. To reflect this, oneiromachy attacks can gain between one and three bonus dice for interesting and fascinating descriptions.

These bonus dice can apply to offensive or defensive actions. Simply add the bonus directly to the Defense of the target in the case of defensive stunts. It should be noted, however, that a given stunt is really only worth dice once — swinging from a vine in a jungle nightmare is great the first time it happens, especially if it ends in a kick to the villain's jaw, but after that becomes old hat. Each stunt must be interesting and innovative.

Interesting Description (+1 die): An attack that uses an interesting description is worth a single extra die. An oneiromancer is capable of changing the "laws" of the dreamscape he is in by simply willing it so. The ability to run along a wall, leap tremendous heights and strike with such force that the resounding blow cracks the masonry and shatters glass within a 10-foot radius are all appropriate descriptors. None of these descriptions will grant a mechanical benefit other than this bonus die without performing an actual dream riding roll to truly manipulate the dreamscape. These stunts are the actions of epic heroes, feats impossible to normal people — but in the world of dreams, the most lavish dreamers *are* the epic heroes.

Using Thematic Qualities (+2 dice): Going a step beyond an interesting description, using thematic qualities involves tapping into the symbolic themes already present in the fight. These could be the themes of the dream the battle is taking place in, the themes that surround either of the combatants or the themes that are meaningful to the dreamer himself.

Thus, the Fairest of the Winter Court might describe the strikes of his fists leaving behind hoarfrost-bite where they strike, or embellish his charge across the courtyard at his foe as ending in a slide across a patch of frost, the beauty that emanates from within him gleaming off the ice to blind his foe. A battle going on in the mind of fan of musicals might incorporate a falling chandelier, Phantom-style, or one of its foes might arm himself with the impressive headsman's blade from the Mikado. The combatant who takes advantage of his foes' fiery elemental nature by plunging him into a lake of icy water might likewise benefit from two additional dice.

Maestro's Performance (+3 dice): Finally, a three-dice stunt is the rarest of them all, because it isn't sufficient that the stunt be described well. Instead, a three-dice stunt is any two-dice stunt that forces the gaming group to concede that the stunt is not only appropriate and impressive but actively adds to the fun of the group. Therefore, it is entirely subjective — what may constitute a three-dice stunt to one group might only warrant a pair of dice as a bonus in another. The Storyteller is, however, encouraged to be generous — dream combat is supposed to be interesting, fun and somewhat over the top.

The Lords of Dream

The masters of Glamour and Arcadia are, by extension, masters of mortal dreams. The weaker weft of human dreams is like a toy to the Gentry, who take great delight in their play. Unlike changelings, the Others need not bind themselves into a pledge to enter the dreams of mortals. Instead, the Fae may gain access to the dreams of mortals in one of two ways: through the use of dream phials or by their physical presence.

Instead of Empathy, True Fae may use Persuasion or Intimidation to manipulate the dreams of mortals — the True Fae do not need to rely on understanding dreams, the way once-human changelings do. Their force of personality is sufficient to hammer dreams to take the shapes they desire, and the dreams they weave are breathtaking constructs of terrible beauty (Persuasion) or awesome horror (Intimidation).

Dream-Poison

To enter the dreams of mortals or other creatures, the Fae must poison their dreams, warping and twisting them until they are a welcome and inviting environment for the Other's influence. In order to do so, the Fae must either leave a dream phial (see "Dreamweaving," below) for the mortal's slumber or she must touch the sleeping mortal.

The dream-poison — also referred to as a contagion-dream by savants of the Autumn Court — is a dream crafted through the use of either dreamscaping performed while touching the mortal, or through the arts of dreamweaving. When the mortal experiences the dream-poison, his player rolls Resolve + Composure; each success in this roll reduces the Intensity of the dream-poison. If the final Intensity of the contagion-dream is lower than the True Fae's Wyrd rating, the poisoning is incomplete.

In such cases, the Fae must attempt to poison his dreams again. If the poisoning attempt is made within seven days of the original attempt, the final Intensity of multiple dream-poisons are cumulative. The dream-poison fades after a week, though, so if more than seven days pass since the first poisoning, the Other must begin in the process anew.

Once the Intensity of the contagion-dream is sufficient to accommodate the powerful Wyrd of the True Fae (whether accomplished after one exposure to dream-poison, or multiple), the mortal's dream world is remade into an environment fitting for the Fae invader. The Other may, at any time and from any distance within the Hedge or the real world, enter the dreams of the mortal. The Fae instinctively knows when the mortal sleeps in such instances, and there is no limit to the number of mortals whose dreams the Fae may poison.

However, a given mortal's dreamscape can accommodate only one Fae at any given time. Attempts to poison the dreams of a mortal whose dreams are already poisoned automatically fail. At that point, the only option the Fae has is to approach the mortal and gain his permission to enter his dreams, bound by the Wyrd in a pact. From that point, the Fae may enter the dreams of the mortal and scour away the influence of the Other in the same way a changeling may erode the influence of poison-dreams (see "Dream Riding," below).

Dream Warping

Though changelings can work wonders with dreams, only the True Fae can engage in the techniques referred to as dream warping. While within the dreams of a mortal whose dreams the True Fae have poisoned (entering the dreams of mortals through the use of pledges is insufficient), the Gentry can perform any of the following feats of oneiromancy.

Contagion-Carrier: The True Fae may rework the dreamscape of the mortal's psyche, turning it into a breeding ground for contagion-dreams. This requires a normal dreamscaping roll (see "Dreamscaping," below), with an Intensity equal to or greater than the mortal's Willpower. Success indicates that the mortal's dreamscape becomes a twisted, hellish place that literally churns out a new contagion-dream once every week.

These contagion dreams have an Intensity equal to the mortal's Wits + Resolve, so the Fae tend to prefer creative, stubborn people as contagion-carriers. The True Fae may visit the dreamscape to harvest these contagion dreams, placing them within dream phials to use in poisoning other mortal dreamscapes. Alternately, should a dream-poison remain unharvested for 24 hours, the mortal feels compelled to seek others to infect. A contagion-carrier can infect others by simply sleeping beside them, generally with skin-to-skin contact.

This condition, understandably, has a detrimental effect on the mortal's psyche. For each month the mortal serves as a contagion-carrier, he must roll Resolve + Composure or gain a derangement. This roll receives a one-die penalty per previous month when he succeeded at the roll. Once he receives a new derangement, these penalties reset back to 0. Thus, contagion-carriers eventually end up horribly insane, suffering from a wide variety of phobias, anxieties and schizophrenia, all focused around the thematic elements of the Keeper that tainted them. Thus, a man whose psyche is used by the Spidermarrow Witch finds that the voices he begins hearing are hers, and he gains a phobia of the spiders that constantly weave her gown of grey silk.

Though the dreamscaping performed on the mortal can be removed by an oneiropomp's dreamscaping, after one year of serving as a contagion-carrier, a mortal's dreamscape is irrevocably poisoned; she will forever create dreams that may poison others. The only way of dealing with such cases is to kill the unfortunate, lest they inadvertently provide the Fae a way into dreams.

Ensorcell: In a dreamscaped vision of Intensity at least equal to the mortal's Resolve + Composure, the True Fae can instill a point of Glamour into the mortal, ensorcelling him. Fae ensorcellment works just as the ensorcellment of changelings, save that Fae ensorcellment doesn't require a pledge to instigate.

In addition, a truly favored ensorcelled mortal can be granted a single use of one of the Fae's Contracts. The Keeper must dreamweave the Contract's use into a dream, with normal dreamweaving techniques. However, rather than the dream unfolding in the mortal's slumber and affecting him, the True Fae may invest a point of Glamour into the mortal, allowing him to "hold" that bundled dream-Glamour, spending that point at a later date and unraveling the power. When this is done, the power takes effect on the target of the mortal's choosing, as though the True Fae were using the power in that instance, allowing the Gentry to seed the mortal world with agents capable of using tremendous and terrible power, but only once.

Using such stored power takes a toll on the mortal's psyche, however. The unraveling of the maddening Glamour can shred the sanity of the mortal, exposing him as it does the Wyrd of the True Fae in that moment. The mortal must make a degeneration check as though he'd just committed a sin against a Morality rating of 7 — the Wyrd prerequisite of the Contract just used. Thus, using a Contract with a Wyrd prerequisite of 4 is a Morality 3 sin.

Harvest Dreams: The Fae can harvest Glamour from a mortal's dreams as changelings do, although the Fae are far less gentle. A Fae tends to roll Presence or Manipulation + Wits + Wyrd to harvest Glamour from a dream, receiving one Glamour point per success. The dreams are exceptionally intense, and often leave the dreamer shaken. A mortal whose dreams have been ravaged by a True Fae loses a point of Willpower upon awakening (and of course, gains no Willpower from restful sleep). If the Other achieved an exceptional success on the harvesting roll, the victim must make a Resolve + Composure roll or gain a derangement. Those unlucky enough to attract the attention of a Fae who likes the "taste" of their dreams are all but doomed to end up as broken lunatics.

Read the Wyrd: The True Fae may use the connection between mortal dreams and the Wyrd to induce a prophetic dream in the mortal. This requires a dream riding roll from the Other, who flays away the base symbolism and personal meanings in the dream to reveal the raw lines of the Wyrd that lurk beneath all dreams. Though this grants the True Fae a glimpse of the future, it has truly detrimental effects on a mortal. The mortal must make a Resolve + Composure roll against the True Fae's dream riding roll. If the mortal makes more successes than the True Fae scored, the mortal simply experiences a nightmare of an Intensity equal to the True Fae's successes.

If the True Fae ends up with one to four more successes than the mortal's, the mortal experiences a terrible nightmare and then awakens with a mild derangement that lasts for a month. If the True Fae has enough successes over the mortal's resistance roll to constitute an exceptional success, the mortal awakens with a severe derangement that lasts for a month, a permanent mild derangement or has one of his own mild derangements upgraded to a severe derangement permanently.

Sleepwalk: While within the dreams of a mortal, the True Fae can subtly alter the patterns of the mortal's sleep, turning him into a sleepwalker. With a dream riding roll (see "Dream Riding," below), the True Fae introduces slight changes into the mortal's perception of the dream. For each successful roll of dream riding by the True Fae, the mortal obeys a single simple command. Such commands include such things as: "Get out of bed." "Walk down the hall." "Open the door." "Step into traffic." "Pull the trigger."

Supernatural Dreams

The dreams of supernatural creatures are, in some way, protected by the occult nature of those creatures. Mental defenses grant benefits against any and all techniques of dream-shaping, and any resistance rolls always add the supernatural potency of that creature (Blood Potency for vampires, Primal Urge for werewolves and Gnosis for mages).

In addition, the True Fae cannot use dream-poisoning against supernatural creatures. The only way to enter the dreams of a supernatural creature is by crafting a pledge that grants entry — the darkened recesses of supernatural psyches are too clever and powerful for the trickery of the Gentry.

Other Dangers

The True Fae are not the only dangers to a dreamer that might come from the Hedge. Changeling tales are filled with strange creatures in the Hedge or Faerie that are capable of hunting in the dreams of mortals for their sustenance, feeding on the fear the creatures create and leaving mortals mad or mindless.

Other creatures are said to be capable of luring a sleeper's dreaming self into actually leaving his physical body, entering into the Hedge as a wispy, ghost-like thing, half-real and slowly withering away, lost and unable to return without the help of an oneiromancer. It is believed that some creatures trap and slowly eat these half-real dream-selves, while others simply leave those dream-bodies to wander while they enter into the hollow place where the dreaming self used to be, taking over the mortal's body for their own ends.

Tokens

Some things that linger in the Hedge or Faerie gain a measure of dark magic. Even the simplest of items — a thorn broken off a gnarled vine, a brass knob unscrewed from a Fae Keeper's many cabinets, a shoelace stolen from a Hedge-tangled corpse — may feature a mote of mad sorcery within it.

Changelings may take these things and use that magic for their own gains. These items, known generally as tokens (though some glibly refer to them as "souvenirs"), provide the Fae with a curious trick or weird enchantment. The most powerful of these tokens are deliberately crafted by the Others themselves, literally tokens of old promises that bring the Fae to fulfill old obligations with powerful magic, no matter who now holds the object.

But it's not all gold spun from straw. The magic inside a token is some of the same magic that pumps inside the hearts of the True Fae, and while powerful, it is in part corrupt. Every token comes with a drawback, a small curse or additional cost that use of the token invokes. A feather in a changeling's hair may put a spring in her step, but it may muddy her thinking. A pair of gold-rimmed eyeglasses do help her see great distances, but when she wears them she is totally deaf. For every benefit there is a price to pay, a toll taken by the whimsy of Faerie magic.

A Token's Mien

Tokens, when brought into this world from the Hedge or from Faerie, do not appear as they necessarily would have in those places. In this world, the token appears mundane, almost purposefully uninteresting — metal has no shine to it, wood seems dinged or splintered, paper or parchment frays at the edges.

Much as changelings have a supernatural seeming, though, so do tokens. When active, a token reveals (only to changelings) a measure of its magic. The token may appear as it did in the Hedge or in Arcadia, or it may reveal new glimpses of odd magic. It's rarely an extreme shift (though some particularly power tokens offer staggering shifts in perception); a ratty baseball hat taken from a body in the Hedge doesn't become a gleaming crown when active. It still looks like a baseball hat, but now it looks new, pristine, its colors bright, perhaps with a strange logo representing no familiar team. The baseball hat may offer non-visual changes, too — the changeling can smell fresh popcorn, or hear the sharp *crack* of a bat against a fastball. Of course, there's often a dark element to the token's mien, too — the brim of the baseball hat may cast a very dark shadow over the changeling's face, or it may wet her hair with blood when worn. Bad magic taints the mien in some small but noticeable way.

Activating a Token

Using a token occasionally requires a physical action on the part of the changeling — stroke it three times, whis-

per a rhyme, drizzle a drop of blood upon it — though many simply require the changeling's presence and desire. Most tokens have a power that is used upon activation. To activate a token, the player rolls the character's Wyrd. Willpower may *not* be spent to add dice to this roll. Alternately, the player may spend a point of Glamour to activate the token's power automatically, fueling the enchantment within with her own magic.

Dice Pool: Wyrd

Action: Varies by token

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The token fails to trigger, but the user still suffers whatever drawback is listed with the token.

Failure: The token's power fails to trigger.

Success: The token functions as noted in its description.

Exceptional Success: The changeling's own magic is invigorated by the success. The next time the player rolls the character's Wyrd (as part of a Contract or perhaps to activate a token), she gains a +1 die bonus to that roll.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+2	The character is within a Hollow when the token is used.
+1	The character is in the Hedge when the token is used.
–1	The character has particularly high Clarity (8–10).
–1	Distractions are present (noise, crowds).

The Catch

Every token has a catch, a dread cost that allows *anybody* to use the token. This means that a human, mage, vampire, werewolf or Promethean can use the token and gain its benefit without rolling Wyrd or spending Glamour. It also means that a *changeling* can gain the token's benefit without rolling Wyrd (perhaps she has too few Wyrd dice to achieve a reasonable rate of success) or spending Glamour (perhaps she doesn't want to spend her Glamour, or has too little of it to go around).

The catch is always a cursed effect. By giving up the Wyrd roll or Glamour cost that a token demands, the token will still work but does so only by taking a severe toll upon the user. Every token has its own catch.

Note that, in addition to the catch, the token's drawback still occurs. Both negative effects go off, and the token's benefit occurs automatically without any Wyrd roll or points of Glamour.

Some catches involve a consciously paid cost (involving pain or penalties). Other tokens will take their grim tolls out of the character's hide without asking. It should also be noted that tokens resist any sort of alteration to their form from outside sources. A mage who uses magic to change a token's shape or a werewolf who attempts to dedicate a token to her body may find that they have accidentally destroyed the token… or increased the power of its drawback.

Finding a Token

Anything withdrawn from the Hedge or from the lands of Faerie might theoretically be a token. Tokens are not always easy to recognize, however. To determine whether a given object is a token or not, a changeling must roll Wits + Wyrd while in contact with the item. Success allows her to "feel" the familiar tingle of a promise reinforced by Glamour.

One-Dot Tokens

A one-dot token is a minor, low-power item whose benefit is either very meager, or only useable in specialized situations. One-dot tokens make for common bartering items among the changelings of the freehold, generally given as the result of a pledge. Other changelings bring such items back from the Hedge themselves.

Ace in the Hole (•)

This token appears to be a playing card, usually an Ace or a Queen. When taped over the interior lock of a closed door and activated, this token makes it difficult to pick *any* of the locks attached to that door (even if the card is taped over the knob lock, the deadbolt lock above it gains the advantage as well). Attempts to pick the lock of that door are made at a –2 dice modifier, and the presence of this token also *removes* the 10 again rule from any lockpicking attempt rolls. This token doesn't work on security systems, only physical locks (though rumors of a higher-dot token exist that do confer the penalty against attempts to crack security systems). The protection lasts until the user or any other character opens the door.

Action: Instant

Mien: When active, the card appears to be a dirty, dusty Tarot card — often the Empress or Fool. The figure on the card sometimes blinks and mouths silent words. The card's edges drip with a dark, viscous liquid as it works its magic.

Drawback: When using the Ace in the Hole, the wielder always cuts himself with the card — a stiff paper cut that causes one point of bashing damage. No matter how diligently he protects himself, he'll slice his thumb, skin between fingers, even his chin. It cannot be avoided.

Catch: Use of this supposedly lucky icon actually drains a little of the luck from the user as the cost. For the rest of the day, until he sleeps, the character no longer gains the 10 again advantage on any of his rolls.

The Cracked Mirror (•)

When staring into this dingy mirror whose glass is cracked and flecked with red rust, a changeling is able to see the face of his fetch and communicate briefly with him. Upon a successful activation, the fetch's face appears, and the two can have a conversation capable of lasting a number of turns equal to the user's Willpower score. (The fetch becomes immediately aware that his changeling "twin" is

looking upon him.) Spending Willpower extends this by one minute per point spent.

Action: Instant

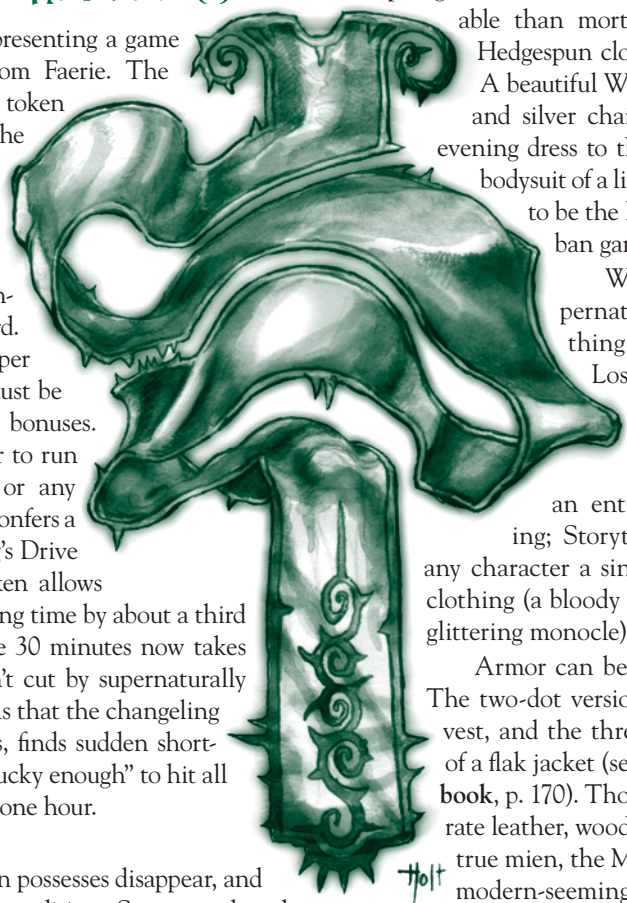
Mien: The crack in the mirror melts away. A cool fog drifts up from the glass as the fetch's face is present.

Drawback: The fetch becomes aware of the changeling's exact location.

Catch: The changeling must first cut his own face in such a way that it becomes visible in the mirrored glass. This visible cut confers one lethal point of damage. The cut must be fresh, still dripping, for the token to be of use.

This token is of little use to non-changelings, though it may reveal the face of someone posing as the user in more conventional fashion.

Driver's Little Helper (•)



This token is an icon representing a game of chance or skill, stolen from Faerie. The changeling must place this token somewhere inside her car. The token might appear to normal eyes as a pair of ratty pink dice dangling from the rearview, a scuffed-up eight-ball topping the gearshift or an old air freshener shaped like a playing card. When used, Driver's Little Helper grants the changeling (who must be driving) a number of small bonuses. First, the token allows the car to run without expending gasoline or any other fuel. Second, the token confers a small bonus to the changeling's Drive rolls (+1). And third, the token allows the changeling to cut his driving time by about a third (so, a journey that might take 30 minutes now takes 20, instead). Driving time isn't cut by supernaturally speeding up — but it just seems that the changeling always makes propitious turns, finds sudden shortcuts and discovers that she's "lucky enough" to hit all the green lights. This lasts for one hour.

Action: Reflexive

Mien: Any flaws the token possesses disappear, and it appears in almost perfect condition. Stranger, though, is that when the token is used, the distant sound of a Fae keeper's carriage rattling and bouncing down the roads of the Hedge can be heard. No radio or traffic noise can drown out this sound. For some changelings, this is quite unsettling.

Drawback: After the hour is up, the car overheats. Steam vents from the front, and the car shuts down. It cannot return to serviceable driving condition for at least 15 minutes, unless the changeling makes a successful Wits + Craft roll (which at least requires her enough time to tinker around in the engine).

Catch: The token will operate without the expenditure of Glamour or use of a Wyrd roll if the character pours a pint of her own blood into the gas tank or transmission. Taking this pint of blood will, when drawn, causes one lethal point of damage (or one Vitae in the case of vampires).

Hedgespun Raiment (• to •••)

Hedgespun clothing is not quite a token in the literal sense, though it qualifies as such for purposes of being purchased via the Token Merit (p. 98). These clothes come in a near-infinite variety of forms — glittering mail jackets carved from unmelting ice, weightless gowns of palest cobweb, rich silks dyed the vibrant hues of a season at its height, form-fitting black leather crafted from the hide of no earthly beast. While quite ordinary clothing by any other measure, Hedgespun garments are often better-fitting and more comfortable than mortal clothing. Most importantly, Hedgespun clothing is protected by the Mask. A beautiful Winter Queen's gown of snowflake and silver chain appears as an elegant white evening dress to the mortal eye. The basilisk-skin bodysuit of a lithe Darkling highwayman seems to be the leather jacket and pants of an urban gangster.

While possessing no actual supernatural power, Hedgespun is something of a status symbol among the Lost, and many courtiers wouldn't be caught dead at a grand Revel in simple mortal clothing. The one-dot version represents an entire outfit of Hedgespun clothing; Storytellers are encouraged to allow any character a single small article of Hedgespun clothing (a bloody red cap, a flame-colored scarf, a glittering monocle) at no cost.

Armor can be crafted of Hedgespun, as well. The two-dot version is the equivalent of a Kevlar vest, and the three-dot version is the equivalent of a flak jacket (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 170). Though the armor appears as elaborate leather, wood, metal, ice or other armor in its true mien, the Mask disguises the armor as more modern-seeming protective clothing (a soldier's flak jacket, hockey pads or the like). Hedgespun armor cannot be mistaken for ordinary clothes.

Hedgespun clothes can also be crafted by the Lost, not simply discovered. This requires an appropriate Crafts roll, and must be performed in the Hedge. The changeling must make a small donation of her own energy to "finish" the garment (represented by the experience cost.)

Action: None

Mien: Practically infinite. Each piece of Hedgespun raiment is a work of art in its own right.

Drawback: Hedgespun cannot abide the touch of cold iron. Armor made of Hedgespun provides no protection against cold iron (see p. 174). Delicate garments may even unravel or burn at its touch.

Catch: Hedgespun tends to chafe uncomfortably or provide little protection against the elements when worn by a non-fae. The discomfort can provide a one-die distraction penalty to dice rolls if the circumstances seem appropriate, such as attempting to concentrate on picking a lock.

The Murmuring Coin (•)

Some Murmuring Coins are taken from Faerie — the strange ducats that the True Fae use as money make for easy pocketing if one has fast hands. Others are pennies, dimes, quarters or other coins taken from the pockets of dead men or changeling corpses found in the Hedge. The Coin, in the real world, looks grungy and feels greasy, but otherwise appears as any normal coin. The changeling must keep the Murmuring Coin touching her skin somewhere to use it — some keep it in a shoe, under the tongue or in a pocket so it can be held tightly in one's palm. At the time of purchasing something with money, the changeling activates the token. She can, for this single transaction, buy the item as if she had one more Resources dot than usual. (For instance, if the user possesses Resources 1, but is attempting to buy a light revolver at Resources 2, she can now do so.) The magic of the token is expressed in various ways: the merchant suddenly drops the price "for a friend," or maybe he's willing to barter down to "clear out inventory."

Action: Reflexive

Mien: The Coin turns a burnished bronze color. The head's side of the Coin develops a new, strange ornamentation — one that's different every time. It might reveal a big 'X' slashed across the president's face, or perhaps has the user's own scowling face embossed upon the metal. The Coin whispers, too — incomprehensible murmurs (hence its name) that only changelings can hear.

Drawback: For the following day, the changeling's Vice changes temporarily to Greed. During this time, she cannot gain Willpower through the expression of her old Vice, and only gains it if she performs avaricious actions. If her Vice was already Greed, she regains only half the Willpower she would ordinarily regain by following her Virtue, though she may regain Willpower through Greed as usual.

Catch: A loved one will suddenly suffer some misfortune that reduces that person's Resources dot by one. A kitchen catches fire, someone breaks his leg at a job site and cannot work, someone steals a credit card and runs up astronomical fees, etc. If it's a changeling who is eschewing her Wyrd roll or Glamour expenditure, then the unfortunate drop in Resources may happen to one of his own motley.

Two-Dot Tokens

Tokens of two dots tend to be more versatile, or offer even stronger benefits in specialized situations. Changelings don't usually give these out as parts of easy pledges, though these tokens may be common currency among changelings of the Courts or within certain entitlements.

Homespinner's Needle (••)

It appears as nothing more than a simple sewing needle tucked away in a tiny velvet envelope. For those who know its power, Homespinner's Needle can bring great advantage. To use it, a character simply conceals the token beneath something in a room — beneath a rug, under a couch cushion, even beneath the heel of her boot. When activated, the Needle gives the room a homely, warm glow — a faintly perceived sense of comfort. Even the dankest prison cell can be made to feel restful and serene for a short time. The advantage is that any who enter the room have +1 to any Presence or Manipulation rolls made while within the needle-affected room (they feel cordial, hospitable, even gregarious). The changeling who activated the token gains +2 to her Presence and Manipulation rolls. The Needle's effects last for one scene.

Action: Instant

Mien: The Needle turns from silver to gleaming gold.

Drawback: Any affected by the Needle (meaning, they gain the Presence and Manipulation bonus at any point) will suffer a one-die penalty to any Social rolls made in the scene following. They find that they trip over words, or simply cannot articulate themselves quite as well. The changeling who used the Homespinner's Needle gains a –2 to her Social rolls for the scene following.

Catch: The Needle demands its user whisper the rhyme, "Needle, needle, sharp and fine, clean up the house for the suitor of mine" and then stab herself in the palm with it. The Needle literally disappears beneath the flesh and worms its way through the body. This process causes one lethal point of damage at the moment the needle-tip is thrust into the hand. The Needle comes out of the body three hours later, hacked up into the mouth and spit out.

Lantern of Ill Omen (••)

This handheld Lantern has neither candle nor bulb within. In the spot where the light source normally sits is a small jar, and within this jar are two reagents: a handful (about a half-dozen) of crushed-up fireflies and seven hairs plucked from the user's own head. (Some say those hairs carry the echoes of memory, necessary for the attunement process.) The user attunes this Lantern by spending one Willpower point and concentrating for a single turn on an individual she has met in the past. Now, when activated, the Lantern will glow and buzz when that individual is within a half-mile radius, providing ample warning to the changeling (though some use this token to verify their accuracy in a tracking attempt — if it glows, then she knows they're at least getting close to their prey). Activation lasts for a number of hours equal to the user's Willpower score. The Lantern of

Ill Omen can be re-attuned once per day to a new target, but each time this costs another Willpower point (and a turn to concentrate). The Lantern *can* be attuned to a True Fae, though it can only be attuned toward a Fae that the user has met previously, and this costs *two* Willpower points instead of one. Alternately, if the user tunes the Lantern to her fetch, no Willpower expenditure is necessary. Note that the Lantern must be within 10 feet of the character to work.

Action: Reflexive

Mien: Parts of the Lantern seem etched with mad whorls of filigree and scrollwork. Within the token, the supposedly dead fireflies sometimes twitch or flutter a broken wing.

Drawback: Once the lantern glows for a full hour, the light source "burns out" and must be replenished. Hairs from the head are easy to replenish, but fireflies are not so simple to obtain in some areas or seasons.

Catch: Those refusing to pay the Willpower cost or submit to a Wyrd roll find that the Lantern still works, but glimpsing its glow damages one's sight — the user's vision is suddenly filled with floating orbs and flashes of light. Any sight-based Perception rolls are made at –3 dice. This penalty lasts for one full hour *after* the glow finally recedes.

Ribbon of Nevermiss (••)

This token is a ribbon taken from a human's loved one — a ribbon from a little girl's pigtails, from a gift given to a boy, clipped from a wife's negligee, or so on. When tied around the barrel of a firearm and activated, the Ribbon of Nevermiss provides the shooter with a bit of luck and keen insight. The shooter's next shot can effectively double the ranges associated with that particular weapon. If its ranges were, for instance, 20/40/80, they are now 40/80/160 for the purposes of that shot.

Action: Reflexive

Mien: The Ribbon smolders. Curls of steam and gun smoke rise from its length.

Drawback: A firearm can only make three shots this way before it starts to damage the gun's accuracy. After three times are used, the gun's Damage rating falls to 0, and the Ribbon can no longer provide its benefit to that particular weapon.

Catch: The token demands one of the user's teeth. If the user refuses to remove a tooth on his own, fate will conspire over the next 12 hours and take one (he'll trip and do a face plant into a doorframe, a hockey puck will hit him in the mouth or he'll find an alarmingly accelerated case of rot in one molar). Some believe this cost is steep, but others are just happy it doesn't ask for an eye.

Three-Dot Tokens

These potent tokens tend to offer benefits above and beyond what a changeling can achieve with her own abilities. Such items aren't taken or given out carelessly — they often form the lynchpin of powerful pledges.

Baby Cat's Eye (•••)

This old porcelain doll in her ratty red dress has one good eye, and one eye that is a cat's eye marble. Upon activation, a character can put this doll anywhere, and for the following 12 hours, is able to see through the token's eyes as if they were her own. She must close her own eyes to see through the doll's. The doll's eyes literally move left and right, up and down, as the changeling scans the token's field of vision. Whatever the doll is capable of seeing, the character can see when concentrating. Once the 12 hours are up, the doll cannot be reactivated until two full days (48 hours) have passed. (A changeling cannot end the doll's perceptive power prematurely.)

Action: Instant

Mien: The doll appears much the same, except in one's peripheral vision she appears to move. When looking indirectly at her, she may appear to wave, turn her head, even stand up and stagger forward. But looking back at her confirms that she never moved at all.

Drawback: After the 12 hours are up, one of the changeling's eyes grows crusty with a sand-like sediment and turns hazy white, as if discolored by a minor cataract. The changeling suffers a –2 dice penalty to her Perception rolls until six hours of sleep are obtained.

Catch: During the time in which the doll's power is active, the character suffers from the Suspicion derangement. If he already possesses the mild version, he assumes the severe form, Paranoia. This lasts until the 12 hours are up.

Dead Man's Boots (•••)

These shoes, taken from the feet of a corpse found in the Hedge, allow a changeling to double her Stealth score when wearing them. This effect lasts as long as the user has Willpower (see the item's drawback) or until she chooses to end it. The shoes feel ill fitting when worn, and appear dirty or scuffed.

Action: Reflexive

Mien: The shoes grow dark with shifting shadow, and Hedge thorns poke out from the eyelets or from other rips in the material. From time to time, the shoes waft the odor of a fruiting corpse, though only the user can smell it.

Drawback: The shoes literally "drink" the user's Willpower points at a rate of one point per hour (at the beginning of the hour; thus, once when put on and then again every hour after that). Why this is, nobody really knows. Some suggest it's because the dead possess incomprehensible thirst, and do what they must to quench it.

Catch: In addition to the Willpower point, the Dead Man's Boots drink health levels, too. The wearer takes one bashing level of damage every time a Willpower point is consumed by the token.

Hedgespun Wardrobe (•••)

This item may appear as a battered wardrobe, steamer trunk or other well-used receptacle for clothing. The Wardrobe always possesses a lock, and its key hangs from a chain attached to the object. The key will not turn in the lock, however, unless the token is activated. Its owner may command it to produce a new Hedgespun outfit (p. 203) once per day. The garments provided roughly suit the changeling's demands ("a courtly Winter gown," "something in dark leather"), but the Wardrobe cannot create protective garments sturdy enough to count as armor.

Action: Standard

Mien: The Wardrobe rattles slightly, and may shift as if alive. A chest with clawed feet may flex its toes slightly from time to time, and the moths engraved on a wardrobe's door may seem to move their wings. Opening the object releases a musty, warm (or cold) rush of air like a breath.

Drawback: The garments produced are physically real, but temporary in nature. Each one dissolves into mist, smoke or dust at the next sunrise, whether it's worn at the time or simply lying on someone's bedroom floor.

Catch: The user must moisten the key with his own blood. The wound aches slightly while the Wardrobe's clothing is worn, distracting the wearer and imposing a –1 die penalty to any Composure rolls. A user who cannot see through the Mask cannot request a specific outfit, not that she could see it for what it is anyway; she simply sees a quaint old dress or elegant suit within the Wardrobe once it's open.

Hoarfrost Spine (•••)

This thorn, broken off from somewhere in the Hedge where the briar is glazed with frost or encased in ice, can help a changeling succeed in hand-to-hand combat. The spiny thorn must be worn on a piece of jewelry or held somewhere on the changeling's body. When the token is activated, for the remainder of the scene the changeling becomes surprisingly slippery to those who want to harm him. He gains +1 to his persistent Defense against all incoming Brawl attacks. Moreover, his Defense doubles when any grapple attacks are made against him. *If* a grapple attack is successful against him in this scene, the changeling's "break free" roll does not subtract the attacker's Strength from it. To activate this token, the changeling must grip the thorn in her hand for a full turn and feel the cold crawl through her veins (it feels like a chilled saline injection).

Action: Instant

Mien: The token appears normally as a long, dead thorn. When active, however, it becomes wrapped in a thin sheen of clear ice, and the thorn becomes vibrant and green beneath the frost, as if recently plucked from a living vine.

Drawback: First, the changeling's seeming shifts slightly; for the next 24 hours, her seeming reflects some kind of minor icy effect (frosty breath, ice crystals clinging to eyelashes, abnormally cold touch). During this time, the changeling also becomes painfully vulnerable to fire. For the next 24 hours, the character takes aggravated damage from fire, not lethal. Vampires and other supernaturals who already take aggravated damage from fire take an additional point of damage from any given source.

Catch: The character finds that things become slippery for her over the next 24 hours, as if all things are slick with ice. Any Athletics rolls made during this time suffer a three-dice penalty.

Four-Dot Tokens

Tokens at this level tend to possess widely applicable, relatively potent powers. Such items are not given out with any frequency, and are not easily claimed from their respective realms of origin. Noteworthy service to the Court over a long period of time may earn a changeling a token of this power.

Biting Grotesquerie (••••)

When inactive, it looks like some kind of misshapen grotesque monster carved out of a fist-sized hunk of coal. The idol is an ill-fitting amalgamation of monster or animal parts. Each one is different. Curling ram horns might sit on the side of a toad's squat face, all perched upon a round belly overlooking a priapic lower torso. When active, the small coal statue animates into a grotesque hobgoblin. The hobgoblin has one function, and that function is to bite. The token's bite, however, causes potent hallucinations, per a strong psychoactive drug. Those bitten with by the hobgoblin suffer a three-dice penalty to all Traits including Defense and Initiative. The victim suffers confusing hallucinations both auditory and visual, giddying and terrifying. Effects cannot be resisted, but a victim can attempt success on a Wits + Empathy roll (with the –3 dice in place) to recognize that he is indeed on a drug trip, and that the people on the street aren't all monsters or that the parking meters aren't laughing at him and trying to steal his blood

(or whatever other hallucinations assail him). The effects of this "trip" persist for (8 minus the victim's Stamina) hours. The hobgoblin can only remain animated for a number of turns equal to the user's Clarity (or equivalent Humanity, Morality or Harmony) score. The hobgoblin has only one direction it will accept, which is to bite a particular person (who must be somewhere in the user's range of sight). Some changelings possess such creatures so that they themselves can experience the psychoactive bite. Stats for the hobgoblin can be found below in the sidebar following.

Action: Instant

Mien: The idol carved from the hunk of coal (generally found in the Hedge, but some True Fae are said to collect them and keep them in vast glass cases) becomes animated. The idol's skin remains black, but is now dry and leathery.

Drawback: For some unknown reason — something to do with the properties of the coal the grotesquerie is encased within, perhaps — when active, the token causes intense magnetic disruption that causes all electronics within 50 yards to fail. Media devices emit loud static. Cars stop working. Lights flicker and go out. This doesn't stop when the token returns to a hunk of carved coal, either. The disruption persists for one hour afterward in the vicinity of the token like a rolling blackout.

Catch: If a character fails to pay the proper costs, all it takes to animate the token is a gob of spit hocked upon it and a Willpower point. However, because the proper costs are then bypassed, the token becomes a one-time-only deal. Upon the end of its limited lifespan, it crumbles into a pile of coal dust.

Bug Cudgel (••••)

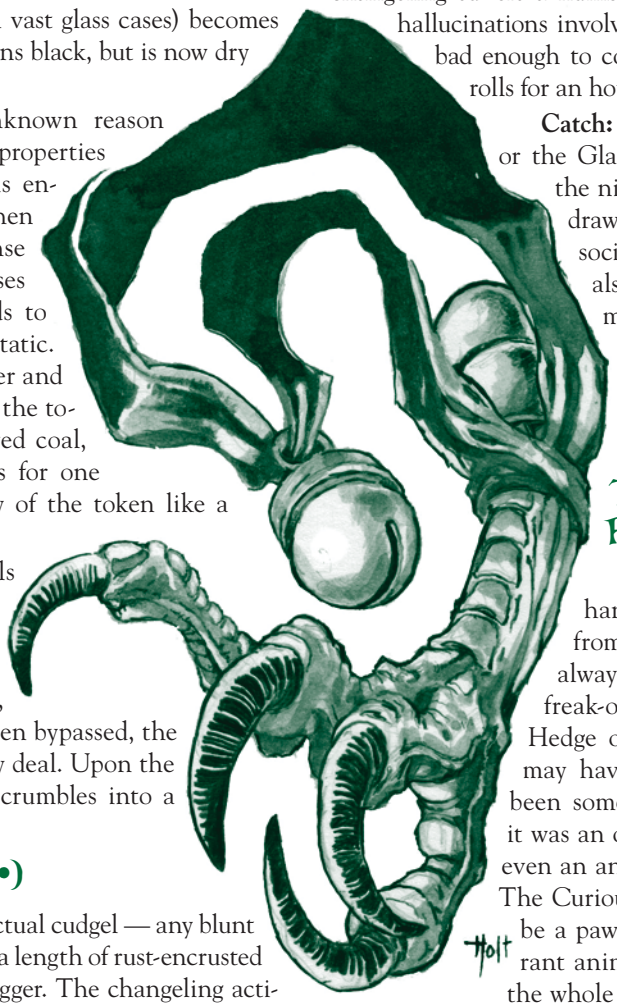
This token needn't be an actual cudgel — any blunt instrument is appropriate, from a length of rust-encrusted pipe to a wooden Louisville slugger. The changeling activates it upon receiving a successful hit that confers damage to the target. At the moment of activation, nothing happens beyond the normal bashing damage. However, one hour later, the area that received the hit begins to bruise and swell suddenly. It turns mottled red and purple, and causes terrible pain. The bump because to rupture within minutes, spilling out several insects or bugs — a small cloud of black flies, a dozen spiders or maybe a passel of centipedes. This causes such intense pain that, while no actual wounds occur (in addition to those received from the bashing hit), the victim suffers a dice penalty equal to the token user's Wyrd score (maximum –5). (If a non-changeling uses the token, assume that the penalty is equal to that user's Resolve score, again with a maximum penalty of –5.) The target suffers this penalty for a number of hours equal to the token user's Willpower score. The Bug Cudgel's power can be used on a victim only once per day, although it can still be used for straightforward damage, of course.

Action: Reflexive

Mien: The weapon occasionally shudders and trembles. Wisps of diaphanous spider's web trail from its tip.

Drawback: The night after using the Bug Cudgel, the changeling suffers a number of dreams and hypnagogic hallucinations involving bugs. The nightmares are bad enough to confer a one-die penalty on all rolls for an hour after waking.

Catch: Eschewing the roll to activate or the Glamour cost, the subject suffers the nightmares as mentioned in the drawback as well as the penalty associated. However, the nightmares also confer the Phobia derangement (mild), with the focus being of that phobia being insects. The bug phobia (*entomophobia*) goes away after a week.



The Curious Paw (••••)

This talisman, which may hang from an expensive chain or from a ratty piece of fraying rope, always comes from some kind of freak-of-nature animal found in the Hedge or within Faerie. The animal may have been diseased. It might've been some kind of mutant. Or maybe it was an oddly exceptional creature (or even an animal forged of dying dreams). The Curious Paw doesn't always have to be a paw, either, any part of the aberrant animal will do. Examples include the whole carcass of a three-legged frog, a deer's hoof mottled with shriveled red cysts or several feathers plucked from an abnormally intelligent and talkative magpie. Activation requires the user to stroke the amulet three times. If activation is successful, the talisman grants the changeling *and* his motley an additional measure of luck for the remainder of the scene, allowing them access to the 9 again rule on all rolls *except* Glamour-based rolls or Contract rolls. Those motley members hoping to gain the bonus must be within the user's eyesight to receive this advantage.

Action: Instant

Mien: The token moves. Not as if alive, but as if caught in the throes of death — a crow's foot might find the feet retracting suddenly, an eyeball might shake and the pupil could dilate.

Drawback: Being the focal point of such luck is enervating. After the scene is up, any changelings within the motley, *whether or not* they gained the 9 again advantage (in other words, no matter where they are) begin feeling foggy, sluggish, even queasy. All rolls are now made at –2 dice penalty for the hour after the Paw's powers wear off. For *two* hours after the token's effects fade, the motley also suffers –1 die penalty to any Defense rolls and –3 dice penalty to their Initiative modifiers.

Catch: One piece of information from the character's mind is lost forever and cannot be relearned. The information chosen is usually small but critical — the character's own phone number, a spouse's name, a child's birthday, an important street address. The token takes such knowledge as payment.

Five-Dot Tokens

Tokens of such puissance are truly mythic and gifted only to kings, heroes and other potent figures of the freehold. These tokens are highly prized for their power.

Blood Pennon (•••••)

This short, swallow-tailed banner seems to be nothing more than a swatch of burlap or sackcloth marked with an ugly swipe of red paint. When unfurled and waved about (which takes one full turn and may be done in the changeling's hand or at the end of a long pole), the Blood Pennon grants the changeling and his motley powerful battle prowess throughout the remainder of the scene. For the rest of the scene, all members of the changeling's motley — no matter where they are — gain a number of combat bonuses. They each find that their Defense is doubled, they have +4 to their Initiative modifiers and they can ignore any wound penalties. Moreover, any all-out attacks become more effective, providing each of the changelings with an additional two bonus dice on such attacks (in using an all-out attack, the changeling still forfeits his Defense, however).

Action: Instant

Mien: The Pennon, likely stolen from a Knight's lance somewhere in the Hedge or within Faerie, no longer seems made of sackcloth and now appears cut from silk. The smear of red paint becomes an odd heraldic symbol, different every time it's used. (The symbol might be a horse with a forked tongue, a crooked dragon's skull, even a painted garland of roses wreathing a severed head.) The symbol oozes blood.

Drawback: Use of the banner draws the attention of enemies — often the Others or a particularly strong type of hobgoblin for changelings, potent spirits for werewolves and so on. The enemies might not know what has drawn them to the user (except perhaps the Gentry, who recognize the banner's power), but they can sense the presence of someone or something they hate. The enemies don't show up instantly, but are more likely to arrive at an inconvenient time.

Catch: The strong magic put forth by this token soon hobbles the users. The character who waved the Pennon about will, after the scene is up, find himself utterly spent and with a dearth of combat ability. The character loses half his Initiative, Speed and Defense (round down) for the rest of the day. This is usually when the True Fae come calling, and instead of simply reclaiming a lost Pennon, they often see an excellent opportunity to drag the enervated victim into the Hedge and back to their horrid lands.

Squall Knife (•••••)

In Faerie, the True Fae consider it lucky to place a knife beneath the cradle of a sleeping infant (one abducted from the human world). This knife blesses their new servant, assuring that the child will have the good health and fortitude necessary to endure the many tortures and strange labors the slave will suffer as though adolescence and adulthood (until the creature is spent, of course). From time to time, a changeling may abscond with one of these knives, bringing it back to the world. In this world, it appears as nothing more than a dull knife with a wooden handle, its blade nicked. However, when activated, the weapon provides a key benefit that remains active for the remainder of the scene. Every time the weapon causes lethal damage, the victim cries out, and the token's wielder can choose to heal one lethal point of damage or three bashing damage (this token will not heal aggravated wounds). If for some reason the victim is somehow stopped from crying out (he's mute, his mouth is taped shut,

he's unconscious), the power does not work. An exceptional success on an attack roll increases the healing to two points of lethal damage or five bashing.

Action: Reflexive

Mien: The Knife's blade appears to be preternaturally sharp, and the unflattering wood suddenly becomes something impressive — a rosewood handle, or it perhaps gains a smooth pearl inlay. Also, every time the Squall Knife is swung or thrust forward, the user hears the howling squalls of human children unable to tolerate the strange foods of Faerie and incapable of finding peaceful rest.

Drawback: Using this weapon causes a kind of grief-stuck backlash within the changeling. The character feels gripped by loss of her own humanity, recalling her youth as a child and hearing the distant echoes of infants wailing. For the following 12 hours after using this weapon and activating its token effect, the character suffers from the Melancholia derangement (mild). If the mild version is already possessed, she now suffers from full-blown Depression (severe).

Catch: A character who uses this weapon suffers from garbled memories of childhood as a strange and horrible time of powerlessness. Other people intrude on the character's sensibilities as potential predators from this time, filling him with hostility and paranoia. The user suffers a three-dice penalty to all Social rolls for the following 24 hours.

Trifles

Not every token contains enough magic to last. Some are strictly one-use items whose magic fades after its initial sorcery. Changelings call these tokens 'trifles.'

A changeling activates a trifle in the same way that she would a token, except that there is no drawback. Only changelings can use trifles; no catch exists that allows others to access the enchantment within.

Creating a trifle out of an item in the Hedge or from Faerie requires only that a single Willpower point be expended in harnessing and directing the magic.

All trifles require some kind of physical action to activate or "release" the magic.

Bilefruit

Bilefruit is a greasy, oblong fruit that hangs in the Hedge close to the ground. Past the bilefruit's tough, waxy skin one finds a bitter meat. Eating the entire fruit allows the changeling to hide her seeming, including her Shadow, for eight hours. Her fae mien remains completely concealed, and for all intents and purposes, the character looks wholly human. Once the bilefruit is consumed, she cannot turn off this effect.

Glimmerbraid

This section of braided hair — bravely stolen from a True Fae or simply thieved from a figure (living or dead) in the Hedge — casts a powerful, though temporary, illusion upon the holder of the braid. To activate the glimmerbraid, the changeling merely needs to hold the braid in one hand and tug on it with the other. For the rest of the scene, whoever has the braid upon his person gains the benefits and drawbacks of the Fame Merit at three dots. Humans see the wielder as whatever public personality (celebrity, politician, athlete) that they most want to see at that moment. A changeling might use this herself to gain a measure of adoration and favor, or she may sneak it into some other fool's pocket and let that person wonder why he's suddenly mobbed in front of the club with screaming "fans." The braid's power works for one scene, after which is dissolves into a tangle of burnt hair (it stinks like burnt hair, too). Changelings are not affected by this, and see through the illusion without effort.

Stingseed

This small seed, dug up out of the Hedge, allows a single bullet to do additional damage when the seed is nestled into the lead tip (usually via a hollow point reservoir, though a changeling can easily dig out a hole in the lead). When put into the bullet, the seed must be watered — only a single drop of water, or even a bit of spit, does the trick. The bullet must be used in the subsequent scene for the trifle's effects to work. Those harmed by a stingseed bullet suffer a –1 die penalty until half of the lethal bullet damage (round down) is healed. Small plants grow from the bullet wounds, thus causing a low level of constant pain (hence the penalty). If more than one stingseed is used, the penalties stack to a maximum of –3 dice.

Sweetblood

The blood of any dream creature fuels this trifle. The blood on its own is unpleasant to drink and provides no benefit. If, however, just before quaffing a changeling sprinkles one teaspoon of sugar upon it and *then* drinks it, the trifle's powers come into effect. For the following scene, the character gains the 9 again rule on all Socialize rolls. She finds her tongue loose, and others find her manner pleasing. If she already benefits from this rule (such as from a Contract or blessing), she gains an extra die to such rolls.

Thimbleblack

It's said that the True Fae can, when wearing a thimble, craft vast artifice spun from lies and myth. This pewter thimble, painted black, demands that a single drop of the user's blood be drizzled into its well. It doesn't grant the user the full measure of the Fae's power, but grants her a small portion of it. She doesn't wear it upon a finger, however. Once the blood is in the thimble, the user places the trifle beneath her tongue. Upon activation, the thimble allows the character to add her Subterfuge score to any Crafts or Computer rolls she makes during the following scene (without speaking, she is effectively "lying" to the devices to make them comply with her wishes). After the scene is up, the thimble turns to metallic dust that tastes of moldy pennies.

Tumbleglass

The True Fae collect strange baubles made of glass — delicate things made of odd spheres and discordant colors. A changeling can take one of these things and activate the trifle's power by breaking it beneath his foot. During the next scene, the character gets one free "fall" that causes no damage at all, up to 100 yards (if more than 100 yards are fallen, the character incurs full terminal velocity damage). The character doesn't land on her feet, and may require a Stamina roll to be able to act immediately after.

Utterbarb

A single scratch from this hooked Hedge thorn (requiring a successful "touch" attack) causes no damage to the victim, but it steals his voice for a single scene. He can only communicate in breathy whispers barely heard. Upon a successful attack, the thorn disintegrates into an oily cellulose paste.

Welkinstick

This dead branch or brittle twist of vine helps a changeling achieve a significant boost when making a jump. The trifle must be taken from somewhere higher up in the Hedge or in Faerie — at least 50 yards up (perhaps cresting the top of the tangled Thorns or some tree that clings to an old, decrepit Fae tower). When the welkinstick is snapped in half, the distance achieved is doubled in the changeling's next jump roll (which must be made within three turns of breaking the stick). In a vertical jump, the changeling gains two feet per success, and in a broad standing jump, she crosses four feet per success. In a running jump, the character can cross a number of feet equal to twice her Size per success rolled. All other jumping rules apply (see "Jumping," p. 66, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

The Hedge

A young woman falls asleep beneath a cypress tree and awakens surrounded by thorn bushes and unable to remember her name. A teenaged boy walks through a cemetery gate and walks out through a tangle of brambles, then hears the distant baying of hounds on the hunt. An old man stands with his shadow falling over an open grave and whispers a word his grandmother told him never to say, then watches as the briars fade into view around him.

This is the Hedge, a barrier between the realms of the Fae and the world of humanity. The Hedge does not conform to human expectations of time, distance or mass. The Hedge appears (and disappears) according to rules and laws laid down thousands of years ago, and not even the Fae can truly control it. Changelings fear the Hedge because it can lead them back into slavery, but they recognize its utility as well. They can enter the Hedge through the appropriate gates. Mortals normally enter the Hedge by accident or trickery only, but a few mortals know secret rules and rites that allow them ingress. Of course, once someone has entered the Hedge, whether mortal or changeling, her life is in danger. Getting out of the Hedge is often much more difficult than getting in.

The Nature of the Hedge

The Hedge is psychoactive. That is, it responds to the thoughts, moods and general presence of those within it. The power of the Hedge bridges a gap between the mind and the soul. It is possible to lose one's soul in the Thorns of the Hedge (as changelings whisper), but a hapless traveler stands an equal chance of losing his mind as the land around him reshapes itself.

The Hedge's appearance remains consistent to all viewers in some respects. It is always labyrinthine, with twists and turns and dead ends that seem to shift. The "walls" of this maze, however, usually resemble the overgrowth commonly present in the area. For instance, the Hedge in a Midwestern area might look like thorn bushes, high weeds, small (but dense) copses of trees and high shrubs. Near a wetland, the Hedge takes on the impassable nature of the swamp — deep pits of water, gray vines, fallen logs and shallow but dangerously murky streams define the endless paths.

There is no barrier to carrying modern devices into the Hedge, but such tools are of variable utility. A flashlight or pistol will work as long as its batteries or bullets hold out, but a cell phone or radio relies on transmissions that don't follow into the Hedge. And the closer one gets to Faerie, the more the Hedge's laws become shaped by the will of those powerful fae that ride through it. Radios pick up strange fragments of song or enigmatic conversation. Guns jam and recoil like wild horses. One must remain close to the mortal world to have real faith in its creations.

A savvy traveler can gauge how far into the Hedge he has traveled by how dense the "wilderness" is. If the traveler can still perceive evidence of human civilization — buildings, litter, sounds of traffic, etc. — then he can probably find his way back to his own world. Once those things fade, though, the traveler is well and truly within the Hedge, and if he steps off the path (or, worse, was never on one to begin with), he is probably lost. It would take a near-miraculous stroke of luck or the intervention of a being native to the Hedge to get him pointed in the proper direction again.

Even in the parts of the Hedge closest to the world of mortals, where humanity's trappings are still visible, the otherworldly nature of the place is evident. Aspects of the modern world seem far away, in sight but viewed through a telescope, dotting the horizon and yet just over the next hill. The Hedge itself, though, seems real and immediate, and often the barest hint of a path can be seen between the thorny bushes, enticing the traveler to walk away from the distant and arduous task of finding the human world and forage on toward Faerie. This instinct, to push deeper

into the Hedge, is perhaps what allowed the Fae to abduct the first human to become a changeling, untold eons ago. Humanity has not grown wiser in the interim.

Changelings in the Hedge

Entering the Hedge is dangerous for anyone, but especially for changelings, who risk enslavement once again whenever they brave the Thorns. Possible reasons for doing so can be found later in this section, as can game mechanics for entering, but a few points are worth noting at the start.

First, entering the Hedge is a sin against Clarity. It's not a *breaking point*; only changelings of Clarity 10 have to worry about it actually eroding their sanity. But the fact that the Hedge has this effect at all is worthy of discussion (see below for more on the effect of the Hedge on Morality of all types).

Second, a changeling in the Hedge cannot hide what he is. His mien is visible for all to see, even if a viewer is watching him from *outside* the Hedge. Indeed, a mortal might stumble upon an open gateway into the Hedge and spy a Bright One bathing or a Beast on the hunt, and feel compelled to follow this strange being or to run home and hide for the next few days. No Contract, token or entitlement allows a changeling to hide his nature in the Hedge. Amidst the Brambles, a changeling cannot help but feel exposed, vulnerable and even trapped, and those feelings are not without merit.

Finally, and related to the last concern, changelings in the Hedge attract notice. A changeling can, with effort, carve out a kind of safe haven within the Hedge (called a Hollow), and some changelings even live there. But *hiding* in the Hedge is hard for changelings. The Fae know the Hedge better than a changeling ever could, and the Others don't need trods to navigate the Briars. The strange creatures native to the Hedge find changelings fascinating. Even when these creatures are neutral or even well-disposed toward the changeling, they can inadvertently act as beacons for a being with decidedly unpleasant plans for him.

The Hedge and Morality

The Hedge is not, by nature, an evil place. The Hedge does not tempt people to sin or to act against their fellow people. It does not change a person's morals (or Morality). Why, then, do the old stories speak of women of goodly virtue taken by the faeries to submit to nights of carnal debauchery? Why might a man of stout heart turn into a gibbering coward in the Briars?

The reason is that the Hedge changes perspective. An action might be right or wrong regardless of the beliefs or attitudes of the person taking the action, but whether or not to take an action very much depends on outlook. A scrupulous person might never think of stealing, while a starving person probably doesn't see it as a crime. Whether or not the theft results in a loss of Morality depends on a number of factors, but the *chance* to lose Morality is present in any case. What if that scrupulous person were to starve and be unable to feed himself in any other way but to steal food? Might that shift in perspective not cause a change in behavior?

And so it is with the Hedge. The Briars change the perspective of those within it — but the bill comes due when the person *leaves* the Hedge. Mortals feel this effect the most keenly. While in the Hedge, they indulge in excesses of lust, wrath and gluttony that they would never consider. When they return to their rightful place outside the Hedge, they must face their actions, and it is at that point that the moral consequences come due. Is this just, that the Hedge removes inhibitions but those trapped within it must face themselves later? Possibly not. The Fae do not deal in justice, however, and neither does the Hedge.

Some changelings, as mentioned, risk degeneration when they enter the Hedge, but only those changelings who are paragons of Clarity. This isn't because such a changeling is stepping away from the mortal world into an area that is "more supernatural"; any changeling with a Clarity rating high enough to have a problem entering the Hedge is *very* cognizant of the difference between the two. The problem is simply that perceptions in the Hedge cannot be trusted, no matter how trustworthy those perceptions normally are. A changeling who so arduously works to maintain his Clarity is taking a major risk by entering the Hedge, because such highly focused perception cannot survive a place that changes based on perception for long. Clarity demands a certain degree of objectivity, from the world as well as the observer.

From the standpoint of game mechanics, the Hedge has several effects on degeneration:

Changelings: As long as the changeling can still see some vestige of the mortal world, degeneration functions normally. If, however, the character loses this "anchor" to the world outside the Hedge, it becomes easier for her to lose Clarity. All degeneration rolls are made at a one-die penalty until the character leaves the Hedge. The Clarity roll to avoid gaining a derangement is unaffected.

Mortals: Being in the Hedge removes the need to check for degeneration until such time as the person leaves the Hedge. The Storyteller should make note of any acts against Morality that character commits while wandering the Thorns. When the mortal returns to his own world, the player makes the appropriate rolls, starting with the most serious sin and moving to the least serious. If the character's Morality rating drops to the point that a later-occurring sin would no long be applicable, the player need not check for degeneration for that sin.

Other Beings: Vampires, werewolves and mages can occasionally enter the Hedge, and it affects their Morality-equivalent traits as well.

Vampires follow Humanity, a measure of how human they remain even after their descent into undeath. Thus, Humanity affects the vampire's perceptions of the Hedge in subtle ways. A vampire with a high (7+) Humanity rating responds to the Hedge as a mortal would, in terms of the psychoactive effects of the place (see below). If a vampire with a lower Humanity rating (5 or 6) enters the Hedge, it responds to the bloodsucker as though he were a low-Wyrd changeling, usually making the area darker and the brush thicker. Vampires with Humanity 4 or less find the Hedge catering to their predatory nature. Any humans in the area (or high-Humanity vampires, for that matter) find themselves herded toward the hungry beast. Sunlight fails to penetrate the trees, even at high noon, and a light mist rolls through the Hedge. Of course, nothing says that a vampire finds these changes useful or comforting. The sense of oppression is thick, and it is all too easy to recognize that the vampire is no longer the master of his own domain. This is a land where he is no longer the predator.

Werewolves are concerned with Harmony: in brief, a measure of how in tune a werewolf is with himself and the spirit world around him. Harmony intersects with human Morality only on a few points; both Traits hold torture as a sin, but for different reasons (hunters kill quickly and cleanly, and so torture is not a natural or harmonious act). The Hedge is not the spirit world to which werewolves sometimes venture, however, and it has no effect on their Morality.

Mages are mortal, despite their power. They measure Morality in terms of Wisdom — they must not only act in a moral fashion if they are to retain sanity and functionality, but they must take care to use their magic in a responsible way. Mages who do not do so find their spells slipping out of control more often and in more dangerous manners than their wiser brethren. In the Hedge, mages function similar to mortals — any degeneration rolls are put off until the mages leave. While they remain in the Hedge, however, any spell that alters perception, affecting the mage or another target, has a maximum dice pool equal to the mage's Wisdom. This include "Mage Sight" spells designed to analyze magic, spells meant to give others the benefit of such perceptions and even spells to allow seeing in the dark. Note that a spell that creates light doesn't influence perception, and so doesn't suffer this restriction. A spell designed to blind a foe does, however.

Shaping the Hedge

The Hedge responds to the thoughts of those within it, though not usually to conscious thought. The Hedge has a

nightmare quality. Shadows run deep, flickers of movement appear in the corners of travelers' eyes and a feeling of being watched pervades. A traveler who starts to run develops a feeling that he is being chased, whether or not he actually is. A traveler who stops walking has a hard time starting again; the feeling of danger becomes paralyzing, and the hapless visitor believes that the dangerous creatures "out there in the forest" cannot see or will not harm him as long as he stays still. For non-changelings in the Hedge, this kind of "feedback loop," wherein fear amplifies the terrifying effects of the place, is the limit of their ability to shape the Hedge. This includes other supernatural beings such as vampires, werewolves and mages — they do not possess enough of a connection to Faerie to manipulate the Hedge any further.

Changelings, Fae and even ensorcelled mortals, however, impose more dramatic effects. For changelings, Wyrd rating determines the extent of the effect, while seeming (and, to a lesser extent, Court) determines the details.

Wyrd 1–2: The changeling's immediate area becomes colored. From his perspective, this effect extends as far as he can see, but beings that cannot see the changeling can only detect the changes within 50 feet or so, and only within about 10 minutes of his passing (meaning that a skilled tracker can follow a changeling through the Hedge) or until a changeling with a more potent Wyrd enters the area. The details of the changes depend on the changeling's seeming and Court, and should be largely up to the player, but they are cosmetic and subtle. Someone tracking the changeling gains a +1 bonus to attempts to follow his trail.

Examples: Jack Tallow, a Fireheart, singes the briars where he touches them, and footsteps release small puffs of wax-scented smoke.

Wyrd 3–4: The effects of the changeling's Wyrd become more pronounced at this level. While the changeling, again, perceives the changes that her Wyrd makes as affecting everything that she can see, everyone within 100 feet can also see the effects. Perceptions start to play tricks on observers. Someone entering the "zone" in which a changeling's Wyrd is in effect might think he sees a row of skulls along a path, but upon closer inspection (if he has the courage to approach), he finds only a few strangely shaped rocks. Trackers receive a +2 modifier to attempts to hunt the changeling, and these changes linger for roughly 30 minutes.

Example: When the Mara, a Leechfinger of the Spring Court, enters the Hedge, tiny sweet-smelling flowers appear on the trees around her, and the ground takes on a loamy consistency. Moans of pleasure can be heard, always emanating from just over a hill or around a bend, and the ground is soft and warm, as though inviting travelers to lie down.

Wyrd 5–6: A changeling at this level of power begins to define the Hedge, rather than simply altering it. The very defining features of the area — the Thorn bushes or high shrubbery that make the Hedge a labyrinth — enter flux as the Hedge and the changeling's Wyrd struggle for dominance. The Hedge still wins out at this level. Thorn bushes remain thorn bushes, but out of the corner of the changeling's eye, she might see sheets of ice (a Snowskin or Winter Court changeling), crawling insects (Venombite) or even seaweed (Water-Dweller, Swimmerskin or Waterborn). These changes last for a scene or an hour, whichever is longer, after the changeling leaves the area and extend for 500 feet around her. Trackers receive a +3 bonus.

Example: Silas, a Draconic of the Autumn Court, seems to consume the life of the Hedge around him. Trees become barren, briars grow thin and sparse, nothing but twigs and thorns, and puddles dry up. Although Silas is a slight man, he leaves large, reptilian footprints as his dragon-like appetite comes to the fore.

Wyrd 7–10: At this level, changelings unconsciously influence the Hedge as described for Wyrd 5–6, but they are also capable of deliberately altering the Hedge around them. While changelings can never truly tame the Hedge, as they approach the limits of their power they can change it in their own favor or to hinder an enemy. A changeling with Wyrd 7 or more can change the details of his surroundings, freezing puddles of water solid or reshaping the Thorns to block a larger pursuer. This requires the player to roll Wyrd, subject to the modifiers below. Such effects last for the remainder of the scene or the rest of the day, whichever is longer, with one exception: if the changeling alters the path through the Hedge, this change lasts only for one hour.

Modifier	Situation
Surrounding Hedge is receptive to the change that the character is attempting (freezing water in winter)	+1
Character has been in the Hedge for more than a day	+1
Purely cosmetic (color of flowers, scent on breeze)	+/–0
Small functional change (temperature changes, silencing birdsong)	–1
Notable change; enough to confer a modifier of +/– two dice on a roll (freezing puddles, lengthening Thorns)	–3
Impressive change; enough to confer a modifier of +/– three or four dice on a roll (slight altering direction of a path, thickening brush, summoning a swarm of insects)	–5
Opening a new path or creating a dead end in an existing one	–7

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character's Wyrd clashes with the Hedge. The change that the character was attempting to make does not take place, and the character's unconscious effects on the Hedge are even more pronounced. All bonuses to track the character are doubled until the character leaves the Hedge.

Failure: The desired change does not take effect. The character can try to make the same change again, but doing so costs a point of Glamour.

Success: The desired change takes effect.

Exceptional Success: The desired change takes effect, and the character's Wyrd influences the surrounding Hedge more strongly. The character can make an extra, cosmetic change, which does not require another roll from the player.

If multiple changelings are in the same area, they effects they have on the Hedge meld together in subtle ways, though the changeling with the highest Wyrd rating always has the greatest influence on the area (with one possible exception, discussed below). Motleys of changelings often shape the Hedge in ways consistent not only with the seeming of the individual members, but with any overarching theme or purpose of the motley itself. A motley dedicated to finding and slaying fetches probably leaves broken branches and other destruction in its wake, while a motley composed of Blackbird Bishops (see p. 290) might make the Hedge slightly more hospitable, mitigating the terrifying effects somewhat as they pass. What happens when two changelings try to change the Hedge in different ways at the same time is discussed under "Hedge Duels," below.

Ensorcelled mortals shape the Hedge slightly more than other mortals, but not as much as even the least potent changeling. The Hedge simply reminds ensorcelled mortals of their place occasionally, producing tiny cosmetic effects similar to the ones that the changeling to whom they are sworn or enchanted might produce. For instance, a mortal ensorcelled by Black Aidan, the Airtouched Knight of Thunder, might hear his brutal master's voice in the rumblings from the clouds above, should he think about trying to flee.

Freeholds, Rulers and the Hedge

The Hedge in areas in and around a freehold often changes to fit the temperament and power of the local ruler. Such changes are not any more potent than those listed for the 1–2 Wyrd level, but they don't fade over time unless the ruler is removed from power. They occur in the Hedge within the ruler's defined boundaries, which means that a savvy changeling can tell when she has reached a point of safety (or, conversely, when she is in enemy territory). The ruler's Court often influences these changes, as well. In the Blue Mountain Duchy, for instance, the foothills of the Hedge sing in the wind, in tribute to the Bardic, Duchess Doremma. Because she belongs to the Spring Court, however, flowers, plants and even stones take on the rich blues and lush greens of the Court's heraldry.

Changes in the Hedge based on freehold and rulers can become quite complex as more changelings inhabit an area. If a powerful ruler segments his domain among several other changelings, the Hedge in the area becomes divided as well. The whole area carries the signature of the ruler, but in each of the smaller domains, that domain's ruler makes a mark, too. Some changeling courtiers have become quite expert not only at discerning such boundaries but in puzzling out how loyal to the ruler a given changeling is based on how her Hedge effects interact with the ruler's. (This requires a Wits + Politics roll, with negative or positive modifiers applied based on the investigator's familiarity with the history and the personalities of the area).

Braving the Thorns

Why would a changeling — or a mortal, or any other being, for that matter — wish to enter the Hedge? What motivation would any sane being have for risking the ire of the Fae or the other dangers of the Hedge? As it happens, changelings have many good reasons to do so, while mortals usually enter as a result of their own base desires. Supernatural beings might enter deliberately, but more often do so by accident, on the rare occasions that they brave the Briars at all.

Changeling Motivations

- **Goblin Fruits:** Probably the most obvious benefit of the Hedge of changelings is the strange fruit that grows there. Details on goblin fruits and their effects on changelings can be found on pp. 222–225.
- **Travel:** A skilled Hedge-walker can use the paths through the Thorns to travel more quickly than mundane — or even magical — means of travel might allow. The mechanics for this are presented under "Trods," below.
- **Hedge Duels:** Changelings who wish to settle grudges in spectacular fashion sometimes engage in Hedge Dueling, a battle of wits, imagination and puissance that leaves the Briars warped and bloodstained in its wake. Details on the Hedge Duel are presented below.
- **Hollows:** A patient and skilled changeling can carve a Hollow into the Hedge, creating an area to cultivate goblin fruits and live in relative peace. Hollows are discussed in depth below (the Hollow Merit can be found in Chapter Two).
- **Personal Reasons:** A group of changeling revolutionaries might meet in a dangerous section of the Hedge away from a treacherous ruler's minions. A pair of lovers might flee to the Hedge for a tryst out of their spouses' sight. Changelings enter the Hedge out of fear, desire for solitude, lust, ambition or any of a thousand other motives. One worth noting, though, is pernicious and dangerous. Some changelings enter the Hedge for no reason they could articulate, and then simply wander. They don't press too deeply into the Briars and normally stay on the paths, but they don't pay heed to changes in the brambles around them, and they don't mark time well.

Why do changelings do this? To enter the Hedge without a specific purpose is courting disaster, for one never knows when a privateer or a Fae raiding party might arrive. But the changelings return to the Hedge as an abuse victim might return to her spouse, aware of the danger and yet willing to believe that this time, it might be different. This is especially true for changelings whose Keepers

kept close tabs on them. While the Fae might have abused these changelings emotionally or even physically, they can't help but feel that something familiar waits for them in the Hedge. Sometimes the desire for familiarity outweighs common sense, especially as Clarity falls.

New Derangements

These derangements are suitable for changelings, but not recommended for other characters who cannot enter the Hedge on their own.

Wanderlust (mild): When physically exhausted or emotionally drained, the character has difficult staying in one place. She feels compelled to walk, usually in a large circle — around a block or through a neighborhood is common. Even if the character is wounded or falling asleep on her feet, she continues to walk, searching for something she cannot name.

Effect: When the character feels the effects of fatigue (see p. 179 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) or after the player spends the character's last Willpower point, the player must roll Resolve + Composure. If the roll succeeds, the character can remain where she is, though she is flighty and distracted (–1 die penalty to all Mental rolls for the scene). If the roll fails, the character must walk for at least an hour. Pacing isn't good enough. The character needs to be able to walk far enough that she perceives some distance being traversed (again, around a block is often enough). The character walks slowly, usually at about half her Speed rating, though she can pick up the pace if need be.

Hedge-Calling (severe): As Wanderlust, but on a failed roll the character enters the Hedge and walks there for at least an hour. She stays on the path and can remain in sight of the mortal world, but if the path curves deeper into the Hedge, she follows the path rather than turning around unless the player makes a successful Resolve + Composure roll with a penalty equal to the character's Wyrd.

Mortal Follies

Mortals usually can't enter the Hedge without some kind of invitation (though some mortals do know how; see below). "Invitation," though, is a loose term here. The mortal doesn't have to be specifically or verbally invited into the Hedge. His own Vice can be enough to allow him ingress (egress is another matter entirely).

For those mortals who *do* wish to enter the Hedge, why would they want to? Curiosity is a possible motivation. The notion of meeting the strange and enigmatic fae can compel a mortal to step into a gateway, especially for those mortals with an imperfect notion of what the fae are (which is most of them). Some mortals have a familial or cultural history that ties them to the fae, whether or not such mortals understand what the fae truly are, and they might feel that entering the Hedge is a way to express or connect with that history. And some mortals are just oblivious, wandering into the Hedge purely by accident. These mortals are the ones who often wind up walking away from their own world and toward Faerie, and thus being taken away by the Others. Again, the Hedge has no concept of "fair" or "just." Ignorance is no excuse.

Some mortals, it bears mentioning, have a better concept of what waits for them in the Hedge and venture there anyway. They might be mages or otherwise touched by the supernatural (or believe they are), but some have a laudable purpose for entering the Briars. A relative, friend or lover of someone taken by the Fae who recognizes the fetch for what it is and is able to determine what happened to her loved one might brave the Hedge to get that loved one back. Is this possible? Some tales say it is. Legends circulate among captive changelings that if love is pure enough, if a person is driven enough, she can be guided directly to her target through the Hedge and through the dangers of Faerie, and by their own laws the Fae must agree to return the mortal they have stolen. Other versions of this legend say that the would-be rescuer must bring the fetch with her (or the fetch's head or hands) in order to make the swap, and darker renditions claim that the rescuer might agree to take the captive's place. And, of course, fatalists say that all of these stories are hogwash, just tales spread by the Fae to lure more mortals into service.

Other Supernatural Beings

The supernatural denizens of the World of Darkness might enter the Hedge for the same reasons as a mortal. Their arcane powers afford them more protection than the average mortal enjoys, true, but even the eldest vampire, the deadliest werewolf or the most learned mage is severely out of his element in the Hedge. That doesn't mean that the Hedge has nothing to offer these creatures or that entering the Briars is a death sentence to them, simply that they face challenges outside of their usual experiences.

Why, though, would such a creature deliberately brave the Thorns? As for mortals, they might follow a changeling through a gateway or be tricked or pulled into the Hedge. A supernatural creature who *seeks out* entrance to the Briars, though, usually has a strong reason to do so.

Curiosity or the search for knowledge (or power) is perhaps the most common reason for this uncommon practice. Every culture has legends about beings that don't precisely

fall into the paradigm of a given creature's culture. How many of those legends actually concern the Fae? A werewolf might hear a story about a hunter who matches his ancestors in tenacity and savagery, and eventually come to the Hedge in his search for this "spirit." A vampire might read about beings who appear from mirrors to steal people away and wonder if such monsters represent a kind of antecedent to her own race. And mages, of course, just seem to have a way of finding out secrets they are probably better off not knowing. Some magi demonstrate an intense interest in finding some means of traveling bodily to Faerie, but the soul-tearing Thorns have proven a barrier the mages cannot pierce without losing their ability to work magic.

Entering the Hedge

Anyone, changeling or otherwise, can enter or leave the Hedge via an appropriate gateway. Any opening, archway, doorway or even reflective surface is a potential gateway, provided it is large enough for the changeling to pass through. It merely requires a changeling or other fae being to activate it.

Activating a gateway isn't complicated. A changeling merely needs to touch part of the gateway and make some sort of request to be admitted. A knock or a verbal request ("Let me in, damn it!" is acceptable, as are more polite overtures) is sufficient. The player spends a point of Glamour, and the gateway opens, provided that it can. A door that is locked, bolted or rusted shut does not open for the changeling, which is why most fae use archways and other open apertures rather than doors. It remains open for a number of turns equal to the changeling's Wyrd *after* the gateway is no longer being used. For instance, if a changeling with a Wyrd rating of 1 activates a gateway and four of her friends use it, the gateway remains open for one turn after the last changeling has passed through it. While a gateway is open, anyone can blunder through it (see below).

Leaving the Hedge through a gateway works much the same way, and if the changeling has kept the mortal world in view enough to keep a sense of perspective, the changeling can create a new one in the same way. If a changeling turns her back on the mortal world, though, she must find an active gateway, and this can take a great deal of time and perseverance (see p. 218).

Gateways don't stay open long, but once a door, archway, mirror or any other entrance is made into a gateway, it remains a gateway forever. A changeling making use of an existing gateway can forego the Glamour expenditure and simply command the gateway to open (this requires a successful Wyrd roll, though, so weaker changelings often find it more expedient to use the Glamour). In areas where changelings gather or the Fae are active hunters, gateways become more common. This, in turn, leads to people getting lost in the Hedge more often, which leads to more legends, which leads to changelings gravitating to the area in hopes of finding their fellows, and the cycle goes on.

Why, then, do gateways become commonly used, if changelings can so easily open new ones? Part of the reason is because one never really knows what's waiting in the Hedge. If word gets around that the entrance to the antique store leads to a safe place in the Hedge (or to a particularly tasty goblin fruit tree), that doorway becomes more commonly used. Repeated use of a gateway, especially under specific conditions, can form *keys* over time (see below), allowing mortals and other beings to access the Hedge. Some rulers also pass laws within their domains stating that changelings may only create gateways with permission. This might seem like an abuse of power, but it does serve a useful purpose — if changelings aren't creating new gateways *into* the Hedge, they find it easier to notice when new gateways are created leading *out* of the Hedge. Since it tends to be the Others or newly arrived changelings who create such gateways, this can be extremely helpful information to have.

Entering the Hedge for mortals isn't quite as easy. A mortal can enter the Hedge through any of the following methods:

• **Following:** Seeing into the Hedge isn't difficult, even for mortals. Any time a changeling or a Fae is on the Hedge side of a gateway, the mortal can see the being for what she truly is and can therefore see the gateway itself, even if it wouldn't normally be visible. For instance, the space between two large bushes might be a gateway into the Hedge, but mortals can normally walk through this space with no ill effects. If a changeling flees into the Hedge through this gateway, and a person watches, however, the mortal can see the changeling (in her seeming, since she can't hide it while in the Hedge) and can suddenly perceive the boundaries of the gateway in the greenery. At this point, the mortal can follow the changeling into the Hedge if he does so before the changeling is out of sight. At that point, the gateway closes to the mortal. Given that, then, changelings can bring mortals into the Hedge, willing or not.

• **Keys:** Some mortals know (or discover) keys to the Hedge. The Hedge isn't actually a place so much as a barrier, and so a key to the Hedge is, in truth, a key to Faerie. It's just that one has to walk through the Hedge in order to *reach* Faerie. In any event, all cultures the world over have legends and fables about entering other realms. The tales might refer to entering the lands of the dead or of spirits, the Dreamtime of Australian aboriginal legend or the mythical Mag Mell of Irish folklore. At least some of these legends actually refer to Faerie, and the methods of entering these realms might allow a mortal to access the Hedge.

It's not enough to discover a key, though, because keys are usually specific to time, place and circumstances. A set of standing stones might allow sometime to access the Hedge *if* that person stands between them at sunset on the summer solstice and turns around in place three times. A certain hill might allow ingress if the traveler spills his blood on the ground and curses a close family member. Keys

can be highly specific, only working for one (probably long-dead) family line, or can be so general and simple that people fall into the Hedge on a comparatively regular basis. An area with a high disappearance rate might actually contain a gateway with a simple key.

Discovering a Key

What if a mortal occultist *wants* to enter the Hedge (probably working under some faulty assumptions about where this forest might take him)? It is possible to discover a key, but this takes careful research and deduction. In game terms, this requires an extended Intelligence + Academics roll. Each roll requires one month of research, and this assumes access to appropriate materials. Such materials include a well-stocked reference library, the Internet, field research (going out and looking around the suspected gateway), changelings and Fae artifacts. Books written during this century are arguably useless, but it's not impossible that someone who believes he witnessed, say, an alien abduction might actually have seen the Fae at work. Fact can be found in strange places.

The number of successes required varies depending on how obscure the key is. In other words, the Storyteller needs to decide. Much of that decision should be bound up in how long he wishes the search to take. If the Storyteller wishes to detail the search over the course of a story, he might forego the Research roll entirely or use it to find the next step in the process rather than the key itself.

Some keys are passed down from generation to generation, some are common knowledge to an entire village, and some keys are lost when the last person to know them dies. Some sample keys might include the following:

— Speaking the name of one of the Fae while standing at the edge of a cliff, the mortal turns around and sees the entrance to the Hedge.

— Jumping over an open grave while holding his breath, the mortal lands in the Hedge.

— Standing so that her shadow stretches out in front of her, the mortal falls forward while keeping her eyes wide open. She falls into her own shadow and falls out, still standing up, in the Hedge.

— A mortal crawls through the window of the first room in which he slept as a baby (difficult now that most people are born in hospitals), and then crawls out again into the Hedge.

— Anointed at birth with her mother's blood, a girl can enter the Hedge during her menstrual cycle by submerging herself in water. She surfaces in the Hedge.

— A boy places a fresh egg in a chink in the old rock wall. The next day, the egg has been replaced by a key. This key fits any door's lock, but when the door opens, it leads into the Hedge.

— Once every seven years, the "faerie fort" on the hill leads into the Hedge for anyone foolish enough to climb into it.

— The second child in a particular family can recite a particular nursery rhyme on a forest path and open a gateway to the Hedge through which anyone can step for two minutes. After that, the gateway closes and cannot be reopened for 12 hours.

— Breaking spider's webs in the woods behind the old house is dangerous. The first time, nothing happens. The second time he does it, the person gets a spider bite while he sleeps. The third time, he turns around in the Hedge, usually with eight fist-sized eyes watching him from above.

— Playing at dice on the big flat rock can open a gateway. If all of the dice read the same number, the gateway opens. If the shooter doesn't want to enter the Hedge, he'd better roll those dice again and get a different result within 10 seconds. Otherwise, he's stuck until he rolls the *same numbers* again. And Heaven help him if he tries to cheat.

• **Vice:** A person's base desires can get him into trouble if he's not careful. Actaeon spied the goddess Artemis bathing, and was turned into a stag and killed by his own hounds for his impertinence. The Hare of Aesop's fable is undone by his sloth. Even in modern times, we disguise cautionary tales as truth in the form of urban legends — what is the story of the man who wakes up after a drunken tryst in a tub of ice missing a kidney, if not an admonition against lust or liquor?

As it turns out, vice is one of the oldest and most potent keys to Faerie. This Contract was agreed upon so long ago that many human legends mention it in one form or another, from Pandora's Box to the original sin of the Bible. Whatever the original wording or intent of the Contract, a mortal even today who regains Willpower from his Vice while in sight of a gateway to the Hedge has a slim chance of noticing that gateway. The mortal's player rolls Wits + Composure at a –2 dice penalty. If the roll succeeds, the mortal notices the gateway and spies something inside it that appeals to his Vice. A Lustful man might see what looks like a beautiful woman resting under a tree. A Greedy woman might see a glint of gold in the branches. A Slothful person spies a comfortable bed of moss, and so on. The mortal is under no supernatural compulsion to follow the impetus and enter the gateway, but if he does, it immediately closes. What's worse, the object of his desires turns out to be nothing more than an optical illusion — the "woman" was simply a tree silhouetted against the setting sun, the "gold" just a discarded bit of litter, the "moss" a bed of algae on a bog. The mortal is trapped in the Hedge until he can

find another gateway… unless something finds him first. Many changelings lament the whim that took them into the Hedge, and thus into the service of their Keepers.

Supernatural beings can enter the Hedge through gateways in the same way as mortals, or through the use of keys. Many keys that work for mortals do not work for supernatural beings, and vice versa. Especially learned beings might also know rituals that allow ingress to the Hedge, but are those rituals truly empowered in and of themselves, or are they just glorified keys? The truth is a mystery, and it's a moot point anyway — if the method works, it works.

The one method of entering the Hedge open to mortals but closed to supernatural beings (including ghouls, wolf-blooded and Sleepwalkers) is by using a Vice. This method is almost impossible to use deliberately anyway, but it bears noting that whatever ancient Contract allows humans to fall to their own follies, it does not apply once a person has been touched by the supernatural.

The Hungry Hedge

Sometimes, say the fae, you don't have to go looking for a gateway. Sometimes the Hedge comes to you.

It happens occasionally that a changeling, mortal or even a supernatural being of some kind winds up wandering in the Hedge with no idea what got her there. In all probability, the hapless traveler accidentally activated some key or followed a changeling through a gateway without realizing it, and most changelings reassure themselves by saying that anyone who winds up in the Hedge by accident is just unlucky.

The truth, though, is that the Hedge is a boundary between the human world and Faerie, and Faerie is tied to Fate. If someone enters the Hedge by accident, it's because some force beyond mortal comprehension — the Fae themselves, Destiny, God or whatever one might name it — *wants* that person in the Hedge. Some changelings even tell stories of their fellow changelings who refuse to walk through any doorway or shadow for fear that they will see the Thorns fade into view around them.

Leaving the Hedge

Escaping the Hedge is simpler than entering, but by no means easier. To escape the Hedge, a changeling either needs to find an active (not necessarily open) gateway, or find a suitable door, archway, mirror or what-have-you to make into a gateway. Finding either from the Hedge is easy enough as long as the changeling can still see the mortal world through said gateway. If a changeling so much as turns her back on the mortal world, though, perspective is lost, and gateways simply become part of the landscape, while mortal-world features disappear entirely.

A changeling can search for an active gateway, and will probably find one, given enough time. This requires an extended action. The roll is Intelligence + Investigation + Wyrd. The time that each roll represents varies based on how familiar the character is with the surrounding area.

Familiarity	Time Required per Roll
Very familiar; neighborhood in which the changeling lives or claims domain	One minute
Somewhat familiar; section of hometown or ally's domain	10 minutes
An area visited only infrequently	30 minutes
Area visited only once or described in some detail	One hour
Unfamiliar area or enemy's domain	Three hours

The number of successes required likewise varies based on how long the changeling has been in the Hedge.

Length of Time in the Hedge	Successes Required
Less than one hour	Two
One to eight hours	Five
Eight to 24 hours	Eight
24 to 48 hours	10
48 hours to one week	15
More than one week	20

Note that it is possible for a changeling to spend so much time in the Hedge searching for a gateway that the player needs to acquire more successes to escape the Hedge than when the character started looking. Teamwork actions can (and probably should) be used for this search; see p. 134 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

Suggested Modifiers: A well-known and often-used gateway is in the area (+2), changeling is being chased while searching (–3), changeling is off the path (–3)

Example: The Mara, fleeing from her fetch and its friends, enters the Hedge in a bad part of town. She's never been here before, but she's familiar with the area, so when she goes looking for a gateway every roll her player makes represents 10 minutes. The Mara's only been here about 30 minutes before she starts looking, so her player only needs to roll two successes at the outset, but just after the Mara starts to search, a band of privateers spies her and gives chase. It's another four hours before she loses them enough to search for a gateway, which means the player now needs five successes for the Mara to escape the Hedge.

Mortals and other supernatural beings can search for gateways in the same manner, but their players suffer a –3 dice modifier to the roll, as if they were attempting an unskilled Mental task. If such a character becomes practiced enough in traversing the Hedge to warrant an Investigation

Specialty in "Hedge," this penalty no longer applies. Non-fae can *only* search for gateways in this manner. They cannot Navigate the Hedge in the same way that changelings can (see below).

Navigation

Finding one's way through the Hedge, even in a familiar area, is perilous. The Hedge does not remain constant, and paths become overgrown, impassable or simply misleading if left untended and untrod for too long. Any area with a sizeable changeling population develops a network of commonly used pathways, usually leading to the local courts or (when appropriate) Goblin Markets, but those paths remain consistent through repeated use. In an town that only boasts one motley, the Hedge is likely to be untamed and ever-changing.

A canny changeling can use the Hedge to navigate the world, cutting down on travel time. The fae find, though, that trods are more useful for long journeys than short ones. It is easier, for instance, to walk on a trod from Miami to New Orleans than it is to walk from Coconut Grove to Little Havana. "Easier," of course, doesn't mean "safer." Dangers untold still wait in the Hedge, it's just that the act of navigation is easier for longer trips.

Why is this? Changelings believe that long-distance travel is easier because the destination is larger and more general. Walking to "the city of New Orleans" is a much simpler notion than walking to "1309 Bourbon Street." Finding a gateway that opens to a specific destination is a matter of chance or careful research, and either way, changelings often find more mundane ways of travel to be preferable.

All of this in mind, walking on trods *can* reduce travel time on long treks (see below for a discussion of shorter jaunts). In game terms, there are several ways to represent this, depending on how much focus the Storyteller wants to place on the journey.

- **Road Trip:** If the story is about the journey, then the exact amount of time it takes is less important than what happens along the way. The journey can be said to move at "the speed of plot." That is, the characters arrive at their destination when any events within the Hedge along the way have been resolved, and the Storyteller decides how much "real time" has elapsed. Not the most scientific of methods, but the Hedge works on a different kind of science.
- **A Long Walk:** If you'd rather just determine how long the walk takes and pick up the chronicle when the characters arrive at their destination, that's fine, too. Have each player roll Intelligence + Survival at the beginning of the journey. One character may guide the others, making this a cooperative roll.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changelings leave the path somewhere along the way. See below for a description of the dangers involved. The Storyteller decides how close to their destination they were before this occurs. This happens if even *one* player out of a group rolls a dramatic failure.

Failure: All of the players fail the roll. The changelings' journey becomes muddled. The walk takes the same amount of time it would in the mortal world.

Success: At least one player succeeds on the roll, and no one rolls a dramatic failure. The journey takes a number of hours equal to 10 – the changeling's Wyrd rating, or the lowest Wyrd rating if a group of changelings travels together. This effect seems to be heavily tied in to the notion of traveling with a specific destination in mind, though. If the changelings try to stop early or change course, the effect ends and the characters must try and find their path (and their pace) again.

Exceptional Success: At least one player rolls five successes or more. Treat as a success, above, save that in a group, use the *highest* Wyrd rating present to determine the time.

Trods

There are places where the Hedge been tramped down over time, roads carved by the Others so that they can ride more freely between the mortal realm and Earth. The fae call these places trods, and take careful note of them. They make access to and from the Hedge much easier — which is itself a danger of sorts.

A trod always begins (or ends) with a spot in the mortal world where entering the Hedge is easier: a permanent gateway, with one or more keys already established. A trod leads off on a specific path, which may be to another freehold, or perhaps back to Arcadia itself. The danger, of course, is that the Fae can use a trod as easily as a changeling can.

Despite the danger, a trod is considered a great asset to a freehold. Hollows tend to flourish along a trod, and the area of a trod closest to the mortal world is often a place where many goblin fruits are safely cultivated. Many a freehold boasts a greater supply of Glamour thanks to their peculiar horticultural efforts in the Hedge. Freeholds must also post sentries along the way, however, so that any Gentry that might come riding down the trod can be resisted. The most valuable trods, of course, are those that cut from one mortal location to another instead of passing to Faerie. They boast all the benefits of an easy and controllable path into the Hedge, and the danger of the Fae finding such a trod is much reduced… though not absent.

Why Not Just Fly?

Sticking with the Miami-to-New Orleans example, an average group of changelings can count on about eight or nine hours of walking. Why not take a flight, or drive a car? It's faster and a damn sight safer.

Well, yes, but it's also more expensive. Many changelings don't have much in the way of money. Remember, too, that the Fae have been stealing people (and thus changelings have wandered the world) for much longer than quick transit has been available, and these techniques have historically allowed changelings to travel quickly and unmolested. Finally, though they'd never admit it, some changelings get a thrill out of daring the Others to show up and retake them.

What about shorter journeys? Sometimes changelings attempt to use the Hedge for tactical purposes. A motley might appear out of a gateway behind their foes for instance, or try to escape from jail or another unpleasant situation by opening a gateway and following the Hedge to a more hospitable locale.

In theory, these are sound ideas. In practice, though, the Hedge doesn't always cooperate. Remember, for one thing, that the Hedge responds to fear and expectation. A motley trying to get the drop on their foes might actually attract hostility, since they're spoiling for a fight. A changeling trying to escape incarceration, upon entering the Hedge, takes that fear with him. What might he attract among the Thorns if he fears slavery or imprisonment?

Another problem is that minor pathways shift on a daily or hourly basis, and though gateways always open directly onto paths, the paths don't always *lead* anywhere. A changeling being taken to jail might turn the door of the police van into a gateway and hop out into the Hedge (hoping that other inmates or cops don't follow him, but that's another issue) and find himself standing on a tiny square of pathway, with nowhere to go but back through the gateway or off the path.

Finally, it's not impossible to get lost while keeping to a pathway. Every time a changeling in the Hedge chooses a goal or destination, his player must roll Clarity. Trying to navigate while not on a path incurs a –3 dice modifier on this roll.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling becomes hopelessly lost in the Hedge and has blundered off the path. If the character is not on the path, she wanders into a highly dangerous area (privateer camp, True Fae hunting path, etc.).

Failure: The changeling takes a wrong turn somewhere and does not reach his destination (or rather, he reaches somewhere else first and must cope with whatever it is that he finds there).

Success: The changeling can continue along the Hedge to his destination. He finds his way to his goal (if his goal is in the Hedge) or the nearest active gateway to his goal (if his goal is in the mortal world).

Exceptional Success: No special effect.

If the changeling does not have a clear picture of his destination, or if his destination doesn't exist in the same form that he imagines it, he *cannot* find it. This is one reason why people taken by the Fae don't normally find their way back through the Hedge hundreds of years later — they can't find what they once knew because it no longer exists. Also, a changeling's tactical use of the Hedge is limited, because he can't emerge from a gateway if he hasn't seen where he's trying to go, and even if he does have a clear picture of his destination, there's no guarantee that a gateway exists in good enough relation to that target to be helpful.

Off the Path — The Thorns

Every changeling in existence knows very well what stepping off the paths in the Hedge can do, because even those who were carried down the wide and open paths to Faerie by their abductors have felt the touch of the Thorns. The Thorns of the Hedge, like the thorns of any mundane briar, poke, scratch and tear at those who walk through them or even pass too near. But the Hedge's Thorns don't just tear away flesh or clothing. As the story goes, they tear away the very souls of travelers.

The Lost don't know for certain, of course. How can you prove such a thing? How do you even know for sure that you had a soul to begin with? But they've all felt the same pangs of loss during their journey. When one changeling says "I think I lost my soul during the journey," others nod their heads. They know the feeling.

The Hedge doesn't seem to take the whole soul at once. No, the Hedge rips the soul off piece by piece, each tiny shred lost in the thickets and usually consumed by a ravenous denizen of the Briars. A mortal (or any other being with a soul to lose) feels a sharp, tearing pain occasionally while walking through the Hedge, and over time starts to feel empty, drained and apathetic. Her will is broken, and sooner or later she simply lies down and dies or gives in to the comfort of madness.

Is it possible to reach Faerie with part of one's soul still intact? The changelings theorize that it might be, but they don't know for sure, just as they can't say for certain that they lose their souls at all. No true changeling has ever managed it, in any case, but whether that's because the time spent in Faerie strips any vestiges of a true human soul, because the Gentry tear it away to make the fetch, or because the changelings lose the rest of their souls on the way *back* to the mortal world is unclear.

Leaving aside any theoretical notions of where the soul comes from and how best to maintain it, it *is* true that a mortal torn slowly by the Thorns goes steadily mad, and a mage that spends too long in the Hedge apparently loses any and all ability to perform magic. Whether it's the actual soul as people visualize it or something else, something vital is certainly lost.

The Hedge doesn't strip away a person's capacity for behaving in a given way. The Hedge strips away the basic

human context that drives those behaviors. (And, yes, some mortals seem to lack that context even before they enter the Hedge. Does that mean they are born without souls? It's a question the brave might explore.)

Mechanics: In game terms, the Thorns of the Hedge strip Morality away. A character with a low Morality score degenerates much more quickly than someone with a high Morality score, and is less likely to notice that anything is changing.

When a mortal (including mages, ghouls, wolf-blooded and Sleepwalkers but *not* vampires and werewolves) leaves the path in the Hedge, she loses one dot of Morality per hour spent wandering through the Thorns. After each hour, the player can roll the new Morality rating to realize what is happening. The character feels emotionally and mentally drained. She cannot focus her thoughts beyond "keep moving forward" and has difficulty attaching words to concepts. She can talk about objects and situations that are physically present, but slowly loses the ability to displace language, that is, to conceive and talk about ideas, people and objects that aren't currently part of her experience.

If the character realizes that the Thorns are to blame for this problem, she might try to find the path again. This is handled by a roll of Intelligence + Investigation, but remember that trying to navigate the Hedge while not on a path always carries a –3 dice modifier. It is much more likely that a person who loses part of herself to the Hedge will continue wandering until it the rest entirely gone. If a person managed to return to the human world, she suffers this loss in the form of the lost Morality dots. This doesn't manifest as a sudden drop in ethics but rather in a newfound callousness toward other people or, more properly, an inability to understand and care about other people. Mortals, of course, can regain lost Morality by behaving in appropriate ways (see p. 94 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**), and the Storyteller might consider allowing mages to regain lost Wisdom in the same manner.

Changelings, being partly fae, don't have to worry about this effect. The Hedge does strip them of power, however. Whenever the Hedge would normally take away a dot of Clarity, the Hedge tears a point of Glamour from a changeling. Normally, this would simply be annoying, but the many dangers of the Hedge make losing even a bit of this power potentially deadly.

Vampires and werewolves, since they are neither truly human nor fae, respond differently to the Thorns. The state of a vampire's "soul" is murky indeed, and the Thorns, either by ancient and unknown Contract or simple inability, cannot strip whatever is left of it away from the undead. Instead, the Thorns

wound vampires, and vampires find that they are unable to prevent themselves from losing blood to such wounds. Every hour that a vampire spends off the path, her player must roll Stamina + Resilience (if any). If this roll fails, the vampire suffers a point of lethal damage. She can heal this damage normally, but until she does, she loses one point of Vitae per hour. While she is bleeding, her player need not check for further wounds, but if she heals the damage, the Thorns try to bite her again. Note, too, that the sun does shine in the Hedge, and so a vampire here must take care to seek out shelter.

Werewolves are as much spirit as flesh, and seem to be more resistant to losing vital parts of themselves. The Briars do bite the flesh of the shapechangers, though. Every hour spent off the path requires a Resolve + Composure roll to avoid Death Rage. If this roll fails, the werewolf flies into a blind rage and charges into the Hedge, hunting some quarry that only she can see. In addition to potentially stumbling onto something dangerous, she suffers five dice of lethal damage (less any armor she possesses) from the Thorns.

Are We All Soulless?

An unpopular belief holds that all changelings have not simply lost their souls but have not regained them. Despite this, the Lost do possess the will and desire of "souled" beings — why? Again, it's impossible to state fact without empirical evidence, and such evidence is hard to come by in this matter, but perhaps the strongest possibility deal with the nature of Faerie itself. For a mortal to survive long enough to become a changeling, she must accept the various agreements and Contracts inherent to Faerie. Over time, these Contracts — taken for granted in the mortal world — become the changeling's method of viewing morality, consciousness and desire. The changeling is defined by agreements and vows, even on the very simplest levels: Fire warms me because it agrees to do so. Food nourishes me because it agrees to do so. I bleed because I agree to let metal cut me. Is it any wonder, then, that a changeling's ethical compass has so much to do with keeping her own perceptions clear? If a changeling cannot trust her senses and perceptions, how can she trust the agreements she has made with the world? How can she be sure of anything?

Even the assistance of mages who can see and manipulate souls is cold comfort. To Spirit magic, a changeling appears to have a soul, but something seems off about it. The "soul" cannot be targeted by Death magic, only perceived. This makes it difficult, perhaps even impossible to tell if the changeling has regained his own soul (which now sits strangely out of joint due to the process of its return), if some other patchwork creation of soul-tatters has filled his body, or if what is there is simply a Fae-spun illusion made of rosebuds and dream-cobweb. When they die, will a healed soul find its final reward? Or will the soul break apart in fragments of sparrows' dreams? The Lost cannot know. They can only theorize and hope.

Hollows

Despite the many dangers, it is possible to create a safe haven within the Hedge. The Thorns can be trimmed back, the trees cut down and hewn into wood and the stones built up into structures, given time and patience. Such places are called Hollows, and they afford Hedge travelers respites from their journeys… or final resting places.

Any fae being can create a Hollow, ostensibly, but that's a bit like saying that any person can build a house. It's true, assuming a degree of ability and resources. The Hollow Merit (see p. 94) assumes that the character who owns the Hollow either built or otherwise acquired it at some time before the chronicle starts, but a character can also construct one after play begins. Establishing the size and amenities of a Hollow are easy to adjudicate, even if the process is grueling; the changeling must clear a swath of "land," build or claim a den and bring in or build any furnishings. A motley will have an easier time establishing a new shared Hollow, of course, as the members can share the work amongst themselves. Cutting entrances and exits is also physical work, but may require some extra attention to make sure that the appropriate gateways in the mortal world remain accessible. Establishing the wards of a Hollow is potentially the trickiest aspect, but the Storyteller should be able to work with players to devise ways to secure a location. Physically concealing the haven by planting goblin vines or other strange Hedge plants might rationalize a dot of Hollow Wards, while the most elaborate wards might be arranged via the help of powerful Autumn sorcerers or favors wrested from oathbound hobgoblins. As with any experience point expenditure, it's always good to have a solid rationale for the purchase, and even better if a good story is the result.

Goblin Fruits

Certain items harvested from the Hedge have the ability to heal changelings and even augment other abilities. These "goblin fruits" grow only on or near the Hedge, and only faintly resemble mundane types of vegetation. They may be grotesque small gourds, petal-bearing blossoms that look like sylvan faces or heavy, fleshy ovaries that drip a sweet, bloody juice.

In most cases, these goblin fruits refresh a changeling, healing her of a single point of lethal damage or two points of bashing damage per fruit consumed. These fruits grow from the Hedge during all seasons, and if one type of healing goblin fruit is out of season, another such salubrious fruit is surely in its prime. Examples of healing goblin fruits include blushberries (pink fruits slight larger than cherries), dream-a-drupe (which looks like a purple nectarine and is faintly intoxicating), murmurleaf (a blossom that curls upward at the end of the leaf) and ertwen (mealy seeds inside a pod, similar to peas).

Goblin fruits typically have mystical effects only on changelings and True Fae. Mortals or other creatures who eat goblin fruits (such as werewolves) gain none of the benefits of the fruits. Those creatures who don't normally eat (such as vampires) experience no effects from goblin fruits, either detrimental or beneficial.

Let the Hedge-traveler beware! Not every goblin fruit's effects are necessarily beneficial. Storytellers and even players should feel encouraged to create their own varieties of goblin fruits, as the contents of the Hedge are surely as wide and varied as anything we mere mortals can dream up.

Amaranthine: This goblin fruit is comparatively rare and looks like a small, red eggplant. Eating an amaranthine heals the changeling of a single point of aggravated damage. Glutting on amaranthine has no additional effect; amaranthine restores only a single point of aggravated damage per scene.

Coupnettle: A delicate, leafy plant that grows in the Hedge, coupnettle is often used to make tea. Whether steeped as tea or eaten raw, coupnettle has a bitter, minty taste. Consuming an entire coupnettle plant invigorates the changeling, allowing her to restore a single spent point of Willpower. Each additional coupnettle consumed in any given 24-hour period restores an additional point of Willpower, but imposes a –1 die penalty to Composure rolls.

Fear Gortach: "Hungry grass" planted by wicked fae to entrap those mortals who find themselves lost in the Hedge (or possibly those trying to escape Faerie), fear gortach makes the person who consumes it famished. Lost mortals and ignorant changelings sometimes eat this grass in desperation — few would willingly eat it if they knew its effects. No matter how much he eats, he madly desires more. A character who tastes fear gortach temporarily suspends the effects of any other goblin fruits he has eaten (if they have lasting effects — healing fruits, for example, are unaffected because they've already restored points of damage) and any he may eat for the remainder of the scene (healing fruits included here). Also, a character who has eaten fear gortach must succeed at a Wits + Composure roll if he encounters it in the next scene or he must consume fear gortach again. Characters who have the Gluttony Vice suffer a three-dice penalty to this roll. Unlike other goblin fruits, fear gortach also affects mortals and other creatures.

Jarmyn: Both the leaves and the ovaries of the jarmyn plant are edible, and each produces a distinct effect. Jarmyn leaves are stimulating, and add three bonus

dice to the roll for a character to stay awake after a period of extensive wakefulness. (See pp. 179–180 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook** for more information on fatigue and staying awake). The jarmyn fruit found in the Hedge alleviates the dice pool penalties for actions taken during extended periods of activity for the duration of the scene in which it's eaten. Consuming either the leaves or fruit of the jarmyn (or both) cause the changeling to sleep for entire day after the effects wear off, once she finally takes her rest. This sleeping effect is cumulative: for each "dose" of jarmyn, whether fruit or leaves, the character consumes, the number of days the character sleeps increases by one, to a maximum of seven days.

Nightcap/Buglewort: Chalk it up to the chaotic nature of Faerie, but these two goblin blossoms look almost exactly alike, though their functions couldn't be any more different. The two fruits are so similar that it takes an Intelligence + Survival or Occult roll to distinguish what the changeling has foraged. Nightcap makes anyone who eats it woefully lethargic — it effectively cuts the changeling's Speed in half until the character achieves four successes on an extended Stamina + Resolve roll, which may be attempted every hour. Buglewort spins a character into a wild state of alertness, increasing his Initiative by 4 for the duration of the scene (though some who eat buglewort say it makes them irritable or distracted). Additional doses don't stack effects, though a person can be under the influence of both simultaneously.

Pitt Moss: Pitt moss looks a bit like rubbed sage, and has a very rich, pungent taste, used in sparing quantities in many opulent dishes in Faerie. Eaten raw, in quantity (about a salad's worth), and by itself, however, pitt moss bestows an overwhelming dolor upon the individual. If pitt moss consumed "in the field," a point of Willpower is subtracted from the character's pool, and he is unable to spend Willpower for the remainder of the scene.

Oddments

Not all goblin fruits are necessarily "fruits" or even consumable in the traditional sense. The Hedge certainly hosts any number of bizarre flora, some of which have uses outside that of food or resuscitation. These fruits are called "oddments," as they seem to grow with the express purpose of being used as tools, but those uses are so very specific that it's odd they could have evolved at random.

Are they the results of forgotten Fae's efforts to grow specific plant servants? Are they some altruistic wanderer's gift to those who would venture past the hedge? No changeling will ever know.

Gallowsroot: The gallowsroot is a ropy vine that grows on low, sprawling bushes. It is considered an oddment because the ends of its lowest-growing vines are shaped like nooses. When slipped over the head and around the neck of any living victim, the root immediately constricts like a hangman's rope. The gallowsroot "attacks" as a Strength 3 combatant wielding a garrote for three turns. The gallowsroot may not be attacked in return — all the victim can do is hope to hold it at bay or break it like a garrote.

Jennystones: Described somewhat poetically as the rotten fangs fallen from the mouth of Jenny Greenteeth, a folk legend. In truth, they're just the hard seeds of the Jennystone bush, about as big as accords and inedibly bitter. They're an oddment, though, because they *stink*. Jenny obviously didn't take care of her teeth, and these reeking ones spilled from her mouth, as the story goes. Jennystones exude a nauseating scent in a five-yard diameter, so potent that they inflict a –1 dice pool penalty to anyone with a sense of smell unfortunate enough to be in the area.

Promise Leaves: Promise leaves are curious because they're not a distinct goblin fruit or blossom of their own. Rather, they grow as occasional chaotic aberrations among the leaves of other plants among the Hedge. They look simply like engorged leaves of whatever plant they've attached to (or assimilated, or whatever their unique case is) and they have a distinct, parchment feeling. Promise leaves can extend the duration of certain Contracts to which they're added. Specifically, the changeling crumples the promise leaf when he invokes it within the context of a Contract. As the promise leaf is used, the husk of the promise leaf desiccates as it falls to the ground, often blowing away in the queer wind that arises in their proximity. (The "Blessing of Perfection" clause on p. 135 is the most commonly known Contract that can benefit from these leaves.)

Stabapple: The fruits of the stabapple tree are benign goblin fruits, offering no benefit or detriment to those who consume them other than a mild, savory taste. The thorns of the fruit, however, are sharp and hard as bone, long as a man's forearm. A changeling who breaks a stabapple thorn from the tree may use it as a knife, wielding it in melee or throwing it as he chooses. A stabapple thorn does one lethal damage and has a Size of 1. It can be thrown as described on pp. 67–68 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

Carrying Goblin Fruits

Many changelings take advantage of their visits to the Hedge to harvest goblin fruits. Whether they're used for their otherworldly tastes or for the mystical effects, taking a few extra goblin fruits is a long-standing tradition among the fae. Gourmet changelings sometimes make delicious desserts or succulent jellies from these fruits, and the greatest victual artisans in Faerie fashion elaborate presentations of meals from the Hedge's bounty.

It's not so simple to just grab a handful of fruits and be on one's merry way, however. The number of goblin fruits a changeling may carry depends on his Wyrd, his ability to force order from the inchoate vegetation of the Hedge. The following chart lists how many goblin fruits a changeling of a certain Wyrd level may carry with her.

Wyrd	Max. Fruits Carried
1	3
2	5
3	7
4	10
5	15
6	25
7	50
8	100
9–10	A full bounty

Most goblin fruits are about the size of a small apple or a peach. Thus, even a character who can, by Wyrd, carry 25 of them will probably need a bag or basket.

Unless prepared as some kind of cooked repast, goblin fruits last for three days once plucked from the vine. At the Storyteller's discretion, they may be dried or otherwise made travel-safe, especially by a character with some kind of culinary or herbalist's knowledge. Most goblin fruits are protected by the Mask, and mortals have an easy time mistaking them for similar fruits, weeds or the like. However, partaking of goblin fruit will often reveal its true nature to the consumer; the peach becomes *something else* after the first alarming bite.

The maximum amount of fruits carried includes oddments as well.

Hedge Duels

One of the main reasons that changelings enter the Hedge has nothing to do with travel, safety or the possibility of goblin fruits. Changelings often enter the Hedge to do battle for matters of honor or revenge, using a playing field uniquely suited to their place in the world. It bears noting, though, that Hedge Duels are not usually friendly competitions. Entering the Hedge is, in itself, a dangerous proposition, and doing so with the express purpose of fighting is a bit like engaging in an underwater knife fight near a school of sharks. While some thrill-seeking or foolish changelings do challenge friends or rivals to Hedge Duels with the intention of breaking it off before the duel becomes too intense, most of the time a Hedge Duel has the same gravity as a duel to the death, whether or not anyone actually dies.

Hedge Dueling works on the same principle as Shaping the Hedge (see p. 212), but the participants need not be powerful enough to Shape the Hedge at will. That is, changelings with Wyrd ratings lower than 7 can still participate. The duelists must enter the Hedge through the same gateway and announce their intentions aloud. If the duel has a prearranged ending — first blood, death, unconsciousness, surrender — this must be stated at the outset. At that point, the Hedge responds. The briars shift back slightly, giving the combatants more room. Any ambient sources of light brighten a bit, allowing spectators to see. The Hedge itself seems to watch, hungrily, as the duel commences.

A changeling in a Hedge Duel has three options for attacking his opponent. He can attack physically, using the normal rules for combat. This is considered the bastion of a brute or a simpleton in some circles (typically circles governed by the weaker and less robust).

The second option for attack is to target his opponent's mind. In this dangerous and unscrupulous practice, the changeling whispers to his opponent, calling up memories of his time in servitude and calling into question his freedom and sanity. This requires the attacker's player to roll Manipulation + Subterfuge in a contested roll against the victim's Clarity or Resolve + Composure, whichever is *lower*. If the attacker's successes exceed the defenders, the defender loses a number of Willpower points equal to the successes the attacker's player rolled. When the defender's Willpower runs out, he has been terrorized and degraded. He can continue the duel, but suffers a two-dice penalty on all actions. Using this tactic calls for a degeneration roll if the attacker's Clarity is 8 or higher (roll four dice).

Finally, the character can reshape the Hedge to strike at her enemy. Again, normally this ability is only open to changelings of Wyrd 7 or more, but during a Hedge Duel, the nature of the place becomes more accommodating. Why this is the case is a matter of some debate among changelings. Some theorize that the Others *want* changelings to engage in Hedge Duels, because it makes them easier to spot. Other changelings feel that ancient Contracts mark the Hedge as a dueling ground for the fae, since it is neither human territory nor Fae, and thus it is uniquely suited to the activity. In any case, a changeling can cause the land around her foe to strike her. Branches and brambles swing out from the nearby trees, the earth erupts in a stinging shower of sand, swarms of bees and other stinging insects appear to bedevil the victim, and lightning might even lance down from the sky. The attacks are appropriate to the seeming of the attacker, i.e., a Venombite might call up a swarm of spiders, but a Fireheart would have more direct was of inflicting damage. The attacker's player spends a point of Glamour and rolls Wits + Wyrd – her opponent's Wyrd. Defense does not apply, though armor does.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Hedge rebels against the attacker. She suffers lethal damage equal to her own Wyrd rating as the attack reverberates back on her.

Failure: The attack misses; the defender was able to shield himself somehow, or perhaps the Hedge, for whatever capricious reason, refused to respond.

Success: The defender suffers lethal damage equal to the number of successes rolled.

Exceptional Success: No further effect beyond the greater amount of damage inflicted.

Threats from the Hedge

The Hedge is dangerous in its own right, for it can strip the soul from a mortal and the Glamour from a changeling. But the creatures that make their homes in the Hedge are just as dangerous. Some of them are changelings who didn't *quite* make it back to the human world, others are True Fae on the hunt or banished from Arcadia. Some, though, are fae beings of uncertain origin. This section discusses all of these beings in brief and describes their relationship with the Hedge. Game Traits and further descriptions for some of these creatures can be found in Chapter Four.

Changelings

A changeling might live in the Hedge for any number of reasons. He might have escaped Faerie but, due to the passage of time, be unable to find his way back to the mortal world. He might have found the mortal world but decided it was too inhospitable for his tastes. Or, he might still be in service to the Fae and be unable to leave the Briars.

Some changelings spend significant amounts of time in the Hedge without actually living there. Such changelings might help run a Goblin Market, or spend much of their time harvesting and transporting goblin fruits. They might also be privateers, kidnapping people and selling or trading them to the Fae in exchange for various benefits (magical items, protection in the Hedge or simply their relative freedom).

Changelings who do live in the Hedge almost always have Hollows, normally with powerful locks to prevent enemies from entering. These changelings also tend to have extremely low Clarity ratings, as their sense of reality has been distorted by years of living in the Hedge. They resemble the Fae more than humans, and they are often just as cruel, capricious and guided by their selfish desires as the Others are. That doesn't necessarily buy these changelings any mercy from the Fae, of course.

True Fae

For the most part, the True Fae dwell in Arcadia and only enter the Hedge to hunt. These hunts might take them as far as the mortal world, whereupon they leave the Briars through gateways, snatch up a human who fits their needs and ride back to Faerie carrying the terrified mortal. Finding a suitable mortal, though, can take time, and sometimes a would-be Keeper lingers in the Hedge, watching her target through gateways for weeks, or even years, before acting. Time, after all, is a mutable

thing for the Fae. This means that a changeling might, in the long, dark hours of her servitude, look back and recall that she saw her Keeper's face peering out of doorways, mirrors and even shadows before she was taken away, and curse herself for not recognizing the danger and preventing it. This kind of self-loathing is misplaced, though. Once the Others make their choice, there is precious little a mortal can do about it.

Fae often have retinues of servants to clear away part of the Hedge and construct makeshift Hollows for brief stays during hunts. Sometimes the Fae don't take the time to anchor these Hollows, which means that a changeling might find such a place later on, overgrown by the Briars but otherwise serviceable. Sometimes the Fae do anchor these Hollows and make them warm, safe and hospitable — the better to lure changelings in, at which point the Hedge carries whispers back to the Hollow's true owner.

Fae can pass through the Briars, path or no, without ill effect. They tend to stick to paths and trods, however, because they seldom travel alone and taking a whole contingent of servants through the dense brush is difficult. This is one reason why the wider paths aren't considered as safe as the narrow, "back roads" paths, as far as changelings are concerned.

Sometimes, an Other is banished from Faerie and takes up residence in the Hedge. Such beings are similar to changelings living in the Hedge in terms of temperament, but are much more dangerous. They are usually bitter, degraded and constantly looking for any bargaining chip they can use to return home.

Hobgoblins

Are they creatures from Earth that escaped into the Hedge and were warped by the Thorns, or creatures from Faerie that didn't possess the ability to leave through a gateway to the mortal world? Are they, instead, creatures native to the Hedge, perhaps placed there by whatever force put the Briars between Faerie and Earth? Whatever these creatures are, the Hedge is their home, their native land, and they move through the Briars like a bat darting between trees. The Lost call them "hobgoblins," clearly fae but neither True Fae nor of mortal blood. Hobgoblins appear in almost limitless forms and breeds, from the faintly recognizable (something like a lion with a human face) to the warped and nightmarish (a human-shaped living "sculpture" made entirely of arms and fists).

These creatures can create Hollows, and sometimes even have the wherewithal to create locks for them. It's just as likely, though, that the "locks" they create allow ingress but not egress. A hole that a changeling sees as shelter from the rain might turn out to be the den of a trapdoor spider-like hobgoblin, and once the door slams shut, the hapless changeling must either fight or convince the massive creature not to eat him.

A Journey into the Hedge

The following is meant to provide a brief glimpse into what a changeling might experience upon entering and traversing the Hedge. The sections in *italics* are "in-character," from the perspective of Jack Tallow. The sections in normal text are simply explanations for why Jack is seeing what he is seeing, to help the players and the Storytellers get an idea of how the Hedge works and some possibilities on how to present it.

Jack looked around the parking lot frantically. He'd miscalculated in running here. He was miles from any friendly territory, he was unarmed and he could see the shadows behind him starting to change. "Winter's coming, little candle," said the darkness, and Jack knew who was on his tail.

He won't follow me there, *Jack thought.* But I need something to… there! *Up ahead, he saw a lone car, windows fogged. Lovers just trying to find some privacy. Jack flushed a bit at the thought of interrupting, but this was really life or death.*

He ran to the car and knocked on the window. He heard a yelp of surprise from inside, but he didn't pay attention. He was focused on the door itself, on what he had learned on his panicked run through the Briars. All doorways lead in, *he thought.*

He yanked open the door and dove into the car. He had time to notice a young woman buttoning her shirt before the scene faded around him. He stood up and looked behind him. He was standing on the other side of the car, looking through the passenger's window through the still-open gateway. He saw the Darkling striding into the wan light of the parking lot, and he saw the hapless couple staring at the space where Jack had been, trying to make sense of it.

The Darkling stared at the car, knowing that the door was a gateway but unwilling to charge at it. Jack smiled bitterly. He knew that the thug wouldn't follow him into the Hedge, but he also knew that the Darkling's caution was well-advised.

The man in the car shut the door and started the engine. He drove off. The gateway was gone. Jack turned around and walked into the Hedge.

This part of the journey is simple enough; Jack, pursued by an enforcer of a rival Court, uses the only gateway handy to escape into the Hedge. He knocks at the door of the car, his player spends a point of Glamour and Jack dives through. If the car door had been locked, he would have had a problem, but the Storyteller was feeling forgiving. Because the car isn't part of the Hedge, the Storyteller decides that Jack shows up on the other side of it rather than in the seat once he crosses into the Hedge.

Note also that the gateway remains open for one turn after Jack dives through (because his Wyrd rating is 1). If the Darkling had been able to cross that distance in a single turn, he could have used the open gateway as well, but for reasons that will soon become apparent, he was unwilling to do that. Note also that if the two mortal passengers had looked to the right and seen Jack standing outside the window (in the Hedge), they'd have seen his faerie seeming in all its Fireheart glory. Fortunately, they simply left.

The ground under Jack's feet was soft and wet. The asphalt of the parking lot was gone, and Jack noted that the ground seemed to shift only a few yards away from him. He saw no

trees, no brambles or bushes, and this perplexed him. Where were the thorns tearing at his clothes?

The scent of slime and bog-water answered the question. The boundaries here weren't made of wood, but of water. He sighed and walked on, glancing right periodically to keep an eye on the streetlights in the human world. Behind him, he smelled wood smoke and scorched earth, and he knew that he was leaving footprints that anyone could follow. He reached down and dipped a finger into the slime of the bog, and heard it sizzle slightly. Shivering, he picked up his pace.

Since Jack's Wyrd rating is only 1, the Hedge changes only slightly with his passing. Chuck, Jack's player, makes a point of telling Matt, the Storyteller, that Jack is going to make sure he can see some landmark in the human world in order to keep from getting lost. The streetlights make a good reference point.

Jack stood on the path cursing under his breath. The path forked. The right fork doubled back, taking him closer to the streetlights (and perhaps toward a gateway), but at the same time it led back to where he'd lost the Darkling. While Jack knew that his pursuer wouldn't enter the Hedge here, he also knew that the Mirrorskin had now had time to change his form, and was clever enough to lurk by an existing gateway.

But the left fork curved away from the streetlights, and the Hedge in that direction was thick with bushes and brambles. And if the stories were true, Jack feared what lay in that direction.

I'll move quick, *he thought.* Quick as candle flame and I'll be through it. I'll find a gateway and be gone before it knows I'm here. *Taking a deep breath, he set off, deeper into the Briars.*

He walked a few yards and turned around, peering out into the darkness for some sign of the human world. He saw no light but his own, no buildings, cars or streetlamps. Just misshapen trees and cattails twice as tall as he was. He shut his eyes as a wave of fear caused his flame to flicker, and when he opened them again, the path seemed narrower and longer, as though he had walked miles away from the safety of those lights.

He walked on, repeating the mantra in his mind: Quick as candle flame, and I'll be through it. Quick as candle flame.

Jack tries to navigate through the Hedge to find a gateway that's a good distance away from where he entered. Matt has Chuck make the Clarity roll for Navigation (see p. 220), and applies a negative modifier because Jack is unfamiliar with the area. Chuck fails the roll, and so Jack comes to the fork that offers two unpalatable options: go deeper into the Hedge or double back. (The third option, unstated but always present, is to leave the path.)

Chuck makes the choice to have Jack take the path that leads "away" from the mortal world. Since the geography of the Hedge doesn't exactly correspond to that of the mortal world, Jack might be near a gateway, but he's not looking for one at present. All he's trying to do is get through a dangerous area. Unfortunately, since the Hedge responds to fear, Jack's not making it easy on himself, and he's still leaving footprints that an enemy could follow.

The path remained narrow, and Jack noticed that the water from the bog was creeping up the edges of the trail. He walked carefully, afraid to fall in and be extinguished. He wanted to run, but he'd heard the stories of other changelings who had tried to run through the Hedge in this part of town. The path might change or break, requiring a quick jump to a patch of dry land, and there were things lurking in the water that could tear his fragile body in two. Better to walk quickly, but carefully.

Up ahead, Jack saw light. Breathing a sigh of relief, he walked faster. The path widened, and he was sure that the light was a gateway, the light from a neon sign or a pair of headlights or some friendly signal from the human world. He could walk through the gateway and be out again, and find his motley and tell them what had happened. He could warn them about the Mirrorskin before —

But then he reached the clearing, and he realized what the light was, and his heart sank. I'm here, *he thought, and his flame guttered in despair.* I'm in the Glutton's Pantry.

The clearing around him was stocked with food, but not of a sort that Jack found palatable. Goblin fruits of the worst sorts — the cattails that twitched if someone came too close, the prickly, rose-colored apples that left welts on skin, bushels of foul-smelling swamp grass — lay on shelves and hanging from strings tied to the branches. The Hedge had been trimmed back, here, and a fire crackled merrily in a pit in the center of the clearing. Three wooden tables formed the borders of this place, and suspicious-looking cuts of meat sat on them oozing blood into troughs below.

The owner of the Pantry was not at home, it seemed. Jack searched frantically for an exit, but saw only the path that had led him here.

Obviously, Jack has entered a Hollow. Because this Hollow isn't locked, magically or otherwise, Jack was able to run straight into it, mistaking the cook-fire for a gateway. If the Hollow had been locked, Jack would have had to know how to enter it, or he would have to try to circumvent it in some fashion, presuming he wants to enter. As it happens, the owner of this place isn't too concerned about people stumbling upon it, and that in itself is cause for worry.

Trying to remain calm, Jack looked about the clearing more carefully. With sick fascination, he realized that the Hedge hadn't been trimmed back, but chewed — the trees were hewn by teeth, not blades. The stones defining the fire-pit had likewise been gnawed into shape, and even the tables looked oddly rough-edged.

Jack had heard stories about the Pantry and the Gristlegrinder who owned it. This Ogre swore allegiance to no Court and never left the Hedge. Anything that crossed through a gateway west of River and north of 19th Street was considered fair game for the Glutton to eat, or so the scuttlebutt at the freehold had it. Jack had always assumed it was just a story; crossing into the Hedge on this side of town was useless anyway because the goblin fruits here were so foul and the trods were old and untended. But maybe —

He heard footsteps. Heavy, languid thumps, followed by a dragging sound. Jack turned. Still only one exit, and a silhouette filled it. The Pantry's owner had returned.

Matt asks Chuck for a Wits + Politics roll, on which he succeeds. Matt gives Chuck a little more information about the area and the owner of the Pantry, but decides that Jack is so focused on Court matters that he wouldn't know the Gristlegrinder's name.

"Hungry?" asked the Ogre. "I am." He threw a sack at Jack's feet. The sack shifted slightly.

"Not really," said Jack. "But thank you."

"What are you doing here?" The Glutton didn't seem angry, or even all that curious, Jack noted. The Gristlegrinder moved past Jack and started slicing up some of the red goblin fruits. "Just get that big iron pot from under the other table, would you please? Should be about half full. Stick it on the fire, yes?"

Jack struggled to get the pot out. It was closer to three-quarters full. Jack peeked in and immediately wished he hadn't. The pot was full of blood from whatever carcass lay ripening on the table.

"Been wanting to make a stew for a while," continued the Ogre. "Just haven't had the right ingredients. Had to wait for them to get fat enough."

"For what to get fat enough?" As soon as Jack asked, he regretted it.

The Glutton waved his knife toward the sack. "Those worms. If you catch them too small, they're awfully sweet. Not bad for candying, I suppose, but I never got the taste for it myself." He turned to Jack. "You know how to skin them?" Jack shook his head. "Better let me do it, then. You finish here. Slice these up thin, but not too thin, and don't cut yourself. They lose all their flavor if they get fresh blood on them."

I could run, *thought Jack.* But if he chases me… *Jack had no desire to become dessert, so he started slicing the fruits. The skins left tiny pinpricks in his skin and made his hands itch, but he kept slicing. Behind him, he heard the Ogre pulling the worms out of the sack, and the gruesome, liquid noises as he went to work shucking their skins.*

Jack finished slicing the pile of fruits and turned, trying to avert his eyes. He saw the stack of flayed worms before he could look away, but didn't see the skins. He raised his eyes to look at the Gristlegrinder's face for the first time.

The Ogre's skin was brown-green as swamp-water. His lips were too big for his face, and his teeth jutted out from his mouth as he chewed noisily on the last of the worm skins. He wore tattered clothes, far too small for him, and Jack realized that the Ogre had probably taken them from the last changeling to pass this way. "All done?" he said around a mouthful.

Jack nodded. He was having trouble speaking. He kept looking at the worms. They looked like sausage, but they were bloody and wriggling.

"Good. Well, I think that'll do. I can't add the fruit until the base gets hot enough, and that takes a while. Damned wood's always wet." He looked Jack up and down.

Oh, hell, *Jack thought.* He wants an appetizer. *"Well, we could talk a while. I could give you news about the Courts."*

The Ogre gulped down the skins. "Don't care much about the Courts," he said. "Wouldn't mind hearing about the freeholds, though, I suppose." He smirked. "You look a little too waxy to eat, anyway."

Jack managed a nervous laugh.

Matt and Chuck converse for a while, with Chuck recounting recent events in the chronicle as Jack and Matt taking the role of the Gristlegrinder. Matt also has Chuck make some extended Manipulation + Expression rolls for Jack, to keep the Gristlegrinder interested in the conversation. That's really Jack's forte, though, and the Fireheart has no trouble keeping the Ogre's mind on politics rather than dinner.

More important, though, is how long all of this takes. Jack's been in the Hedge for just over an hour at this point. If he has to search for a gateway, that will become a critical detail.

"…and so the Summer Court really needs to decide what it wants to —"

The Ogre held up a hand and sniffed. "Broth's ready," he said. He stood up and gathered the sliced fruits, and dropped them into the now-simmering blood. "Sure you're not hungry? The fruit really brings out the flavor of the worms."

"Thank you, but no," said Jack. "I wonder, though, if you could tell me how to get back through? Is there a gateway nearby?"

The Ogre paused to think and then gestured with a worm carcass. "Head back down the path, back the way you came, but stop before you get to that fork. There's a patch of cattails that hides another trail, and if my memory's right, it leads to a gateway. Comes out under a slide on a playground, I think."

"Thank you," said Jack.

"Drop in again," said the Ogre. "Bring a friend. Someone not so…"

"Waxy. Right." Jack headed back down the path.

Matt tells Chuck to make an extended Intelligence + Investigation + Wyrd roll. Jack has a dice pool of five for this roll. Normally, each roll would require three hours because Jack is unfamiliar with the area, but because the Ogre gave him such specific directions, Matt decides that each roll requires only 30 minutes. Jack still needs five successes, though, because the path through the cattails is well-hidden. It takes Chuck four rolls (two hours) to garner the necessary successes, but this only takes his total time in the Hedge to about four hours, so the number of successes he needs doesn't change.

Cautiously, Jack, poked his head out from under the slide. It was still dark, so he figured he hadn't been gone long. Up ahead, he saw cars driving past the playground and, for a moment, worried that they might see his light before he remembered that he looked human to them, now.

Time to head home, *he thought.* I need to tell the others what happened. *Jack started walking, wondering how he might convince the Mirrorskin to go looking for the Pantry.*

STAWICKI
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We all fell out of different mirrors that night. I fell out of a big full-length one in a department store, and I ran when the alarm rang. Scratch stumbled and fell out of a mirror in a hotel, scared some poor dude half to death as he banged his secretary. Blithe dove out through one of those big mirrors over a vanity and wound up under a sheet; the house was empty and all the furniture covered. Topaz, well, his mirror broke as he came out of it, and the cuts on his leg were so deep that he had to go the hospital. And Little Amy pulled herself from a rearview mirror. Or at least, that's what she says. I don't know. She's not *that* little.

We all met up a week later. We were all scared. None of us knew anything, except that we *weren't going back*. We didn't even know where *back* was, we just knew it was bad and we weren't going.

We all came out of mirrors, so we called ourselves the Bad Luck motley. The other folks in the city thought it was pretty weird, us all coming out together, maybe we'd all escaped the same Keeper? And when someone said that, Amy'd start to cry and Blithe got all jumpy and Scratch grabbed my arm and squeezed, so I asked them to let it drop.

Bad luck comes in packages of seven years when you break a mirror, but there were only five of us. When we all noticed the tattoos on our backs, we figured out that the symbols meant numbers and ours were 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7. Two numbers — 1 and 5 — missing. Two of us hadn't come out of the mirrors, or maybe we just hadn't found them.

So here we are standing in front of that big mirror in the empty house. Topaz is looking at the floor, Scratch is fondling his rusty knife, Blithe is trying to calm Little Amy down, but I'm just looking through the mirror into the Thorns. I'm thinking that someone's in there, someone who is still *back*. And I can't walk away from that.

No matter where *back* is, I can't leave somebody there. I know that much.

Chapter 4
Storytelling

Let there be the pasittu-demon among the people,
To snatch the baby from its mother's lap.
— Atrahasis

…A Storytelling Game of Beautiful Madness

That's what the cover says, and it's a devil of a promise to make because it's almost a paradox. How can madness be beautiful? Where's the beauty in the inability to understand the rest of the world? Given the origins of the changelings — snatched as they are from their once-safe beds and dragged into the hoary realm of incomprehensible beings, madness seems inescapable and so much beauty hides a core of sharp ugliness.

Indeed, those fearful beginnings do provide a vibrant backdrop against which to place your **Changeling** chronicles. Imagine an artist's palette, first of all, a color-box from which you, as Storyteller, will "paint" your chronicles: the locales, the characters, the weird quests and dream-remembered promises. Don't consider the actual colors yet, though. Instead think about the *properties* of those colors. Imagine the bleak, painterly neutrals of the Hedge and the sharp, dry-brush edges of the thorns. Imagine the oversaturated, high-contrast variety of colors present at an august Court function. Imagine the textured patinas of a lost artifact unearthed, an untarnished metallic luster yielding into verdigris or perhaps the luminous nacre of a pearl plucked from between a dead man's chalky fingers.

That's just one aspect of **Changeling**'s visual representation. Beauty can come from the strangest places, or things that don't normally suggest beauty can in fact become beautiful in their function. Consider the savage beauty of a shark or lion, for example, and recall the "terrible" beauty of the witch-queen Jadis from *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Think about the beauty of loss — a virtuoso composition of a dirge, a masterfully painted memorial of a hero long gone, the turning of the leaves in autumn before the dead season. Recall a significant break-up: It was hell to go through, but aren't you glad she's gone now?

There are even words built into the English language that communicate the seemingly incompatible. You can combine your own choice words to create such suggestively impossible concepts: "The gentlest fear." "Forbidden pleasure." "A frisson of joy." "Comforting sadness." The melancholy promise of a rainy day. The smell of November. All of these are appropriate to **Changeling**.

The other portion of the formula, the madness of **Changeling**, is a gestalt of the very word's connotations and denotations. In a textbook sense, madness is an inability to understand relationships between cause and effect. In a conversational sense, it's a simple unsoundness of mind.

We even like to season the madness of **Changeling** with a certain Victorian fear and awe. In this sense, the mind and body are two separate, unrelated systems. Further along these lines, not only is madness the utterly alien perception and response suffered by the insane, but attempts to even understand of ameliorate madness are themselves potentially doomed to failure by madness — almost as if the "otherness" of one afflicted by madness were itself contagious.

A significant part of the madness of **Changeling**, however, is also a degree of wonder. This Storytelling game places its attentions on the strange whims and urges that make the witch in the forest glade want to eat children, or the host of the fancy ball who neglects to provide food or drink for his guests but maintains an enchanting orchestra to keep those guests waltzing until the moment before dawn. This game plays to the worries of the man who believes his basement is where "the bat-faced screamer" lives, the sleepless self-doubt of the girl who saw fey shadows dancing outside her window when no one was there, and the obsessions of the man who sets out a bowl of sour milk and a heel of bread and wears his clothes inside out.

Changeling is a different experience from most "fairy tales," though, in that the protagonists are more than hapless mortals. They're closely connected to Faerie themselves. The players' characters are those abducted to Faerie and returned from beyond the Hedge — they are principally of

both worlds but ultimately alien from either. Thus, they understand a little of that dream world's distant madness, but often only enough to make it seem even stranger.

Another important aspect to keep in mind is the modern nature of the World of Darkness and how the glance "through the looking glass" distorts the scenery. A mushroom ring the characters find is more likely to be located in a ruined basement beneath a tenement than it is in a wooded glade. The cruel antagonist probably resembles a high-society doyenne or relentless police detective. The Others could come out of a cracked mirror in a disused rest stop, not just an elaborate looking glass. These are modern tales, and are all the more powerful when the fantastic distortions play off the familiar.

That's not to say that traditional medieval elements don't have their place, just that when they appear, it's for a reason. Part of the madness of the game is also the juxtaposition of such anachronistic elements. It may well be that the sorcerer-lord of the Emerald Court indeed wears an antlered crown during his seasonal rule, but his reasons for wearing it are distinct rather than assumed. A recluse in a castle either comes directly from Faerie or he's making a statement.

Understanding these ideas is the key to **Changeling**. The stories you tell with it are, effectively, fairy tales adapted to modern sensibilities in a world tainted by horror. The setting elements illustrate that concept inherently — the monstrous beauty of the Fae, the lovely decay of the World of Darkness, the characters' longing have for the lives they once lived and the ersatz new lives they construct for themselves that can merely echo the old. It's melodrama and the harsh sobriety of the old Grimm stories, but it's also wonderment and the thrill of "happily ever after." Savor that incongruity. Let the stark contrasts reinforce your own appreciation of the chronicle you create, and let them be the vehicle by which your players experience the highs and lows of life among such a deranged, fascinating world. "Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't."

Of Wonder and Horror

Certain elements of fairy tales have always suggested some degree of horror, particularly in the original stories of the Brothers Grimm, and in the real-world legends observed since time immemorial by regional cultures. Indeed, what we often think of today as fairy tales are watered-down versions of their original incarnations, softened a bit to keep children in line without terrorizing them.

Well, the hell with that. Let's bring back the terrorizing.

The horror of the World of Darkness and the function of the fae in it necessarily rides as a close companion to the wonder of the dream world from which they come. A True Fae lord might be a ravenous monster who can sate his hunger only on raw meat, or a powerful witch might need to revivify herself by bathing in the blood of virgins. Look no further than some of the seemings themselves to witness some of these grisly legends: beasts who walk as men, giants who grind bones into meal and creatures born of the very shadows of night.

Most Storytellers will have little difficulty weaving the horrors of the World of Darkness into **Changeling** stories. The most important thing to bear in mind while doing so is to effect a stylized horror. Any slasher tale can conjure gallons of blood and mounds of glistening gore. The horror of **Changeling** is just as visceral but much more cerebral. It relies greatly on those delicious themes of madness and beauty, intrigue and nightmare. It is one color in the tapestry, not the only color (or even the predominant one).

Consider having an audience before an august scion of the Winter Court. Everything seems fine, but when the light falls from the moon through the crystals of the chandelier, the lady's face seems to be that of a slavering wolf… but then just as quickly returns to her own lovely visage.

A banquet with the vicar is a sumptuous affair. The table has been laid with all sorts of delectable viands and glimmering wines. A taste of the wine, though, bears the salty bite of tears, and the food is too rich, betraying a sense of cloying rot.

The dice game in the alley seems an innocent enough affair, with the neighborhood's urchins laughing, wagering marbles and gum, and cheering the rolls. As you look over their shoulders, though, you see that the dice are actually the teeth of some creature far larger than a man, and certainly more ferocious.

None of these are wholesome developments, truly. All of them provide a tiny spark of dread that a Storyteller can fan into a greater flame of horror or leave to smolder like embers with no further embellishment.

Note, though, that they play to **Changeling**'s central concepts. Witness the beauty of the courtier that hides a beastly aspect, the trust engendered by the man of the cloth jeopardized by the nightmarish nature of the meal and the childlike quality of the dice game spoiled by the gruesome quality of its playing pieces.

To add another level of horror, any one of these horrific development might not even be true. They might be the products of a changeling's dementia, or horrid dreams imprinted over the fabric of reality.

You'll want more than the standard scary "boo!" fare when you seed your **Changeling** chronicle with horrific moments. Juxtaposition is your best tool in the world of the grotesque fairy tale. Anticipation bears the stench of dread — the duke accepts your pledge of loyalty, but *splits your tongue with his knife to remind you never to speak his secrets*. Forbidden delights may become writhing nightmares — the hermit's golden apple bears a worm that *scuttles down your through as you bite into its flesh*. The contrast between the alluring and the vile punctuate dramatic moments in a

changeling's life, underscoring the deceptive world of the fae and the longed-for simplicity of human life.

Its elements of forlorn hope and proud elegance place horror squarely in a role of contrast, instead of being the entire point of the show.

Understanding the Changeling

While this book presents an enormity of specific information, we should probably spend a little while coming to understand the overarching concepts they represent. It's fine and good to take an interest in a particular seeming or Court, but what do the seemings and Courts represent? How do changelings relate to one another, and how do those relationships affect the stories a troupe wants to tell about them?

This section answers those greater questions: What do changelings mean to the world around them, and vice versa? Storytellers, we give advice here on key concepts that affect the changelings and how to integrate those ideas into your stories.

Other Than Human...

Changelings, plainly, aren't human. They're neither more nor less, but something wholly different. They were once human, but they were dragged, probably unwillingly, into a different world where the forces of Time and Fate made them into something else. They need contact with mortals, as they feast on the Glamour mortals' extreme emotional states can engender, but changelings forever remain outside the true membership of humans as we know them.

What this translates to within the context of a story is a sense of isolation. Changelings should frequently see exhibitions of mortal gestalt — whether positive or negative, jovial, desperate, violent or euphoric — and while changelings can participate, they won't really feel a part of what's going on. For example, a motley of changelings can certainly visit a parade, thronged with mortals, and the changelings may even see images that bring to mind the towering terrors of Faerie or the luscious luxuries of their own Courts, but in the end, the reason for throwing the parade will elude them. What does "Thanksgiving" mean to a changeling? Even if she knows the date it occupies on the calendar, with her own warped notions of family and propriety, she probably has no idea of why thanks is being given. Consider, on the other hand, a labor rally, with hundreds of angry workers shouting out their dissatisfaction. The changeling would certainly see that they were angry, and even be able to feed on the Glamour of that anger, but she wouldn't necessarily understand why they were so angry. They have work to do, right? Are they angry about *how* they're being asked to do it? About *where*? Mortal notions of a fair, safe workplace won't have any resonance for a creature who comes from a realm of immense privilege or endless, thankless toil.

Ultimately, what being other than human bestows is a sense of perpetually being outside. This is the core of what makes changelings feel "other" to those with more mundane lives. The experience between the two worlds simply doesn't translate, which gives changelings a cast of alien madness to those who observe them. Of course, changelings feel the same in return, but the fact that it's not their world makes it all the more acute.

...But Less Than True Fae

While their memories of Faerie are hazy at best, most changelings do remember the terrible awe that the True Fae engendered. Indeed, changelings might find a bit comparison with how mortals perceive changelings in the manner that changelings perceive the Others. Worse, changelings might understand the reasoning of the Gentry *somewhat* when the changelings encounter them, causing the changelings to doubt their own sanity, or to cause them to misunderstand what they really are.

Again, this creates more isolation for changelings, but in a much more dangerous sense. Changelings have no true idea what the Gentry want, but what they want on those rare encounters they share never seems to be in the changeling's interest. The Other may simply want to return to Faerie with the changeling in tow, or it may want to devour the changeling entirely. The Fae may have some warped notion of justice (or vengeance) that involves flaying the changeling alive, or a Fae might be in love with a changeling… but the way she expresses love is like unto a black widow's mating practices. Imagine the changeling paramour of a True Fae who inflates his own esteem, only to learn that she plans to kill him after they consummate their love, so that she might remember him "as he was in his best and brightest time."

From a Storyteller's perspective, representing the goals and wiles of the True Fae is an exercise in moderation, strangely. To be sure, the actions of the True Fae should seem outlandish and incomprehensible, but the Storyteller must be careful never to let them seem comical or pointless. After all, changelings and mortals don't know why the True Fae do what they do, so some degree of menace must always be present, as these are creatures who can exalt or extinguish lesser life with equal aplomb, assuming they give it conscious thought at all. A True Fae visitor might need to turn around three times before sitting down, for example, or might always be seen in the company of a horde of scuttling centipedes. Why? We don't know, and he doesn't acknowledge it.

Again, this will create a sense of isolation among the changelings. Their True Fae roots leave them confused and alienated, but they can't take true solace in the other half of their breeding, either. They truly are in between worlds that don't quite have a place for them.

Best of Both Worlds

A significant reason for the division between True Fae and changelings isn't to imply that changelings are the "lesser" of the two. Rather, it's to make use of more facets of fae legend. The True Fae provide for the elder terrors of the old legends, the entities utterly without human compassion or empathy. Changelings, however, can provide the aspect of Good Folk who just might be good, the fairy godmothers and guardian angels who may work to protect humans from their darker kin. Changelings have access to the majestic trappings of the fae, but are human enough that we understand them and can often empathize with them… even those of them who skew more toward the darker side themselves.

Seeming and Court

Part of the beauty of the **Changeling** setting is that it offers the players chances to soften the impact of those mutual alienations by taking pride or solace in their own cultures. Indeed, that's why the changelings have established the Courts: they understand their own need for companionship and mutual support, so they've fabricated a society that facilitates that sense of camaraderie. (Of course, the vicious politics at play also often foment crushing senses of ostracism, but only someone truly on the outs would genuinely complain about such, or so they reason.)

The players will already be doing their part to evoke what's cool about seemings and Courts, and the Storyteller should, too. First and foremost, the Storyteller should realize that seemings and Courts aren't inherently designed to be a method by which they can torment the players' characters. True, many conflicts form on the basis of partisanship, but that's because those changelings who belong to those organizations feel so strongly about them.

Let the players' characters feel strongly about them, too, and let the players feel strongly about the choices they've made. Over the course of a chronicle, show a variety of seemings and Courts in the best light possible. Dig out from each what makes them individually cool. Introduce the motley to an Ogre champion of unwavering resolve and have him compliment their conviction. Grant them a seat of honor at the Spring Court's seasonal convocation, where they're lauded by one of the freehold's eminent poets. Let them confer with a skilled Wizened who's stumped by a quandary, and let him praise them for providing the answer. Have a sergeant of the Summer Court pay them a compliment and ask them to join his brigade standing against a loyalist threat.

Remember, also, that what's cool need not necessarily be predisposed to the characters. That's definitely true in a horror story. The Ogre champion could easily become an implacable foe, the Wizened could conjure a potent curse against the motley or the motley's cups might be poisoned at the Spring Court convocation. The majesty and greatness of seemings and Courts aren't any less majestic or great when one assumes the role of a nemesis.

In short, shine a flattering light on what makes each seeming or Court compelling. Let that light illuminate the players' characters, too. That light can be both an honor and a peril.

Shifting Perceptions

Much of a changeling's life involves a constant flow of sensory input from a variety of sources. Unfortunately for changelings, many of these inputs are subjective, unreliable or just plain distorted.

The Lost's inherent connection to dreams provides one such example of these shifting perceptions. When mortals sleep, their dreams take them as close as it's possible for mortals to go to the realm of Faerie. Thus, the very nature of dreams is that they bring perceived portions of Faerie to earth through the minds of dreamers. Changelings suffer this, too, but in greater intensity. They are themselves conduits through which Arcadia passes, through their dreams and into the physical world. As a Storytelling technique to represent this, Storytellers may wish to have each player compose a few examples of dream-imagery that occasionally overtakes his character's mind. It's sort of like a dream-motif or a recurring delusion, if you will. Then, at the Storyteller's discretion, these dream-icons can manifest in the story, even to the point of being visible to other characters. For example, if one character has a recurring dream of a rampaging bear tearing through the foliage to pursue him — surely the stuff of nightmare! — then a "bear" might tear through the "foliage" just as the motley is about to gain entry into a hated rival's home. Of course, the bear is actually the rival and the foliage is the fence that lines his property, but the subconscious mind of the changeling (or even the conscious mind, for who can say how dreams truly work?) brings that dreamstuff into the world and imprints it, however briefly, over what seems to be reality.

The liquid nature of Clarity also provides some of these shifting perceptions. As Clarity decreases, a character might suffer madness or moral decay because his perception of what's moral and what isn't vacillates. Such is the effect of being under the sway of enchantment or in the proximity of Faerie's warping influences. Low-Clarity changelings can't distinguish between what's real and what's not, or in some cases, what's right and what's not. A Storytelling device to simulate this might be to substitute certain words for other words when conveying information to the character. Other characters in the motley should receive their fair

interpretation of events, but the character suffering from an episode of broken Clarity might interpret a different set of inferences. For example, a character might mistake his fellow Lost giving him succor for a gang of True Fae who want to haul him back to Arcadia, or he might believe an elevator's cable is actually a thick line of silk spun by an unseen gigantic spider. He might feel a stab of mistrust when someone who's never given him pause before speaks some critical comment. Some of this input might even seem to be completely impossible to understand conceptually (as with saying "You are approached by blue less than so many" when two police officers approach the character or "The computer printout whispers to you the smell of burning leaves") and thus very difficult to respond to.

As you can see, working with shifting perceptions is difficult, but it's a key part of **Changeling**'s themes of madness and dreams. The devices suggested above are intended to simulate that madness, but to minimize the player's frustration at having his options limited. You'll note that all of the devices described above still rely on the input of the player's character in question. The intent with shifting perceptions isn't to limit the character's ability to contribute, it's to see how that character contributes when reality becomes mutable to him, and he reacts to stimuli that aren't necessarily valid.

The dream-motif, for example, allows each character to define (somewhat) key thematic elements that haunt him. Thus, when he becomes aware of those motifs in play, the *player* knows that his input is being used to add significance to the story, while the *character* knows that those horrid things he sees when his consciousness passes too close to Arcadia are back again. The low-Clarity system still allows the character to take action in his environment, only he reacts in ways that seem odd to those who witness the truth of a situation because what he's perceiving as truth is actually distortion.

Starting a Chronicle

With all of this said, with all of the advice given here and there and with the wealth of setting information found in the rest of this book's chapters, where does an aspiring Storyteller begin? It's easy to say that **Changeling** is a game in which the troupe tells modern, urban fairy tales adorned with horror, but how does that actually come into play? What are the building blocks, as it were, with which the Storyteller creates his own unique setting in which to tell those tales?

One of the most important decisions in Storytelling is deciding where the story's going to occur and who's going to be a part of that setting. Being a Storyteller for a game like this is a bit different from being a novelist or short story writer, in that the primary protagonists are largely the creations of other people. That's actually a good thing, as it frees up the Storyteller's attention to focus on the other details of building the world and the conflict. In other words, don't worry about that now. Worry about certain other details instead.

The following section discusses the key areas the Storyteller will need to develop or work with his players to develop before the first word of a story is uttered. We can't tell Storytellers what the plot of their chronicles should be — it'll vary by troupe, and by which ideas in this book he cottons to most — but we can suggest the foundation to put in place so that the story isn't told in a featureless environment.

When the Storyteller sets his sights on creating the setting for his chronicle, he should keep these core ideas in mind. Naturally, other ideas will spring up, and that's great — Storytellers can take them down in their notes alongside these pillars of setting design.

What City?

One important decision when creating a setting is deciding exactly where that setting is going to be. In many cases, this decision comes first for Storytellers, so we treat it here as first among the chronicle-building concepts, because location is so key to the personality of the chronicle.

The decision on where to place the chronicle involves two significant choices right off the bat: Is the location real or fictional? If it's real, is it a place all of the players know (like their hometown) or is it somewhere entirely other from their experience?

The Hometown

Many Storytellers choose their own hometowns as the base of their World of Darkness chronicles for one simple reason: players understand them best. If all the players in the chronicle are from Chicago, then they'll all know what's where in the city and they'll have a mutual interest in the actions their characters take.

Using the hometown is also a benefit because it reduces the amount of research necessary to plan the chronicle. People who live in a certain place can't help but absorb a certain amount of history and current events in that location — such things are all over every newspaper and in most of the city's culture. If everyone knows that St. James Cathedral was restored in the 1980s, that'll mean the Storyteller doesn't have to go as far to get the characters to investigate the weird lights that have been seen emanating from the cathedral's windows every Candlemas for the past 20 years.

Moreover, using one's hometown gives a sense of verisimilitude that other locations simply can't capture. If the troupe has a favorite restaurant or bar and decides to have the characters meet there, it's a little more immersive, since the players can actually imagine what the place looks like. People of local interest might come into play — say, a mayor who was just recognized nationwide as one of *Time*

Magazine's best big-city mayors, or a local business magnate coming under fire for tax evasion. While they fall comfortably short of the "famous person makes an in-game cameo" device, they do lend a sense of veracity to a chronicle otherwise steeped in the supernatural and the unfathomable.

There are few drawbacks to setting a **Changeling** chronicle in the troupe's hometown. In some cases, certain players may know more about certain neighborhoods in the city or local history than the Storyteller. This is easily remedied by either conferring with that player or assuming some minor cosmetic changes occurred in the World of Darkness version of the city. Along those same lines, sometimes the troupe may know the city *too well* to preserve an air of mystery or wonder — but that's overcome by using one of the following options, or by encouraging players to actively separate their characters' knowledge from their own (which isn't bad advice in and of itself, but is more easily said than done).

Somewhere Else

Sometimes a Storyteller wants to set the chronicle somewhere the players don't know as intimately as their hometown. This may be for any number of reasons. The hometown might seem too small to reasonably host a diverse enough group of changelings to make for a dynamic society. Sometimes a different city simply suits the theme or mood of the chronicle better. Sometimes the Storyteller wants to build certain local secrets or communicate a sense of wonder by setting the story someplace faraway or even exotic.

This is a necessary choice for Storytellers who want their chronicles to take place "on the road" between multiple freeholds. It's also a good choice for Storytellers who want to lend a sense of fairy-tale mystique to their stories — imagine tales told in a London setting or near Neuschwanstein Castle!

Using a "somewhere else" city also makes it a little easier for Storytellers to stylize their cities. If geography in one Storyteller's chronicle doesn't exactly correlate to real-world locales in New York, no one's probably going to know if the players are all from Baltimore.

On the other hand, using a real city that's not the hometown necessitates a bit more research than is normally the case for a home-based chronicle. That's certainly forgivable, however, because it translates into a whole new location for the players' characters to explore and learn about.

Fictional Cities

Fictional cities have the benefit of being built *exactly* as the Storyteller wants them. The rotting manse where the landscaping doubles as the Hedge is precisely where the Storyteller chooses to place it. The local authority figures are headquartered as far or as close to changeling activity as they need to be landmarks and even local history are as mutable as the story demands: So you've got a 15th-century Romanian castle next to a World War I mass grave, which the Confederate Army once used as a supply depot? If all that serves the story, it's cool.

Fictional cities also serve the themes of the ever-looming sense of dream encroachment because their geography doesn't necessarily always make sense (almost always due to the choice of the Storyteller). The fact that something outside or other seems to shape the local cityscape adds to that feeling that inscrutable magics are at work, or that the capricious whims of the True Fae and influential changelings are at work. If the Storyteller has even grander, more arcane designs on what shapes the city, that's fine, too (and surely a source of anxiety for local changelings).

Some Storytellers may also wish to adapt real legendary or lost cities such as Brigadoon, Shangri-La, Roanoke or a **Mage**-free Atlantis to their chronicles. These work well if the popular accepted images of these locations play to a similar theme as the Storyteller has in mind for the chronicle.

Drawbacks to fictional cities include a larger unfamiliarity with the locality on the part of the players. If a character, say, wants to go to the docks to meet a contact at midnight, and never knew the city was landlocked, well, that's a problem. As well, the all-important suspension of disbelief required of players gathered around the table might be an obstacle. For many players, part of the appeal of the World of Darkness is that it's so similar to their own that their experiences in real life give some sort of frame of reference to their characters' lives in the game. If the story is set in a place that doesn't exist, that sense of understanding evaporates — the story becomes much more of a fantasy romp than a modern, urban fairy tale.

Trods and Population Density

This aspect of chronicle design is equally important as the location because the trods define how populous the freehold is going to be. Given that trods are places of fae power, the Hedge often turns loose those who have negotiated its brambles in trods (see p. 219 for more information on trods and the Hedge). Thus, a freehold with few trods, or with unreliable trods or both (heavens forfend) will have fewer changelings finding their way back there from Arcadia. A freehold with many trods or unwaning trods will have comparatively more changelings finding their way back through the Hedge.

What this means, then, is that the Storyteller can control the population density of changelings by giving attention to the number and usability of trods. A Storyteller who wants her chronicle to have a sense of dread, isolation or struggle against severe odds would be well served to have few trods or unreliable trods linking the domain to Faerie. A chronicle focusing on large, warring

Courts of changelings or one that highlighted the Byzantine intrigues of changeling society or simply one that wanted to project the same sense of cosmopolitanism as a large city might suggest are all good reasons to have a vast number of functional trods, or trods that have a reputation even back in Faerie as always being where they're whispered to be.

The beauty of this principle is that there are no wrong answers to it. Both of the extremes — few, treacherous trods or many, dependable trods — and every point in the spectrum creates a viable approach to Storytelling in the setting. Plenty of fairy tale archetypes evoke a sense of isolation and just as many others suggest a myriad of courtly dangers, so whatever the chronicle is designed to do, the usability of trods supports it.

As well, the presence of trods determines how much of a threat the True Fae are in a given chronicle, since they, too, must negotiate the Hedge when they choose to visit our world from Arcadia. While their abilities certainly surpass the half-breed powers of mere changelings, the routes the True Fae take back from Faerie are the same, and a freehold with isolation as a characteristic is going to have a similar dearth of True Fae pursuers as it does of actual changeling presences.

Antagonists

Storytellers for **Changeling** are fortunate in that they have a wide variety of antagonists from which to choose when coming up with enemies for the players' characters to run afoul of. You'll meet some of those monstrosities later in this chapter, but for now, let's focus on that variety.

While variety is certainly the spice of life, a Storyteller's vision for a chronicle should bring a distinct focus to the antagonists the characters will face. If the Storyteller locks in too heavily on one type of antagonist, she runs the risk of her characters becoming tired of facing the same type of threat every session. If the Storyteller doesn't focus enough, the story becomes less of a fairy tale and more of an episodic monster-bash-of-the-week.

The antagonists' presence in a chronicle depends greatly on the style and severity of conflict the Storyteller wants to employ (see below), but also relies on the clever use of the antagonists' variety. It's okay to bring in every antagonist from the book, if you wish, so long as it's done in a way that helps the flow of the story. Remember, too, that antagonists can have minions and lesser creatures they send forth to do their bidding. This is especially appropriate when establishing another changeling or even one of the True Fae as a major antagonist: the true mastermind is best saved for a final, climactic confrontation, probably right at the apex of the chronicle, not a single night's session.

Optimally, several Storyteller characters should serve as potential antagonists. This gives the Storyteller the opportunity to challenge the players' characters with opponents who suit a wide spectrum of activities. As well, having multiple antagonists allows the characters to peel back layers of the story, exposing flunkies as the lesser antagonists they are and eventually revealing the true threat (or threats, depending on your chronicle scope) as they eliminate the minor antagonists. The presence of mul-

tiple antagonists also builds a sense of tension that keeps the players' experience vivid. It truly becomes a world of horror if the characters never feel safe, and each minor victory, each moment of reprieve, becomes something worthy of a celebration.

Start at the beginning of the chronicle with an immediate threat, either a person or a Fae beastie that serves as something against which to pit the characters' short-term attentions. They don't need to defeat this threat in the first story — indeed, well-paced stories can keep characters chasing clues for sessions on end — but they do need to feel threatened by it. After all, that's what makes it an antagonist.

Thereafter, create an antagonist who'll serve as the long-term rival for the players' changelings. At the beginning of the chronicle, simply an idea will do for this type of Storyteller character. You don't need to know which Contracts she has or how many points worth of Merits she can access. "Vicious, low-Clarity hag of the Autumn Court" will give you a better idea of the chronicle's direction than "The big bad has 20 dots in Darkness Contracts and all five levels of Kung Fu." At the start of a chronicle, the long-term antagonist is more of an ideal than a concrete and immediate enemy to be cut down.

As the chronicle progresses, you'll see where the characters are growing, who they have relationships with and what kinds of antagonists they like to fight and can fit into the plot without feeling forced. Your initial antagonist served as the springboard into the chronicle, and how the characters reacted to the antagonist begins to show you the path they may take to the threshold of the ultimate enemy. The initial antagonist and the final one don't even have to be related by any plot elements. They're simply the introduction to the changelings' bizarre dream world and the ultimate enemy they face to resolve the chronicle's conflicts.

This two-tiered system may seem simplistic, but it works in the idiom of the classic tales of visitors from Faerie. It's good gamecraft to challenge the players with something immediate but also show them that they're a part of some unfolding larger story. In addition, you can complicate it to your tastes — make a webbed diagram, if you wish, of as many major and minor antagonists as you choose to have lurk within the chronicle. After all, some allies may have once been antagonists, and some enemies may come over to the players' characters' way of thinking.

Conflict

Think of conflict as something to be overcome, a challenge to meet during the course of the chronicle. This doesn't always need to be a physical threat that has to be beaten into submission. In fact, physical threats should be comparatively rare in a **Changeling** chronicle, given that the changelings themselves are relatively vulnerable to harm. It's more likely that conflicts will make themselves manifest in the form of courtly intrigues, social sparring, clashes of influence over rare resources and threats of a magical nature. A conflict might be a race between rival motleys of changelings to collect a palliative goblin fruit from the Hedge in order to earn a lord's favor. A conflict might take the form of an encoded letter that betrays a tryst between two noble lovers, which must be deciphered before the secret can be known. A conflict may be a search to find the lair of a skilled Wizened who can craft an item the characters need, and then the act of persuading him to make the thing for them. A conflict may be a hellish storm the characters must endure, or it may be enduring the ire of an acid-tongued scion of the Summer Court. Then again, it may be that the Stonebones who's been bullying the characters finally needs his comeuppance.

Conflict is what makes the story a story rather than just a snapshot of changeling life. Therefore, it's critical to a chronicle to include a wide variety of entertaining and challenging conflicts. As with antagonists, variety is key, and the secret to avoiding repetition (and bored players) is to pose a variety of different conflicts to them that they must overcome.

That said, it's perfectly all right to have a distinct type of conflict that serves as the chronicle's thematic challenge. For example, a motley whose players enjoy the quick-witted duels of words at Court will probably enjoy a predominance of social conflicts. A motley of spies and scholars who trade in information will favor mental and social challenges, while a pack of bone-cracking Ogres and Beasts probably favor physical challenges. That's great, and Storytellers should play to the characters' archetypes. The players obviously enjoy those kinds of conflicts, and they built their characters around overcoming the threats. Nothing's worse than being a socially adroit character and having to fail repeatedly at a seemingly insurmountable tide of manacle-wielding privateer ambushes.

Speaking numerically, an evening's session of **Changeling** — say, four hours — should involve two to five discrete conflicts, based on your players' style of play. Those immersive roleplayers who want to interact with the setting and the other characters won't need as many conflicts laid out before them, as they'll enjoy banter with the other characters and sussing out the secrets of the surrounding environment. (Attentive Storytellers will also find that these types of players often make the Storyteller's job easier, as they seem to embroil themselves in conflicts of their own making.) More reactive players may need a few extra threats to prod them into activity, which is a perfectly valid style of play (especially when the True Fae and their Host are always at the door, ready to drag one screaming back to Faerie). The Storyteller's prime duty in this regard, then, is to plan an implement a *variety of conflicts* that suit the styles and tastes of the troupe.

This almost inherently requires extra work on the Storyteller's part. She needs to have a number of conflicts ready

to drop into the characters' presence that can occur at the drop of a hat. As well, they need a way to be integrated smoothly into the plot, lest the players feel railroaded or the story become nonsensical. ("Why is Hawthorn's fetch hanging out in the park at four in the morning?") In practice, this means that, unless a Storyteller is exceptionally deft at weaving conflicts into the seemingly random wiles of the players' characters, she should have a back stock of conflicts that relate to the plot, key antagonists, and the character of the city at her disposal at any given time.

This is something that grows over the course of a chronicle but is best planned, at least in concept, at the beginning. If the Storyteller knows that something important marauds through the park at four in the morning, she can make a quick note during the planning stages of the chronicle as to what it might be. When the characters finally do go there, she doesn't have to throw Hawthorn's fetch at them because that was the plot thread she thought they'd be following up on during that session of the game. She can simply go to her notes, see that some hellish nightmare creature has made the park its lair, and either work with the traits she's already established for the creature or resolve the conflict from there.

Remember, too, that the conflict doesn't have to be physical, or at least combative. If the characters follow the leads to the park at four in the morning and the Storyteller doesn't have suitable traits in her notes for the nightmare creature, she can improvise a tense episode of hunter-versus-hunted. The players' characters won't see the nightmare beast during that session (or if they do, they'll catch only a glimpse), but they'll feel its psychedelic effects or the despair it engenders, or they'll smell the rank stench of nightsweat it exudes. The Storyteller knows enough to improvise the situation because she made notes for the nightmare creature conflict in the planning stages. She may even have enough of the concept fleshed out in her mind to improvise the creature's traits as well. Therefore, what may eventually turn into a fight (during some session later down the road) instead becomes a thrilling chase, and even an opportunity to glean some heretofore-unknown information about what exactly prowls through the park. And it ain't Hawthorn's fetch, because that's sleeping soundly in his girlfriend's bed, where it (sort of) belongs.

Theme and Mood

The games that use the Storytelling System make much of theme and mood, and they're certainly important to a chronicle, but they're products of the story itself rather than something a Storyteller must consciously build into the chronicle's planning stages.

Theme comes as a direct result of the story the Storyteller wishes to tell. If the plan is to make a chronicle that focuses on learning about the nature of changeling life over the course of several forgotten holidays, it's more likely a theme of "We all harbor sinister urges within ourselves" will emerge than a theme of "A quick rise to power often precedes a quick fall." That's because the story the Storyteller wanted to create revolves around an aspect of changeling life that reveals the characters' sinister sides, as opposed to a tale of duplicity at Court.

In a nutshell, what that means is that Storytellers don't have to worry about theme immediately. It'll emerge as they assemble the details of their stories. Once that story is up and running, Storytellers should make a priority of communicating their themes effectively — choosing the right sorts of challenges to pit characters against, populating the supporting cast with characters whose character details reinforce the theme — but the theme will eventually emerge on its own, to a greater or lesser degree. After all, the theme is nothing more than what the story means, and the tale acquires meaning in the telling.

If a Storyteller wants to try a different approach, he may choose to establish his theme before other aspects of the story, and that's a fine approach. In such chronicles, however, a sense of fable will occur — players may feel that "what it all means" acquires more gravity than "what's happening, exactly." That's fine, and fairy tales (even dark fairy tales) are certainly appropriate venues for such parables and morality plays, but the tone of the story is going to be significantly different from a story in which that same theme arose organically from the resolution of events. In once case, the story exists to express the theme. In the other, the theme emerges from the story.

Mood is a different matter, and a little less overwhelmingly literary to work with. In all likelihood, the mood of **Changeling** itself or of the larger World of Darkness is going to take the fore. That is, a **Changeling** chronicle will almost certainly feature a mood of looming madness, dangerous beauty or inchoate nightmare, or some other incarnation of those three core principles. Indeed, a **Changeling** story that didn't have beauty, madness or some aspect of dreamscape would make a strange case for "a Storytelling Game of Beautiful Madness."

In application, that means choosing the portions of this book that appeal most to the Storyteller and players and devoting extra attention to them. That is, an enterprising Storyteller should infer a certain amount of feedback from the players' choices (of seeming and Court for their characters, for example, and even of specific Contracts and other evidence of what it appears that they want to do) and combine those with her own tastes for a mutually satisfactory feel to the story. For example, if the players choose Darklings and Fairest for their seemings, they're going to expect a tale with long shadows and strikingly attractive supporting characters, or some interpretation of those ideas. By way of analogy, if theme arises from the story being told, mood arises from the specific elements the Storyteller and players bring into the story proper.

Character Relationships

In particular, the players' characters need to have some degree of relationship established. That doesn't mean the characters all have to know each other before the chronicle begins; what it means is that the players need to arrive at some degree of consensus as to what reasons their characters will have for sticking together.

Any number of reasons justify a group of changelings keeping each other's company. Turn to established genre classics, or invent one on the spot. Perhaps the characters are all somehow related — the fae-touched family is a staple of the genre. Maybe the characters all know each other from college or work and Fate has brought them together for some purpose. Perhaps, as children, they all were nursed by the same nanny, and now, later in life, they've found that unsettling commonality between them. Maybe they're just all newly returned and scared as hell, finding safety in each other's numbers. Perhaps they're all pledged to the same Court or noble, or have been handpicked to face some shuddersome task.

Character relationships also take into account the character's backstory and other aspects of persona development. In a sense, this can be construed as a character's relationship with himself.

Experienced players and Storytellers will understand the need for these sorts of definitions immediately. A character who has no background, no driving passions, no goals toward which he's working and no connections to anyone else anywhere outside himself isn't a character anyone cares about. Even that character's player. While it seems like a bit of setting safety to have nothing the character wants, needs or loves — that way, nothing can be threatened or taken away from the character — those sorts of lone wolves defeat the purpose of participating in a horror game. A good character, a character with enough complexity to merit player and Storyteller interest in a **Changeling** story, can probably be defined in three paragraphs or so, which is about a third to a half a page. Sure, some players can easily write more, but covering the bases without any padding will take at least that much space.

Things to attend to when building a background for a character include important moments in his life and history. When did he discover he was a changeling? When did he return through the Hedge? How does he feel about it? Who knows? What's the status of his fetch? What does the character want to do with his life? Does he have the career he wants? Does he have any material desires? Any spiritual desires? What's his family like? What's his relationship with his parents like? His siblings? His wife or girlfriend or lover? His children? His neighbors? Is he well-known? Who, outside his immediate family and significant others, has interest in him?

Basic Story Structures

This tenet is important because it deals with what the players' characters are going to do. In answering that question, though, the Storyteller must actually attend to two different aspects of story structure.

To build a foundation, the Storyteller must create an overarching sense of where the chronicle intends to go. This may be something as grand as a struggle for the characters' motley to ascend to leadership roles in each of the seasonal Courts or it may be as personal as protecting one's mortal family from the depredations of other fae. It may shake the foundations of local changeling society, as with ousting a hated tyrant of the Fairest, or it may be a subtle quest, such as driving away a motley of opposing changelings, so the characters can have a Hollow of their own.

Rome wasn't built in a day, though, and neither will the players' characters achieve their ultimate purpose the first time the troupe convenes (unless, of course, the story is designed as a one-shot and not a full-fledged chronicle, which is an entirely reasonable way to play). To that end, the Storyteller needs to devise a list of "plot steps," or segments of the characters' journey that take them from their humble beginnings to their ultimate achievements.

(It's possible to do this in reverse — for a Storyteller to start with small focus and then expand his vision of the chronicle's ultimate conclusion — but this is actually a more advanced Storytelling technique than it seems. In the hands of an unpracticed Storyteller, this from-the-bottom method of plot building often results in a chronicle that has no direction, and simply careens from one arbitrary encounter to the next. While that may work for a very post-modern fairy tale, it runs the risk of fomenting disinterest on the players' part. After all, if none of their greater efforts seem to be building toward any significant resolution, what's the point? Very existential, but a valid concern.)

During the planning stages, these plot steps don't need to be fully fleshed out. Before each session in which a given plot step will be the crux of the story, though, the Storyteller needs to invest the time an effort that he would in any story, as normal. As placeholders or vague ideas, though, the plot steps simply serve as an indicator of where the chronicle goes. Without plot steps, who knows what's going to happen next? While that sort of mystery is thrilling for the players to discover vicariously through their characters, if the Storyteller doesn't know where he's headed with the story, how is anyone supposed to care what occurs? If everything's occurring at random or on a whim, why would anyone invest herself in the story?

As a practical exercise, put a blank sheet of paper in front of you. This is going to be your "plot map," since a story is effectively a verbal journey: it begins somewhere and comes to a conclusion somewhere, too. At the top of the

page, write "Introductory Event." At the bottom of the page, write "Chronicle Climax." Between these entries, make five bullets, which you'll use to describe story events leading from one to the next. (You may also choose to map with empty boxes from left to right, like a flowchart.) Brainstorm a single event you'd like to use to kick off your chronicle, and write this idea beneath "Introductory Event." Next, brainstorm what you see occurring in the culmination of your chronicle, and write this idea beneath "Chronicle Climax." Next, fill in the five bullets, *from bottom to top*, using one word from each entry in the entry following it — and thus preceding it in the actual flow of the story — with some action or event that you imagine the characters participating in. This builds a connectivity between the events of the story.

Let's walk through an example:

• **Introductory Event:** Nightmares draw the disparate characters to a well in a condemned building's basement.
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•
•
• **Chronicle Climax:** The motley banishes the Erlkönig back to Faerie.

At this stage, we've brainstormed only the beginning and the end, but they tell us a lot about what's going to occur in the course of the chronicle. We know, first of all, that nightmares and the dreamscape are going to play some role, because they're what seems to serve to unite the characters in the first place. We also know that we have a key antagonist in mind, the Erlkönig, and that he's probably a True Fae, as the characters will eventually banish him to Faerie. We decided to use him because of the Goethe poem based on the Danish legend, both of which are suitably creepy to be good source material for a modern **Changeling** take on the subject.

• **Introductory Event:** Nightmares draw the disparate characters to a well in a condemned building's basement.
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•
•
• The Erlkönig's minions ambush the motley as the characters leave court.
• **Chronicle Climax:** The motley banishes the Erlkönig back to Faerie.

Next we see that we have some new enemies to contend with — people or creatures who work for the Erlkönig in some capacity. These may be nightmare creatures from the realm of Faerie, they may be privateers working for the Erlkönig or they may be something we don't even know how to explain yet because we're still brainstorming. What we do know is that we have a conflict here, and that it's sprung on the characters unknowingly when they leave Court. We've used "Erlkönig" as our linking word this time, so let's use "Court" as the linking word for the next leg of the plot map.

• **Introductory Event:** Nightmares draw the disparate characters to a well in a condemned building's basement.
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•
• The characters seek aid from established members of the changeling court.
• The Erlkönig's minions ambush the motley as the characters leave court.
• **Chronicle Climax:** The motley banishes the Erlkönig back to Faerie.

Some sort of social discourse becomes obvious here, as we have the characters looking for people to help them at Court. This is a particularly rich step in the plot map, as it leaves us with good questions to be answered later in our planning. Do the characters know yet that they're dealing with "the Erlkönig"? Are the characters in good standing among the Courts? Why do the characters have to ask for help in this formal venue as opposed to simply going to a network of close confederates? Is the threat so overwhelming that all of the local freehold might be affected, or have the characters alienated any potential help by this point so that they're forced to abase themselves before all of their changeling kin? Some of these questions might be answered as we step back in our plot map, but the players' actions might also answer those questions once we actually have the chronicle up and running for the troupe.

• **Introductory Event:** Nightmares draw the disparate characters to a well in a condemned building's basement.
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•
• Renegade changelings seek to strike out against established members of local changeling society.
• The characters seek aid from established members of the changeling court.
• The Erlkönig's minions ambush the motley as the characters leave court.
• **Chronicle Climax:** The motley banishes the Erlkönig back to Faerie.

We use "established" as our linking word here, so this suggests to us that there's social dynamic at play that carries us forward into the next leg of the plot (which we previously detailed). What becomes evident here is that renegades — perhaps members of the Courtless, perhaps spies within the Court, perhaps anarchist changelings who despise the entire system of Courts — entreat the characters to help them lash out against the institutions of changeling society. The plot direction implies that the characters aren't having any part of it, but we don't know that for sure yet. Also, this stop on the plot map suggests that the renegades come to the players' characters, rather than vice versa. From this, we

can perhaps discern that the characters are making a name for themselves and other changelings have an interest in what they can offer. Again, though, it's impossible for us to know that for sure at this stage, so we'll file that away in our minds or our notes to resolve in actual play or as we're filling in later details.

For our next step, we'll use "renegade" as the linking word.

• **Introductory Event:** Nightmares draw the disparate characters to a well in a condemned building's basement.

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• A changeling abducted by the Erlkönig returns to join the renegades.

• Renegade changelings seek to strike out against established members of local changeling society.

• The characters seek aid from established members of the changeling court.

• The Erlkönig's minions ambush the motley as the characters leave court.

• **Chronicle Climax:** The motley banishes the Erlkönig back to Faerie.

Now things are staring to come together! We see here that we know about the Erlkönig by this point, so we must learn about him here or even a bit earlier. As well, we see that the Erlkönig is almost certainly one of the Gentry, since he took someone somewhere — probably Faerie — and that individual escaped to join the renegades upon her return. The questions we have to flesh out the chronicle with are fewer but more relevant at this point. Given that the Erlkönig is True Fae and his captive returned as a changeling, what seeming does that changeling belong to? Why did she join the renegades? Has she resolved matters with her fetch? How did the Erlkönig capture the changeling in the first place? This last idea seems strong, so let's riff on that for our final stage of the plot map, using "abducted" as our linking word.

• **Introductory Event:** Nightmares draw the disparate characters to a well in a condemned building's basement.

• A shadowy form leaps into the well, with the abducted children slung over its shoulder.

• A changeling abducted by the Erlkönig returns to join the renegades.

• Renegade changelings seek to strike out against established members of local changeling society.

• The characters seek aid from established members of the changeling court.

• The Erlkönig's minions ambush the motley as the characters leave court.

• **Chronicle Climax:** The motley banishes the Erlkönig back to Faerie.

With the addition of this final (first) portion of the events that lead us to future stages of the map, but we're still broad enough that we have good questions from which to build the chronicle's mystery. The well comes into play, which is where the characters begin their introductory encounter. We have a shadowy figure — perhaps the Erlkönig, perhaps a lesser version of one of his servants we see later — leaping into the well *with children*. Here, we brainstorm that the children are probably sleeping, and probably being carried off to Arcadia, where the Erlkönig presumably makes them a part of his holdings there. We guess that they're sleeping, because it strikes us as a cool idea that this well is a repository of nightmare resonance, the last place in the human world where the child abductees are before they vanish into Faerie. This nightmare residue somehow reaches out to the characters, having drawn them here in the first session of the story, and in this second session, they gain some insight as to what's happening that made that residual nightmare energy so strong. Our questions are many but focused: Can the characters overcome the sleeper-thief before it absconds with another? If they can't, can they at least recover the child? Do they want to? That renegade whom they meet in the next stage: She's probably one of these abductees who made her way back, so they know this has been going on for a while. How do they meet her?

With all of the plot steps filled in, we now have a big-picture understanding of what we intend to happen in the chronicle. We answer some of those lingering questions, building a sequence of brainstorms into a cogent infrastructure on which to pin the rest of our chronicle details. Just to complete the exercise, let's flesh out some of those details and answer some of those questions. In addition, let's ask a few more of ourselves to give us more material to work with later in the chronicle's development.

• The characters, having never met each other at the start of the chronicle, are all drawn mysteriously to a well in the basement of a condemned building by screams and cries that haunt their nightmares. (Storyteller note: Waking nightmares? Nightmares that take physical form? Mine this for ideas.) They spend much of the first session getting to know each other, investigating the well and probably conducting research about the building and who owned it. (Storyteller note: The building can serve as a hangout for some mentally disturbed homeless, to hit the madness theme. As well, it becomes a moral issue if the homeless become agitated and attack the characters, as what moral high ground could the characters possibly have for responding with more violence?) (Storyteller note: If the characters physically climb into the well, they'll find some creepy detritus at the bottom. Things to consider are children's remains or maybe a torn remnant of the Erlkönig's cloak.) The session concludes with the characters vowing to one another to keep vigilant over the well, because it obviously foretells some dreadful occurrence.

• In the second session, the characters are recalled to the well by recurring nightmares. As they revisit the well, they arrive just in time to see some sort of fiend with unconscious children in its clutches leaping into the well. If they move quickly enough, they'll be able to trap the abductor

here in the physical world. If they don't go after the abductor, they'll have an opportunity to wrest the children from its grasp. If they simply let it go, so shall it be, but some sort of moral penalty will apply. (Storyteller note: Create two versions of the nightmare abductor. One should be physically tough to withstand a fight, while the other should have access to a variety of supernatural powers. This is to allow maximum versatility if the encounter comes to actual blows — the nightmare should be able to give the characters a scare for their well-being, so use the version that is strong where the characters are comparatively weak. The characters should overcome the fiend in the end, though.)

• For the third session, the characters come into contact with a member of a group of rebel changelings. How they make this first contact depends on what they do: they may meet her visiting the well, they may meet her at some social event or they may themselves be members of the rebel faction and make her acquaintance that way. (Storyteller note: Schedule a "pariah's party" to occur if the characters would prefer to meet other renegades. This is a good option to show them that the Courtless aren't a formal group of rebels, but rather a catch-all agglomeration of changelings who refuse to defer to Court rule.) From her, they learn that she came back through the well (Storyteller's note: Cover the logistics of making this a comparatively unreliable trod) and that, while in Faerie, she vaguely remembers laboring in the service of a Darkling lord named the Erlkönig.

• In the fourth session, the characters' relationship with the female Courtless blossoms. She brings the characters into contact with her own motley, a like-minded group of rebels and outcasts. As it happens, the outcasts are planning an attack on a group of empowered changelings of the Summer Court. (Storyteller's note: If the characters prove to enjoy political intrigue, this particular group of rebels may have the backing of certain anonymous members of the Winter Court, which may come up later if the characters pursue the connection.) Unless the players all decide to create Courtless characters of the beginning of the chronicle, the rebels' ideology will probably seem to radical to the characters, and they'll decline, which can make for a scene of good, tense diplomacy as they try to extract themselves from the rebels' company now that the characters know the rebels' plans. Certain moral issues may come to the fore here, too, as the characters realize they won't be able to help their embittered rebel friend, but they can at least attempt to stop future abductions. The rebels themselves are too tied up in their political struggle to bother with the depredations of some True Fae they haven't even seen anyway. (Storyteller's note: This may be a place to put a mole for the Erlkönig, given that his agents are going to attack the characters in the penultimate session of the chronicle.)

• For the fifth session, the characters know that they can't entreat the rebels to care about the Erlkönig's marauding, so the characters take the details of the Fae's presence to the changeling establishment that *does* care more proactively about the activities of the True Fae. (Storyteller's note: If the characters don't come to this realization themselves, an agent of the dominant season's Court can come to them, blackmailing them by telling them they've been seen consorting with shiftless rebels. Alternatively, a sympathetic go-between might serve as a good introduction to the proper Courts if the characters have active interest in dealing with the politics of the changeling Courts.) The characters spend the session talking to various nobles of various Courts and choosing from among them who might be the most capable allies with whom to pursue the matter of the Erlkönig's raids further. (Storyteller's note: It might be a good idea to have this Court function occur just as the seasons, and thus Court power, are going to change. This could illustrate the capricious nature of changeling Courts, as well as necessitate additional introductions to characters the next time they come to Court, exposing them to a variety of the different changelings in the freehold.) This is a great place to make valuable contacts even outside the context of the Erlkönig threat, in case the chronicle extends past its planned conclusion or can be revisited for a sequel.

• In the sixth session, after the characters have procured their physical and political assistance, but before they've met with that assistance, the Erlkönig's minions stage a sneak attack on the characters' motley. (Storyteller's note: This needs to be established within the context of the story. The Erlkönig has a mole, and the characters need to learn who it is or this is just a random attack. If the mole isn't one of the rebels, he's most likely someone among the Courts the characters have just conferred with. This traitor may work out to be a good antagonist for a future iteration of the chronicle, assuming the characters don't catch up with the turncoat herein.) This should be a tense session, with the Erlkönig's minions having the drop on the characters and the motley members feeling their unseen predator dogging their every move up until the moment before the attack.

• To conclude the chronicle, the characters face the Erlkönig personally. Hopefully, they have their backup from the Courts. (Storyteller's note: If the characters truly demonstrate an interest in the rebel cause, it might be best to rework the plot map a bit. Instead of forcing them to go find allies among the Courts, perhaps have the rebels aid the characters in confronting the Erlkönig. The session involving the Courts might set the Courts up as antagonists, again relying on the characters being seen consorting with the rebels.) The Erlkönig will either use the trod to find his way through the Hedge to come punish (or retrieve) the characters or the characters can meet him in a Hollow amid the Thorns for a truly strange setting. Alternatively, the Erlkönig might be assailable only in the dreamscape. (Storyteller's note: Make provisions for this, and see what the players' tastes run to over the course of the chronicle.)

Remember that the plot mapping stage is simply a brainstorming tool. You can move a step on the plot map, adjust it later or even eliminate it entirely if the initial idea doesn't bear the scrutiny you later apply.

As well, we suggest five steps simply because it creates a concise story arc that nonetheless offers several discrete points for key events. You may add more for a longer chronicle or even subtract two for a chronicle that will run for a shorter length of time. Five is probably the fewest you want in total, including your introductory and conclusive events, because you want to give an impression of things happening along the way. Any fewer, and your chronicle's events may seem to happen to quickly and without enough distinction between them.

Finally, note that our model here creates a very short sample chronicle. One you create will almost certainly be more complex. A plot map of this size may even be just one story in your chronicle, as opposed to the entirety of the chronicle itself.

Optional Design: Other Supernatural Creatures

Changelings don't claim hegemony over the supernatural World of Darkness, despite their own wide-spanning presence in it. A number of other supernatural creatures belong to the world as well, from vampires to werewolves to wizards and other entities less understood or definable.

While **Changeling** certainly contains all of the pieces Storytellers need to tell stories of madness, intrigue and dark beauty, some Storytellers enjoy bringing these outside presences into their chronicles, showing that some things are alien even to the alien wanderers come back from Faerie.

Among the World of Darkness games, **Changeling** is well suited to these crossover endeavors. Fairy tales often involve insidious blood-drinking monsters, men who can take the shapes of beasts and those who would learn the secrets men were not meant to know. Often, these come couched in the terms of the Good Folk themselves (and there are certainly enough methods in this book by which to simulate them), but sometimes an outsider makes for a strong inclusion in a story, particularly when the players think they've seen it all and the Storyteller wants to challenge their assumptions.

To that end, any of the supernatural types from the other World of Darkness games might bear inclusion. Storytellers should consider

exactly what role they want these interlopers to play before introducing them to a chronicle, however. For example, werewolves play perfectly into themes of isolation and of nature trumping man's efforts to control it. Vampires have a complex society of their own that can certainly rival the schemes of the changeling Courts. As well, vampires' predatory natures parallel the changelings' own, with a dark side: the undead's propensity for blood reminds the changelings that their own manipulation of mortal emotions can be savage and ruinous if indulged with recklessness. In the secrets of the mages, changelings can confront their own lack of understanding, much as the world around the fae regards them as in the thrall of madness. As well, the mages claim to know something of the changeling home realm, but exactly what they know and even how they perceive it certainly doesn't match the fae experience of Arcadia.

Given all these permutations, singular other supernaturals can highlight certain thematic elements of a **Changeling** chronicle. Storytellers may even wish to allow a player in the troupe to portray one of these other supernatural types, to which we say, go right ahead. Be careful of diluting the themes of the core chronicle too much with an overabundance of supernatural cameos, but with that caveat in mind, let the spheres of supernatural oddity overlap as you will.

Chronicle Paths

The life of the changeling is such that those who return from beyond the Hedge, from the Jeweled Realm, have a choice to make. They are alien from both the worlds of humans and the True Fae, but in leaving the latter, changelings have chosen to cast their lot with the former. Within this context, then, each changeling makes his choice. He may choose to regain his stolen life as best he can, or he may hone his fae arts and play the intrigue-riddled game of the changeling Courts.

Naturally, this is a significant choice — "How will you live your life?" — and it certainly affects both character concepts and the individual changeling's role in the motley with which he consorts. This isn't to say that changelings who choose to pursue the shadows of mortal lives can't get along with those who choose the pomp and circumstance of the seasonal Courts, but changelings who are at cross purposes with their intentions will certainly find their allegiances to one another tested. The returned fae find themselves pulled in opposite directions, even when they've made their choices. On the one hand, changelings need humans. Changelings need the Glamour that issues from strong emotion, and they need contact with mortals to retain their Clarity, else they revert to their wilder, more primal ways. On the other hand, every thinking creature seeks the comfort of its own kind, and in a way, the elaborate formalities of changeling society serve to give meaning to the proximity of one another.

What this ultimately means is that all changelings have dual natures that resonate with their ostracism from the lives of humans and Fae. Changelings are opportunistic creatures, seeking human contact for the benefits it gives them, manipulating relationships and circumstances so that they elicit the greatest emotional responses from the humans whose company they keep. At the same time, when changelings seek the company of other changelings, it's ultimately to make themselves more comfortable. Even the joys and miseries they endure while suffering the slings and arrows of courtly life exist primarily to let them know that they're not alone; there are others like them.

Storytelling this concept can be a challenge, but it can also be a tremendous boon to the roleplaying experience. More than anything else, this choice of which nature to indulge in one that needs to receive individual attention during the course of the chronicle. It's an intensely personal decision that reflects more about the changeling as a person than her seeming, kith or Court.

What follows here are a few ways to draw attention to this aspect of changeling personality without taxing the group dynamic with a series of single-character spotlights. No doubt all troupes will find the methods that appeal best to their tastes, and surely players will find their own methods of expressing this facet of the **Changeling** experience.

Attached to each of these techniques is a suggested experience point bonus that Storytellers may wish to award. The extra experience isn't mandatory — the added depth of character certainly pays its own dividends on investment — but sometimes it's good to acknowledge the extra effort on the player's part. With characters whose lives tend toward the melodramatic and the florid such as the Lost, every extra flourish speaks volumes. It will speed up character advancement more than in other Storyteller games, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. In some chronicles, a rapid rise to power is more appropriate, particularly as a beginning changeling isn't as out-and-out powerful by some standards.

• **Character Diaries:** Those players with a literary or expressive bent may choose to keep a sort of character journal, wherein they explore some of their characters' decisions and experiences as they would their own lives. This doesn't need to be anything verbose or even elaborate — each session might produce perhaps a paragraph of internal dialogue and some rationale for why the character did what she did in the session in question. Of course, some players will want to create more than a single paragraph, and kudos to them,

but the thrust of the character diary is the quality of the character insight, not the quantity. Likewise, the content is important here, not the format, and a character's "diary" might be a literal diary, a Web journal, an email circulated among the troupe or whatever. Other players can read or ignore these as they see fit, but the Storyteller should keep abreast of them, especially if she's awarding extra experience for them. The insights the player offers in the persona of the character can give the Storyteller new ideas to bring into the chronicle, or otherwise reveal the style of play she enjoys. Recommended experience awards for keeping a character diary are one or two bonus experience points per session journalled.

• **Limelight:** Every now and then, the Storyteller can decide to make a certain session of the chronicle a time for one specific character to take the limelight. In stories such as these, the character in question makes critical choices that relate to the plot, and the manner in which she's chosen to live her life comes to the fore. For example, a character who has chosen to try her luck with courtly intrigue might need to decide which of a pair of feuding nobles she's going to support and then encourage the motley to help her fulfill a pledge she's made to that noble. A character who has decided to make his way among the mortal world might have to intervene in some sort of family crisis, perhaps recovering something valuable or even retirement funds for his parents that a bogus investment opportunity was designed to bilk from them. (This doesn't have to be as mundane as it sounds — a certain amount of investigation of the finance company might reveal it to be an elaborate ruse that the company's using to defraud people across the country. The company may even have some supernatural personality pulling the strings behind it.) A clever Storyteller can blend a variety of these choices into the limelight, and, indeed, is best served by involving as many other characters from the motley as possible. For instance, perhaps the character who's tied his fate to the mortal world is going to get married, and members of the motley are in the wedding party. Maybe the character whose destiny lies among her fellow changelings needs a few days away from the courtly intrigue to collect her thoughts (or hide out), and she chooses to lay low with a character who dwells among mundane mortals. Whatever the case, the "limelight" character should have a chance to influence the story with her own choices, and her choices should reveal something about why she chose to lead her life as she did. Whether that's love, Mantle, family ties, Court Goodwill or genuine public concern is up to the Storyteller and the character's outlook. Recommended experience point awards for a character in the limelight are an extra one or two points above and beyond what the character normally earns over the course of the session or story. It's also worth mentioning that if the Storyteller chooses to use a limelight story, he should either be fair and allow every player's character a moment on center stage, or he should be up front at the beginning of the chronicle and let all the players know that their characters have to *earn* limelight consideration through development and characterization. A character who never progresses beyond the simplest of conceptualizations won't really have anything to bring to the limelight, and the situation would feel forced if a story revolved around her choices.

• **Solitaire Stories:** One method of making sure every player has an opportunity to explore the details of his personal choices is to break from the normal method of game play, which focuses on the troupe collectively around the table. If the Storyteller is willing, he can create a handful of vignettes, one for each player's character, and conduct those vignettes as short, solo stories, with only the Storyteller and the player privy to what occurs within them. Naturally, the player can share the details with the other players, but the intent is to take a singular look at how the character follows up on the choices he's made. In some ways, this is similar to running prelude for the character (see p. 78) but the difference is that solitaire stories occur during the flow of the chronicle once it's already begun. This allows the Storyteller and player to see how the chronicle has affected the character individually. As well, if the Storyteller runs numerous solitaire stories for each of the characters during the course of the chronicle, each story will attain greater depth, as each will resonate with the solitaire stories before it, and become almost a timeline of the character's personal progress. Storytellers can run these solitaire stories in the downtime between sessions, or they may choose to convene the troupe as normal but break the night's session into a collection of solitaire stories. In this latter case, the Storyteller may offer the other players the chance to look on (but not participate) as they see fit, so that they, too, might be entertained by these "character studies" that promote the growth of each character's personality. As with the limelight technique, subject matter for solitaire stories should vary by the player's preferences and the character's chronicle path, but the Storyteller has the benefit of not having to entertain the entirety of the troupe when their characters aren't the focus of the scene. This is especially recommended if the troupe has some players who are more dominant or assertive than others, or if the Storyteller has a specific plot thread he wants to weave into a single character's progression (either allowing that character to resolve the plot thread on his own, or solicit aid from fellow motley members). Experience awards for solitaire stories should be between two and six points, depending on the significance of the side story and what it means to the growth of the character in question.

• **The Rival:** Storytellers who trust their players implicitly and want to offer a personal touch to the chronicle might allow one or more of the players to create a rival. This is essentially like creating a Storyteller character, only the player does it — he comes up with a concept for a character who will rival his own and is also (at least initially) more competent than his own. The player then works with the

Storyteller to determine a backstory for the rival character, how the rival character might be integrated into the chronicle at large and the player's methods for having his character overcome the rival. In some ways, the rival is like the fetch (see below) because the rival has an immediately relevant tie to the character. The player is invested in the rival because he designed the character conceptually, and the rival is more capable than the player's own character, giving him a challenge to overcome. Naturally, the Storyteller doesn't have to take whatever rival concept the character comes up with, but this is an excellent way of gaining a firsthand look at the sorts of challenges the player wants to face. The Storyteller should tweak the rival's traits and details in his own notes, but the creation itself is a pure representation of what the player wants to overcome in the chronicle. It's also a concept that often arises in fairy tales: that of the "dark half," the alienated one-time ally or the storied nemesis. Experience point awards for working with the rival come into play in two different ways. First, the player's character should receive a bonus experience point or two when the player first designs the rival (depending on how much material he's given the Storyteller to work with and how viable it is for the story at present.) Second, when the rival does show up during the course of play, the character gains an extra experience point in sessions where the rival appears, and two extra experience points if the character manages to overcome the rival, even if only temporarily. In the long run, the benefits to the Storyteller are significant, as he gains a "stable" of characters whom the players' characters have a definite interest in besting. As well, those rivals are probably smart enough to see that if they're being consistently outperformed by the players' motley, the rivals may wish to found a motley of their own, thus taking the concept of rivalry to the next level.

Romance

It's the stuff that great stories are made of, from small-scale affairs to kingdom-destroying epics. The Lost can be greatly given to the kind of deeply emotional romance that tore apart Camelot or sent Ishtar and Orpheus to the Underworld. They're creatures of fae passion and supernatural emotion, but they also have the human capacity for constancy and devotion. Any **Changeling** chronicle should touch on romance one way or another. But how best to make use of this universal story element?

First of all, consider your group's interest in roleplaying romance at the table. Most groups are fine with a healthy presence of romance, as long as the game doesn't devote too much time and attention to the fine details of courtship and consummation. The obstacles involved in a romance tend to be of more interest to a group as a whole. Barring the Cyrano de Bergerac scenario, it tends to be easier to involve an entire motley in smuggling a friend into or out of hostile territory for a romance or helping him vanquish a rival than in whispering sweet nothings into his intended's ear. You'll find that players and troupes can vary quite widely on the preferred approach, though, so think of the people involved first. It really doesn't matter if the more intimate aspects of a romance are played out at the table, conducted privately via email or notebook or summarized succinctly — the only thing that matters is that you find the approach that's most enjoyable for your group. Talk to them about how far any given romance should go at the table (or away from it), as well as if they even want romance subplots in the first place. Not all players do, and you definitely shouldn't force a romantic subplot on a player who's not interested — or even on a player who's interested in general, but not in the specific romance you're promoting.

Next, consider the importance romance will play in any plots. Some romances are there largely to generate story hooks, with little emphasis on actual roleplaying of the romance proper. These romances are usually background elements involving Storyteller characters. Such romantic ties, rivalries, secret affairs and dangerous liaisons generate enough intrigues that the players' motley may be called on for a multitude of reasons: avenging slights to honor, arranging secret trysts, blackmailing courtiers and so on. It's usually good to have at least one such story-generating romance set up in your chronicle. It's realistic — changelings are passionate creatures — and it's an easy source for the occasional story, even if it doesn't take center stage in freehold politics. Of course, there's also plenty of reason to have a player's character be one of the principals in such a relationship, if the player's interested.

Most romances that involve a player's character more directly imply a greater focus on roleplaying the romance itself, instead of just the complications that result. (Those complications should be present, of course, but they're not necessarily the most important thing.) These romances are a powerful engine of character development. A character may change completely from the love of a good man or woman, or may resist such change or may fall into darkness by means of a passion betrayed or denied. If the player's interested in the possibility, it helps to figure out an attack plan for how to present such opportunities.

Can you plan a romance ahead of time? In some cases you can, though that depends largely on the character and the player involved. A player may request a particular kind of romantic interest, and you may create the appropriate character to match that interest. A player with the character concept of "good-hearted Ogre Knight" might ask for a damsel-figure (who may or may not be female, of course) to champion and defend, perhaps even to pine for from afar. Another player might be interested in having her shallow and insensitive Fairest character be gradually won over by a somewhat uncouth but true-hearted suitor, hoping to have her character deepen and grow as she discovers the power of genuine love. These are totally appropriate requests, of course. There's no difference between talking about a potential desired romantic subplot and talking about an old enemy your player would like to show up. The characters

shouldn't get *everything* they want in one easy-to-manage package, of course, but it's best to give players romantic interests they find engaging so that when you hit them with the inevitable complications they have a motivation to persevere, for good or for ill.

Spontaneity also has its strengths. For some players, it's the only way to do things; they'd rather have all their character development take place as direct reactions to unplanned encounters. Spontaneity also has the advantage of greater unpredictability, which is more likely to catch a player's attention. The downside is that you can't rely on it, of course. If a character who's interested in a romantic subplot goes through several sessions without finding any Storyteller characters who strike that particular spark, it can be a touch disheartening.

Once you've established a potential romantic partner for a player, and there seems to be sufficient chemistry to make the relationship worth pursuing in-game, it's time to consider adversity. The course of true love *shouldn't* run smooth — otherwise you have no story. Consider one or more of the following impediments to the happiness of a couple, either to apply before courtship can begin or to introduce during a romantic subplot.

• **Physical:** The rarest of obstacles, these tend to involve purely physical barriers to a romance. Distance is one possibility, as are events such as a kidnapping. Physical obstacles are the most obvious, but tend to be resolved the quickest.

• **Social:** Far more common are social obstacles to a relationship. Some may be simple, such as peer pressure or one of the principals already being part of a relationship. Family ties are a classic, and may also be related to political intrigues, such as if the Winter Queen has forbidden her Knights from associating with servants of her Spring rival. This is often the category for romances between a changeling and a mortal, or potentially a changeling and some other supernatural being. The precedents for social obstacles to a romance are practically innumerable, encompassing many of the great love stories of literature.

• **Psychological:** These obstacles exist largely in the mind of one of the principals. A character may still dwell on the memory of a lost love, and be reluctant at first to "betray" her. Another may uphold a desire to remain chaste due to religious or social reasons, thus warring between that belief and the temptation of desire. These obstacles require careful judgment to adjudicate just when or how they might be overcome — too early and it seems anticlimactic, too late and the passion may be lost. However, they make for highly satisfying roleplaying. If a player gives his character one of these obstacles as a personality trait, it may indicate a desire to avoid romantic subplots (a convenient excuse, basically), but it may also indicate a desire to have another character try to ease him out of his shell. If you don't know which it is, be sure to ask.

Finally, it's worth thinking about whether or not to end a relationship, and how to do so if it seems appropriate. **Changeling** is built on a core of tragedy, but it's also built on a foundation of hope. The best reason for ending a romantic subplot is if the romance itself is no longer contributing anything dramatic or entertaining to the game, and even the player seems complacent — or worse, bored. Ending the romance with an amicable parting, vicious breakup, betrayal or even death may contribute to the character's ongoing story. The thing to avoid is being too hair-trigger about this sort of thing, of course. You don't want to train players to think that any romantic interest they have is eventually just going to betray them or be tragically killed for the sake of melodrama. At that point, they start losing interest in romance as a subplot. And that would be a shame.

Chronicle Ideas

Putting all of this practical advice into, well, practice is a daunting task. To that end, we offer a few story seeds below, to help jumpstart those creative juices or to give a little direction to what may seem like a lot of broad advice that's tough to apply. Use these story seeds as you will: take a little bit from each of them, cultivate one in its entirety, germinate it with your own burgeoning ideas or leave them unexplored in the background.

Losing the Path

Trods have been disappearing all throughout the freehold, and no one knows why. The Courts are split on the issue, with some changelings worried that the magical power the trods represent and the pathways back for other prodigals have been lost, while more conservative voices see reducing the number of fledgling Lost in the freehold and limiting the access of the True Fae is a good thing. As the Courts bicker, however, neither side has attended to the practical matter of why they're vanishing.

The Devil's Own

A motley of exceptionally wicked Lost has taken up residence in the freehold and is terrorizing the mortal populace, feasting on the fearful Glamour provided thereby. Things have gotten so bad that a local church actually believes the changelings to be incarnate devils, and is training "witch hunters" to pursue the fiends and providing local media with sensational accounts of their dealings with the devils. For the sake of all changelings, this reckless motley needs to be brought into line, and the panicked congregation needs to be convinced that it's overreacting to a perfectly mundane threat.

The Dream Oracle

The most shameful of the changelings' secrets have become common knowledge and the Courts are in an uproar. The problem is that it's not just the normal Court intrigue and rumor-mongering that's to blame. It's a mortal writer whose inspirations come from her lucid dreams. The writer

herself doesn't know that she's transcribing the sordid lives of changelings and creating a scandal among the local freehold. On the other hand, she's received no small amount of local acclaim, and it's only a matter of time before her dreams-turned-novels find a national publisher. This would be a disaster for local changelings, for the attention they'd incur from other Lost and the ever-searching True Fae but also for the sheer public embarrassment of it all.

The Nightmare Stone

Someone has placed a disturbing artifact in a prominent neighborhood of the freehold, a secret as yet undetermined by local changelings. What the Lost do know is that many of them have recently moved to the neighborhood, with little more rationale than they "just feel like it." What's worse, either the presence of all these changelings or the mysterious stone have been causing nightmares among mortals who spend any time at all in the neighborhood. Those who live or work in the neighborhood can't get a good night's rest and the whole place is rapidly going downhill — traffic projects are languishing, the police neglect the place if they can get away with it and places of business keep erratic hours. Who wants all the local changelings relocated so centrally, and does she know or care what effect her lure is having on the mortal world?

His Hatful of Hollow

A Skitterskulk has taken up residence in the freehold, and the local changelings find it impossible to resist him when he suggests a pledge with them. This shouldn't be any big deal, since pledges are such small affairs, but the lords and ladies of the Court fear the almost mesmeric power he has over changelings, and fear what he might exact from them if his powers are greater than he's currently letting on. The problem is that he dwells in his own Hollow, choosing to venture into the freehold only when he needs to fulfill some promise or claim a new one. Who is he — *what* is he — and why is he here? His alarming lack of Clarity (no doubt from spending so much time in the Hedge) scares the changelings and upsets local mortals. Are his powers merely what they seem, or does he have access to some fearsome greater abilities?

The Sun Has Set

It's time for the seasonal changing of the Courts, but the currently reigning Autumn Court shows no intentions of relinquishing its power at the due time. Such a gross breach of both Contract and etiquette has sent the freehold into a state of near civil war, with everyone rushing to choose sides with or against the powerful Court, including several high-profile defections to that Ashen Court. To complicate matters, a group of quiet loyalists plans to take the opportunity to lead one of the Gentry through the Hedge once the actual conflict breaks out, in hopes of having their True Fae master set all these warring waywards to the proper way of thinking.

Bloodroot

A new goblin fruit has turned up in the Hedge near the freehold, and though this goblin fruit has no apparent effect on changelings, it works as a narcotic for vampires. Exactly who found this out, no one knows, but one thing's for certain: there's a killing to be made selling this "bloodroot" to vampires, and every enterprising would-be dealer in scouring the city for vampires who want a fix. The vampires have even crossed some social boundaries with the changelings, and courtly

functions are almost always attended by tweaked-out vampires who have attached themselves to the entourages of prominent changelings. Who found the bloodroot in the first place and how did it just happen to show up in the local Hedge? What happens when demand exceeds supply? Are the Lost going to have a vampiric turf war on their hands? Are changeling dealers going to have a turf war of their own? The whole situation is rather sordid anyway, and won't someone please get these unseemly vampire junkies out of the Courts?

Fetches

When the Fae steal human beings from their cribs, or pull them into the Hedge as they walk alone down certain alleyways, they leave something behind. The being — the *thing* — the Fae leave behind looks identical to the person whom they stole, and, if the person were older than a child, can function in the abducted human's life with little difficulty. But that thing that the Fae leave behind isn't human and isn't fae. It is something in between, a construct made of shadow and Glamour called the *fetch*.

The Fae shape the fetch out of a portion of the abducted human's shadow and give it flesh made from materials found in the Hedge or that the Fae carry with them. A few weeks masquerading as a human being is enough to cement this Glamour-spun dross in the mortal world, though, and even the fetch's family can't tell the difference. When a changeling escapes her masters, though, and returns to the mortal world, she has an adversary waiting for her — the fetch, the creature that was given her life. This section discusses how player and Storytellers go about constructing a **Changeling** character's fetch, the powers and resources it has available and its role in the chronicle.

Why do the Fae bother? With all their power, surely it's more expedient to just take people and leave their families to wonder? Over the centuries, Fae have occasionally tried simply stealing people and not bothering to replace them, but the Fae find that human beings are persistent. Parents, especially, do not rest if their children are taken away, and over time these obsessed people can find evidence of the fae — changelings, gateways and so on. One of the reasons that so many faerie legends persist, perhaps, is because of carelessness on the part of Keepers. Better to create the fetch and let humans believe that everything is all right.

Building the Fetch

Every changeling has or had a fetch. The fetch is created at the moment that the changeling-to-be is stolen from the mortal world, and thus is nearly identical. From the time that the fetch begins its charade, its personality develops in much the same way a human's would in response to its environment. Just as a human being's personality and proclivities depend in large part upon genetics, however, a fetch's personality receives a great deal of influence from its "heritage."

Unlike changelings, though, who take on a great deal of the physical aspects of their Fae masters, fetches are crafted to be indistinguishable from humanity. The resemblance is imperfect, but the variations surface in behavior, rather than appearance. For instance, a fetch created by a deathly Fae might have a morbid streak, or simply have an interest in death and the dead. Such a fetch might grow up to be a funeral director or a pathologist, but just as easily might grow up in a completely different profession and read books on funerary practices for pleasure. Indeed, some fetches simply seem to be crafted more skillfully than others. Some are so heartbreakingly human-seeming that one would swear they have souls of their own, while others quickly demonstrate sociopathic or solipsistic tendencies that betray a more slipshod hand.

Likewise, not every Fae that abducts a human being does so for its own personal use. Some of the Gentry employ others for the task of stealing humans and fashioning fetches. Therefore, a changeling might return from Arcadia and discover that the creature that has been living her life has almost nothing in common with her — she spent the time living in a cave and has become an Ogre, while her fetch was crafted by the mercurial wind-Other that stole her from her crib. Such a changeling will have even more difficulty claiming her true identity than most, because time and circumstance have made her fetch so different from her.

The player and the Storyteller should work together to determine the circumstances under which the human was abducted, and thus the circumstances under which the fetch was formed. The player can, of course, leave this entirely up to the Storyteller, under the rationale that the character probably knows nothing about her fetch, and this if fine, if the Storyteller is amenable to the extra work. Many players, however, will enjoy being part of the process, and a player with a strong concept for the fetch and the relationship between this dark mirror and the changeling should be given a chance to express that concept.

The questions below are meant to help spur the creative dialogue between player and Storyteller on the topic of the fetch. It is impossible for this book to consider every possibility for these beings, but these questions cover the most important discussion points.

Questions

• **How much does the fetch know?** Does the fetch know what it is? A fetch created when a Fae steals an adult probably does, but a fetch made from the shadow of a baby might have grown up believing itself to be human. How, then, will this fetch react to learning the news that it is not, and never has been, truly human? Fetches don't always have a strong streak of fae malice; it's not completely inconceivable that a fetch would abandon its stolen life upon learning its true nature. This revelation, incidentally, doesn't have to come from the changeling that the fetch was created to

replace. Another changeling, should he discover a fetch, might choose to enlighten (or kill) the fetch himself. If that has happened, how does that affect the changeling whose fetch is now aware of her nature (or dead)? Does this give the fetch time to prepare a trap?

The fetch can sense the changeling to which it is tied (the mechanics for this are discussed anon), but a truly ignorant fetch doesn't know, initially, what it is sensing. It is unlikely, though not impossible, for a fetch and a changeling to meet without either one of them having any idea that the other existed. What kind of effect must this have on both parties, to meet what both perceive as a twisted mirror image? Can either the changeling or the fetch walk away from this event with her sanity intact?

• **How human is the fetch?** Is its true nature all but indistinguishable from the ordinary human it claims to be? Or is its psychology broken and warped, more like that of a psychopath? This question is important because it determines the balance between the understandable, even sympathetic rival and the horror of the cruel facsimile that wears a stolen face. Both are even possible — a fetch might have an innocent façade of a personality that masks a second persona driven by a heart of rotten alder. Because a fetch can exist anywhere on the scale, it can offer a story of moral and ethical turmoil or of starker, more surreal psychological horror. This variance also makes it easy for the Storyteller to maintain a sense of mystery and dread where the fetch is concerned; it's impossible for the player to know just exactly what kind of reflection her character casts.

• **How entrenched is the fetch in the mortal world?** Fetches don't have the same degree of supernatural power that changelings do, but fetches do have the advantage of years of living among humans. A fetch might have become a policeman, a politician, a rich and influential person or (for a more immediate threat) a soldier or gangbanger while the changeling was enslaved. Leaving aside the question of influence for a moment, the fetch might have married and even adopted children (fetches are, themselves, unable to procreate), and thus be all the more willing to fight to keep its identity. And is the changeling willing to step into this life? If she's not, does she really have the right to take it from the fetch, given how many others will suffer from the sudden departure of this "person?"

• **Is the fetch still around?** Fetches, though crafted rather than born, are living creatures of a sort. They can fall victim to violence and bad luck just as any person can, and a changeling who pushes through the Hedge and tries to reclaim his identity might discover that this identity died years ago. While this is arguably less of a problem than having to find and confront the fetch, the changeling returning to a world that believes her to be dead creates just as much conflict and drama as a world that believes something else to *be* her, and so shouldn't be discouraged outright.

Of course, it's possible that a player might state that her fetch is dead in order to dodge the issue entirely, either because the player believes that this will make her character's life easier or because she wishes to focus her character's story on other things (Court politics, for instance). That's fine — the chronicle is the players' at least as much as the Storyteller's. Consider, though, that just because the world believes that the fetch died doesn't make it so. The fetch might be living somewhere far away, only to return at a critical moment (which raises the question of why the changeling couldn't sense the fetch before now — or maybe she did, and simply repressed the feeling out of hope or denial). The fetch might be enslaved to another changeling, masked from the character's perception by this master's magic. The fetch might even have learned the truth of its existence and entered the Hedge in an attempt to find the changeling (for whatever reason), and still be stuck there, needing rescue.

• **Did the mortal's family ever suspect?** On the one hand, fae magic is powerful, and the facsimiles created by the Fae are nearly perfect. On the other hand, a parent — a mother especially — knows her children. But what would a young mother say when she enters her baby's room one morning to find something that is functionally identical to, and yet *is not* her child? Who could she possibly tell? At worst, she might attempt to harm the child and be rewarded with prison or incarceration in a mental institution. At best, she convinces herself that she is wrong, that this is some post-partum delirium that

No Fetch...

...actually *is* a possibility for a **Changeling** character. A human being who accidentally wanders into the Hedge and is captured might not have a fetch created to represent her. Such a character still faces some of the same issues as a character whose fetch died (her mortal identity might have been declared dead), but the character doesn't have to worry about the fetch popping up someday to cause trouble.

Or does she? The Fae are clever, and have an understanding of time that mortals do not. Even if the mortal encountered the Others far from her mortal home, the Fae who enslaves her might send an envoy to the entrance to the Hedge to create a fetch for this wayward person. This might not happen immediately after the human is captured... or it might happen shortly *before* the human is captured. What if the human follows her fetch into the Hedge and thus winds up becoming enslaved, which in turn requires the creation of the fetch?

any new mother might go through, and goes about raising the child as best she can.

This kind of conflict takes on slightly different flavors depending on which member of the family has the suspicion. A father who realizes the truth is probably ridiculed or reprimanded for not wanting to grow up and take an active part in his child's life. A brother might somehow notice that his baby sister *changed* last night, but no matter how genuine his terror, all he hears is something about "sibling rivalry." A teenage girl has always relied upon her twin sister when times got tough, but that sister went away for the weekend, and although someone came back wearing her clothes and talking in her voice, it doesn't remember any of their code words or signals.

The changeling who returns to the mortal world, then, can be a source of incredible relief to these unfortunate people by explaining the truth. Such a person, once convinced, could be a powerful ally in the changeling's conflict with the fetch, whatever form it takes. Of course, if the fetch realizes what's going on, it might feel compelled to correct the situation. The fetch might resort to violence or use of supernatural powers, but what if it could arrange for the overly perceptive relative to be abducted by the Fae and replaced with a fetch of its own?

Character Creation

A fetch is created in much the same way as a **Changeling** character (see Chapter Two for details). The allocation of the fetch's dots, while numerically the same as the changeling, demands some consideration.

One possibility is to distribute the fetch's Attribute dots in the same way as the changeling's. The fetch was fashioned as an exact duplicate of the changeling, after all, so it makes sense that their basic capabilities would match. Likewise, if the changeling possesses Merits that reflect innate capability (such as Ambidextrous), then the fetch should as well. Skills and Merits that develop over time, however, are unique to the fetch and should be decided based on how the fetch has spent its life. If the fetch replaced a person after she was already an adult, though, the Skills and Merits might match much more closely. Indeed, differences at this stage might provide the changeling a way to track when she was taken — if the changeling has the Iron Stamina Merit and the fetch does not, people close to the character might remember that she suddenly lost her high pain threshold "after she got lost in the woods that summer."

If the fetch replaced the person when she was young, though, even Attributes might not match. Experience plays a large role in development, and how could the experiences of an Fae-enslaved human and an Earthbound fetch possibly be the same?

Another way of looking at this, though, is that when the changeling returns to the mortal world, the fetch immediately realizes it and develops some sense of itself. This might cause it to gain knowledge of Skills the fetch wouldn't otherwise possess.

For instance, a Fairest changeling, forced in Arcadia to be the bodyguard for a spoiled Fae child, has become an expert swordsman. He escapes and flees through the Hedge to the mortal world. His fetch awakens one morning knowing that something is different and that he is in danger. Unable to pinpoint the source of his dread, he finds himself absent-mindedly practicing fencing maneuvers with an umbrella. The fetch is developing the Weaponry Skill, and depending on how much time elapses before the changeling finds and confronts the fetch, he might quickly reach the changeling's level of mastery.

The Storyteller might choose to decide the fetch's game traits, or allow the player to do so. Either way has its advantages. If the Storyteller does it, the player truly does not know what to expect from her character's imposter, and this should heighten the suspense when the inevitable confrontation occurs (it is also probably more expedient for the Storyteller to handle this aspect of character creation, which might be a factor depending on how often and for how long the troupe meets). If the player does it, she has the ability to show the Storyteller exactly what she expects from the fetch/changeling dynamic, which is helpful for the chronicle as a whole. One way of compromising in this instance might be for the player to allocate the dots as usual, but for the Storyteller to spend a certain number of experience points on the fetch to reflect its years in the mortal world. Therefore, these points should generally be spent primarily on Skills and Merits, rather than supernatural powers. As these powers go, fetches do not have access to Contracts and pledges in the same way as changelings do. Fetches have their own supernatural abilities, however, which are detailed below.

Finally, consider Virtue and Vice. These traits represent a way to highlight the differences or similarities between the fetch and the changeling. If the Virtue and Vice are identical, that doesn't mean that the characters express them the same way. A Gluttonous changeling might have been the food-taster for a Fae king in Arcadia, and developed a taste for rich food born of the knowledge that any given morsel might kill him. His fetch, though, might be a simple drunk in the mortal world.

If the Virtue and Vice are different, this might be a simple matter of differing experiences shaping the characters, but these traits might also develop in an odd mirror-image to one another. For instance, the changeling mentioned above has the Vice of Gluttony born of a fatalistic attitude. His fetch, therefore, might have developed the Virtue of Temperance out of a desire to *avoid* this kind of excess.

Character Creation in Brief

The first four steps of character creation proceed as described on p. 72 of this book, with regards to the number of dots that fetches have to distribute. How those dots are allocated is discussed in the text of this section.

Step Five (adding the supernatural template) varies a bit:

- Fetches do not have access to Contracts or pledges.
- Fetches do not have seemings (and thus kiths).
- Fetches cannot gain status in any of the Courts. It is *possible*, however unlikely, for a fetch that is aware of its nature to gain the Court Goodwill Merit, but as fetches are not changelings fetches cannot have dots in Mantle. An unusually non-hostile fetch might (again, as a remote possibility) come to think of itself or even be regarded as a member of a given Court, but in game terms, the best the fetch could hope for is a high Court Goodwill rating. Given that most changelings have a high aversion to these simulacra, though, it would take a very specific circumstance for a fetch to be even grudgingly accepted into changeling society.
- Fetches begin with one dot of Wyrd just as changelings do. The Wyrd rating of a fetch *always* matches the Wyrd rating of the changeling the fetch impersonates, though, so if the player trades Merit dots for Wyrd, the fetch reaps this benefit.
- Fetches have Morality, similar to mortals, rather than Clarity. Fetches therefore derive none of the benefits that changelings do from having a high Clarity rating, but fetches also do not risk Morality for the same kinds of acts (see p. 91 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). A fetch's Morality has no real connection to its model, and may be high or low, with associated derangements or without; some fetches effectively have a Morality of 1 or 2 from the moment of their creation.
- Fetches automatically gain the Attuned to the Wyrd Echo. The player (or Storyteller) selects one additional Echo per dot of Wyrd that the fetch possesses. During play, if the changeling's Wyrd rating increases, the fetch gains an additional Echo as well as a dot of Wyrd.

Example of Fetch Creation

Chuck has given Matt an interesting and dynamic character in Jack Tallow (see Chapter Two for the process of Jack's creation). Since Chuck has elected not to know Jack's human name, Matt is largely in control of the fetch. Still, he asks if Chuck has any input. Chuck reminds Matt that Jack was only taken from the human world a few years ago, but says that he envisions Jack's fetch as being "what Jack's like when the candle is blown out."

Before thinking about Attributes, Echoes and other mechanical considerations, Matt gives a few thoughts to what has happened to the fetch in the time that Jack was lost in Faerie. Matt decides that the Winter Princess who abducted Jack fashioned the fetch out of disused candles, string and a piece of Jack's shadow. Therefore, the fetch is

cold, wasted and burned out. Matt decides that the fetch *tried* to live Jack's life, but without Jack's zeal was open to manipulation. The fetch fell in with a group of militant protesters (Matt leaves their exact cause vague for the moment, but makes a note to decide it during play based on what would shock or horrify Jack the most), and the whole bunch was arrested when a demonstration turned violent. The police dug up information on "Jack" that allowed them to prosecute him on trespassing, vandalism, breaking and entering, theft, invasion of privacy and a host of other charges. While Jack certainly would have fought these procedures, the fetch simply didn't care enough, and was sent to prison. Of the two years that Jack was enslaved, the fetch spent 15 months behind bars. It was released from prison only a few months before Jack burned his way back to the world of his birth.

With all of this in mind, Matt takes a spare character sheet and goes to work. Since so much of Jack's Attribute distribution relates to his fiery, yet fragile, concept, Matt decides to rearrange things a little. He drops Presence from 4 to 2 and increases Composure from 1 to 3 — Jack's fetch, lacking Jack's burning conviction, learned to keep his mouth shut. Likewise, Matt decides that Jack's fetch is too fragile and raises its Stamina to 2 (the fetch doesn't have to be exactly balanced, after all).

Skills get the same treatment; dots in Social Skills are moved to the Physical category (Matt reasons that time in prison raised the fetch's Athletics, Brawl, Larceny and Weaponry while all but eliminating Jack's talent for rhetoric — Expression fades entirely, Persuasion drops to 1 and Intimidation and Streetwise rise to 2). Matt leaves Mental Skills alone; he wants the fetch to be recognizable as Jack, and their knowledge base is one area that Matt reasons would remain fairly consistent. Matt likewise leaves the Cover-Up Specialty, but moves Jack's Specialty in Firearms (Pistols) to Brawl (Sucker Punch) and his Specialty in Expression (Oratory) to Streetwise (Prison).

Following that logic, the Eidetic Memory Merit stays, but Contacts and (obviously) Court Goodwill and Freehold Status go. This leaves Jack's fetch with five free Merit dots, and Matt considers Merits such as Fast Reflexes or Danger Sense (both appropriate given time in prison). He decides, though, that being "quick on the draw" is more Jack's arena, and that his fetch should be slower, steadier and more physical. Matt assigns three of the fetch's Merit dots to Fighting Style: Boxing; if Jack picks a fistfight with his fetch (not entirely out of character, given his fiery temper), he'll be in for quite a shock. Matt puts the last two dots into Allies — although the fetch isn't nearly as sociable as Jack, it did make friends with a couple of other inmates who were released around the same time.

The fetch's Advantages are computed in the same manner as any character's are. Its Clarity rating starts at the same level as Jack's (seven dots), but Matt figures that time in prison wore on the fetch's sanity a bit, and drops the rating to six. Normally this bestows five experience points, but since Matt already gave the fetch an extra dot of Stamina, he doesn't feel the need to spend these points (not a fair trade, numerically, but again, who's counting?).

Finally, Matt assigns the fetch's Echoes. The fetch has a Wyrd rating of 1 (because Jack's Wyrd is 1), and thus the fetch has one Echo aside from Attuned to the Wyrd, which all fetches possess. Matt looks over the list and chooses the Normalcy Echo, reasoning that the ability to blend in and go unnoticed serves an ex-con well.

Matt takes a few notes on what the fetch has been doing since its release from prison. It is on parole, and thus is watched very carefully by the authorities (if Matt decides to extend the political themes of the chronicle from the changeling world to the human world, he might add a shadowy element to these "authorities" — maybe Homeland Security is interested in "Jack," which could get dangerous if they find Jack rather than the fetch). The fetch doesn't have the desire to break the terms of the parole, and checks in with its parole officer right on schedule. Of course, Jack has no idea what the terms of this parole *are*, and so is probably going to break them through ignorance (not that he'd respect them if he did know them). Matt makes a note to stretch this mistaken identity issue out as long as he can before confronting Jack with all of the details of his past. Some characters might make a point to learn the truth quickly, but Chuck has portrayed Jack as so easily distractible that Matt figures he should have no trouble getting some good mileage out of this storyline, especially since the Normalcy Echo makes the fetch hard for Jack to find.

The fetch might, in time, be "re-ignited" — its passion for life might start to burn just from proximity to Jack. Just for the moment, though, Matt decides that the fetch perceives Jack as just another cop, a servant of some unknowable higher order come to enslave or destroy him (ironic, considering Jack's revolutionary principles). The fetch meets this with cold, pragmatic planning. The fetch spends most of its time around its fellow ex-cons, always carries a roll of quarters to use as a weapon (since a gun would be a parole violation that he doesn't want to risk) and carefully watches his surroundings. The fetch, Matt decides, is reactive, not proactive, which lets the highly proactive Jack make the first move. The fetch's name — Jack's *real* name — is Randall Vey.

Magic of the Fetch

Fetches are unable to call upon Contracts or forge pledges, not being changelings or Fae themselves. Fetches are, however, able to use their fae heritage to their advantage. All fetches begin play with the Attuned to the Wyrd Echo, and gain additional Echoes as their Wyrd rating increases.

Echoes, as the name implies, as powers based upon the fetch's relationship with its changeling counterpart. That

is, the fetch is nothing but secondary to the changeling, a placeholder, a stopgap to prevent other humans from going after the Fae. Most Echoes function only in the presence of changelings, and some function only on the changeling that the fetch impersonates.

Some powers can only be acquired by fetches with a certain Wyrd rating. These are noted after the name of the power ("Shadow Step (Wyrd 3)," for instance).

Echoes

• **Attuned to the Wyrd (automatic):** All fetches can recognize the Lost for what they are, even before the changelings to whom the fetches are attuned return to the mortal world. Similar to all fae creatures, fetches see changelings' fae miens as well as their mortal guises. In addition, fetches can sense changelings coming before they see them. This sensation is general; the fetch cannot differentiate between Lost, but can tell when a changeling is in the same area (within a 50-foot radius). The exception, of course, is the changeling that the fetch is impersonating. The fetch can immediately tell if that particular changeling is within this distance. This attunement means that changelings cannot surprise a fetch (see p. 152 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

• **Call the Fae (Wyrd 5):** The fetch can send up a beacon to the Others, usually as a last resort. The Fae might choose not to respond, but then again, they might jump at the chance to reclaim a servant (possibly gaining an edge over an adversary). The fetch spends 10 points of Glamour (only five required in the Hedge) and screams, rings a bell or otherwise makes a loud noise. The True Fae hear the call, though if and how they respond is up to the Storyteller.

• **Death of Glamour (Wyrd 4):** The fetch becomes a sinkhole for Glamour, creating a small zone in which no Contracts are honored and no fae magic can function. The Storyteller spends 10 points of Glamour and rolls Resolve + Wyrd (obviously, this Echo takes several turns to enact due to the Glamour expenditure). If the roll succeeds, no Contracts function within a 50-foot radius and all beings that can hold Glamour, including the fetch itself, lose one point per turn. The changeling weakness to iron, however, also ceases to function during this time, so this power can be of some small benefit. This Echo lasts for one turn per success.

• **Enter the Hedge (Wyrd 1):** The fetch can enter the Hedge the same ways that a changeling can (see p. 216).

• **Feast of Shadows (Wyrd 2):** The fetch can consume the shadows of living beings in order to heal itself. Capturing a shadow requires a roll of Dexterity + Wits – the victim's Resolve + Wyrd. The victim loses a point of Willpower from the shock. The shadow regenerates itself within one scene, or sooner if the victim regains Willpower before the scene is over. Once the fetch has captured the shadow, the fetch can consume it. The shadow begins at the same Size rating as the person who cast it, but loses one point of Size per turn whether the fetch is eating or not. The fetch heals one level of bashing damage per turn spent eating the shadow, one point of lethal damage for every two turns and one point of aggravated damage for every three turns. The fetch can choose what order to heal this damage in, if applicable.

For example, a fetch battles its changeling and does poorly, suffering three points of bashing damage and one lethal. Fleeing, the fetch finds a man waiting at a bus stop and rips his shadow away. The man is Size 5, so the shadow begins at Size 5 as well. It takes the fetch one turn to get to an alleyway to eat in peace (Size 4). The fetch spends two turns eating the shadow and heals one level of lethal damage (Size 2). A drunk man stumbles into the alley and vomits into a trash can; the fetch is startled and stops eating, and the shadow fades a bit more (Size 1). Annoyed, the fetch finishes the shadow (healing one level of bashing damage), and stalks after the drunk who distracted him to tear *his* shadow away.

The fetch can only shadows only from living beings with souls. This means that werewolves, changelings and mages are fair game, but vampires are not. Stealing a shadow from a supernatural being has a benefit, though; add the being's power trait (Gnosis, Primal Urge or Glamour) to the effective Size of the shadow.

• **Match (Wyrd 1):** The fetch has an intuitive sense of the changeling's actions and mindset, even beyond the connection usually present. The fetch and the changeling always act on the same Initiative (both roll and use the higher result), and any ties on contested actions go to the fetch.

• **Mimic Contract (Wyrd 2):** This Echo only works in the presence of the fetch's changeling counterpart. The fetch spends one point of Glamour. On the following turn, the fetch can use any Contract that the changeling possesses.

• **Normalcy (Wyrd 1):** This Echo is permanent and never needs to be activated, although the fetch can turn it *off* for a scene if the fetch so desires. The fetch is completely undetectable by fae magic. As far as the perceptive magic of the Fae and changelings are concerned, the fetch is simply a human being. The fetch must turn this power off to use other Echoes (with the exception of Attuned to the Wyrd). This Echo cannot protect the fetch from its creator's magic.

• **Shadow Step (Wyrd 3):** The fetch can draw upon the shadow-stuff of its creation to teleport limited distances. The fetch must find a shadow large enough to step or fall into, and the Storyteller spends a point of Glamour. The fetch disappears into the shadow and reappears from any shadow of comparable size with 100 yards. The fetch can use this power to escape from a pursuer, circumvent a locked door or gain a tactical advantage over an opponent (appearing behind her, for instance). The teleportation normally requires an instant action, but with the expenditure of three points of Glamour, this action is reflexive. The fetch does not have to see where it is going, but if it cannot see its destination the fetch gains no protection from unfavorable circumstances there.

Storytelling the Fetch

The role that the fetch plays in the chronicle depends on the Storyteller and the players, of course. That said, the fetch is well suited to highlight a few of **Changeling**'s themes, and can make for stories unique to this game.

The fetch is fashioned out of a piece of a human being. Specifically, the Fae use a piece of the person's shadow, but this is an obvious metaphor for the soul… and to the Fae, metaphor is as good as truth. The fetch, therefore, is put into the role of imposter without any choice in the matter and usually with no idea of its position. It isn't until a changeling escapes from Arcadia and arrives, breathless and bloodied from a harrowing run through the Hedge, that a fetch realizes that he is different.

What form does that realization take? One fetch sits bolt upright one night, sheet soaked with sweat, in the middle of a panic attack so intense he can barely breathe. Another might find herself standing in a crowded square one day, tears running down her face, because she suddenly cannot remember her name or where she lives. Yet another fetch walks out of class at the college he attends only to be grabbed by the lapels and slammed against the wall by a man whom his friends don't get a good look at… but after the assailant runs away, the fetch is so terrified he can hardly stand, because the face of his attacker was identical to his own.

Fetches are not necessarily "evil twins" to **Changeling** characters. Many fetches believed themselves to be human until shown otherwise by their counterparts. Their emotions may have betrayed a certain fae sensibility, but a fetch may never have understood that its peculiarities were all that peculiar. Are they more prone to sociopathy because they lack true souls, or do they mimic human morality because they are meant to blend in? Is killing a fetch really murder, from an ethical or moral standpoint? (What it means from a Clarity standpoint is more immediate, but Clarity doesn't represent what's ethical or moral.) These are questions that your troupe can confront, if you wish to tell a story about the fetch.

Conflicts inherent to **Changeling** are discussed on pp. 239–240, but below are some conflicts and stories specific to the fetch and its role in the chronicle.

The Fetch as Adversary

Once the fetch realizes what it is and that the changeling exists, it's very likely to be incensed. As long as the changeling is around, it knows that it's a fake, a mannequin made to dupe the relatives of the changeling. But while the changeling has been gone, *it's* been doing all the work, and it's been doing it quite well, thanks anyway. Why should the changeling get to show up and take it all away just because he actually happens to *be* the genuine person?

This kind of attitude doesn't have to stem from bitterness or fear, though it certainly can. As mentioned earlier, the fetch might have a spouse and (adopted) children, and whether it can feel genuine love or not, it certainly isn't going to give up its family without a fight. At the other end of the spectrum, the presence of the fetch's changeling mirror may erode away the fetch's last human sentiments, "freeing" it to a state of solipsism akin to that of a serial killer.

The fetch can be a violent adversary to a changeling. The two can spend their days sparring, attacking whatever the other holds dear, while at night they enter their shared dream and battle there (see p. 193 for an explanation of how fetches fit into dreamshaping).

The fetch can oppose the changeling in an exclusively social fashion. Mostly, the fetch is the greatest social threat in the arena of mortal society, where the fetch has the advantage of roots. It's the one who knows the names of the children's friends and teachers, who has been networking at the office, who can more effectively press charges against a "vagrant stalker." In some cases, though, a fetch can give the changeling trouble within the context of Lost society. What if the reigning monarch decrees that fetches cannot be killed, but must agree to give up their stolen lives and return to their changelings' shadow? The fetch then needs to be convinced to submit to this fate, or beaten down and degraded to the point that the fetch agrees. The battles between changeling and fetch then aren't literal, physical battles but political and emotional games of wit and endurance.

The Fetch as Other Half

Some Lost believe that they can merge with their fetches. The fetch can, they say, step back into the changeling's shadow and give up its stolen life. This is akin to death for the fetch, of course, but the fetch's memories of its life as a human being transfer to the changeling. In that moment, the changeling becomes whole again, casts a shadow and regains the entirety of his soul. He's still a changeling, yes — nothing's going to take that away from him — but he's human, as well.

It's beautiful idea, but is it true? Enough changelings believe it that the idea persists, for whatever that's worth.

If merging with the fetch is possible, it probably requires an extraordinary set of circumstances. Perhaps as part of creating the fetch, the Fae had to build a clause into the Contract that enabled what was sundered to become whole again. This clause might involve beating the fetch in a certain type of combat, or might require that the fetch knowingly and willingly agree to the "merger." Perhaps the changeling can complete this merger if he drags the fetch back into the Hedge and keeps the fetch prisoner there for a certain amount of time… but of course that fetch will probably scream for help until it's hoarse, and in the Hedge, who knows what might answer?

New Merit: Broken Mirror (Milestone)

Effect: Regardless of the fetch's true nature, whether the fetch is capable of genuine compassion or is become as solipsistic as the Other that spun it of wood and shadow and rusty wire, killing a fetch isn't easy for a changeling. Destroying the duplicate of a changeling (or, worse, one's own) feels entirely too much like destroying the changeling in question, or like destroying a part of yourself. Such a task is a breaking point for changelings of Clarity 5 or higher (p. 92).

However, the act of personally destroying one's own fetch is also a turning point of sorts. The killing may erode the changeling's sense of self, but it also places him in a greater mastery of his own fate. And as Arcadia's orphans, fate is more than a simple abstraction to the Lost.

The player may invoke the Broken Mirror Merit once per story to gain three additional dice on a roll, just as if he had spent a Willpower point. This Merit does not count as a Willpower expenditure, and can in fact be used on a roll that is also augmented with a Willpower point, for a total of six dice.

A changeling who personally kills his own fetch gains this milestone Merit, without having to purchase it with experience points. This Merit can be gained only in play; it cannot be given to a character during character creation, even if his fetch died during the course of his prelude. Players who want to simulate killing their fetches as part of backstory may choose to purchase extra Resolve or Composure at character creation instead.

The Fetch as Myth

Maybe there is no such thing as a fetch.

Of course, that requires jettisoning ideas such as Echoes and other supernatural capabilities of the fetch, but perhaps the fetch is just a myth. That would mean that changelings out to reclaim their lives are victimizing innocent people, people who have no memory of "stealing lives" not because the Fae wiped that memory or because they were too young to remember but because they *just didn't do it*. These innocent people have no way to fight the changelings, no way to convince them of their innocence beyond simple pleading. For all these innocent people know, these horrific nightmares are here to take them away to the lands beyond the Hedge, to make them slaves and take their lives away.

Story Hook — The Fetch Prelude

The players create characters as described in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**; they are (or believe they are) normal mortals. As the game progresses, however, they see evidence of the Fae creeping through — strange shadows in mirrors, whispers coming from dark corners, odd reactions from animals and any other strangeness the Storyteller feels like inflicting. The characters find each other through circumstance, possibly directed by these odd events, though this "direction" is really only comprehensible in hindsight. The first time they are all together, the area becomes dark, the creeping shadows of the Hedge become visible, and they *know* — an alien being is lurking somewhere, hunting for each of them.

At that point, the players create their changeling characters, using the fetches as a base. This is a reversal on the "standard" **Changeling** chronicle, but if the Storyteller wishes to ease players into the game (and set up a story about the fetches with a bit of moral ambiguity in the process), it's a great way to start.

Antagonists

Although a changeling's first impression upon returning to the human world may be one of relief, few have the luxury to revel in their newfound freedom for long. Just as the legendary "fair road" leads not to Paradise, but to the gates of Hell, their escape from Faerie does not guarantee a safe haven. Adversaries and antagonists threaten changelings' safety, freedom, sanity and even their very souls, revealing this ostensible respite to be its own treacherous trial. Some of these dangers are overt, wielding claws, fangs or Fae magics. Others are more subtle, although no less dangerous. All too often, an unsuspecting changeling has fallen prey to an underestimated human pawn, or even one of his fellow wayfarers, while seeking aid from what he deemed to be a more clear threat. The lesson most changelings learned first in Faerie remains true upon their return: things are rarely what they seem, and the greatest harm may come from where you least expect it.

The Lost

Those who have escaped Faerie often are drawn to one another as they try to make their way in the mortal world. The threat of madness lies thickly in what they have endured, not only in their time in Arcadia, but also upon returning to the "real" world, a place they no longer truly

belong. Finding others who understand somewhat of the threat is often the first step toward defending themselves against it, and it's easy to bond quickly with those who seem to be kindred spirits.

Simply being a changeling, however, is no assurance that any given individual will be a friend or ally. Intentionally or not, the Lost can also be each other's most potent adversaries. Even within "civilized" changeling society, political machinations and rivalries can be a deadly business, pitting Court against Court in Machiavellian plots that lead to treachery, betrayal, even death. Manipulation and intrigue come instinctively to the fae. Many changelings learned to wield these skills with lethal proficiency at the feet of their Keepers. Changeling freeholds offer protection from external threats but possess their own inherent dangers — high-density changeling populations breed high-density political entanglements.

Outside freeholds, the threats only worsen. Unhampered and unprotected by the pledges and promises of at least superficial cooperation, Lost who are not associated with freeholds are often focused even more highly on self-preservation and their own personal agendas. Should they be so inclined, changelings' innate ability to see through the Mask — not to mention their access to Contracts and pledges — makes it an uncomfortably simple matter for one changeling to hunt down another. Likewise, those who have survived time in Faerie and returned to the human world often know enough about Arcadia, the Gentry — and each other — to make them among a Prodigal's most dangerous enemies.

Madmen

No changeling escapes Faerie entirely whole. Most are scarred, physically and emotionally, from their struggles to return to the lands of their birth through the hungry passages of the Hedge. All have lost something during their abduction and return: treasured belongings, precious friends, their pride and in some cases, their sanity. Many factors can combine to shave away at a changeling's reason. The longer changelings spend in Faerie, the less likely they are to be able to successfully transition back into human society. Likewise, those who were taken at a young age or who had pre-existing mental instability have less connecting them to the mortal world and are more prone to suffering debilitating madness, should they manage to return.

While the jarring return to the human world is never easy for those who have spent time in Faerie, for some the touch of the madlands never fades completely. They find themselves seeing, hearing and experiencing things that "normal" humans cannot, in a world with no sympathy for such perceptions. Other changelings are likely to empathize with these delusions, and most freeholds attempt to provide aid, as long as the afflicted individual is not blatantly homicidal and is willing to accept their assistance. In this way, some madmen are able to team up with other changelings and eventually regain enough Clarity to make their way in the mortal world. Others, however, are not that lucky.

Madness is not always a direct and immediate result of one's time in Faerie. For some, especially those who had adapted to the mutable reality of life in Arcadia, it may be the human world that slowly erodes away at their sanity. Changelings are just as susceptible to the biological, psychological and social causes of mental illness as their human counterparts. Dealing with the duality of their changeling nature only adds to these influences, making changelings more, rather than less, likely to succumb to mental illnesses as they return to the mortal world and attempt to juggle their dual lives.

Insanity

Not all madmen are raging beasts. Madness can creep up subtly, sneaking into the cracks and crevices of the mind and blurring the demarcations between reality and fantasy so gradually that it is impossible to say where exactly insanity begins and sanity is left behind. Even for those who are able to keep their lack of Clarity hidden for a time, however, madness is confusing, frightening and debilitating. Most chilling, however, is the fact that madness is very often progressive, with the gap between sanity and madness deepening exponentially as time passes. Eventually, others will notice the discrepancy between the madman's reality and that of those around him, and if it goes unchecked, eventually he will no longer be able to function in society, either human or changeling.

Many strong (and entertaining) representations of mental illness exist in modern media. Films such as *A Beautiful Mind, Frailty, Three Faces of Eve* and *Jacob's Ladder* portray the frightening nature of insanity, while books such as *Movies and Mental Illness* address the topic of understanding madness through its portrayal in film. Technical journals such as *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* can offer accessible non-fiction information on the topic as well.

The Mad Hound

Quote: *"You think I can't see you? I see you! I see what you really are!"*

Background: Jules fell into Faerie as a youth while attempting to escape yet-another beating from the local bully and his gang. Scrambling through the overgrown bushes, Jules found himself not in the empty lot he expected but deep within the dark maze of the Hedge, where he quickly drew the atten-

tion of a pack of briarwolves. Escaping the shadowy monsters made eluding the human predators he'd just ran from seem like child's play. The pack toyed with the boy, chasing him through hungry thickets that tore first at his clothing and then at his skin. They nipped at his calves, bloodying his trail, but he was used to dealing with bigger foes and slipped into the center of a huge bramble so fiercely thorned that the massive briarwolves could not quickly follow. When the brush parted, he thought they'd found a way in, but instead he found the black-pelted Fae who would become his Keeper standing over him.

What followed next was an eternity of nightmare. Jules, if the stories he tells in his more lucid moments can be believed, served for 70 long years as the head of his Keeper's hunt. During his service, his body was transformed at her whim from human to hound and back, until he himself was uncertain which of the forms, if either, was truly his. He escaped one night while on a hunt, his astute senses picking up an almost-forgotten scent that led him, howling and baying, back to the selfsame thicket his Keeper had found him in. Impossibly, the scent seemed as fresh as the day he first walked into the Hedge, and he quickly tracked it back to the spot he'd entered through.

The Jules who pushed his way back out of the overgrown bushes was a lifetime of hard hunting different than the gangly youth who'd entered. No wonder then, that the gang of teenaged boys who'd chased him there in the first place were more than a little surprised at the snarling adult who emerged from the same bushes that their young prey disappeared into. They were no more surprised than Jules himself, however. Despite the half-remembered dreams of decades of hunts, only a few moments had passed in the "real" world. His family, expecting their teenaged son's return, turned their back on the tattered adult who attempted to claim his place. They called the police, who took the "transient" into custody. He spent that night, the first of many over the ensuing years, in the city drunk tank, a cell that resembled his "kennel" in Faerie enough to further blur the lines between his various realities.

Description: Jules might easily be mistaken for any mortal vagrant. His mahogany skin is heavily layered with dirt and grime, and his hair forms a raggle-tag ruff of earthy brown and tarnished silver that stands out wildly around his hunched shoulders. His hands are layered with mismatched gloves, all of which have been torn through at the ends to expose long, ragged fingernails, thickened into horny talons. His feet are swaddled in layer upon layer of heavy socks that turn his lower extremities into awkward stumps, and he wears no shoes, regardless of the weather. He keeps the collar of his pea jacket turned up against the wind, and his baggy camouflage-print cargo pants are ripped in more places than they are whole. Gnarled yellow teeth, long and sharp, hide behind the bushy jungle of his unkempt beard. When he speaks, the words most often alternate between grumbling snarls seemingly spoken to himself, and barking accusations leveled against the entirety of the world around him. More frightening, however, are the moments when Jules seems completely lucid, when his dark gaze catches someone and holds her and his words are succinct and precisely chosen. At those moments, when the animal cunning flashes brightly in his eyes, Jules is at his most dangerous.

Jules's mien betrays his bestial nature: his feet and hands are half-paws ending in sharp canine claws. His skin is bristled with patches of mangy fur, and his lower jaw juts forward, barely able to contain a maw full of gnarled and pointed teeth.

Storytelling Hints: Perhaps the return to the mortal world broke Jules's already strained grip on reality. Perhaps his family's rejection of the life he was on the cusp of remembering. But whatever snapped his fragile psyche, the fact remains that Jules is a broken man. Whatever goals he had as a youth have been stripped away by the decades spent as his Keeper's hound. Now, Jules is a prisoner without a prison,

bereft of even the chaotic control of his Fae master. Still feral, Jules is as apt to turn on those who offer him kindness as he is to appreciate it. During his most agitated moments, he's barely more than an animal in mostly human skin, capable of brutal physical attacks and wily stalking. When he is lucid, however, he is easily more dangerous. As ill suited as he is for life in the mundane world, he has no desire to return to his former captivity. He sees anyone bearing the touch of Faerie (including other changelings) as a potential threat to his freedom, and at most times will do his utmost to avoid them. When he's at his most lucid, however, he will take any opportunity to sabotage their works and lead them to harm. He may be mad, but he's not an idiot — his instincts are strong enough to make him a cunning enemy.

Seeming: Beast
Kith: Hunterheart
Court: Courtless
Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 4, Resolve 3
Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3
Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 4, Composure 2
Mental Skills: Investigation (Tracking) 3, Occult (Fae) 2
Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Larceny 2, Stealth 3, Survival 3, Weaponry (Claws) 4
Social Skills: Animal Ken 3, Empathy 2, Intimidation 2, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 1
Merits: Danger Sense, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 3
Willpower: 5
Clarity: 1
Virtue: Justice
Vice: Wrath
Initiative: 8
Defense: 4
Speed: 15
Health: 8
Wyrd: 4
Contracts: Smoke •, Fang and Talon (Canines) ••••
Glamour/per Turn: 13/4
Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Dice Pool*
Brawl	0(B)	6
Claws	2(L)	10

Loyalists

The Fae rarely hunt openly. More common (and more insidious) are those who do their bidding. These loyalists, serving as spies, investigators and saboteurs, can often cause more harm to a freehold through their clandestine presence than could a direct raid by the Fae.

Some loyalists are unwitting spies. They may believe they are serving their Court or noble order in their clandestine observations, not realizing the identity of the individuals they report back to. Others, for one reason or another, serve their Fae mentors deliberately. These loyalists may believe such betrayals of other changelings will net greater profit than the price upon their newly returned souls and thus be willing to provide information, perform tasks or even act as subtle assassins, all while moving undetected among their changeling cousins. Not all of those who serve the Others knowingly, however, do so willingly. The Gentry are masters of manipulation, and more than one changeling has accepted what seems to be a sweet bargain with them, only to realize otherwise too late.

Bondthrall

Quote: *"Art is sacrifice."*

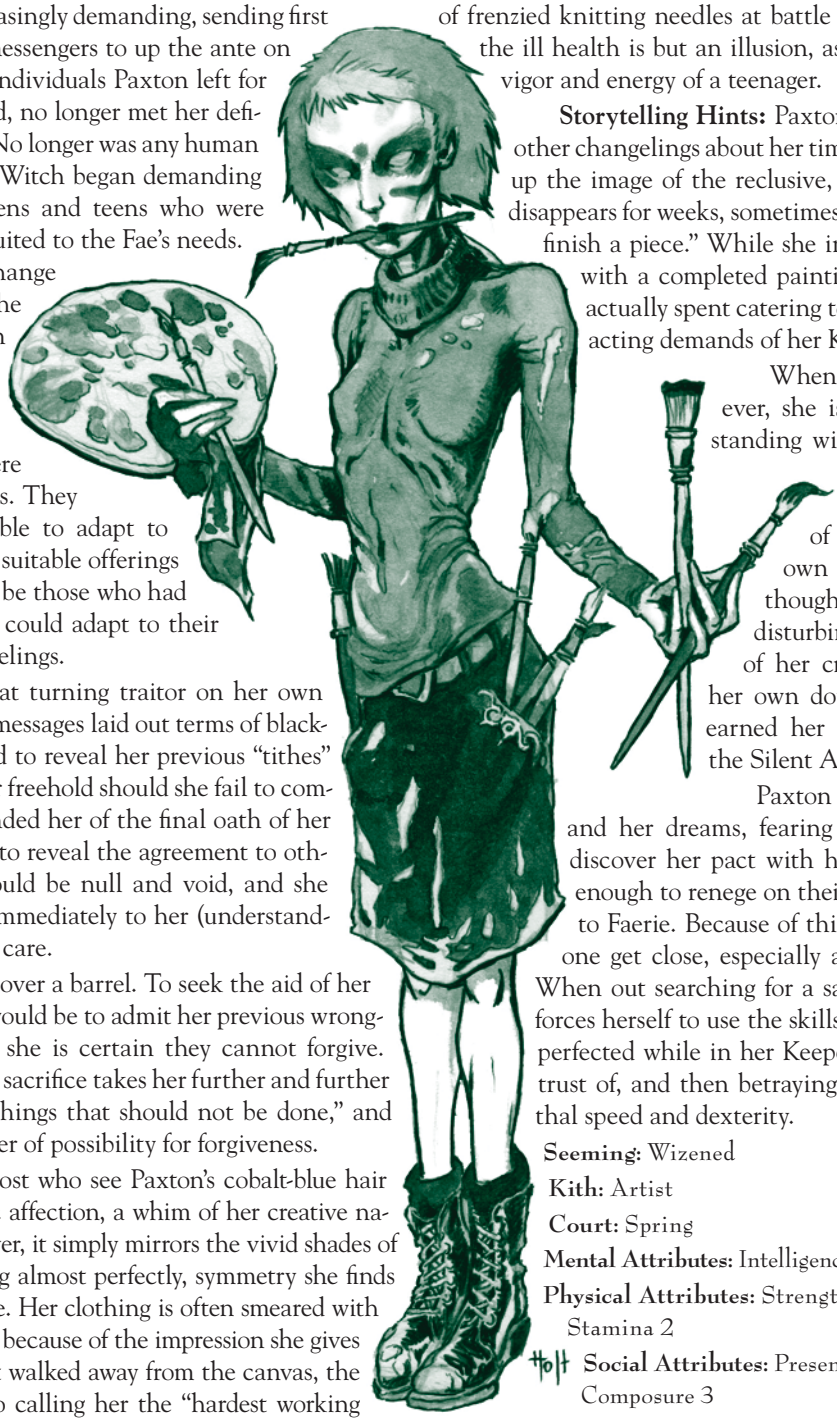
Background: Paxton first drew the attention of her Keeper when she was barely old enough to walk. First in her dreams and then occasionally in person, the Hoarfrost Witch watched covertly as the child's artistic talent developed from remarkable crayon sketches to prodigy-level talent in a wide variety of media. As the girl's natural gift grew, so did her Keeper's interest and influence on her life. Paxton's parents consistently struggled to encourage her art without allowing it to become her sole defining quality. This became an even more difficult task as their 10-year-old garnered first local, then international attention from art critics and aficionados. Her parents sought professional advice as their daughter, who'd always been introspective, seemed to hide further and further inside herself as her art advanced in quality and grew more and more extreme in subject matter. Then one day, as the counselor warned them it might, the drawing stopped completely. Overnight, their artistic waif grew boisterous, even temperamental, but apparently at the cost of her creative interest and talent. As the pastels and acrylics slowly disappeared into the depths of her closet, her once acclaimed name faded from the media's view. Paxton's parents grew accustomed to their new fetch-child, never suspecting that their true daughter had been kidnapped through the Hedge, claimed at last by her Keeper.

Once her new ward was secure, however, the Hoarfrost Witch grew quickly discontent. Separated from her family and the world she called home, Paxton's talent first faltered and then failed. Neither the witch's bribes nor threats could restore it. At length, the Keeper agreed to allow Paxton to return to the lands of her birth for the majority of the year, but bound her in a pact with a steep price.

As a young adult, Paxton "reclaimed" her place in the mortal world with the unusual, but invaluable, aid of her Keeper. Paxton's sudden change of temperament (and the just-as-abrupt return of her interest in art) surprised her parents, but they attributed it to her recent enrollment at a local university. Even more surprised was her fetch, which, with the aid of a knife gifted by her Keeper, served as the first of Paxton's sacrifices to the Hoarfrost Witch in exchange for her semi-freedom.

Paxton agreed to bring the Hoarfrost Witch other "suitable wards," in exchange for reclaiming her human life

and the freedom to remain in the human world for much of the year. Originally, her tithe was simple and straightforward: on the night of winter solstice, she would bring an infant human child to a designated trod and leave it body there for the Witch. However, after a few solstices, the Witch became increasingly demanding, sending first missives and then messengers to up the ante on Paxton's pact. The individuals Paxton left for the Witch, it seemed, no longer met her definition of "suitable." No longer was any human child sufficient; the Witch began demanding older children, tweens and teens who were stronger and more suited to the Fae's needs. Paxton made the change reluctantly, feeling she had little choice in the matter. Soon, however, the Witch claimed that even these youngsters were not suitable offerings. They were, she said, unable to adapt to Faerie, and the only suitable offerings from then on would be those who had already proved they could adapt to their new home — changelings.



Paxton balked at turning traitor on her own kind. However, the messages laid out terms of blackmail that threatened to reveal her previous "tithes" to her Court and her freehold should she fail to comply. They also reminded her of the final oath of her pact. Were she ever to reveal the agreement to others, her freedom would be null and void, and she would be returned immediately to her (understandably angry) Keeper's care.

Now, Paxton is over a barrel. To seek the aid of her fellow changelings would be to admit her previous wrongdoings, a guilt that she is certain they cannot forgive. And yet, each yearly sacrifice takes her further and further across the line of "things that should not be done," and removes another layer of possibility for forgiveness.

Description: Most who see Paxton's cobalt-blue hair take it for an artistic affection, a whim of her creative nature. In truth, however, it simply mirrors the vivid shades of her Wizened seeming almost perfectly, symmetry she finds somehow appropriate. Her clothing is often smeared with acrylic paint. In part because of the impression she gives of having always just walked away from the canvas, the media have taken to calling her the "hardest working artist in the world" or "the painter who never rests." This is, however, just as most aspects of her life, is a meticulously constructed image crafted by the artist herself.

In her true mein, the Bondthrall seems wasted and ill. Her eyes are a flat slate-gray without iris or pupil**.** Her frame fades from painfully slim to anorexic, all angles and planes without a curve in evidence. Her diminutive height — barely five foot in her stocking feet — adds further to the impression of illness. Her fingers are almost skeletal, and when busy at work, give the impression of a double handful of frenzied knitting needles at battle with each other. Yet the ill health is but an illusion, as she moves with the vigor and energy of a teenager.

Storytelling Hints: Paxton refuses to talk with other changelings about her time in Faerie, and plays up the image of the reclusive, eccentric artist. She disappears for weeks, sometimes months at a time "to finish a piece." While she inevitably does return with a completed painting, her time away is actually spent catering to the increasingly exacting demands of her Keeper.

When she is present, however, she is a member of good standing with her freehold. Her artistic bent has ensured her a place of some respect in her own Spring Court, although the dark and often disturbing subject matter of her creations, as well has her own dour nature, have also earned her no small favor with the Silent Arrow.

Paxton guards her privacy and her dreams, fearing that should anyone discover her pact with her Keeper, it will be enough to renege on their deal and return her to Faerie. Because of this, she rarely lets anyone get close, especially at her local freehold. When out searching for a sacrifice, however, she forces herself to use the skills of manipulation she perfected while in her Keeper's care, gaining the trust of, and then betraying, her targets with lethal speed and dexterity.

Seeming: Wizened

Kith: Artist

Court: Spring

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (Art History) 3, Crafts 4, Medicine (Anatomy) 3

Physical Skills: Drive 2, Firearms (Pistol) 2, Stealth 2, Survival 1, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Expression 4, Persuasion 3, Subterfuge 4

Merits: Court Goodwill (Winter) 3, Mantle (Spring) 2, Meditative Mind 1, Fame 2, Resources 2
Willpower: 5
Clarity: 7
Virtue: Fortitude
Vice: Pride
Initiative: 6
Defense: 3
Speed: 9
Health: 7
Wyrd: 3
Contracts: Vainglory ••, Fleeting Spring •••; Goblin — Trading Fate for Luck (•), Fair Entrance (••)
Pledges: None active
Glamour/per Turn: 12/3

Militia

For generations, some particularly militant Lost have gathered others to themselves in the name of exacting retribution upon the Fae. Some militant Lost seek to merely stop the Fae's marauding enslavement of humans; others to drive the Fae to annihilation, if such a thing is possible. The most ambitious seek not only to put an end to the Fae, but, finding no place for themselves in the mortal world, seek to claim Faerie for themselves and create a changeling realm within their former prison. For the most part, these groups have remained the stuff of drunken aggrandizing and wishful, if impractical, thinking. Even were the factions to muster a standing army, their incursion into Arcadia would likely be doomed. Vengeance, however, is a harsh mistress, and those driven by revenge often eschew logic in its stead.

What makes these militia antagonists is their zeal. They are willing to make "sacrifices" that the Summer Court would ordinarily revile, throwing pawn after pawn away in the effort to catch a single rook. It doesn't matter that their pawns might have lived better lives if they hadn't been recruited or press-ganged into the militia cause, or even used as unwitting bait or couriers to draw an enemy out of hiding. The warhawks, in the pursuit of their cause, have become as callous toward their "comrades" and "fodder" as the Others.

Warhawk

Quote: *"Justice is a bloody business."*

Background: Elusive to the extreme, the Bloody Wing is one of the largest militia groups who reportedly are gathering forces against the Fae. The wilder rumors suggest the Bloody Wing has members (or at least information gathering contacts) in every major freehold in the world. Their soldiers, however, are very circumspect. Realizing that most Lost don't yet agree with either the Bloody Wing's goals or methods, the group operates in the shadows of changeling society, forming small "talons" of no more than a dozen members, of which only one may know the identity and location of other talons. One of the more infamous talon leaders is known simply as Nemesis.

During her childhood, the attention Trudy Long received was always famine or feast — with the feast being heavily laden with poison. Adults in her life inevitably ignored her or else inundated her with violence and inappropriate attention, which transitioned seamlessly into a series of adult relationships with men whose dysfunctions ranged from borderline psychotic to criminally abusive. On the night when Nemesis was born, yet another late-night argument with Trudy's drunk common-law husband turned violent. She fled the cheap double-wide trailer they shared, and while crossing the broken rural countryside between their home and the nearest payphone, she was taken by a Fae raid. Her captor bartered her to a violent creature whose abuse made that of her mortal partner seem trifling in comparison. By all rights, she should have died several times over, during the first years she spent in his demesne. Faerie, however, is a strange place. At first, the woman who once was Trudy believed she had just become accustomed to the daily beatings and sadistic abuse. In time, however, she discovered that through the Contracts she earned with her blood and tears as part of his holding, she had been strengthened. His blows fell less painfully across her shoulders, which had become broader and stronger under his attacks. She learned from him things he never intended to teach her. Manipulation. Treachery. Ruthlessness. And how to strike when it would do the most harm. When opportunity arose, she cold-heartedly stepped over the top of other members of her Keeper's household, slowly but inexorably intertwining herself into increasingly vital places in his works. While she never shied from his blows, what little free time she could steal was spent honing the new physique her time in Faerie bestowed upon her. She worked both her speed and strength until the only individual in the household who could lay a hand upon her was her Keeper, and then she waited for him to leave the house just long enough for her to take charge.

Nemesis's rebellion was brief and vicious. As she led her fellow changeling servants away from her Keeper's household, her hands were caked with blood. Her memories led her back to the dirt crossroads from which she'd been taken, where she found herself alone on the far side of the Hedge. Unlike many of her kind, she had no desire to reclaim the pitiful excuse for a human life she'd lost. Instead, she began seeking out others who'd been wronged by the Fae, trying overtly at first to recruit changelings to her goal. The Bloody Wing gave her a place to put the tricks learned during her time in Faerie to good use.

Description: While Trudy Long was an introverted and plain-faced woman, Nemesis has blossomed into something quite different. She stands, broad-shouldered, just under six feet tall, and walks with the confidence

of someone who knows her place in the world. Her true mien is pale and faintly gray like finest marble, her hair jet black, and her features, although rough, speak of the strength she inherited from the Ogre whose Contracts once bound her. When putting forth a rare appearance as Nemesis with her talon, she uses the strongest of pledges to mask her identity. As Alice Concord, Nemesis's supposed messenger and aide, she dresses to downplay her stony nature, in stark contrast to her unyielding and often overwhelming militant persona.

Storytelling Hints: Nemesis has contacts in multiple freeholds. In order to assure herself the resources to pursue her goals, she has used every advantage — looks, brains, wit, personality and an absolute lack of conscience where her objective is concerned — to amass a veritable dynasty of finances and followers who are loyal to the Bloody Wing. Few, however, know her for the faction's leader. Most who have met her directly believe her to be Alice Concord, the faction's leader's trusted aide-de-camp. As Alice, Nemesis has deep ties to those who recruit for the Bloody Wing throughout the mundane world. She provides them with whatever incentives best suit their needs, from information to aid them in their own political and socio-economical maneuverings to physical resources and finances. Once their loyalty is gained, they are expected to contribute with commensurate devotion to the cause, allowing her to recruit others. This method, while middling effective, has not provided Nemesis with the powerbase she believes she needs in order to force widespread support for her goals, however, leaving the fanatical leader scrambling desperately for ways to bring her plans to fruition. Among the more extreme measures rumored to be used by the Bloody Wing are forced conscription, including blackmail, threats against family members and even mind- and emotion-influencing magics to garner reluctant "volunteers."

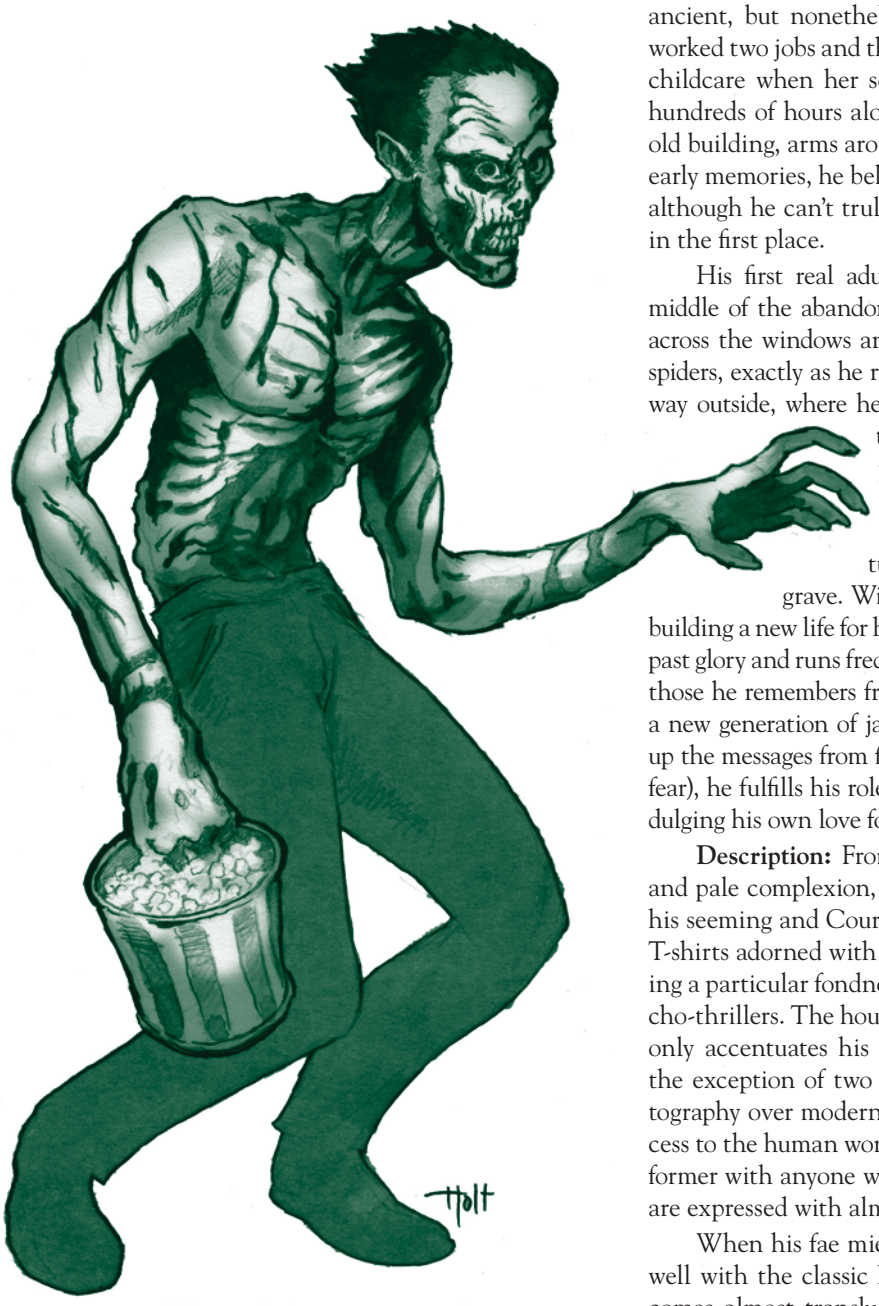
Nemesis herself is capable of portraying whatever combination of personality traits seems most likely to be effective to garner support for her organization. She can play the sophisticated diplomat, the hard-core militant or the flamboyant rebel with equal ease, often slipping from one to the other as necessary to achieve her goals.

Seeming: Ogre
Kith: Stonebones
Court: Summer
Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 4
Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3
Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 4
Mental Skills: Academics (Tactics and Strategy) 3, Computer 1, Investigation 3, Occult 3 (Fae), Politics 4
Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (Stony Fists) 4, Firearms 2, Stealth 1, Weaponry (Sword) 3
Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression 3, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 2, Socialize 3, Subterfuge (Alter Ego) 3
Merits: Contacts 3 (Militia, Summer Court, Bridge-Burners), Danger Sense, Disarm, Fast Reflexes 2, Mantle (Summer) 2, Status (Bloody Wing) 4
Willpower: 8
Clarity: 4
Virtue: Justice
Vice: Wrath
Initiative: 9
Defense: 3
Speed: 12
Health: 8
Wyrd: 2
Contracts: Darkness ••, Stone •••••, Vainglory ••; Fleeting Summer ••, Eternal Summer ••
Pledges: The warhawk prefers to bind herself in pledges in which one of her charges is oathbound to aid her in her cause, in return for her "patronage."
Glamour/per Turn: 11/2
Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Dice Pool*
Brawl	0(B)	8
Machete	2(L)	9

Bridge-Burners

The passageways between the lands of the Fae and the lands of humans are fraught with danger. But no risk found on the path is as great as the fact that they exist at all, at least according to some. These radical separationists believe the only safety from the insanity of Faerie and the predation of the True Fae comes in cutting off passage between Arcadia and the mortal world entirely. And they are willing to sacrifice anything — the lives of those still in Faerie, the safety of those around them, even their own changeling powers and eventually their lives — to ensure their goals come to fruition.



Burgeoning Terrorist

Quote: *"The alternatives may not be pretty, but… I've seen Hell. I'm not going back."*

Background: Terrance remembers almost nothing of his time in Faerie. Some changelings believe this is a mercy. Terrance isn't so sure. The experiences may not be available to his conscious mind, but they seep through the cracks into his subconscious often enough to make him doubt his sanity. One thing he doesn't doubt, however: whether the things he imagines really happened or whether they're just inspired by his experiences there, he never wants to go back.

His early human recollections center around memories of a dark theater and hours spent raptly staring at the ancient, but nonetheless captivating, screen. His mother worked two jobs and the rundown theater was cheaper than childcare when her son wasn't in school. Terrance spent hundreds of hours alone in the darkness of the cavernous old building, arms around a bucket of stale popcorn. Those early memories, he believes, led him back out of the Hedge, although he can't truly recall how he got into, or out of, it in the first place.

His first real adult memories are of standing in the middle of the abandoned theater that was, save for boards across the windows and doors and a copious population of spiders, exactly as he remembered it as a child. He made his way outside, where he was soon discovered by members of the local freehold. With their help, he pieced together bits and pieces of his childhood memories enough to track down his mother, who had, unfortunately, worked herself into an early grave. With few other choices, Terrance began building a new life for himself. He's returned the theater to its past glory and runs frequent showings of vintage films such as those he remembers from his youth. By sharing horror with a new generation of jaded youth (and occasionally backing up the messages from film with a firsthand "encounter" with fear), he fulfills his role in the Scarecrow Ministry while indulging his own love for classic horror films.

Description: From his lanky stature to his ebon hair and pale complexion, Terrance seems the epitome of both his seeming and Court. He dresses predominantly in black T-shirts adorned with various movie advertisements, showing a particular fondness for 1950s monster movies and psycho-thrillers. The houndstooth blazer he wears over the top only accentuates his boyish looks. He's soft-spoken, with the exception of two topics: the merit of vintage cinematography over modern works and the need to sever Fae access to the human world. While he will heatedly debate the former with anyone who will listen, his views on the latter are expressed with almost clinical preciseness.

When his fae mien is in evidence, Terrance blends in well with the classic horror films he reveres. His skin becomes almost translucently pale, with dark eyes recessed deeply in shadowed sockets and thin cracked lips peeled back to reveal a gnarled mouthful of rotted teeth. His slim form is cadaverous, riddled through with leprous sores and unhealed wounds from which dark ichor oozes.

Storytelling Hints: Terrance teeters on the razor edge between radical belief and terrorist action. His nights are filled with terrible dreams of being lost in the Hedge, half-remembered memories of his time in Faerie and the dark recollection of things he had to do to escape it. During daylight hours, he seems quite logical in his goals, but his dedication to them is fueled by the nights he wakes up drenched in cold sweat with the hoofbeats of the Fae Hunt still echoing in his mind. For years, Terrance has attempted to garner

support for his quest: to close off all access to the mortal world near his freehold — and eventually throughout the world. He has to date gained little headway.

Recently, Terrance's nightmares have been getting worse. Memories of his time in Faerie are beginning to re-emerge unbidden: horrific recollections that only add fuel to his fervor to sever all passages into or out of the lands that haunt him. He's coming to realize that the chances of enlisting others to aid in his quest are slim, and has begun making plans to take action on his own. He's filled the theater with stockpiles of highly flammable material, which he plans to use to destroy the trod at its heart. He regrets having to do it; the building is his home, and he fears that a fire sufficiently large to destroy it and the trod will likely spread to the inhabited buildings on either side. But as long as the trod exists, the danger exists with it. Perhaps, when that byway is severed, the rest of the changelings will see realize the danger and see how effective it is to cut themselves off from the Hedge, and thus the Fair Lands, completely. If not, he will have at least blocked one entryway, and perhaps given himself some respite from the encroaching nightmares.

Seeming: Darkling

Kith: None

Court: Autumn

Entitlements: Scarecrow Minister

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics (Cinema) 4, Computer 1, Investigation 2, Occult (Changelings) 2, Politics (Changeling Society) 2, Science 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Firearms 1, Larceny 3, Stealth 3, Survival 1

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression 2, Persuasion 2, Socialize 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Encyclopedic Knowledge, Mantle (Autumn) 3, Resources 3

Willpower: 5

Clarity: 4

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 6

Defense: 2

Speed: 11

Health: 8

Wyrd: 3

Contracts: Darkness •••••, Fang and Talon (Bats) ••, Fleeting Autumn ••

Pledges: No permanent pledges. Similar to many bridge-burners, he has difficulty feeling safe in long-term bindings, particularly those enforced by Glamour.

Glamour/per Turn: 12/3

Soulless

Arcadia is no place for a human, a fact that is made painfully clear by the effect entering has on the human soul. Those who pass through the Hedge, as captives of the Fae or through their own wanderings, often feel that a part of them begins to wither: the unique spark that made them human. Relief of sorts comes with the return, and the Lost have come to believe that their souls are reunited with them when they reach mortal soil once more.

Then there are those who weren't so lucky. An unfortunate few find themselves back in the world of humans, and yet the shard of their own humanity remains painfully elusive. Perhaps they spent too long in the lands of Fae and were sent back through the Hedge long after their human souls had withered and died. Perhaps the horrors they endured at the hands of their Fae Keepers were so great that their own souls now reject returning to their fae-tainted psyches. Or perhaps they are merely the victims of fate; the unlucky one-in-a-million for whom something cataclysmic goes wrong, denying them any hope of returning to even semi-human existences.

Whatever reason denies them its return, the changelings that others call Soulless are horrific. Unfettered by human morals, incapable of human emotions, these creatures are the closest rivals to True Fae in alien nature, if thankfully not in power. Soulless beings have no concern for the balance of Clarity; they often epitomize such extremes that the idea of "balance" is antithetical to them.

Some are controlled only by a desire to destroy, inflicting immediate and devastating damage on the world they return to. They may set themselves up as snipers on school grounds, suicidal bombers or abusive authority figures. Others are driven to subtler, but no less amoral, goals. More subtle ones may mimic normal humans or changelings for a time while wreaking untold damage below the surface. Unfortunately, while they are no longer fettered by Clarity, they do not lose their knack for changeling magic. They retain access to whatever Contracts or pledges they forged and learned in Faerie, and are just as single-minded about striking new ones, should it suit their goals.

Where most changelings may find it difficult to pick back up their human lives, the Soulless may do whatever is necessary to reclaim the lives that were stolen from them. They do this not from affection for family or friends, or a desire to truly become the people they were once more. Instead, they simply find their earlier identities the most expedient roles to slip back into — niches tailor-made for them, with only a few messy details required to reclaim them. Their fetches, should they exist, are eliminated with stark efficiency. If friends or family members notice the sudden change between the pseudo-human fetch and the newly returned Soulless (if indeed the two were all that different), their concerns are ignored, with no attempt made to ex-

plain them away. Why, after all, should the Soulless care if those around them are uncomfortable or suspicious? The exception, of course, is those who are adamant enough in their concerns to inconvenience the Soulless significantly. Similar to the fetch, such individuals are most often dealt with quickly, efficiently and without the slightest regret.

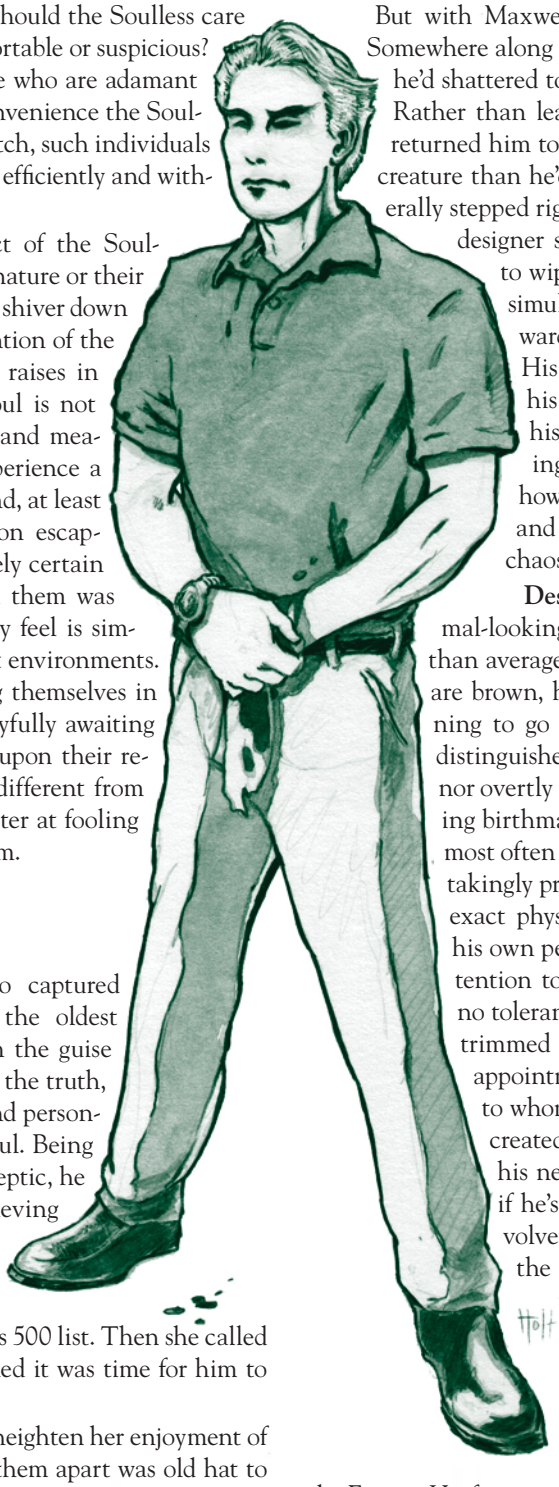
The most frightening aspect of the Soulless, however, is not their amoral nature or their ruthless drive. What sends the icy shiver down any changeling's spine at the mention of the Soulless is the niggling doubt it raises in the back of their minds. The soul is not a tangible thing, to be weighed and measured. While all changelings experience a withering upon entering Faerie and, at least by contrast, a strengthening upon escaping, it is impossible to be absolutely certain that whatever was stripped from them was truly returned. Perhaps what they feel is simply a reaction to the two different environments. Perhaps they are merely deluding themselves in thinking that their souls were joyfully awaiting the chance to merge with them upon their return. Perhaps they are truly no different from the Soulless themselves, only better at fooling themselves and those around them.

Serial Killer

Quote: *"Game over."*

Background: The Fae who captured Maxwell Stevens used one of the oldest tricks in the book. Appearing in the guise of a financial mogul, she told him the truth, offering success in his business and personal life in exchange for Stevens' soul. Being the epitome of a jaded modern skeptic, he laughingly accepted, never believing that the contract was more than a rather dated joke. Five years later, he'd followed her advice and parlayed his company onto the Forbes 500 list. Then she called for one last meeting, and explained it was time for him to pay his debt.

Building up humans only to heighten her enjoyment of their degradation when she tore them apart was old hat to his Keeper. She kept him in Faerie, one day for each day of his success, and each moment spent in her "care" brought a new torment with it. Her final torture was releasing him with full memories of his time spent with her, and sending him back to try to piece together a life in the human world. She thoroughly expected to gain another five years of pleasure from watching him scramble through the trials of human poverty, and possibly insanity.



But with Maxwell she'd done her work too well. Somewhere along the five-year-long path of torment, he'd shattered to an extent she hadn't anticipated. Rather than leaving him a broken human, she'd returned him to the mortal world quite a different creature than he'd been. When he returned, he literally stepped right back into the tailored suits and designer shoes of his old life, pausing only to wipe the oily ichor of his fetch's slain simulacrum from them before going forward with his new life and his "game." His Keeper, although entertained by his actions, is slightly disappointed at his seeming composure upon returning to the human world. Eventually, however, she believes he will crack, and she looks forward to watching the chaos when he does.

Description: Stevens is a very normal-looking individual, with slightly better than average height, build, and looks. His eyes are brown, his hair a shade darker and beginning to go to steel gray at the temples in a distinguished fashion. His skin is neither pale nor overtly tanned, and he has no distinguishing birthmarks or scars to draw attention. He most often wears casual business attire, painstakingly pressed and unerringly altered to his exact physical specifications. He maintains his own person with the same meticulous attention to which he gives his "game," with no tolerance for deviation. His hair is neatly trimmed and nails manicured at a standing appointment every two weeks, by a woman to whom he barely speaks. His clothing is created by the same tailor who catered to his needs before his time in Faerie, and if he's noticed Stevens' reduction in involvement in the choice of his clothing, the tailor's not mentioned it — fortunately for him. Maxwell's wife was not so lucky.

His fae mien is unearthly, but in an oddly subdued way. His hair remains short and well-groomed, but takes on the luster common to the Fairest. His features are flawless and slightly attenuated, and his eyes are deep and empty pools of black. Though any changeling would notice him as one of the Lost, he would be easily overlooked among his more vibrant cousins, a gray dove obscured by the colors of a tropical aviary.

Storytelling Hints: Stevens' daily routines are as structured as his toilette, save for the time dedicated to pursuit of his game, which, although meticulously planned, supplants any other activity. The basics of the "game" are

simple. Take someone and reduce him to his base components, physically, mentally, emotionally and eventually, literally. The pawns in the game could be anyone who catches Maxwell's eye. Age, sex and appearance matter little. Nor does he have a particular "type." In fact, preferring a challenge, he rarely seeks out similar victims from one "game" to the next.

Once his victim is chosen, he observes her until he has determined her routine. For some pawns, this takes a matter of days. For others, weeks or months. Once determined, he chooses the precise moment when they are least likely to be missed, and simply removes them from their world, pulling them into the Hedge into his private Hollow. This nook, although not large, suits Stevens' needs exactly. It gleams with stainless steel walls and bright chrome instruments. Retractable chain leads and eyebolts dot the room, conveniently placed for pawns of a wide variety of sizes. Propane jets heat surgical-grade implements to cherry-red within moments, and glass-front cabinets conceal a veritable cornucopia of acids, narcotics, poisons and placebos to ensure his game never grows boring. And, at the center, a tapered drain, complete with a disposal capable of pulverizing even the heaviest bones, ensures that the Hollow is easily returned to the pristine state he prefers, post-game.

As his Keeper was before him, Stevens is motivated entirely by his own amusement. He takes great pains to avoid detection and capture, not because he fears it, but because it would put an end, at least temporarily, to his game. He sees everyone around him as a pawn, picturing himself above them all in his role as the master player. When challenged, whether by an investigating officer or a nosey family member, Stevens quickly assesses his "opponent" and sets about ruthlessly bringing them to utter defeat in the most degrading and debilitating way possible. He takes great pleasure in not only killing those who challenge him but by transforming them from player to pawn. Once he has them utterly helpless, physically and emotionally stripped bare, he then continues with his normal "play." Mrs. Stevens was the first of his "opponents." He keeps her wedding ring — and the finger on which it still rests — as a memento of his first victory.

In the past years, Stevens has played his game against many "opponents," and won every time. Recently, however, he's begun to grow bored. Humans can be such narrow and two-dimensional creatures, breaking far earlier than he himself had under his Keeper's devoted attentions. He's turned his attentions to bigger challenges, eschewing human pawns for those with a bit more stamina — supernatural stamina.

Seeming: Fairest

Kith: None

Court: Courtless

Entitlements: None

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Computer 2, Investigation 4, Medicine (Anatomy) 1, Occult (The Hedge) 1, Politics 1, Science (Chemistry) 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Drive 1, Larceny 1, Stealth 3, Weaponry (Knife) 4

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression 1, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Socialize 1, Subterfuge 4

Merits: Fast Reflexes 2, Fresh Start, Hollow 8 (Size •, Amenities •, Doors ••, Wards ••••) Iron Stomach, Weaponry Dodge, Resources 3

Willpower: 8

Initiative: 9

Defense: 3

Speed: 11

Health: 8

Wyrd: 4

Contracts: Mirror ••, Smoke ••, Vainglory •••; Goblin: Fair Entrance (••)

Pledges: Similar to many Soulless, the Serial Killer avoids forging pledges on anything but the most temporary basis.

Glamour/per Turn: 13/4

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Dice Pool*
Brawl	0 (B)	6
Knife	1 (L)	9

Mortals

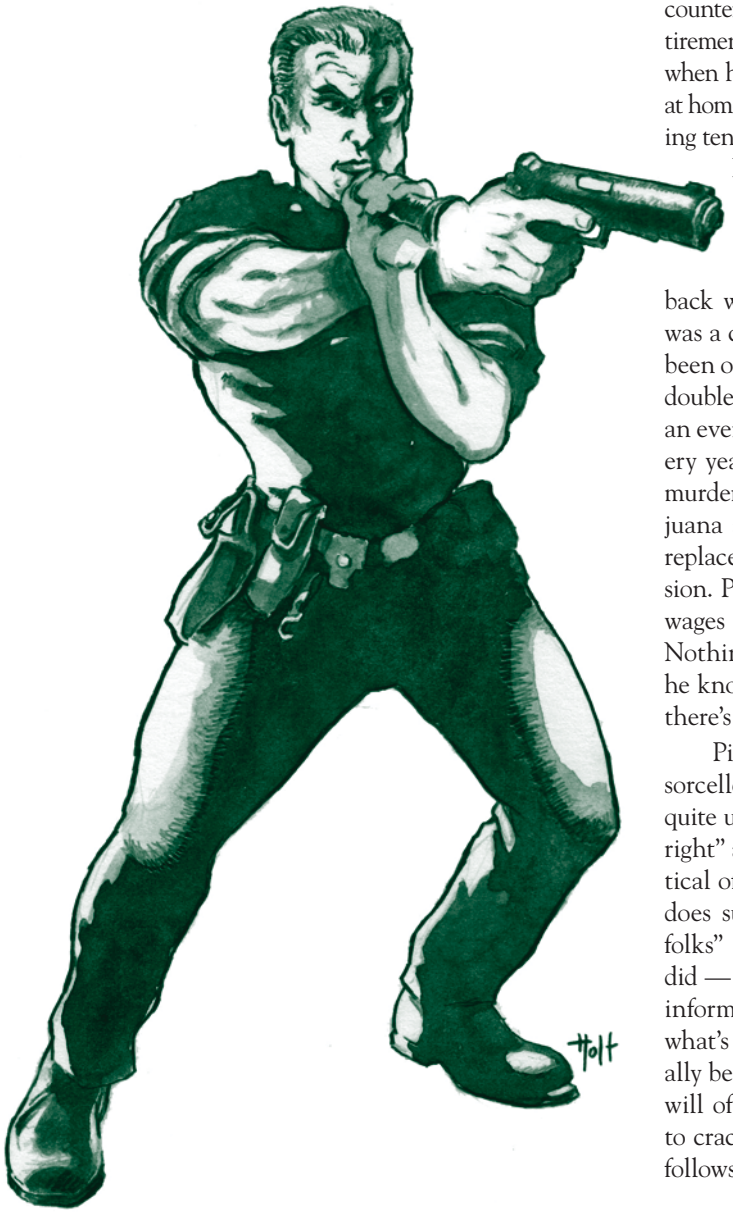
While other changelings may be among the most dangerous enemies the wayfarers may encounter, humans are more numerous and in many cases just as deadly. Even without guiding fae influence, bureaucrats, police investigators and general busybodies, those who somehow become aware of a changeling's supernatural existence, can be significant adversaries for the Lost. Likewise, human bodyguards, strong-arms and hit men can be just as dangerous to a changeling as a supernatural foe, especially when outfitted with weapons and protections designed specifically for dealing with non-human adversaries. When strengthened by the bestowments of a changeling benefactor, an ensorcelled human can prove to be a significant adversary to anyone whom the human's mentor targets him toward.

Oathbound Protector

Quote: *"Something about your story doesn't add up, and you're not going anywhere until we get to the bottom of this."*

Background: Close to 20 years ago, Officer Pitts was investigating what promised to be a routine break-and-enter case. Neighbors, alerted by howling dogs, called complaining of a vagrant moving around in an abandoned building on their block. Pitts went in, expecting to find a drug deal,

and instead discovered a bedraggled young girl attempting to escape from what appeared to be a giant of a man dressed in black, emerging from the decrepit house's basement. The officer called for the man to stop, and the attacker turned on him instead. To his credit, Pitts held his ground, even when the stranger reached for him with arms twice as long as a human's. According to procedure, Pitts ordered the creature to stop, and when it continued forward, emptied his entire service revolver into a three-inch diameter grouping in its chest. The stranger didn't even slow down, batting the officer aside like a child's plaything as it reached for the screaming girl again. Luck was on Pitts's side that night. The creature's blow knocked him into the garden fencing, jarring free a length of wrought iron that he swung, like a baseball bat, at his foe. The iron caught the stranger off guard, giving the girl time to escape. Pitts, on the other hand, was left with nothing but a piece of bent iron and an angry… something charging at him. The Fae knocked Pitts over and leapt atop him, and only blind luck saved the police officer's life. The fencing jammed in the soft soil next to Pitts, and the stranger's attack impaled it on the metal. Pitts squirmed out from under the creature's body as it writhed on the iron rod. As he scrambled for his radio, he paused in disbelief as the corpse in black was suddenly no longer there. There was nothing but a tattered green garbage bag impaled upon the iron stake.



The girl returned, creeping up on him while he was still staring at the fluttering litter. She introduced herself as Lovenia Stain, and within a week, he was working for her. It took much longer for him to earn her trust and for her to begin to reveal a glimpse of the half-mad world she dwells within.

Description: Pitts doesn't look his 64 years. In fact, during the last 20 years, he hasn't aged a bit. His hair still shows only the slightest feathering of gray at the temples, and the crow's feet at the corners of his eyes are more a result of his usual stern countenance than age. He's extremely fit for a man nearing retirement, his shoulders broad and his waist as narrow as it was when he first met Lovenia almost two decades ago. He is most at home in his uniform, to the extent that even his casual clothing tends to incorporate the same navy shades and crisp pleats. He earned the "Pit Bull" moniker for his tenacious work ethic and investigative abilities, but his strong jaw and square features don't detract from the nickname.

Storytelling Hints: Robert Pitts became a cop back when high school kids smoking cigarettes in public was a crime worthy of police attention. In the 45 years he's been on the force, he's seen his town's population more than double, its murder rates skyrocket and violent crime become an everyday occurrence. Girls turn up pregnant younger every year, and the average age of thieves, drug abusers and murderers falls even faster. Tobacco was replaced by marijuana as the drug of choice for teens, which was in turn replaced by coke, crack and crystal meth in rapid succession. Pitts has weathered it all with stoic diligence, despite wages that haven't increased and death threats that have. Nothing seems to surprise the "Pit Bull" — perhaps because he knows that no matter what evil humanity is capable of, there's much worse walking the streets he patrols.

Pitts is an example of an ally who is not actually ensorcelled, but who has received a minor blessing and is still quite useful. He suspects that there is something "not quite right" about his association with Lovenia, but he'd be skeptical of the idea that she wasn't really human anymore. He does suspect there are things in the world that "normal folks" don't know about and wouldn't understand if they did — and that, unfortunately, the average citizen's lack of information and comprehension don't protect them from what's out there. He and Lovenia have struck up a mutually beneficial agreement. At the most surprising times, she will often have exactly the piece of information he needs to crack the hardest dead-end cases. And he, in exchange, follows up on some of the leads she drops his direction.

For Pitts, the arrangement is ideal. His success rate on homicides, missing persons and violent crime cases is easily double that of any other officer on the force, thanks in no small part to Lovenia's tips. And, while her leads have led to investigations that may not have been strictly by the book, they've always ended up revealing crimes of a sufficiently graphic nature to alleviate any misgivings he may have had about the source of his information. He just tries not to think too hard about the obviously inhuman nature of some of the things she sends him against.

For Lovenia, the relationship is just as idyllic. She occasionally uses a Contract to divine information her pet human requires for his work, and in exchange, her adversaries and their minions are quickly and efficiently dealt with whenever they garner too much power or block her goals too effectively. And, should she need direct protection, she knows just whom to call for an "escort" through a troubled situation.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Computer 1, Investigation (Detective) 4, Occult 1, Politics 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Drive 2, Firearms (Revolver) 3, Stealth 2, Survival 1, Weaponry (Nightstick) 3

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 2, Socialize 1, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Contacts 3, Danger Sense, Disarm, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 3, Fresh Start, Iron Stamina 3*, Quick Draw, Status (Police) 3

Willpower: 8

Morality: 5

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 9

Defense: 3

Speed: 11

Health: 9

Pledges: The Oathbound Protector receives the benefits of a pledge with the task of medial alliance and the boon of a blessing of fortitude (granting the benefits of Iron Stamina 3). A side effect of this blessing is that he seemingly does not age. Should he break this pledge, the blessing is lost, and his age will catch up to him, granting him an age-related Flaw such as Lame (see the World of Darkness Rulebook, p. 219). [Task: Alliance (–2); Boon: Blessing (+2); Sanction: Flaw (–2); Duration: Season (+2)]

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Range*	*Dice Pool*
Brawl	0(B)	–	7
Nightstick	2(B)	–	9
Lt. Revolver	2(L)	20/40/80	7

Fae-Struck

While some changeling pawns may not fully realize their patrons' nature, other changeling pawns are blissfully aware. Just as superstars, politicians and religious leaders have their smitten followers, so do the changelings. A fae groupie may have grown up feeling like an outsider to human society, longing for some explanation for this alienation. Those who've stumbled across the existence of changelings may believe they have discovered the reason. Some may even falsely believe themselves to be changelings, rather than simply socially inept. However, once indoctrinated into the reality of the situation, they often become obsessed with the fae. This obsession is predominantly fueled simply by their belief that their contact with changelings marks them as "special" rather than just "weird." Some become obsessed pawns of one changeling or another, and their blind loyalty is manipulated by their patrons' adroit machinations and used to promote their own goals or thwart those of other Courts, orders or individual adversaries with unswaying dedication. Others may aspire to "win" the same "power" that they perceive changelings as having, seeking out greater and greater ensorcellments to make them more and more "special." Some eventually grow dissatisfied even with the wonders available to fae allies and use their contact with the lost to try to attract the attention of the True Fae and engineer their own kidnapping into Faerie. These may not only be a danger to their mentor's enemies, but to their mentors themselves, as they fumble their way through attempts to attract the attention of those the Lost would rather avoid.

Fae-struck individuals are often not as overtly influential as those with a firmer grasp on "reality" (as humans know it). They may simply be young or immature, their naiveté leaving them vulnerable to fae manipulations. Or, in many cases, they may be genuinely dysfunctional, unable to thrive within the "real" world and quickly accepting any explanation (outside of their own inadequacy) that justifies their inability to hold down a job, maintain a relationship or function well in human society. But effective or no, there is something to be said for the power of fanaticism, and the fae-struck possess that a-plenty.

Devoted Groupie

Quote: *"I always knew there was something else out there… something more… real."*

Background: As the only son and heir to a wealthy political family's fortune, Michael Wyndham never had to work for what he desired. Discontented with his lot, however, he immersed himself in fantasies of a more noble and romantic time, focusing his education and leisure on the pre-Raphaelite and Victorian eras with an emphasis on literature and art, rather than following in his father's business and political footsteps. While still very much the pampered son, he was approached by a motley that had scoped him out as a potential resource. In the changelings, Wyndham saw an answer to the seemingly pointlessness of his mundane existence.

Description: Effete and beautiful, Michael Wyndham could have sat for one of the masters as the epitome of boyish charm. He affects a romantic version of gothic fashion, carrying it off with careless aplomb few who were not raised in the cradle of privilege could muster. His lean grace and striking good looks make him a favorite of the Fairest, for although he cannot rival their beauty, he at least does not offend their senses by appearing as mundane as most humans.

Storytelling Hints: While he may not be the strongest or most combat-ready of adversaries, Wyndham is dangerous because he is a fanatic. Discovering the existence of the fae has validated what had been, up to that point, a meaningless life. He appears utterly devoted to the Lost who have recruited him to their cause, and will not hesitate to put his considerable intellect and resources to their aid, providing research, weapons, manpower, sanctuary and whatever else his family's money and influence can buy. In this way, he may well end up as an adversarial force to any changelings who opposed those he is aligned with.

Wyndham poses just as great a threat to his associates as to their enemies, however, although they do not realize it. He has become obsessed with the idea of becoming a changeling himself, hoping at first to be "turned" or transformed by his new compatriots. Upon discovering that this is an impossibility, he has begun subtly pumping those he associates with for information on how they were taken by the Fair Folk or came to find Faerie themselves. Given the opportunity, he will do anything in his power to draw the attention of the True Fae, in hopes of being taken away and made a changeling himself, despite having been warned of the horrific realities of this fate. He is, however, undaunted. To this end, he will pay any cost — including sacrificing the motley he is allied with — in hopes of realizing what he believes now to be his true destiny.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 1

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (Literature) 4, Computer 3, Investigation 3, Occult (Fae) 2, Politics 2, Science 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Drive 1, Larceny 1, Stealth 1, Weaponry (Fencing) 1

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression 2, Persuasion 2, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Encyclopedic Knowledge, Contacts (City Hall) 2, Resources 4, Striking Looks 2

Willpower: 6

Morality: 5

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Speed: 10

Health: 6

Pledges: Ensorcelled (The Ancient Pact)

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Range*	*Dice Pool*	*Special*
Rapier	2(L)	–	4	–

The Banished

Things in Faerie are often not what they seem. As the touch of the True Fae extends out into the lands of humanity, that rule extends along with it. Changelings' seemings rest just below the surface of the reality that humans can perceive. The Hedge waits hungrily on the borderlands between Faerie and the human world, caring little for whether its victims "believe" or not. Even the staunchest friend may be a foe in disguise, warily eluding bonds of oath that might betray their duplicity. The Banished are but another example of this phenomenon.

It is difficult for humans to imagine what atrocities might be great enough for one of the Fae to be cast out of their homeland. In a "society" where duplicity, manipulation, betrayal and bloodlust are no more than foibles, crimes deserving of banishment are few and far between. Most of those who have been

exiled from Faerie are not criminals, per se, in the sense of having caused harm to other denizens of Faerie or broken the laws of their culture. These things are not only expected of the Fae, but, as long as they're done properly, are seen as signs of strength. If one of the True Fae flouts a cultural covenant and fails, the consequences often fall heavily upon her head, but they are more often inflicted as a direct reaction to her action, rather than as a judgment from on high. In a land where most powerful entities believe themselves to be, if not gods, then at least emperors in their own demesnes, the idea of external justice is weak, as opposed to simply consequences of any given action. Exiles, therefore, are less likely to be criminals as humans would describe them, as opposed to those who have violated their Contracts with Faerie itself, or, more often, who have been foolish enough to bind themselves into Contracts with banishment as a sanction for breaking it. Because of this, banishment sanctions might be among the most severe used amongst the True Fae, and are rarely permanent. Being separated from Faerie permanently is a death sentence to creatures that are, if legends are to be believed, essential immortal, and even "short" sanctions that would levy banishments of decades or centuries are not entered into lightly.

Although far less powerful than those who have merely journeyed into the human realm to acquire slaves or for some other Fae amusement, the Banished still pose a very real threat to any changeling. Some hope to earn themselves an early reprieve by bartering valuable resources (such as changeling slaves). Others, resigned to life away from Arcadia, set out to establish their own power base in the human world, using whatever abilities are left to them to build their own regimes and make themselves veritable deities among the mortals they manipulate. These often include the same powerful or influential humans that changelings desire to use for their own purposes, resorting in a resource struggle. As well, a banished Fae may take sadistic pleasure in gaining control of friends and family of Lost and weaving them in as pawns in their manipulative games.

Other Banished play a more devious game, masquerading as weaker fae and dealing directly with Lost society. They are better-suited to this than one might expect. Many aspects of changeling society are based loosely upon those they remember from their time in Arcadia, and if a hierarchy for political power and Machiavellian machinations already exists, it is a Fae's nature to try to take advantage of it. With their shared knowledge of Faerie, it is not impossible for a banished Other to mask itself, at least temporarily, as a changeling, and work its way quickly into positions of overt or subtle power among those they once enslaved. Especially for those who know they will eventually return to Faerie, the price for wreaking great havoc from within changeling society is very low, compared to all of the potential benefits.

It is even possible that a banished Fae might masquerade himself as another type of supernatural creature altogether. Depending on his nature and visage, he might convince others that he is a werewolf, a vampire, a mage or even something entirely unique. But appearances are deceiving, and regardless of their weakened state, the Banished remain Fae through and through. Any changeling who allows himself to be swayed to believe otherwise will eventually rue the action as he finds himself tightly woven into whatever plot the banished Fae has set into motion.

Hidden Killer

Quote: *"We're not so different, you and I. Perhaps we can aid one another?"*

Background: Just as many of her kind, the Fae who now uses the name "Keri Urban" lost access to her native realm as the result of her own failed manipulations. In a particularly intricate plot involving power exchanges between herself and another Fae, she bargained on being able to slip out of her pledges through the tiniest of loopholes. Unfortunately, her opponent had only feigned ignorance of the escape clause while setting up circumstances that would force her to betray her oath if she attempted to use it. Her exile — "for a hundred fae lifetimes" — was among the most severe ever meted out in Fae history, although like everything else in Faerie, it is not exactly as it seems. Through her own divining and the reading of omens, Urban believes she has found a loophole, and she has begun to put a plan into motion that she believes will allow her not only to return to Arcadia, but to do so more powerful than when she left.

Description: Although the True Fae often retain their ability to take on their natural form when out on the hunt or otherwise traveling in the human world, banished Fae

no longer has this ability. They are condemned to a more mundane (if such a term can ever be used to refer to one of the Fair Folk) existence. Urban's mortal form is but a pale shadow of the one she chose to wear in Faerie, let alone her truest form. That is not to say, however that it is anything near to mundane. She stands near to six feet tall, with a curvaceous build that would put a valkyrie to shame. Her hair falls nearly to her waist in a tangle of golds, oranges and reds, and her beauty is enough to cause traffic accidents when she walks down the street.

Storytelling Hints: Even a decade in the mortal realm is not enough for an essentially immortal being to adapt completely to life away from Faerie. Urban often comes across as very low Clarity, perhaps even dangerously so, even to those she has wooed into trusting her. She deals much more adeptly with changeling society than that of humans, and uses the ties she's developed with her local freehold as a buffer against those things that she not only cannot understand but has no desire to expend the effort toward learning. Her goal is singular, if clandestine, and anything that does not directly support that goal is beyond the range of her interest.

The Fae who calls herself Keri Urban lost the vast majority of her powers when she was exiled from Faerie. That being said, she is still a powerful entity, rivaling the strength of an experienced and adept changeling. For someone used to being a god in her own world, however, this is a severe handicap. Many of the Contracts that Urban once possessed are with aspects of Arcaedia itself, making them useless once her ties to that world have been severed. She still possesses some supernatural acumen, however, and no small measure of charm that, when coupled with eons of experience in high-stakes games of manipulation and intrigue, make her the match for almost any human or changeling she encounters.

Urban believes that the key to undoing her banishment early lies in a broad interpretation of "one hundred fae lifetimes." In order to end her exile, she believes that she must offer enough years of fae life — not necessarily her own — to equal a hundred fae lifetimes, through sacrifices to the Hedge that currently separates her from her homeland. Once she realized that she was not doomed merely to wait out her eons of imprisonment, but could whittle away at it through butchery, she quickly turned to setting this plan in action. As she is vastly less powerful than any of the unbanished True Fae she might encounter, the obvious solution is to sacrifice changelings instead. Rightfully fearing the wrath of an entire freehold brought down upon her, were she to merely set about waylaying and killing their members, Urban has infiltrated her local freehold and established herself well in its ranks. Her role as a Duchess of the Icebound Heart comes naturally to her, as does her place as a dedicated member of the Winter Court. Unfortunately for those around her, the fact that she seems to be an epitome of both is due in a large part to her True Fae nature.

Seeming: While Urban does not actually possess a changeling seeming, she is most often mistaken for (and masquerades as) one of the Fairest.

Court: Winter

Entitlements: Duchy of the Icebound Heart

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 5, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Investigation 2, Medicine (Intoxicants) 3, Occult (Fae) 4, Politics (Changeling) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Larceny 3, Stealth 2, Survival 2, Weaponry (Rapier) 4

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Expression 3, Intimidation 4, Persuasion (Seduction) 4, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 5

Merits: Fast Reflexes 2, Fighting Finesse (Rapier), Iron Stamina 3, Natural Immunity, Striking Looks 4, Mantle (Winter) 4

Willpower: 7

Clarity: 3

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 9

Defense: 4

Speed: 12

Health: 8

Wyrd: 7

Contracts: Darkness ••, Elements (fire) •••, Vainglory •••••

Pledges: The Banished is exceptionally cautious about binding herself to pledges with changelings, and avoids doing so unless absolutely necessary. Mortals are her preferred target.

Glamour/per Turn: 20/7

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Dice Pool*
Rapier	2(L)	11

Hobgoblins

Caught between the world of Faerie and mortal lands, the Hedge is home to a bizarre plethora of beings the likes of which are seen nowhere else. Some are constructed, willed and crafted into being by the True Fae, and then lost or discarded when their fae interest wanes. Others are freed intentionally to guard the byways of the Brambles against intruders. Some of the most macabre seem to be manifestations of the Hedge itself, weird creatures that make their home in the inhospitable Thorns, or have carved out a niche for themselves in a Hollow. These entities run the gamut from sentience to merely reacting to stimuli, and vary in size from infinitesimal to hulking masses. Some are stationary, others lethally mobile. And while some small few are fairly innocuous, seemingly content to merely eke out an existence in this bizarre zone, many are violently predatory. Unfortunately for those who must make their

way through, looks are often deceiving, and what seems to be a harmless denizen might easily be their downfall. Just as the clearest passageways through the Hedge can hold the most danger, so the most mundane encounters within its walls can quickly turn deadly.

Briarwolves

Quote: [blood-curdling howl]

Background: Although the Hedge can be lethal to those who tarry too long in its thorny pathways, not all who get lost within the Bramble die, at least not right away. The supernatural realm imposes changes upon them, even if they do not travel all the way into Faerie proper. Or so say some rumors that try to explain the existence of the terrifying predators known as briarwolves. Others claim that briarwolves are merely manifestations of the fear and danger of the Hedge itself come to life in a physical form. Since these creatures are sometimes used as hounds by the True Fae, some believe that briarwolves are magically created by the Fair Folk (perhaps from among their more recalcitrant slaves) to discourage changeling servants from attempting to return to the mortal realm. No matter where they came from, briarwolves are some of the singularly most frightening creatures that make their home in the Hedge.

Description: The most fearsome aspect of briarwolves is not their razor-sharp claws or their gaping muzzles full of jagged teeth. It's not even the smell of old blood that surrounds them as a product of their preferred hunting style or the eerie echoes of their howls to one another through the Thorns. The single most terrifying thing about briarwolves is that they're human — or at least they were at one point.

Although they run just as easily on four legs as two, they are completely capable of standing bipedal, especially if it aids with their hunting. And while they may possess almost any combination of human and animal predator physical characteristics, their eyes always retain a human aspect.

Storytelling Hints: When a briarwolf pack has located its quarry, the members begin to stalk it from a distance, baying out to one another across the thickets of the Hedge. Although they are certainly capable of stealth, they prefer to announce their presence, raising as much fear in their prey as possible before beginning their actual attack. Their howls tend to create a flight reaction in those who hear them, inciting panic and sometimes even flushing an otherwise safe victim from its sanctuary.

Once the pack's prey has begun to flee, the chase is on. Briarwolves eat meat, but also feed upon emotions, with a strong preference for fear, pain and desperation. To this end, briarwolves will chase their intended victim to the point of exhaustion, nipping first at non-vital bits to injure, but not seriously debilitate, their prey. As the hunt continues, and the victim's adrenaline soars, the pack will move in to inflict more and more serious injuries, each time allowing the victim to scramble onward for a while before the next attack. Tracking someone who has been hunted by briarwolves is a grisly business as his trail produces first nothing more than frenzied footprints accompanied by a light splatter of blood but then begins to manifest increasingly gory evidence of the pack's sadistic savagery. Near the end of the hunt, briarwolves are renowned for eviscerating their quarry in such a fashion that the entrails spill forth from the abdomen without killing the victim. The pack then chases the prey through the thickest parts of the Hedge, leaving bloody gobbets of flesh and organ on the Thorns in their wake, before finally moving in for the kill.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3
Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4
Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 1, Composure 2
Mental Skills: Investigation (Tracking) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl (Claws) 5, Stealth 5, Survival 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Prey Reactions) 3, Intimidation 3

Merits: Danger Sense, Brawling Dodge, Direction Sense, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 3, Fresh Start, Iron Stamina 3

Willpower: 5

Initiative: 8

Defense: 3

Speed: 15

Health: 9

Wyrd: 2

Contracts: Darkness •••••; Elements •, Fang and Talon (Wolf) ••••

Pledges: None

Glamour/per Turn: 11/2

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Dice Pool*
Brawl	0(B)	8
Claws	1(L)	9
Bite	2(L)	9

Noppera-Bo

Quote: *"You are lucky I was here to help. I know a shortcut."*

Background: One of the greatest challenges facing changelings is their lack of firm identity. The Noppera-Bo are hobgoblins that seem to embody that lack of identity and use it against those who travel within the Brambles. The Noppera-Bo were perhaps born of trickery, confusion and fear, or perhaps of changeling's own self-doubts, made solid by the inherent power of the Hedge. Regardless of their nature, they are a real danger to those who travel the Hedge. Although usually more impish than overtly malevolent, the Noppera-Bo take great pleasure in tricking travelers and leading them astray, often into the same perilous situations the hobgoblins profess to be attempting to avoid. Sometimes, however, for reasons known only to them, a Noppera-Bo will directly serve the will of one of the True Fae, leading those who would follow it directly into servitude, or worse.

Description: The Noppera-Bo most often appear initially masked as normal humans or changelings. They can take the form of any kith or seeming, but most often choose appearances that are either akin to those the hobgoblins wish to trick or that will be likely to elicit sympathy from their victims. Their masked forms are normally small in stature, however, and they often appear injured, ill or simply emaciated. Noppera-Bo are especially fond of taking the shape of small children or beautiful, frail females.

Those who have encountered the Noppera-Bo report that the clothing they initially appeared in was similar in style to their own, and that the creatures spoke to them in a tongue understandable to each of the travelers. Uncertainty remains as to whether this is the result of empathetic or telepathic probing, or is instead the effect of some sort of mind-altering illusion that only makes the viewer believe in the familiarity of what she is sensing. Regardless, the Noppera-Bo will use their human or changeling seeming to work their way into the company of a group, playing up their apparent weakness or injuries to full affect.

The Noppera-Bo's natural form is much more disquieting. Roughly man-shaped, they wear formal robes and have skin as smooth and white as an eggshell. Noppera-Bo faces are utterly devoid of features (no eyes, noses, mouths or ears), and their bodies are entirely hairless.

Storytelling Hints: Although they regularly travel in groups of two to four, normally a single Noppera-Bo appears at the first encounter with any traveler or group, with the others watching covertly. Taking an innocuous form, the lead creature attempts to insinuate itself in with its would-be victims. Sometimes it will profess to have information of value

to the group: the location of an item or individual they seek or a short cut to their destination. Others times the Noppera-Bo will attempt to play upon their sympathies, hoping they will not be so cruel as to leave the "helpless" individual that it appears to be alone as they continue their journey. If, for some reason, the group does eschew the creature's company, another of the Noppera-Bo troop will attempt to connect with them using a different seeming, a short time later.

Assuming that one of the Noppera-Bo is eventually successful in connecting itself to the Hedge-travelers, it will attempt to gain their trust, offering small bits of helpful advice. The Noppera-Bo may be able to show them a safe Hollow to camp in briefly, or the location of some goblin fruit to aid in healing or perhaps lead them around some obvious obstruction or danger in their path. However, this aid is all a part of the Noppera-Bo's game. Once the creature has earned their trust, it will begin leading them into trouble, rather than away from it. Their path may be diverted to wander near the carnivorous vine patch, rather than going around it, or they may "accidentally" find that the "safe" Hollow they sought has been claimed by a hungry beast. During this time, the rest of the Noppera-Bo's troupe will fill whatever roles necessary to keep the travelers in a heightened state of tension. The Noppera-Bo may mask themselves as True Fae or some other dangerous encounter to be witnessed from afar, and thus herd the group in the "right" direction. Or, they may simply lend special effects to the "game," taking the voices of dangerous predators, or even pretending to be fallen victims of some mysterious attacker as suits the drama being woven. Noppera-Bo troops take great delight in seeing how many perils they can lead a group into before they fall under suspicion. Great kudos goes to those that are able to put their victims into several life-threatening situations in a row before being discovered, with the highest honors being given to those that are able to actually convince their quarry to sacrifice themselves to save the Noppera-Bo that has led them to their peril.

When, at last, the Noppera-Bo's duplicity has been discovered, they have one more trick to play. When confronted, they reveal their true form, hopeful that their lack of features will give their erstwhile victims one last fright before the troop escapes off into the depths of the Hedge.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Investigation 3, Occult (The Hedge) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Larceny 3, Stealth 3, Survival 3

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Expression 1, Persuasion 4, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 4

Merits: Direction Sense

Willpower: 4

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Speed: 9

Health: 7

Wyrd: 5

Contracts: Mirror ••••; Artifice ••, Darkness ••

Pledges: None

Glamour/per Turn: 14/5

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Dice Pool*
Strike	1 (B)	3

The True Fae

Thankfully for changelings, the Others are rarely encountered in the mortal world, which possesses more than enough of its own dangers. Most wayfarers will never see another Fae after having escaped Faerie, and they strongly prefer to keep it that way. Even so, the fear of the Gentry, both for their own inherent solipsistic cruelty and because of the threat of being returned to Arcadia, is one of the greatest driving forces in a changeling's life, and with good reason. When one of the Gentry is encountered, there is often little a changeling, or even a motley, can do to thwart its efforts. They are preternaturally endowed with skills and abilities the likes of which even the most adroit changeling cannot hope to rival alone. This often makes the best encounter with a True Fae the one that a changeling escapes from with his life.

The True Fae use mechanics similar to those of changelings, at least when manifesting in the mortal world. In Faerie, the True Fae's power is far less limited, something changelings know all too well.

Arcadian Huntsman

Quote: *"There is no greater sport than the Hunt."*

Background: From the dawn of time, the hunter archetype has played a vital role in the mythologies of human culture. "The Sorcerer," one of the earliest known cave paintings still in existence, immortalizes the image of a powerful hunter adorned with the sweeping rack of a stag. From India to the Celtic Isles, gods, demigods and mythological figures have appeared bearing the same combination of hunting prowess and horned visage.

No changeling knows for certain whether the Horned Hunter is one of these mythic old gods who inspired legends of the same or whether he has merely affected a similar appearance as part of his chosen role. He is, however, the epitome of the archetype: cunning, skillful and entirely ruthless in his chase. His appearance is heralded by the bugle of a hunting horn, quickly followed by the baying of his hounds. Whether in the Hedge or the human world, changelings who hear these sounds are well served to hide. Those who run from the Hunter rarely survive the chase.

In days gone by, the threat of an immortal hunter from beyond was one that even humans felt strongly. Many tales of

folklore speak about those who barely escaped the Wild Hunt with their lives, or of those who were taken and never seen again. In recent history, the Horned Hunter has rarely been seen in the mortal world, seeming to prefer the supernatural wilderlands of the Hedge for his hunting grounds. Rumors exist, however, of freeholds he has visited. Although the stories vary, certain elements remain consistent. While damage to the building and grounds was minimal, not a single changeling escaped alive. The bodies of some were found arrow-shot, gutted or hound-mauled. The rest were dragged off in chains, presumably to replace slain members of his hunting pack.

Description: Just as many of the True Fae, the Hunter can affect a variety of forms, although he certainly has favorites. He sometimes appears as a giant of a man wearing the head and neck of a massive elk, stag, bull or goat, sometimes with the lower legs or feet of the same. Other times, his face and neck are human as well, boasting broad sweeping antlers or massive sharp horns. His skin may be pale, but is more often dark as night, lit only by the pale gleam of his eyes and a trail of witch-fire.

Regardless of the form he takes, he is a powerful and electrifying sight to behold. More than one legend speaks of a changeling who, when called by name by the Hunter, left her sanctuary and went willingly to his side — and her death — simply by force of his dominating and arresting aura.

Storytelling Hints: The Horned Hunter has no interest in negotiation or communication beyond the sound of the horn and the baying of his hounds. Once his prey is chosen, he will stalk it to the borders of Faerie and beyond, using every ounce of his skill to bring his prey to ground. Those who attempt to confront him directly will find that this Fae is no creature of challenges and duels. He has no tolerance for the niceties of fae Courts, and his interactions tend to be very straightforward. He sees the world, both fae and mortal, as existing in a hierarchy of predator and prey, with himself at the apex of the food chain.

Not all of his hunts are to the death, however. His power is as much of the bower as it is of the bow, and when he sets his sights upon a conquest, few are capable of resisting. No gentle lord of poems and flowers, the Hunter pursues his carnal quarry with as great intensity as any other prey, be they male or female, young or old. He brooks no more resistance to these predations than to those of the more traditional hunt: both are most likely to end with his prey lying gasping and bleeding at his feet.

The Horned Hunter travels with a pack of shadowy hounds, forged from the shadows of his changeling prey. Use the statistics of briarwolves, above, to represent his coursers.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 6, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 6

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Investigation 5, Medicine 3, Occult (Fae) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Firearms (Bow) 6, Stealth 5, Survival 5, Weaponry (Knife) 4

Social Skills: Animal Ken 6, Empathy 3, Intimidation 6, Subterfuge 4

Merits: Danger Sense, Meditative Mind, Ambidextrous, Direction Sense, Disarm, Fast Reflexes 2, Fighting Finesse (Knife), Fleet of Foot 3, Fresh Start, Giant, Iron Stamina 3, Quick Healer, Toxin Resistance, Inspiring, Striking Looks 4

Willpower: 9

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 11

Defense: 5

Speed: 16

Health: 12

Wyrd: 8

Contracts: Smoke •••••; Fang and Talon ••••• (All animals), Stone •••, Vainglory ••••••; Eternal Autumn •••••

Glamour/per Turn: 30/8

• **Immortal Flesh:** As one of the True Fae manifested in the mortal world, the Hunter can shrug off some of the lesser slings and arrows of the mundane. Bashing damage does not affect the Hunter at all, unless delivered by a cold iron bludgeon. Cold-forged iron causes aggravated damage, should someone be skilled enough to strike him with such.

• **Ruled By Passion:** The True Fae are entities almost embodied by their passions and vices, with higher morality and self-denial little more than a whim to them. For them, passion *is* virtue, and the denial of passion an affectation. Their supernaturally amoral nature is reflected in an inverted ability to regain Willpower. The Hunter regains one Willpower point from indulging his Virtue, but refreshes his whole pool when satiating his Vice.

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Range*	*Dice Pool*
Bow	4 (L)	80/160/320	16
Knife	1 (L)	–	9

Goblin Markets

By the dark of the moon, under an abandoned overpass in the bad part of town, the fairies gather to hawk their wares. When the night of the Sabbath draws mortals home to bed, the creatures of dream set up shop in the darkened plazas of the local shopping mall. In the brightest noon, the path between two rowan trees in the park will take you to a hollow in the Hedge where your forgotten dreams will sell you your heart's desire. From faerie fruits to forbidden Contracts, arcane tokens to unbaptized human infants, anything can be had at the Goblin Market. The only question is: are you willing to pay what the merchant asks?

An Unearthly Bazaar

A Goblin Market is at once a location and an event, a sort of black market for the fae where they can acquire the rare, the exotic and the mystical. Nearly every freehold boasts a relatively frequent ("stable" would be a misnomer of the worst sort to apply to any dealings of the fae) Market, whether the Courts admit to it or not, and for those few that lack one there is no shortage of wandering Markets journeying from town to town via the treacherous byways of the Hedge. Goblin Markets take many forms, with some resembling Middle Eastern *souks*, others the market squares of traditional European villages and still others, especially wandering Markets, resembling the archetypal image of a gypsy camp or a tinker's wagon. Regardless of actual appearance, Goblin Markets tend to be archaic; even those that set up in modern commercial districts look anachronistic and out of place, wooden stalls and vigorous barkers cheek-by-jowl with the credit card machines and electronic cash registers.

When and Where

Just as so many aspects of changeling society, Goblin Markets are governed by Wyrd, bound up in concepts of fate and time. Similar to the faerie gatherings in old folk tales, a Goblin Market occurs only at certain times and in certain places; when the time is right, any changeling (and even the odd hapless mortal or two) can enter. When the time is wrong, it's as if the Market never existed. Some changelings whisper that this is in fact the case: When the time comes for a Goblin Market, the Wyrd aligns itself and the market exists, and in fact has *always* existed. When the moon moves out of phase or the seasons turn past, the Market is gone and was never there. While this might explain why a Market never leaves even the slightest evidence of its presence behind, this scarcely explains how one can buy something from a merchant who never sold it to you at a market that doesn't exist. Logic-minded changelings discount the theory on these grounds, while others just shrug and accept the paradox as part and parcel of changeling existence.

The frequency of a Goblin Market is usually roughly connected to its size. Smaller Markets are often held on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, while the larger ones are tied to the lunar cycle or the march of seasons, appearing once a month to once a year. These larger Markets often draw pilgrims from other freeholds near the Market's location. A Goblin Market may last as long as a week, but almost never lasts for less than a half a day (usually from dusk till dawn). While there are daytime markets, the preponderance take place during the twilight or nighttime hours. Even diurnal Markets are usually held indoors or in a location shaded from the light of the sun.

The exact location of a Goblin Market can vary widely from freehold to freehold, but most are held in similar types of locations: desolate, sparsely populated areas where mortals are unlikely to wander by. Borders are a particularly popular choice, both in the literal sense (county line roads, state boundaries and the like) and the metaphorical (the edge of a forest, sea shore or boundary between two neighborhoods). The Market itself is frequently secluded, tucked under an abandoned overpass or in a thick copse of trees. There in the darkness, lit by corpse-candles and will-o'-the-wisps, the merchants set up shop.

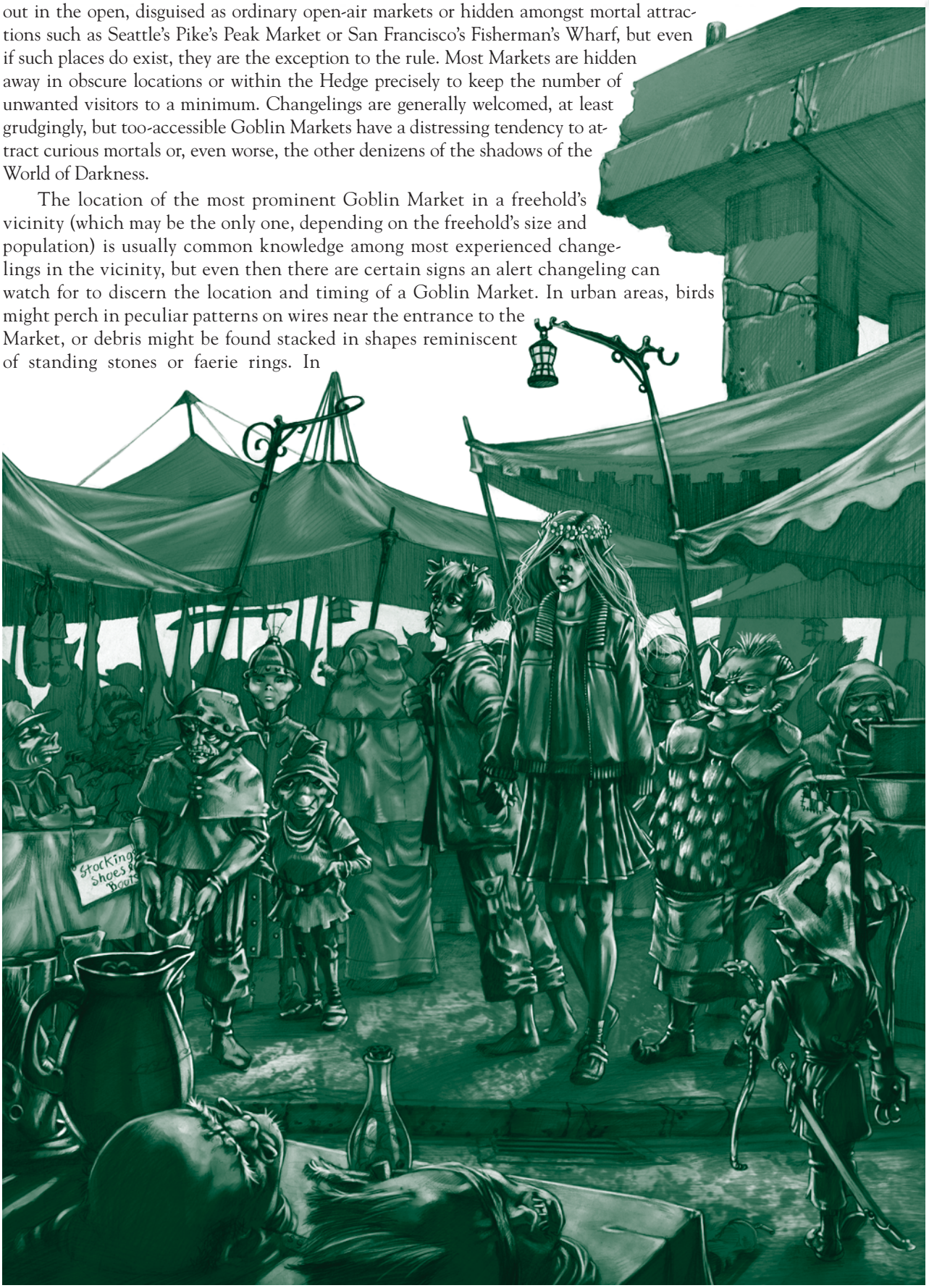
Many Goblin Markets do not actually exist in the mortal realm, and instead are held in Hollows within the Hedge itself. These Markets are often even more fanciful, seeming to exist on the ocean floor or in the branches of an impossibly tall tree, among other possibilities. Hedge Markets, as these are sometimes called, are objects of both terror and fascination for many changelings, for while many of the rarest and most potent merchandise cannot be found in the earthly markets, popular changeling belief holds that the True Fae frequent — or at least occasionally patronize — the Hedge Markets, seeking rare and exotic trifles from the mortal realm or the souls of wayward changelings to snatch away back to Faerie.

How and Why

Goblin Markets, as a rule, don't stand out. There are rumors in some of the larger cities about Markets held right

out in the open, disguised as ordinary open-air markets or hidden amongst mortal attractions such as Seattle's Pike's Peak Market or San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf, but even if such places do exist, they are the exception to the rule. Most Markets are hidden away in obscure locations or within the Hedge precisely to keep the number of unwanted visitors to a minimum. Changelings are generally welcomed, at least grudgingly, but too-accessible Goblin Markets have a distressing tendency to attract curious mortals or, even worse, the other denizens of the shadows of the World of Darkness.

The location of the most prominent Goblin Market in a freehold's vicinity (which may be the only one, depending on the freehold's size and population) is usually common knowledge among most experienced changelings in the vicinity, but even then there are certain signs an alert changeling can watch for to discern the location and timing of a Goblin Market. In urban areas, birds might perch in peculiar patterns on wires near the entrance to the Market, or debris might be found stacked in shapes reminiscent of standing stones or faerie rings. In



more rural locales, crop circles, faerie rings and mounds or odd formations of stones might mark the entrance to a Goblin Market. The signs can be other than visual, as well: the sudden scent of hollyhock blossoms, a snippet of strange music on the breeze or the sensation of "fairy pinches," sudden, sharp stings along the skin, can also be a clue. In the case of smaller Markets, or those that follow a nomadic path, or of changelings who avoid interaction with the larger freehold society, these signs may be the only way to locate a Market.

Even once you've found a Goblin Market, though, actually getting inside can prove difficult. Markets that exist wholly in the mortal world are frequently guarded by hulking, powerful hobgoblins that determine who is allowed in and who is not; Markets held within the Hedge may have even more esoteric requirements for entry. The entrant might have to enter a deep cave and sound three blasts on a horn he finds there, or he might have to recite a short poem before stepping into a ring of mushrooms. Dark rumors whisper of Goblin Markets that deal in especially grim merchandise and that can only be accessed by performing a ritual of human sacrifice on the night of the new moon, but where such a Market might be found is anyone's guess.

An even greater mystery, at least for most changelings, is *why* these Goblin Markets exist in the first place. What possesses these creatures to come together in such a strange echo of commercialism? Is capitalism really *that* universal? While the answers are unclear, there are many theories. Some changelings believe that it is a simple matter of survival; the goblins and dream-creatures that operate the Markets require Glamour for sustenance, and the bargains, buying and selling act as a sort of pledge between buyer and seller, providing the merchant with Glamour in much the same way as a saucer of cream left out for a changeling who helps with the mending does. Coming together into Markets makes their "prey" seek out the merchants, who are provided with an all-you-can-eat buffet of Glamour. Others theorize that the creatures of the Hedge are, in fact, much more intelligent and social than most changelings give them credit for, and that Goblin Markets are simply the one aspect of that society that changelings commonly encounter. The Lost are allowed access to the Markets because of the resources they provide, but are not welcome in the thorps and townships where the hobgoblins dwell. Still others claim that the entire concept of the Goblin Market is an elaborate trap, engineered by the True Fae to ensnare their wayward slaves. In this view, common amongst the especially paranoid element of changeling society, the goblin "merchants" are in fact the loyal servants of the Fae, and the wares offered for sale are honeyed traps set out to entice and ensnare unwary changelings.

Who and What

Many changelings, upon hearing of the Goblin Markets for the first time, assume them to be little more than a formalized setting for the local motleys to gather together to buy and sell and trade. Surely the term "Goblin Market" is an affectation, a mere turn of phrase to make the whole affair seem less crassly commercial. Within moments of setting foot in a Goblin Market, those assumptions are shattered. The merchants who operate the stalls are not the familiar faces of the local Courts, or the majority of them even recognizable as changelings. Hobgoblins and bits of broken, forgotten dreams, creatures of the Hedge and, if rumors are to be believed, even the odd exiled Fae or two: these are the purveyors of goods at the Goblin Market. Tiny men with the faces of cats sell pigeons' wings tied with string while knobby, gnarled creatures like living trees offer the unshriven souls of mortal men tangled in their branches. Bristle-tailed imps provide tutelage in mystic arts while huge, hulking trolls vend sweetmeats of dubious origin. Some changelings choose the life of the goblin merchant over pledged loyalty to Court and freehold, but they are in the distinct minority.

Although Goblin Markets often seem like completely disorganized mobs of individual merchants come together as much for convenience as anything else, woe betide the changeling who tries to set up shop in a Goblin Market without permission. The Marketeers are actually tightly-knit troupes, bound to one another and their Markets by oaths and pledges, and they take a strong dislike to interlopers trying to push in on their turf. The goblins' punishment for such transgressions is legendary. In one freehold in the Pacific Northwest, a changeling caught trying to sell goblin fruits at a Market was forced to gorge himself on his wares until his stomach ruptured — which the magic of the fruits promptly repaired, so that the process could be repeated over and over until the unfortunate's entire stock was consumed, at which point his bloated body was dragged into the wildest part of the Hedge and left to its fate.

Goblin merchants seem to have an uncanny sense for outsiders trying to work the Market; oddly, the goblins don't seem to care if changelings conduct business between themselves elsewhere, even if said business directly undercuts the Market. All that matters is that the sellers at a Goblin Market all be pledged to it and to each other.

How a changeling might fall in with a Market and swear its pledge is a mystery; few Lost are bold enough to claim they know the secret oath of the goblin merchants, and fewer still are correct in their claim. Given the paucity of information on the subject, most changelings suspect the pledge involves oaths of secrecy and detachment from Lost society in addition to those of loyalty to the Market. What effect such an oath might have on a changeling's Clarity is a chilling thought, and likely one of the reasons there are few actual changelings in the Goblin Markets.

Despite their draconian enforcement of their own exclusivity, Goblin Markets have no shortage of wares with which to entice the discerning changeling. Even the smallest Markets offer an array of goblin fruits and assorted trinkets from the wilds of the Hedge. Larger ones can provide even more exotic wares: dreamstuff and tokens, even artifacts from Faerie proper (though why any changeling would want such an artifact is a puzzling question). No catalog of goblin wares can ever be truly comprehensive, of course, but the following list covers some possibilities to help kickstart your ideas.

Goblin Fruits: Perhaps the most common, or at least most commonly useful to changelings, item for sale at a Goblin Market is goblin fruit. Bushels and baskets of all varieties of fruit line the stalls, while vintners, bakers and cooks of all description prepare a dizzying array of dishes using the fruits as principal ingredients (which have the same game effects, and count toward the maximum number of goblin fruit a changeling can carry, as a raw fruit). Wise changelings make sure they know exactly what they want, or bring a companion knowledgeable in the peculiar botany of the Hedge, as the merchants are seldom scrupulous enough to clearly delineate the edible fruits from the vilest poisons. A sampling of goblin fruits can be found on p. 223.

Tokens: Tokens offered for sale at Goblin Markets tend to be those with particularly nasty drawbacks associated with them, though the power of the item is correspondingly potent. The Monkey's Paw, from the classic story of the artifact that grants wishes at a terrible cost, is a prime example of the sort of thing typically offered by goblin merchants. That isn't to say that they don't sell less powerful or less dangerous tokens, they just tend to proffer their most potent stock most freely. After all, the greater the token, the greater the price it fetches, and if the nastier drawback creates trouble for the item's new owner, well, that suits the typical goblin sense of mischief just fine.

Goblin Contracts: Learning new Contracts is a time-consuming and difficult process for changelings. The goblin merchants are fully aware of this fact and only too happy to offer their services to expedite the process. The fact that Goblin Contracts are intrinsically flawed and carry drawbacks associated with every use is conveniently omitted from the sales pitch. Most changelings learn to be wary of goblins bearing Contracts early in their lives, but sometimes the need outweighs the risk associated with a Goblin Contract (and, of course, there are always inexperienced changelings who can be fooled into thinking they're getting a great deal). Goblin Contracts are fully described on p. 164.

Skills: For those who want to improve their talents but don't want to spend the time training and studying, goblin tutors can sometimes be found at the Markets that can bestow supernatural prowess in various fields. Mechanically, this works just as improving Skills normally through experience point expenditure, but the goblin tutor obviates any requirement to spend time practicing or working to improve the Skill. Goblin tutors are most commonly found for Skills such as Occult, Melee, Athletics, Persuasion, Socialize and Crafts, the sort of Skills one might traditionally bargain with supernatural entities to learn. Goblin tutors that can teach more modern skills, such as Computer, Science or Firearms, are significantly rarer.

Mortal Slaves: Not all mortals stolen by fairies end up taken back to Faerie by the lords of the True Fae. Some mortals who wander into the Hedge are set upon by opportunistic Marketeers, clapped in chains, and dragged off to the Goblin Market to be sold as slaves for whatever dire purpose their new masters might devise. These human chattel are usually ensorcelled before going on the block, so they are better able to interact with their masters. While some changelings do purchase slaves in this manner, the presence of a slaver at a Market tends to make the locals edgy. The True Fae, after all, have a much greater desire and use for mortal men, women and children than most changelings, and one never knows when they might drop by to inspect the merchandise.

Esoterica: Dreamcatchers made of spun spider silk and the bones of children. Tears of the moon in a crystal phial. Sweetmeats and dainties, necklaces of flies' wings and garments of gossamer chains. Many of the wares offered at the Goblin Market defy description or classification. They have no game-mechanic effects and provide no advantage or disadvantage per se, but can be used to expound on the otherness and the dreamlike logic of illogic that abounds in **Changeling**. These esoterica might simply be background filler, strange items the characters hear being hawked somewhere in the Market or vital elements needed to complete a story. Just remember that Goblin Markets are all about the weird, the unexpected and a liberal dose of the macabre.

Paying the Piper

It's hardly surprising to the average changeling that the merchants at the Goblin Market don't take U.S. dollars or whatever the local mortal currency happens to be. What is often more surprising is that there seems to be no logic to what the Goblin Markets *will* accept as payment. A changeling might be able to purchase a priceless gem-encrusted goblet for the cost of a few locks of golden-blonde hair, while another might have to promise a rare and powerful token for a handful of magic stones. Sometimes the price isn't even an actual object, but some metaphysical requirement, such as a favorite memory from before a changeling's abduction or a pledge of a future favor. Exactly what the Marketeers get out of these arrangements is up for debate; some Lost posit that the prices they pay are simply bartered in turn to other, stranger entities, while the paranoid suggest that every Goblin Market in the world is somehow tied back to the

True Fae, and each bargain a changeling makes brings him — or maybe even *all* changelings — one step closer to being dragged back to Faerie and bound so securely that he'll never escape again.

In game terms, since the price of goods at the Goblin Market isn't measured in the sort of currency represented by the Resources Merit, the cost of buying from a goblin merchant is reflected in one of two ways: Glamour for items not represented by game-mechanic Traits and experience points for those that are. For example, buying a single goblin fruit might cost only one Glamour, since the fruit can only be consumed once and then is gone, while some strange piece of esoterica might cost anywhere from one to five Glamour, depending on the item's usefulness or importance. By contrast, buying Goblin Contracts or tokens costs experience points, as would a mortal slave (represented by the Retainer Merit). Paying these experience points works exactly as normal experience point expenditure, except that from a story perspective the experience represents some aspect of the character being "paid" to the merchant.

Optional Rule: Dangerous Bargains

The simple rules presented here are perfectly adequate for bargaining with goblin merchants, but classic fairy tales on the topic often feature more outlandish bargains. If you want to evoke these stories, here are a few options to consider:

Memory: Many stories feature fae creatures with an inordinate fondness for memories, especially happy ones. A changeling might agree to give up her memory of a specific event or person. This specific memory loss incurs a –1 die penalty on Social rolls in situations that refer to that memory, such as speaking to an old flame whose memory the character gave up.

Virtue/Vice: The character offers up one of her strongest passions in return for her heart's desire; until the next new moon, whenever she would regain Willpower from indulging her Virtue or Vice, she regains no points.

Sanity: One of the steepest prices a changeling can pay. The character immediately loses a point of Clarity as though she had failed a degeneration check. This price is only asked for extremely rare or potent items.

If you choose to use these steeper costs of bargaining with goblins, consider giving players a slight break on experience point costs; reducing the new dots multiplier by one is a good rule of thumb.

Using Goblin Markets

Goblin Markets can provide a variety of functions in your chronicle. Just as the Hedge in general, they can showcase the fundamental otherness of the fae side of a changeling's nature, rooting her squarely in the surreal and the mad. They can enhance the sense of paranoia underlying the core of **Changeling**; after all, you might not be able to trust your fellow changelings, but you can at least understand how they think. With goblins, you never really know *why* they do what they do. Of course, they can also be used as the backdrop for a wide variety of stories, from fairly simple and straightforward attempts to acquire a necessary item to more complex, adversarial stories.

The Madness of Dreams

Simply put, Goblin Markets just don't make much sense. Leaving aside for the moment the fact that many of the merchants aren't even remotely human in appearance or outlook, the entire pageant of buying and selling is skewed through a heavy veil of dream logic and seeming nonsense. Like Alice when she arrived in Wonderland, a changeling new to the Goblin Market finds that he can rely on none of his preconceptions to guide him. Merchants sell low and buy high, request payment in forms that seem utterly impossible and offer strange goods whose use can only be guessed at as though they were the most valuable and useful items in the world.

You can play up this bizarre and alien aspect in a variety of ways. When setting the scene at the Goblin Market, emphasize the strange, weird and unusual items being offered. If the characters never actually *see* the merchandise in question, so much the better; sure, that barker *says* he has three pinfeathers from a human being's wing, but who is to say what's actually in that gilt-inlaid box sitting enticingly apart from the other wares? Likewise, keep the offered price of items expressed in strange and seemingly illogical terms. Wares at the Goblin Market are rarely bought and sold for mere coin, even if the coins in question are Faerie drachmas smelted from moonsilver and crocodile tears. Be careful, though, not to overdo it; when the goblin merchants start offering their wares for the price of a three-dollar bill, you've moved away from the beautiful madness of the Goblin Market and into absurdism. The surreal aspects of the Goblin Market should be tinged with an undercurrent of the bizarre and the macabre.

If you are fortunate enough to have particularly vivid dreams that stay with you after you wake up, you might consider starting a dream journal and using it as inspiration for scenes set in Goblin Markets. Not every dream will be appropriate fodder for a World of Darkness game, of course, but as far as verisimilitude goes, there's no better source for dream-imagery and logic quite like your own subconscious.

Books on dream interpretation might also provide you with inspiration for the weird and unusual.

Human beings (and changelings, for that matter) are social creatures, and to a large extent, we base our perceptions and reactions on those around us. That's why sitcoms have laugh tracks, and why sporting events are more exciting when you can experience the roar of the crowd. You can use that unconscious reaction to increase the sense of alienation and unease by showing the players that the other shoppers and merchants seem to find nothing out of the ordinary or illogical about the manner in which deals are made at the Market. The cognitive dissonance created by the incongruity will heighten their sense of being off-balance and unsure what's going on around them.

Paranoia

When you get right down to it, Goblin Markets aren't put on for changelings. Sure, changelings are welcome to browse the goods, and their coin (in whatever form it may take) is typically honored, but a wise buyer remembers that he is simply a visitor benefiting incidentally. The majority of merchants and buyers at a Goblin Market are goblins and other denizens of the Hedge, and those beings are, at best, ambivalent about the existence of changelings. Shopping at a Goblin Market should be a tense, nerve-wracking experience, as risky as it is potentially rewarding. You never really know whether the goblin merchant you're dealing with has fairness in mind or whether the goblin is just waiting for you to complete the sale before it marches off to its Fae lord and gives away your exact location; for that matter, you can seldom be sure the "merchant" isn't one of the Fae in disguise, waiting like a Venus flytrap for unsuspecting changelings to wander by and be ensnared.

Of course, you don't want to overplay this angle, or the players will never want to visit a Goblin Market (which isn't an inherently bad thing, but it does remove a Storytelling tool from your arsenal). Remember that paranoia is the *fear* that everyone is out to get you. If everyone really is out to get you, it ceases to be paranoia and becomes certainty. Play up the mistrust and the fear with the occasional thinly veiled sneer or merchant who seems just a little *too* interested in the characters' activities and lives. Leaving some ambiguity — maybe that sneering shopper just doesn't like changelings, or the merchant thinks his obsequiousness will get him a better price — can help keep the players on their toes.

Goblin Market Story Hooks

Goblin Markets provide no shortage of potential story hooks. Treat the following brief list as a palette of ideas; combine them in whatever way suits your fancy, use them as individual elements or just use them as a springboard for your own ideas.

The MacGuffin: One of the most common elements of fiction in many genres, a MacGuffin is some item that drives the plot forward, but otherwise contributes little to the story. The Maltese Falcon is a MacGuffin, as are the Sword in the Stone and the Golden Fleece. This particular plot device can be cliché if handled poorly, but when done well, suffice it to say there's a reason it has become a classic. The MacGuffin could be as simple as finding the right merchant at the right Market and buying the MacGuffin (which could be quite a story in and of itself), or you can add more wrinkles to it. Maybe a rival of the motley's wants the same item, and what should have been a straightforward purchase becomes a bidding war. The

characters might have to engage in a great deal of politicking to broker a sufficient payment to outbid the rival, or they might have to fend off underhanded attempts to take them out of the bidding (or launch such tactics themselves). Even if there is no rival involved, the merchant might divine how important the item is and set the price exorbitantly high: the bloom of a rare goblin fruit found only in the wilds of the Hedge or the promise of a character's firstborn child.

Liberation: The wares at Goblin Markets sometimes include things most right-thinking folk would find abhorrent, including human slaves or, rumor has it, even the snared souls of the dead. Some motleys might be motivated to try to put a stop to this process, either on principle or for more personal reasons. Changelings have families, too, and those mortal relatives are no less likely to stumble into the path of a goblin slaver than any other mortal. The characters might be able to stage a straightforward raid to free the captured mortals; depending on the characters' audacity and skill, they might even succeed. Unfortunately, that's the *least* of their problems. The political fallout within the freehold will almost certainly be massive, and that's to say nothing of the retribution of the slavers themselves. Then there's the issue of what to tell the rescued mortals about what happened to them, especially if the liberated thralls know the changeling's fetch. How does a changeling explain a running battle with trolls and nightmares to his sister, when said sister knows him as a thoroughly average, slightly dull college student?

The Price We Pay: In a similar vein to the Liberation hook, this story involves a changeling ally of the motley who has made a bargain with a goblin merchant that the ally is no longer able or willing to pay. Maybe he promised to spend a year and a day as the goblin's indentured servant and has since learned that the merchant intends to sell him back to his Keeper, or perhaps he has suffered amnesia and can no longer provide the happiest memory of his childhood. The characters must find a way to get their friend out of the bargain he is trapped in; no easy task for beings whose very souls are built around the idea that a promise is inviolate.

Escape: The worst fear of every changeling has been realized. One of the True Fae has struck a bargain with the creatures of the Goblin Market to see the characters forcibly returned to Faerie. The motley members must try to escape the Goblin Market and return to the relative safety of the freehold with every hand in the Market turned against them. Harried by nightmares and furies, this story becomes an exercise in evasion and sudden ambush. Perhaps a single merchant offers the changelings succor — but is it an actual ally, or merely a more cunning hunter than its ilk?

STAWICKI

He stood there on the path, smug as always. He thought this would be over quickly, that the man standing in front of him would die at the end of his blade and he would walk back through the gateway to his victim's woman. He had already taken her, changing his face so that it looked like his enemy's. Hence the duel.

He smiled, and tightened his grip on the hilt of his knife. "Make your declaration," he said.

"I, Aston of the Autumn Court, challenge you to a duel. We shall fight, and we shall not stop until one of us lies dead. That is my declaration."

"I accept your challenge." He had no need to name himself, for he did not use a name. He did not claim allegiance to a Court. He refused to tie himself to anything. No woman and no words held him.

The duel began. He drew out his knife and advanced on his opponent. Aston stood there, still and silent.

No, not silent. Whispering. What was he saying?

"Come back, boy. I haven't done with you yet. You'll kneel before me and do my bidding, boy. You'll take what I give you and thank me, else you'll find yourself bent over and serving my stable hands again! Come back here, boy, or I'll change myself before our fun tonight, and you can barely breathe as it is!"

The words of his Keeper. He felt tears well up, and his knife dropped to the ground. He looked to both sides, but saw only the unforgiving Thorns of the Hedge.

Aston stepped forward and pointed at him. "On your knees, boy." He could only obey. Aston reached down and picked up the knife. "Shut your eyes."

"Please," he whispered.

"I am Aston of the Autumn Court," said his opponent, "Marquis of Shameful Remembrance." The knife slid home, and he heard the last sounds he ever would. "Shame you put so little stock in names, or you might have known what that meant."

Appendix One
Entitlements

I too shall lie in the dust when I am dead,
but now let me win noble renown.
— Homer, "The Iliad"

Nobility is a powerful, almost living thing. An entitlement — the gaining of nobility through joining a noble order — provides more than just a title. It's an alteration to a changeling's own heart and mind, a badge of purpose, power and terrible will. An entitlement grants the entitled fae significance, strange blessings and a transformed mien. But the way to nobility is a path of thorns whose every turn is marked with peril. New political intrigues threaten to hang the changeling by her neck until she is dead. Old adversaries rise from the darkness to steal her power. And the True Fae are drawn by the sickly sweet taste of untested nobility. For every new ally and secret blessing, the changeling now finds that she faces untold pitfalls and foes. Make no mistake, joining an entitlement and becoming ennobled is a powerful thing. But it also threatens her life and sanity in ways never before suspected.

The Noble Order

The noble order is a fundamental part of changeling society. An order may be formed out of vanity or necessity. It may grow out of a like-minded group of changelings who commit to a single cause or form from a disparate cadre of fae who use the order to keep tabs on one another. Changelings may parade their noble orders about in full public view, or they may stay well beneath the watermark of common knowledge, gathering in "secret" societies to which membership can be both coveted and feared.

The noble orders are sometimes called "entitlements," and changelings within the orders who earn specific titles are known to be "entitled." The title granted by a noble order is the same for all changelings within that order — all the fae who belong to the Duchy of the Icebound Heart are *all* considered Dukes and Duchesses. The order doesn't feature a single Duke and several Knights or Squires beneath them. The title is universal throughout that order. While the Duchy may feature an internal hierarchy unique to the order, this element remains irrelevant to those outside the group. Those entitled share the designation: a gathering of the Duchy, for instance, would see all of its Dukes and Duchesses in attendance.

Joining an Order

One must first meet the prerequisites put forth by the oaths and Contracts that bind the order together. An order's set of prerequisites can be nearly anything, though for the most part an order demands an obligatory level of Wyrd (usually Wyrd 2 or 3), as well as a few other Traits emblematic of the order's purpose and theme (a noble order of thieves might have a Larceny 2 prerequisite, for instance). Sometimes, an order is Court-specific, requiring that its members first belong to the appropriate ruling Court. (The Satrapy of Pearls, for instance, demands that its Satraps first have a particular Mantle within the Spring Court.) A character cannot possess multiple entitlements at the same time; conflicts of loyalty are sure to arise, and thus each order will accept only those who are not otherwise titled.

While none of the entitlements listed here are seeming-specific, rumors of them do exist — odd little orders of Darklings or Fairest, changelings gathering in truly secret societies. Some even suggest that kith-specific orders exist; though, if they do, they must be very esoteric and sparsely attended.

If a changeling meets the Trait and character prerequisites, she must then meet the roleplaying obligations. Every order demands that the changelings within its ranks be worthy in some way. Some ask for spare trials of loyalty or ability, while others put their potential members through hell and back to test their mettle. Every order is different, with trials and ordeals unique to its design.

Provided that a changeling fulfills all obligations, she must then swear an oath to the order. This oath is supernatural in origin, much like the pledge sword to a Court. Just as everything else, the pledge required is unique to every order. One group may ask that a changeling swear to a Byzantine codex of laws and bylaws, signing off on a hundred little intricacies of conduct before gaining the full benefits of membership. Another may have a single phrase or sentence that informs the purposes of the order and holds the changeling to one crucial act or behavior.

The Eldritch Orders

Rumor has it that some entitlements have been around for thousands of years, existing as secret societies within various freeholds. Supposedly, these eldritch orders are only for the most powerful changelings (requiring a steep set of Traits to gain membership, such as Wyrd 5+ or Mantle 5 in a particular Court). The bonuses that come as part of the ennoblement are equally steep, however, granting changelings unseen measures

of power. Of course, most of the changelings who belong to such ancient entitlements have also lost much of their perspective, often possessing Clarity well below the norm. Most seem to have ways to conceal this, however, appearing to be normal and sane to unprying eyes.

Advantages of Title

Upon swearing the oath and joining the order, a changeling gains a few benefits key to that order. The first benefit is a supernatural bonus of some kind that comes with the sworn pledge. (All noble orders are founded through the same sorcerous means as the four Courts. Joining one requires a similar magically binding oath.) This bonus may be a small blessing, token or access to certain pledges unique to the order. A character doesn't need to purchase these bonuses separately with experience points; she gains them automatically upon joining that noble order and becoming entitled.

The changeling also gains some changes or ornamentation to her fae mien. Such ornamentation is often minor, and comes in addition to the changeling's existent mien. (If the ornamentations born of the entitlement conflict in any way with the character's extant seeming, the player can choose between conflicting elements, as she has some measure with which to design her character's mien.) Changes to her mien are part of the mantle of power given by an entitlement's very nature — her flesh now wears the badges of whatever strange heraldry and grim purpose the order possesses. The ornamentations of an entitlement are not as permanent as the physical changes wrought by years in Faerie; ornamentations of entitlement are Wyrd-shaped manifestations of solid Glamour, and typically dissolve away into mist or faint strains of music when separated from the changeling.

Certain Social bonuses may also come into play. While this isn't universal, many entitled changelings gain a small (+1) bonus to any Social rolls when dealing with other nobles, be they from the Courts or from another entitlement.

One perhaps unexpected bonus is in an entitled changeling's relationships to the True Fae. The Gentry seem to refuse to deal with most changelings, seeing them as so clearly "lesser" and tantamount to slaves or worse. Gaining a title through a noble order seems to raise a True Fae's estimation of that entitled character.

This doesn't mean that a Fae will act favorably toward the character, however (and in fact has its own disadvantages, see below). It means that the Other grants the character a small measure of social propriety. Instead of just attacking the changeling or attempting to abscond with her back into the Hedge, the Fae may offer her some minor formalities. A True Fae might offer a character a game of chance, a game of skill, a riddle or some kind of strange bargain or time extension ("If you promise to stand on this spot in one year, I will come for you then and give you that extra time, but if you fail me, I will hunt down the rest of your motley, as well"). A Fae may also offer specific formalities that suit a changeling of a particular title: offering to joust with a Knight, for instance.

Of course, the Gentry are deceivers all. Any formalities offered are purely stacked in the True Fae's favor, or so the creature hopes. What it does, however, is offer the entitled changeling a potential loophole through which she might wriggle free. It may grant her some measure of time, or at least a chance to escape the attention of those vicious Others.

Disadvantages of Title

Just as possessing a title can offer some Social bonuses, possession of a title can also incur Social penalties. The Storyteller may at times invoke a penalty when making Social rolls involving changelings who do *not* belong to a noble order (such "common" changelings may feel angry, nervous or otherwise uncomfortable around those so-called nobles, and the penalty reflects that). A penalty may also occur if the character is dealing with a changeling from a competing or adversarial order. (Note that these penalties are not universal, but are optional modifiers left to the prerogative of the Storyteller.)

The other disadvantage of possessing a title is in dealings with the True Fae. While it's true that, as noted above, the Gentry offer some formalities to the ennobled changelings, this bonus also comes with a somewhat significant downside, as well. The downside is that the Others always notice a changeling with a title before they notice a changeling without one. Why this is remains unknown. Do the True Fae, believing themselves nobles above all nobles, find it all the more satisfying to victimize and humiliate entitled changelings? Or does the noble badge of a title simply draw the Fae without them even realizing it, as blood in the water will draw hungry sharks?

This paints a rather large bull's-eye on the backs of the entitled changelings, and for some sours an otherwise sweetened deal. The Fae will always deal with an ennobled changeling before deigning to notice a "common" changeling without a title. Thus, membership in one of the noble orders is a double-edged sword. Yes, it confers to the changeling a number of benefits both social and supernatural. But it also lures the Others, which is a cost too steep for many.

Quitting an Order

Once in a noble order, it's in the changeling's blood and bones. That's not to say she can't quit the order, either to free herself from all entitlements or to join another order. Doing so, however, is costly.

To renounce the order, a changeling merely needs to swear aloud that she is leaving the order. The spoken words are not enough — she must truly *mean* it (hence it's difficult to coerce a changeling into shedding her entitlement). But, if she declares herself apart from the order with the full intention of leaving it, then it's done. It doesn't matter if anybody can hear her make this declaration of separation — the pledge that allowed her to join is now broken. Her title is void.

All bonuses gained from her membership within that order cease immediately. Tokens gained as part of the initial oath become useless, existing now as objects with no magical effects. Any Social bonuses, too, are gone.

She also suffers a number of deleterious effects. The first is that she now suffers a –1 die Social penalty when dealing with any changelings from her old order. Even if they claim understanding, some part of the broken pledge taints the relationship.

Second, breaking a pledge is a sin against Clarity (see p. 92).

Third, she loses a full Willpower dot. This dot can be repurchased with experience points (see p. 77 for these costs), but breaking the pledge and ripping that magic out of her saps her will.

Bishopric of Blackbirds

I will gamble my own soul to help the souls of others. Let us have faith.

The life of a changeling is never easy. Whether navigating the Hedge on the return home, dealing with one's fetch or plotting a course through the crushing rocks of a freehold's cruel politics, one finds pitfalls at every turn. It doesn't help that exposure to these elements only help to decrease a changeling's confidence in his own perceptions. As Clarity drops, the fae's ability to discern reality from unreality, the dream state from the waking or madness from sanity grows weak. A single changeling who lets this lunacy creep in at the edges means that others are letting it in, too. That can damage the sanctity of an entire freehold, and put everybody in danger.

Enter the Bishopric of Blackbirds. They believe themselves the salvation of the freehold, positioning members to be there when others need them. That is their first stated goal: to assist those poor Lost (which, to most Bishops, constitutes *all* of them) when necessary. This can manifest in many ways. The Blackbird Bishops, for instance, often wander the Hedge and look for those who have escaped from Arcadia or who are plainly lost. The Bishops offer their aid, helping those poor souls return to the world. Maybe a changeling has a problem with her fetch, and a Blackbird Bishop will help her come to terms with her "other." (They won't help her destroy the fetch, but they will attempt to either forge an understanding between the two, or will instead help her to forget that life and never again try to contact her Fae-made twin.) The Bishops offer guidance to those who are lost, above all. As a changeling, it's all too easy to lose one's way, and the Bishopric accepts the role of savior.

Of course, salvation doesn't come free. From the order's earliest days under its supposed founder, the Bishop Lily Rose, the Blackbird Bishops are bound to require some kind of payment in return for aid. They do not provide aid without making it totally apparent that, by accepting a Bishop's help, the needy changeling agrees to an unnamed favor that will come due at some point in the future. Now, the Bishops don't normally use this power for selfish gain — no, instead they use it to help the freehold. A favor might be to tithe some Glamour to the local Court, or to help another changeling deal with his fetch or even befriend a lonely soul. The favors demanded are generally done in service to the freehold, though sometimes the request can be quite intensive. For this reason, many changelings note that the blackbird is both a good and bad omen. In some stories, the blackbird is a sign of ill omen or sexual temptation. In others, though, blackbirds represent peace and love. For the Bishops, this is perhaps appropriate: earning a Bishop's aid sometimes requires a favor whose work ends up far outweighing the reward.

Of course, the Bishopric knows that it walks the line between two omens, and it ultimately posits that both perspectives are true. Because here is the second stated goal of the Blackbird Bishops: to restore Clarity to the freehold. They preach long and loud about the dangers of lost perspective, about how the temptations of madness are alluring but damning. They struggle to help others find serenity and perspective, which often comes at the cost of their own Clarity. Delving into the Hedge time and again to search for lost fae is dangerous to mind, body and soul. Helping another changeling fight his inner demons and outer adversaries puts the Bishop at risk. They know this going in; it's part of their oath to the order. If they lose their own Clarity — and life or limb — to help others gain them back, so be it. They do what they must.

Titles: Blackbird Bishop (male and female)

Prerequisites: Wyrd 2, Empathy 2

Joining: The first and perhaps most common way that a changeling joins the Bishopric of Blackbirds is by using his membership to pay off a pledged debt. When offering aid in reward for a future favor, the Bishop makes it clear to most that one way out of the pledge — a clause to the contract, so to speak — is to become a Blackbird Bishop. Seeing as how the Bishops are devoted to helping the freehold and preserving Clarity, it serves the order's goals in the long run to have more members. (Though, again the cruel irony presents itself that some Bishops end up with alarmingly low Clarity without realizing it, and thus they become the ones weakening the fundamental sanity of the freehold.)

Otherwise, those who wish to join are usually allowed to join. The other Bishops discuss it, but even if a changeling enters who doesn't deserve the grace and wisdom of the order, the other Bishops will *make* him deserve it. They recognize that they're only as strong as their weakest link, and if that means dragging one of their own headlong into helping others and farming out goodwill through pledges, then that's what they'll do. The Bishops have little problem in "motivating" their slacking brethren. Motivation may come at the end of an hours-long lecture — or from a swift reprimand at the end of a cudgel.

Certainly there are those the Bishops want nothing to do with, and most new Bishops require a vote of confidence from a majority of the existing members. Ultimately, though, the Blackbird Bishops *want* more changelings in their order, and believe it'd be ideal if everybody felt the same way they did about helping one another (even if it means playing the martyr to do so).

Mien: The Bishopric doesn't assert any common appearance or dress code among its Bishops, except for a single bird pendant hammered out of tin and painted black. The order expects its Bishops to wear this pendant somewhere within sight — usually pinned to a lapel or hung around the neck via a small chain. A Bishop's mien is a whole different matter. Changes to a Bishop's mien are at first subtle, with feathers (usually the black and brown feathers of the common blackbird, though some manifest red-tipped feathers or oily blue-black feathers) appearing from beneath sleeves, cuffs and collars. These feathers sometimes drift away and fall to the ground around the changeling's feet.

The other changes are more extreme. A Bishop's eyes may take on the round black glassiness of a bird's. His feet, too, may turn knobby and shriveled, ending in hooked talons. As Wyrd increases, the number of feathers grows before they drop to the ground, left behind for some humans to find. (Humans, too, feel odd in the presence of high-Wyrd Bishops — mortals grow abnormally superstitious, refusing to step on sidewalk cracks or walk beneath ladders.)

Background: The Bishopric is home to three types of changelings, for the most part: those who take comfort in feeling righteous and needed, those who genuinely want to do some good in this world and those who have crawled their way up from the bleak pits of slavery and madness and are trying to find some way to mitigate the horrors they've experienced. The latter group features changelings who are just happy they have a place in this world and aren't tangled in the Hedge, bloodied and forever lost. The righteous changelings will do anything to prove themselves correct and virtuous, and by doing so, they coincidentally contribute some good to this world. Those Lost who genuinely seek good things are fewer and further between than the order prefers to admit — worse, when a changeling *is* genuinely committed to the sanity and security of others, he often does so at the cost of his own. The good ones always seem to become martyrs.

Socially, some may have belonged to the Courts, but many of the Bishops long drifted between the Courts, earning goodwill but rarely committing themselves to any one ruler over another. They simply did not have a place before, and now they do. (This is why many Blackbird Bishops are zealously committed, sometimes frighteningly so. And they're happy to demand that others join them in this upright noble order.)

Characters within the order tend to have a pretty balanced array of Traits, which abstractly suits their needs just fine. Most act as the jacks of many trades, masters of none. Of course, some Skills take prominence: Empathy, Persuasion, even Subterfuge. Otherwise, expect that Bishops have a rather diverse spread of Traits, Merits and Contracts.

Organization: Internally, the Blackbird Bishops gather in councils (sometimes called *synods*) to discuss matters regarding the freehold. Frankly, councils are rarely conclusive; for the most part, discussions go around and round, an endless tautology of same ideas. (Those who have witnessed a synod have observed that the Bishops obviously like to hear themselves talk.)

When it comes to results, the Bishops manifest effects with their missions. In a persistent attempt to keep their own perspectives (and thus, Clarity scores) from wavering, the Bishops walk among humans and involve themselves in humanitarian efforts. Perhaps the Bishops help some charitable association build houses for the poor, maybe they work at homeless shelters or perhaps they moonlight as late-night suicide hotline counselors. This is advantageous in a number of ways beyond helping to stabilize Clarity. First, it lets them spot other changelings who may need help finding the freehold or reclaiming their sanity. Second, it gives them opportunities to soak up various strong emotions — desperation, depression, hope or gratitude — and thus reclaim some measure of Glamour. Some changelings outside the Bishopric claim that these so-called missions fulfill another advantage: giving the Bishops yet another reason to act haughty and self-righteous.

Concepts: Crazy street preacher, drug counselor, experimental psychotherapist, head of a homeless shelter, New Age guru, old gang leader, self-righteous ex-reverend.

Privileges

Below is a token available to all Blackbird Bishops upon joining the order.

Aspersorium (••)

The Aspersorium is a small, fist-sized container, appearing usually as a small pail or cup. Most such cups feature ornate filigree or scrollwork, and are generally made of metal (silver, brass, pewter), though a few are glass and are instead rimmed with metal ornamentation. The changeling puts any kind of water inside of the cup and whispers a few prayers offered to the weave and weft of Fate itself, asking for a moment of lucidity and perspective. The water, now "blessed," can be flicked onto or sprinkled upon another character's brow. Upon activation, the blessed water helps restore that person to some measure of sanity. If that person possesses any mild derangements, those derangements disappear for a single scene. If that person possesses any severe derangements, then those derangements downgrade to their mild counterparts (i.e., Paranoia becomes Suspicion) for the scene. The Aspersorium also grants the affected person +1 bonus to any Perception rolls he makes during the rest of the day (until he sleeps).

Action: Instant

Drawback: The martyrs of the Bishopric believe that what this token grants to others is able to do so only because it draws it away from the Bishop who uses it. Upon using this, the Bishop suffers a –1 die penalty to any Perception rolls made on his behalf over the rest of the day — his eyes sometimes sting or tear up, and he may even feel a minor headache stirring behind them. This lingers until he gets at least four hours of sleep. This penalty is cumulative — if the Bishop blesses a motley of five changelings, the Perception penalty grows to a –5 modifier.

Catch: In addition to the drawback noted above, the character also takes on the target's derangement (mild or severe, whatever is possessed) for the rest of the scene. If the token is used on a character who does not possess any derangements, then the user of the Aspersorium takes on one mild derangement of the Storyteller's choice, which lasts for the scene.

Rumors of the Bishopric

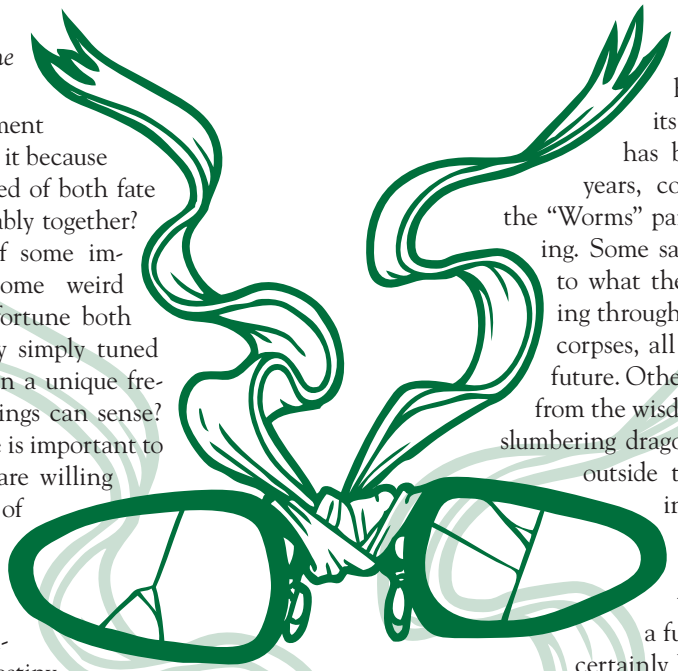
Characters might hear the following rumors regarding the Bishopric of Blackbirds:

• In some cities, the Courts disdain the Bishops and their intrusive, self-righteous natures. In places where this happens, the Bishopric works similar to the old "underground railroad," helping changelings escape oppression. Some Bishops even help to foment rebellion.

• Some whisper that the Blackbird Bishops are *only* a bad omen, and have some ulterior motive. Further whispers suggest that the Bishops help fuel the activities of the sociopathic bridge-burners, thus truly "enforcing" Clarity's law. Other rumors say that the Bishops live to help "reform" fetches, but everybody knows a fetch can't be made normal or sane, right?

• Rumor is that no Bishop will accept the role of ruler in any given Court. Some say that their founder agreed to this long ago, and if any Bishop ascends to King or Queen, that freehold is certainly doomed.

College of Worms



My eyes always seek the impossible and the insane.

Fate is a critical element to changeling existence. Is it because the land of Faerie is formed of both fate and time, braided irrevocably together? Are changelings made of some immeasurable ephemera, some weird non-physical mixture of fortune both good and ill? Or are they simply tuned into it, as if fate lingers on a unique frequency that only changelings can sense? Whatever the reasons, fate is important to changelings, though few are willing to truly examine it for fear of what they might find.

The fae of the College of Worms believe that fate needs to be scrutinized. The threads of destiny aren't easy to find — the number "13" on a passing cab, the image of a crow formed in the steam that darkens a mirror, an oddly-shaped paper cut on one's ring finger — but they're there for those who care to sort the chaff from the wheat. And why do they do this? If fate is truly a force that exists, then it operates in the world on every level. Thus, fate can explain the past and foretell the future. More importantly, if the seemingly inscrutable threads of fate can be parsed and understood, then perhaps the College of Worms can help predict when terrible things might happen to the freehold. If these changelings can predict the coming of the Others, and when they might come to abduct mortals from this world — or when the Others might return to hunt those who have escaped them — then such a service is of profound interest. The diviners of the College are not necessarily *glad* to provide such a service, as doing so often engenders a risk to their Clarity. But they feel it needs to be done, and accept that they are the only ones truly willing to commit to the task.

Searching out such elements of fate may take them into the past by poring over old books and manuscripts (or by scanning websites for odd typos or Fortean sightings). They may also examine the present, looking for signs and portents happening in the moment, anything from a council of black cats conglomerating in a hidden alley to a cryptic configuration of high scores on the Galaga machine down at the abandoned arcade. By probing the past and obsessively observing the present, the diviners hope to form a picture, however murky, of the future.

Of some argument is how this noble order gained its name. The College, which has been around for hundreds of years, continues the debate on how the "Worms" part of the name came into being. Some say that worms are appropriate to what the diviners do: hungrily chewing through books, history, artifacts, even corpses, all in an attempt to discern the future. Others suggest that the word comes from the wisdom of the old "Wyrms," or the slumbering dragons of old. A few changelings outside the College have less flattering things to suggest, comparing the diviners to ringworm (which the diviners are quick to note is not a worm at all, but a fungus). Whatever the case, it's certainly had an effect on the diviners' seemings (see below under "Mien" for more information).

Titles: Diviners of Worms (sometimes just called "diviners" or "augurs")

Prerequisites: Wyrd 3, Investigation 2, Occult 2

Joining: Any who wish to join the College of Worms must first apprentice with a current member of the order. Apprenticeship has no fixed time limit associated with it — it can be a month, a year, or 10 years. Most apprenticeships last around a year, but what really matters is that the tutor feels that her apprentice is ready to give his oath to the College, and "readiness" is one's willingness and ability to see the largely undetectable threads of fate emerging in day-to-day life. The tutor tests her apprentice over and over again — did he see what the lottery numbers were for the past seven nights and can he rattle them off? Did he hear the malapropisms in the president's speech last night and what they *really* said, and didn't he hear those same misspoken words used in that child's rhyme heard as they passed the playground? Important, too, are the conclusions an apprentice draws from such sightings. Does the sighting invoke the coming of the True Fae? Did fate inadvertently discuss the apprentice's murderous fetch? Did the pattern of flies on the north wall foretell the breaking of a significant pledge by the current Court in power? The tests given aren't fixed, and are instead made up in the moment — every apprentice finds himself challenged differently from the next.

What's curious is that the tutor makes a pledge to the apprentice never to give up on the student's training. If the apprentice remains unready, then the tutor continues train-

ing. Two years, 10 years, a lifetime — the pledge remains (or the tutor becomes susceptible to the apprentice's changeling powers from the breaking of a promise). In most cases, if the apprentice is woefully unprepared, then it's up to the student to quit. The tutor won't break his pledge (though she may attempt to force her student to quit, thus ending the pledge).

When the tutor deems that a student's apprenticeship comes to an end, that's it. At that moment she is brought before the rest of the College, and they finalize her oath to the order.

Mien: Certainly, most diviners tend toward scholarly appearances, maybe choosing a houndstooth suit jacket and tie, or a simple buttoned-down shirt with khaki pants. Others take their supposedly sacred roles as diviners more seriously (especially if they're "official" diviners for one or several Courts), wearing elaborate robes or other ceremonial garb to indicate their station. While the College in general has never formalized any raiment for its augurs, the order in a given freehold may have. The College in Miami may don plain white robes, as white as the Florida sun. The College of London may instead wear black robes with red braiding and elaborate stitching and needlework meant to indicate one's training or exploits.

A diviner's mien changes in a number of ways. The most obvious and disconcerting change is the suggestion of worms crawling beneath the skin — the flesh rises and moves as never-seen worms squirm and burrow. (Some say that as Wyrd increases to abnormally high levels, the worms *do* sometimes pop out of the skin — and then crawl away to the nearest crevice or cubbyhole.) The other change is the pair of eyeglasses that appear perched upon a diviner's nose. The eyeglasses may be in any shape, composed of any metal — round and silver, gold and square — but the common theme is that the lenses themselves are always cracked (though the diviner's sight remains excellent). As Wyrd grows, the cracks deepen and multiply.

Background: The intellectual and academic changelings find that the College of Worms is perfect for them. It allows them to expand and engage their minds, furthering their studies. Many diviners come from various intellectual pursuits — college professors, students, writers, artists or world travelers — because this allows them to continue doggedly pursuing their own theories and interests. The College is a haven for such types.

Of course, it's also a haven for conspiracy theorists, Glamour junkies and paranoid schizophrenics. The twisting strands of fate are insane enough all on their own, and sometimes the off-kilter or mad find that the College is just the place to "express" themselves. Some come to the

College and hide their weird habits or lunatic peccadilloes, fearing that if anybody found out about their wild theories or behaviors, they'd never make it past the apprenticeship. The reality is, the other diviners sometimes recognize that mad or low-Clarity changelings are sometimes given over to *special* insights. Yes, someone must separate the true insights from fanatical conjecture, which is why most of the unhinged diviners are given "handlers" who shepherd them from afar. The College sometimes accepts such troubled Lost in the hope that it will help them further plumb the vagaries of fate. It gives the College something of a bad reputation, however, because for every three studious diviners, the order features one conspiracy nut or changeling who thinks the Hedge is talking to him. One bad apple spoils the sauce.

Obviously, most diviners tend toward Mental Traits being dominant. Mental Merits such as Eidetic Memory or Encyclopedic Knowledge are treasured, too. That's not to say that other Skills aren't useful. Some use Stealth to stay hidden and observe notable phenomena (or steal books, because most diviners love their books). Some might use Socialize, Streetwise or Survival to examine various patterns — those within nature, in the cities or in a crowd. The College features a disproportionate number of Wizened and Darklings, with the appropriate Contracts being equally prevalent.

Organization: Most diviners stay together, and remain as outside of Court politics as is possible. This isn't true for all. As noted, some end up as the Court diviners for one or several seasonal rulers, or instead work for one of the other noble orders in a "freelance" capacity. The majority within the College find solidarity amongst themselves. Every College tends to be a bit standoffish to other non-diviner changelings as kind of a defense mechanism (they assume everyone thinks they're crazy, and so they don't bother with them at all for fear of confronting such distrust and disdain). This is seen in varying degrees, however, particularly in the nature of the College's symposiums.

Every College holds symposiums. The more members they have, the more symposiums the order holds throughout the year. Generally, they try to have one a month. A symposium is a lecture given on a particular topic. The topics are often about fate and time or other esoteric subjects, but might instead simply be something that a speaker feels particularly passionate about, whether it's the rise and fall of local insect populations or obsessive ruminations about pop culture. Some symposiums are open to other changelings, and therein lies the barometer for just how trusting the College is. The more approachable a College is in a given freehold, the likelier it will be that symposiums are open to all changelings. (Truly open Colleges have guest speakers from outside the order; this is admittedly unusual.) The more closed-off and paranoid the College becomes, the more symposiums end up only for other diviners.

Outside of symposiums, one way that drives the College and the rest of the fae into contact (and sometimes conflict) is the ringing of the *tocsin* bell. The ringing of the bell is sometimes literal, but often as not it's simply a term for the College's "alarm." Whenever diviners come upon what they feel are destined pre-indicators of threat ("Three dead children with the same name were found across the city within minutes of one another! It's a sign!"), they warn the ruling Court. The Court is free to listen or reject them out of hand. Honestly, the warnings are wrong nine times out of 10 — but it's that 10th time that's a real killer. Some are happy to waste resources on those nine times that nothing manifests in the hopes of catching the one time it does. Others reject the College *tocsin* without even hearing their warnings (some even have standing policies to keep the diviners out of their way at all times).

Concepts: Asylum escapee, author of cult conspiracy novels, computer programmer, doctor of neuroscience, homicide detective, professor of British literature, sufferer of synesthesia.

Privileges

In affirming his pledge with the College, a neophyte diviner gains the following token.

The Diviner's Instrument (•••)

Every diviner within the College of Worms is expected to possess a divining tool suited only to her. She chooses the nature of the tool: a pouch of runes, a cup of pigeon bones, a hand-drawn Tarot deck, a scrying mirror made from an old Maybelline compact. Upon joining the order, the pledge to become a diviner connects this instrument to the strands of fate, if only with a few perfunctory threads, enough to grant the token a small and relatively safe measure of power (anything greater would wreak havoc upon the poor changeling who carried it). The token's power is passive. The changeling uses the device (tossing the bones, reading the cards or whatever mechanical action one normally performs to "use" the diving tool), and upon activation receives no insights at the time of use. The insight comes later. When about to make a roll, the player determines that the insight is finally revealed to the character and helps grant her feelings (be they instincts or an odd *déjà vu* sensation), which translate to bonuses on that roll. The character can take a number of dice equal to the character's Wyrd score and add them to that roll. However, this must be done within a number of hours equal to the changeling's Clarity score. If she goes beyond that time limit, she cannot access the hidden insight provided by her divining tools, for they are lost. The Diviner's Instrument is a fickle thing, much as fate itself, and can only be used once per game session.

Action: Instant

Drawback: All Perception rolls made during the time the "insight" is active (i.e., during a number of hours equal to the changeling's Clarity) suffer a –1 die penalty. The only exception to this is if the changeling chooses to make a Perception roll the recipient of the token's Wyrd bonus (at which point no penalty is given, and the full bonus is received). The reason for the Perception penalty is that, when considering fate, the changeling looks for fate's fickle fingerprints — often in the wrong place. She becomes easily distracted. When she's supposed to see a blue truck driving past, she may instead be looking skyward, examining the contrails left by an airliner.

Catch: If the changeling chooses to eschew the Glamour expenditure or Wyrd roll, or if a character uses the token who does not possess either, then the Diviner's Instrument confers a significant penalty in addition to its bonus. *After* the player chooses which roll gains the bonus his character gained by using the token, the Storyteller chooses another roll made later in the day to receive a *penalty* equal to the character's Wyrd score (maximum –5 dice). As noted, fate can be quite fickle, especially when it is not paid its proper due.

Rumors of the College

The following rumors regarding the College of Worms may find a character's ear:

• Some say that the diviners are not always so free-wheeling with dangerous information. Stories suggest that they have little caches of knowledge and artifacts, known by some as Treasuries, and others as Tombs.

• Word around the Court is that the diviners have, through their studies, uncovered old forbidden Contracts that changelings aren't meant to know. Some of the oldest augurs are said to possess knowledge of grim necromancies and fate-twisting secrets. Such knowledge is supposedly written down in a book known as the Bad Doctor's Codex.

• Fate, some suggest, drives the diviners mad. All of them end up crazy — so crazy, in fact, that once in a while one goes back to the True Fae and asks to be that Keeper's apprentice to learn the *true* secrets of fate and time.

Duchy of the Icebound Heart

I refuse to be a slave to love and a servant to grief. I prove this by breaking hearts and drinking the sorrow from within.

The heart is a fragile thing. Sometimes it seems to be *too* delicate, as if formed from brittle glass and frail twigs, pumping blood as thin as water. Humans certainly possess fragile hearts, but changelings do, too. Sometimes, a changeling's heart is even more fragile; time spent amidst the True Fae seems to have left cracks in many a changeling's already delicate heart, and too many are given over to their emotions, to the heady lusts and weepy loves they encounter at every turn.

That means one thing: the heart is a vulnerability. It can be used to lure someone this way or that, can be manipulated so that one will do anything to avoid having his heart broken again.

The Dukes and Duchesses of the Icebound Heart recognize this fact, having themselves been once-vulnerable, and they have sworn to never again be helpless in such a way. No longer will they be the puppets, instead becoming the puppet-masters.

Most of the changelings in the Duchy are potent manipulators, playing emotions like a master harpist. It gets them whatever they want, whenever they want it. Need a new car? Date the salesman, or better still, the guy who owns the dealership. Want to feel treasured for a night? Call an old lover, have a tryst under the promise of renewing that old fire and then kick him out the door. The Dukes and Duchesses even attempt to ply the heartstrings of other changelings, most of whom should know better (the Duchy does not operate in secret, after all). Knowing better doesn't stop the heart from wanting what it wants, though, does it? Too many changelings have given in to the manipulations of the Icebound Dukes and Duchesses, buying into false promises and offered desires far too often than what common sense should allow. The fae of the Duchy know: Love is power. So, too, lust. Learn to use them, and they become like keys able to open any door. Fail to use them, and you become the door to which others hold the key.

At the end of the day, the changelings of this order recognize that they have given themselves over to a callous double standard. They have stopped being the victims to monsters by, in a way, becoming monsters themselves. The changelings find that they're able to look past this unfortunate turnaround, convincing themselves that if *they* don't act the monsters, then someone else will. Perhaps this can eventually teach the poor heartbroken fools to steel themselves against such manipulation in the future, and that's almost like doing them a favor, isn't it?

Besides, these changelings believe you're one of two things in this world, the abuser or the abused. They've simply chosen the wiser path, or so they believe.

Titles: Icebound Duke (male), Icebound Duchess (female)

Prerequisites: Wyrd 2, Persuasion 2, Subterfuge 2, Mantle (Winter) 1

Joining: What the fae of the Duchy do is con artistry. Everything is a confidence game, with the fulcrum of every con being the emotions of another. Those who usually end up joining the ranks of the Duchy are often those who seem able to recognize the con and turn it around upon the Duke or Duchess who's running it. Particularly gifted changelings might even be able to orchestrate the game from the get-go, playing the victim while truly controlling the outcome of the con. It's not often that this *works*; the Lost of the Duchy have been at this game for a long time, and can often recognize the smell of deceit hanging in the air. That being said, they're also notoriously vain, which can lead one to be more than a little shortsighted. Those who remain unwilling to believe that they could ever again be victims soon end up as victims.

Regardless, that's the key to impressing the ranks of the Duchy. One must show that one's heart is sufficiently encased in an unbreakable carapace of ice. Turning the trick back around on the emotional tormentors is a *virtuoso* move, one worthy of the Duchy.

Oh, and a future Duke or Duchess must belong to the Winter Court. Those of the other Courts don't have a fair

comprehension of sorrow, and thus don't belong in the Duchy. That *does,* however, make them excellent victims, or so these changelings say. Worth mentioning is that the Icebound Dukes and Duchesses don't maintain a very positive relationship with the fae of the Spring Court. The Icebound changelings have, in a way, pilfered the Spring Court's attack on "desire" and are doing it in their own selfish way. A rivalry exists between the Court and the order.

Mien: The Icebound Dukes and Duchesses dress to impress. Each member of the order has an angle to play, and exterior appearance helps to reinforce that angle. One Duchess plays the "troubled waif" role, appearing in the dress of a humble, oft-abused urchin girl. A Duke might alternately play up the role of the sensitive loner (clothes off the racks at the Salvation Army, white iPod headphones dangling from the ears) or power-broker playboy (sharp-angled suits, polished shoes, engraved money clip). The changeling's outward exterior always helps to reinforce whatever persona that character uses to get her way.

The fae's mien changes, too. The normal trappings of the Winter Court are present, only moreso: breath of frost, icy skin, hoary eyes. Another change to one's mien is the addition of frozen tears that cling to the character's face. These tears are more symbolic than realistic, looking like frozen teardrops fastened to the cold skin of the character's cheek. As one's Wyrd increases, so do the number of tears. A Duke or Duchess with an abnormally high Wyrd score begins to have trouble at her task, because those tears seem to give off a palpable aura of sorrow. Those around them begin to feel overwhelmed by it — which, as it turns out, makes it difficult for them to ply their trade in broken hearts.

Background: Those who belong to the Duchy were usually once emotionally available — too available, really, for in most of them it meant being used, abused and discarded. These fae belong to the Winter Court for a reason. The grief they've suffered in this life both before and after being snatched away to Faerie is usually significant. Some suffered near-constant heartbreak, jumping from relationship to relationship, flitting through a cascading series of codependent lovers and cruel paramours. Others suffered more tangible tragedies: loved ones lost in accidents, injuries suffered by abusive parents, extreme anguish at the hands of the True Fae.

Membership in the Duchy allows these changelings to turn the tables on their own sorrow, refusing ever again to be sidelined by sadness. (The reality is not always so easy; some suggest that the changelings of the Duchy have only hidden their sadness in that icy heart, and by refusing it, it only grows. The frozen tears that come as part of the Icebound seeming represent the most obvious clue.)

Stat-wise, most Icebound Dukes and Duchesses have strong Social Attributes and Skills, though many didn't start out with Social being primary, having only developed such Skills through their inclusion in the Duchy. Many such changelings specialize in one or two key Social Skills, much as a weapons trainer might be uniquely skilled with a particular sword or pistol. A consummate "life of the party" Duke might possess

the Socialize Skill at high levels, while a Duchess who acts as a shadowy seductress might prefer strong Persuasion or Subterfuge scores.

Organization: The organization of the Duchy is informal; they travel and attend parties together, moving like a wolf pack through the flocks of unwitting sheep, but beyond that, they've very little specific organization. Two rules of note stand out, however.

The first is that the Icebound Dukes and Duchesses aren't supposed to work their cruel heartbreaking manipulations upon one another. It's not part of the oath to enter the order, however, but instead remains as a casually mentioned "rule." Of course, it utterly fails. The characters who enter the Duchy are now users, and have in the past generally been used; therefore, like a pit of sharks or a cage full of tigers, eventually someone's going to get bitten. They play their games with and against one another constantly; few, however, admit it. Nobody wants to admit that he's playing his fellow members, and no member wants to admit to being played. The practice is the elephant in the room that nobody talks about.

The second rule is the pronouncing of the Rake. Once a year, often on the first of January, the Duchy names its most successful libertine. The changeling who is seen as most successful at enslaving and breaking hearts is given the title until the next year. The members of the order don't choose the Rake — that is, somewhat incestuously, the task of *last year's* Rake. The qualities considered when naming a new Rake are purely up to the old Rake. Number of conquests? Adept at appropriate Contracts? Sharpest dresser? While this sometimes works out fairly, some Rakes simply bounce the title back and forth to one another, glad-handing each other with yearly rewards while the rest of the Duchy sits idly by. Few are willing to put up with such nonsense, however, and find ways to cruelly end the reign of the current Rake. The advantage of being Rake is, within most freeholds, a label that earns the changeling notable bragging rights (and perpetual dance partners at whatever affairs the Winter Court holds in a year). In some domains, though, the order actually forces its members to tithe Glamour up to the Rake via various imbalanced pledges (where the Rake does minimal effort, and the rest of the changelings do the lion's share of whatever effort the pledge requires).

Concepts: Bitter waif, broken-hearted housewife hag, consummate cheater, codependent cheater, everybody's favorite bartender, owner of dating service, pathological liar, poly-amorist puppet-master, serial rapist, shallow courtesan, vindictive courtier.

Privileges

Below is the privilege available to all members of the Duchy.

Heart Hooks

Heartbreak is a powerful thing. It can be fickle, too — a heart might be broken after a particularly potent one night stand in a neon-lit highway hotel, or might not be broken after a years-long marriage disintegrates. The Icebound Dukes and Duchesses strive to bring heartbreak to others, because it gives them power.

The changelings of this order gain +3 Social dice over those whose hearts the changelings truly broken. Only those who have truly been decimated by the relationship are truly weakened in such a way. While it seems odd that one would gain a benefit *after* the heartbreak, that's part of the privilege. It cores the heart, removes some intangible strength from the person and the changeling benefits by taking that strength unto herself. Its uses are many. She can call upon the heartbroken to perform simple tasks ("Get me a drink, will you?") or to use in elaborate schemes to make another jealous (and thus secure yet another broken heart). Make no mistake, it's cruel. While some changelings maintain a vast stable of old lovers, many simply discard them after a few uses. Discarded lovers don't always handle it so well. Some give in to massive sorrow, eventually killing themselves. Others fail to have productive relationships, resorting to stalking or other sorts of deviancy. The most ironic is when those abandoned playthings become just as the changelings who destroyed their hearts: callous, vindictive, abusive. The bonus remains until the victim loves again, as intensely as he once loved the Duke of the Icebound Heart.

Legends of the Duchy

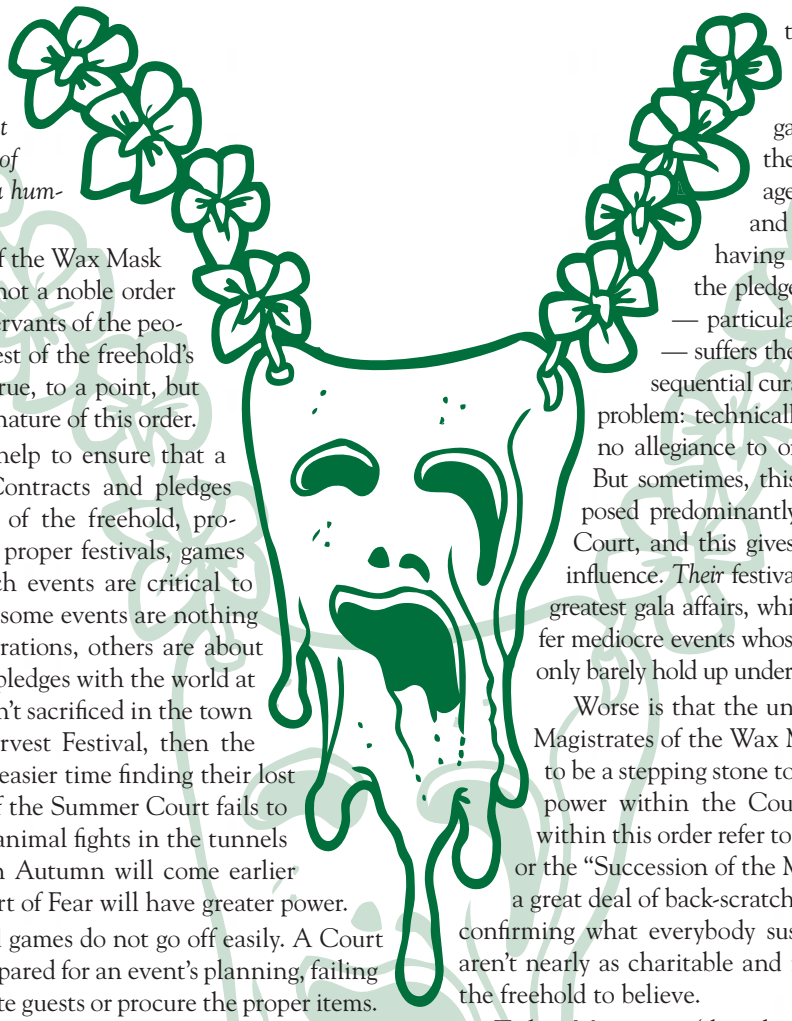
Changelings might hear of the following rumors regarding the Dukes and Duchesses of the Icebound Heart:

• Some claim to have seen the changelings of this order break off some of the frozen tears from their face and melt them into the drinks of their soon-to-be conquests. Nobody knows what this does, precisely, but it's assumed that it softens a victim's resolve against the emotional machinations of the changeling.

• Check the freezer of a Duke or Duchess of the Icebound Heart. Know what you'll find? Hearts. *Real* hearts, ripped from the chests of their subjugated lovers and encased in ice. (That's why the poor fools are so pliable after the fact; they no longer have the heart to resist.) The only way to really hurt a changeling of the Icebound Heart is to destroy these frozen organs, shattering them somehow.

• If you can make a Duke of the Icebound Heart fall in love with you, and then *you* break *his* heart, you gain power over all the poor souls that he hurt (emotionally) over the years. Of course, doesn't that make you as bad as him?

Magistrates of the Wax Mask



And so I give myself over to the will of the freehold and act on its behalf to ensure that the games and festivals of old are honored. I am a humble servant.

The Magistrates of the Wax Mask pretend that they are not a noble order at all, but are instead servants of the people acting in the interest of the freehold's greater good. This is true, to a point, but hardly depicts the full nature of this order.

The Magistrates help to ensure that a Court keeps up its Contracts and pledges with the changelings of the freehold, providing them with the proper festivals, games and other events. Such events are critical to many freeholds; while some events are nothing more than mere celebrations, others are about renewing treaties and pledges with the world at large. If three sows aren't sacrificed in the town square during the Harvest Festival, then the True Fae will have an easier time finding their lost changeling servants. If the Summer Court fails to hold its blood-soaked animal fights in the tunnels beneath the city, then Autumn will come earlier that year and the Court of Fear will have greater power.

Such festivals and games do not go off easily. A Court may be woefully unprepared for an event's planning, failing to invite the appropriate guests or procure the proper items. What if one uses the wrong knife to slit the bull's throat? Or fails to ensorcell the proper number of humans who will act as playthings for the night's affair? Failure to plan properly can result in broken pledges and a freehold in revolt.

Enter the Magistrates, who have a long legacy of providing the Courts with their aid in regard to such events. Some simply add their help when the Court asks for it. In other cases, the ruling Court may hand over the reins and let this order of changelings control the entire affair. It all seems aboveboard, and the Magistrates play at being humble. They claim to be acting in the best interest of the freehold, and are at its tender mercies.

The reality is often quite different. In many freeholds, this grants the Magistrates of the Wax Mask considerable power. First, they often end up in charge of the invitation list. A snub from the Magistrates is a clear message. Second, the Magistrates end up relied upon so heavily in regards to the proper festivals and games that this affords them a great deal of leverage. Insult the Magistrates, and one runs the risk of having them purposefully spoil the pledge, and thus the freehold — particularly the presiding Court — suffers the lion's share of the consequential curse. This leads to another problem: technically, the Magistrates have no allegiance to one Court over another. But sometimes, this order finds itself composed predominantly of members from one Court, and this gives that Court substantial influence. *Their* festivals suddenly become the greatest gala affairs, while the other Courts suffer mediocre events whose pledges and Contracts only barely hold up under scrutiny.

Worse is that the unspoken rule is that the Magistrates of the Wax Mask is lately perceived to be a stepping stone to other noble orders and power within the Court. (Some changelings within this order refer to this as *cursus honorum*, or the "Succession of the Magistrates.") It leads to a great deal of back-scratching and favor-currying, confirming what everybody suspects: the Magistrates aren't nearly as charitable and impartial as they'd like the freehold to believe.

Titles: Magistrate (though other internal titles are used; see "Organization" below)

Prerequisites: Wyrd 3

Joining: The official "party line" for becoming a Magistrate is that those who wish to join the order may join the order. No tests, no trials. One's interest in serving the freehold by performing a rather rigorous job (and a known time-sink) is enough to warrant entry.

It doesn't always work that way, however. The truth is that, in many freeholds, the Magistrates represent a rather exclusive club. Those within the order possess a great deal of potential power, even though it's not meant to be such a socially profitable endeavor. As noted, membership in this order is also perceived as a springboard to greater roles within the Courts or freehold, and the Magistrates know that "not just anybody" deserves access to that opportunity.

And so, they tend to freeze out potential Magistrates of whom the current Magistrates don't approve. They make life difficult for such a novitiate (before he makes the pledge to become a Magistrate), or ignore his requests entirely. They never act so obviously as to make threats, but threats often become implicit in their actions.

Of course, that's not to say a character can't join the Magistrates after they've written him off. He simply has to play them at their own game, and find some leverage against them. Either that, or meet with their approval in the first place.

Mien: Many Magistrates dress professionally and humbly. Some wear simple suits and dresses, others plain robes. Not all resist dressing flamboyantly — after all, they are the curators and creators of some of the greatest and most necessary events held by the freehold. The chance to enter the spotlight for a time is compelling to some, though other Magistrates often frown upon those that give into such brazen urges.

A Magistrate's mien changes in one substantial way: the slowly oozing wax mask that the changeling may don over his normal face. The mask is largely faceless and featureless, with dollops of fresh wax occasionally breaking open and running in rivulets down the length of the face. Sometimes, the mask takes on the color schemes of whatever Court is in charge at the time — green for Spring, reds and oranges for Summer and so forth. However, a telling sign is that a Magistrate belonging to one Court above others often finds that his wax mask reveals his allegiance: even if the Court of Fear is currently in power, if the Magistrate belongs to the Winter Court, his mask may show the icy blues and hoarfrost whites of his own people.

Background: Those who join the Magistrates of the Wax Mask are generally of two sorts. They're changelings who believe themselves bound to duty and so they join the order with the intent of performing work for the freehold, or they're the young Turks of the region who see the Magistrates for the opportunity the order presents. Too often, the first group often loses sight of its humble stance and ends up just like the second group — the potential to claim hidden leverage and secret authority is just too good to pass up for many such creatures.

Inevitably, those entering the order are proficient in either Mental or Social Skills or Attributes. Those who find Mental stats dominant tend to remain in the lower ranks of the group, finding themselves tasked time and again with the administrative duties (see "Quaestor," below). Those who become Magistrates and have Social stats as primary (or develop them over their time within the order) usually rise to greater things. This isn't universally true, of course. A particularly cunning Magistrate with little social grace may still find himself able to outwit the others (they rely on honeyed tongues, while he relies on a sharp mind), but it's less common than changelings would like to admit.

Organization: The Magistrates give themselves over to a rather strict three-tiered organization. Those on the lowest tier are known as *Quaestors*, and are responsible for what other Magistrates perceive as all the "boring" stuff: lists of names, inventories of items, finances, calendars. The Quaestors handle all administrative manners.

Above the Quaestor is the *Curule Aedile* (or simply "Aedile"). The Aediles are the ones who meet regularly with the Courts, acting as liaisons and planners. They're very hands-on, and represent the "public face" of the Magistrates.

Above them is a single changeling known as the *Magister Equitum* (literally "Master of the Horse," a position of great power in ancient Rome). Every Magistrate in a given freehold has a Magister Equitum, who acts as the guiding force behind the order. Usually, the Magister represents a powerful position, having the ear of whatever reigning figure controls the Court at any given time of the year. Some Magisters are even capable of usurping the expected power of the extant nobles, acting as a shadowy ruler from behind the scenes.

(One final note: Some Magistrates, particularly the Magister Equitum, take on bodyguards from outside their order. They refer to such unaffiliated bodyguards as "Lictors," and make it clear to these changelings that being a Lictor is a good way to curry favor and enter the Magistrates of the Wax Mask. It's not always true — brute force doesn't necessarily equate to political finesse, but lies are sometimes necessary to keep servants in line.)

Concepts: Bacchanalian party planner, bacchanalian beast, control freak administrator, number-cruncher, political advisor, Queen's right-hand advisor, savvy bureaucrat, social butterfly.

Privileges

The following token is available to all Magistrates of the Wax Mask.

Waxen Violet (••)

The violet — that small, purple flower with the sweet smell — is sometimes considered a symbol of one's humility and trustworthiness. That is, at least, how the Magistrates hope it will be perceived, and this token goes a good way toward ensuring that. This small flower, preserved in a thin coating of wax, is a token that one pins to his clothing (or skin if he's willing to suffer a pinch and a few beads of blood). When activated, the Violet gives off a pleasing aroma that seems to linger around the Magistrate. Those who are within 50 yards must succeed on a Resolve + Composure roll, and must achieve successes that equal or surpass the Magistrate's Wyrd score. Failure to do so indicates that the Magistrate appears — as the flower suggests — humble, and ultimately trustworthy. He gains +3 Social dice against those affected. The effects of this token last for the remainder of the scene.

Action: Reflexive

Drawback: The Violet has its effect on the changeling who uses it, as well. Except for him, the effect is somewhat soporific. The lingering aroma has a sleep-inducing effect that, while thankfully delayed, is still quite potent when it finally strikes. The changeling has two remaining hours left awake after using the Waxen Violet. If he does not find a place to sleep before that time, he will collapse into slumber unless he spends a Willpower point. That Willpower point only earns him a single turn, however (though several points can be spent to grant several turns). Once asleep, the character sleeps for eight hours straight. If at any point he's forced awake during this time, he suffers a –2 dice penalty on all rolls until he is able to go to sleep and finish his eight hours.

Catch: In addition to the Drawback, a mortal or other character using this token without the requisite Glamour expenditure or Wyrd roll suffers one lethal wound upon its use. The Violet literally numbs the flesh beneath where it rests and "drinks" a wound level (its petals turning deep reddish-purple in the process). This wound always leaves a small, puckered scar shaped like a flower.

Rumors of the Magistrates

What follows are a number of rumors one might hear about the Magistrates of the Wax Mask:

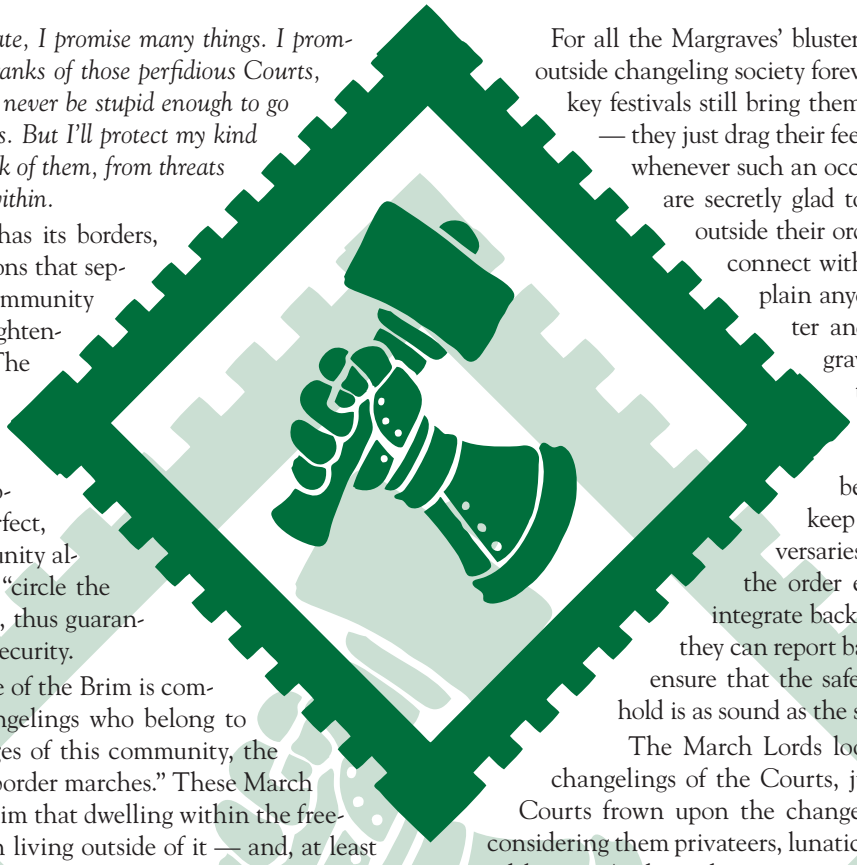
• Supposedly, the Magistrates hold their own clandestine festival once a year, called the Renewal of the Mockeries. Beforehand, they form effigies of all the changelings the Magistrates detest, which often includes many of those in power. The Magistrates stuff the effigies with hay and pig hearts, wrapping them in burlap and painting their faces in blood. The Magistrates destroy the effigies at the festival, whispering malicious invective against them as they tear them apart — these insults are said to act as very real curses that affect the changelings mocked by those ragged effigies. This festival is said to be part of the order's old oaths. Without it, the order would fall apart.

• The Magistrates keep a massive network of ensorcelled mortals hidden from the rest of the freehold. So far, nobody has been able to find out what purpose this network serves. Weirder still, each human has a number branded or tattooed upon his skin (somewhere hidden, such as upon the inner thigh or around the side of the torso).

• Ever peel away a Magistrate's oozing wax mask? Some say that one of the Ogres of the Court of Sorrow did that a few years back, and couldn't talk about what he saw underneath for weeks. And even then, he's never quite explained it. The face beneath has turned wretched, he said. The face of a true goblin. Bloodless and wrong.

Margravate of the Brim

To the Margravate, I promise many things. I promise to never join the ranks of those perfidious Courts, much as I promise to never be stupid enough to go swimming with sharks. But I'll protect my kind no matter what I think of them, from threats without and threats within.



Every freehold has its borders, unofficial demarcations that separate a changeling community from the vast and frightening world beyond. The Lost form freeholds in part because doing so protects them; while such protection is far from perfect, a tightly knit community allows changelings to "circle the wagons," so to speak, thus guaranteeing at least *some* security.

The Margravate of the Brim is composed of those changelings who belong to the areas at the edges of this community, the so-called Brim, or "border marches." These March Lords and Ladies claim that dwelling within the freehold is no safer than living outside of it — and, at least the enemies outside usually have the courtesy to stick the knife in your chest instead of your back.

The fae of the Brim make one thing clear: those of the Courts are not to be trusted, at least not without a solid pledge to keep one's hind end safe (and even then, the slippery eels always seem to have a couple of loopholes, just in case). To the Margraves, the nobles of the freehold are treacherous cowards on the best day, and fickle monsters on the worst. It doesn't matter to what Court one belongs, they're all bastards. And so, the Margraves have chosen to live on the periphery of changeling society, eschewing the tangled politics of the Courts and demanding that their own members remain soundly apolitical.

And yet, contrary to the March Lords' bitter disavowal of anything Court-related, they are sworn to protect the freehold — which, ironically, means they're sworn to protect those of the Courts, as well. The Margraves believe themselves to be the first and hopefully *last* line of defense against those outside the freehold who would dare to bring harm against the changeling community. A largely militaristic order, the March Lords train on whatever weapons they can scrounge together. They stockpile anything from shotguns to sharpened shovels, preparing for what they believe is an inevitable conflict, a coming bloodbath between the changelings and their Fae keepers.

For all the Margraves' bluster, they can't remain outside changeling society forever. Old pledges and key festivals still bring them back into the fold — they just drag their feet and loudly protest whenever such an occasion occurs. Some are secretly glad to mingle with Lost outside their order, desperate to reconnect with old friends or just plain anyone outside the bitter and often strict Margravate. Others accept the opportunity to mingle again with fae society because it helps them keep an eye on their "adversaries." In some areas, the order even sends spies to integrate back into the society, so they can report back to the Brim and ensure that the safety within the freehold is as sound as the safety without.

The March Lords look down upon the changelings of the Courts, just as those of the Courts frown upon the changelings of the Brim, considering them privateers, lunatics or simply ill-mannered beasts. And yet despite misgivings on both sides, the March Lords do what they must to protect the freehold from threats both real and imagined.

Titles: Margrave, March Lord (male), Margravine, March Lady (female)

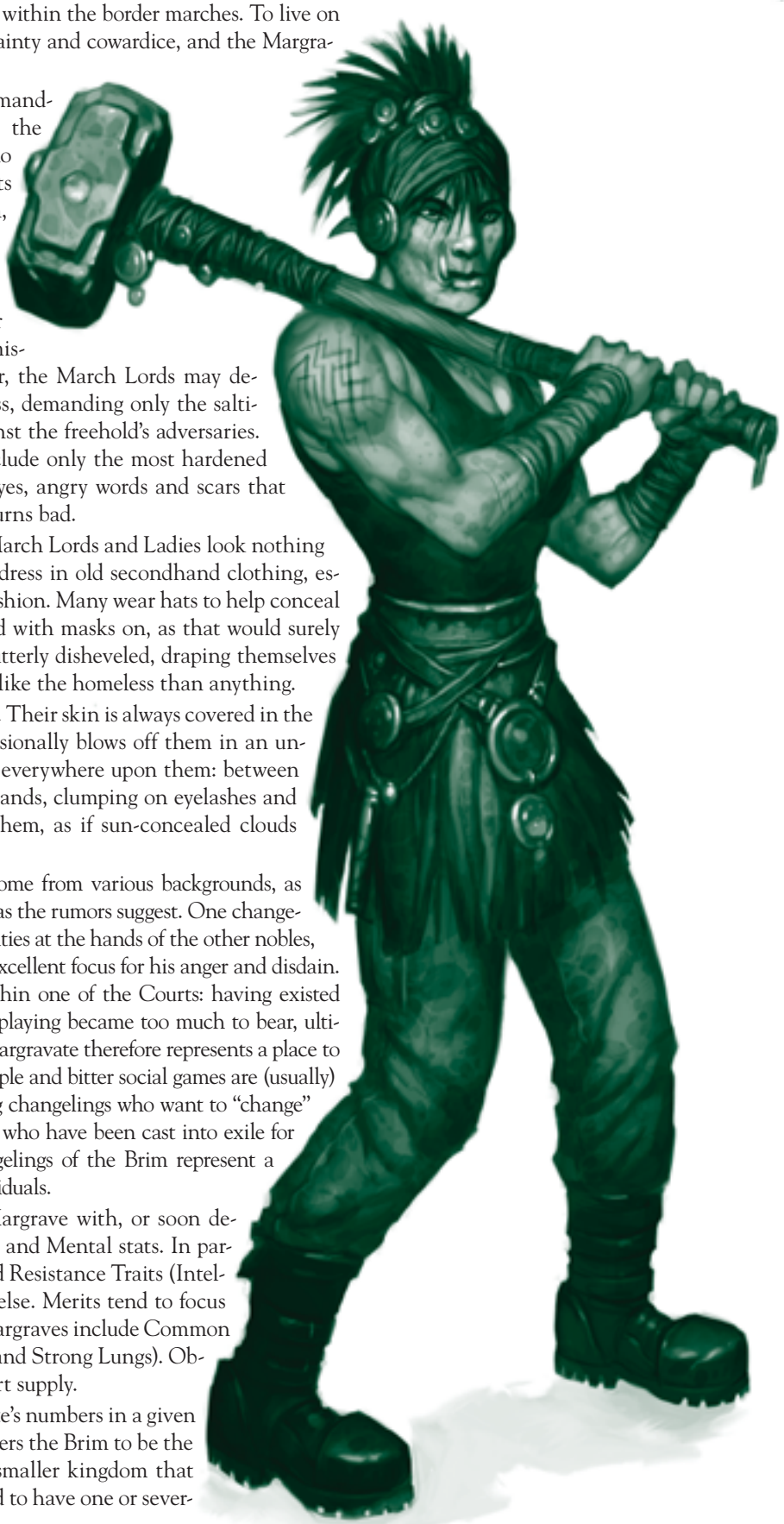
Prerequisites: Wyrd 2, Clarity 5 or higher

Joining: One cannot belong to the Courts and simultaneously belong to the Margravate of the Brim. Some within this order merely distrust the Courts, others loathe the Courts outright — but rarely does a Margrave have a positive word to share about the so-called nobles. Therefore, connection to the Courts is the uttermost demerit. Even those who no longer belong find themselves distrusted for years, regardless of how often they've proven their worth to the March Lords.

The other base requirement is that one must live just outside the freehold. The Margraves have their own maps that show the often-improvised boundaries between the freehold and the outer world. Between the two waits the border marches, a kind of buffer zone between that which belongs to changeling society and that which does not. The border marches might be a street, a whole block or a broken procession of fallow fields and tracts of old forest. The changelings

who belong to this order must dwell within the border marches. To live on either side is to declare one's uncertainty and cowardice, and the Margravate cares little for either.

Some March Lords are more demanding than others. In one freehold, the Margravate might take any Lost who have outwardly rejected the Courts and their noble vanities. To them, nothing else matters. Eschewing the Courts is proof enough, and everybody has some kind of skill they can bring to the table, whether it's hammering nails or writing missives. In another freehold, however, the March Lords may declare a prohibition against weakness, demanding only the saltiest, most stalwart fae to stand against the freehold's adversaries. These veteran outposts tend to include only the most hardened changelings — those with mean eyes, angry words and scars that itch and tingle when the weather turns bad.



Mien: For the most part, the March Lords and Ladies look nothing like Lords or Ladies. They tend to dress in old secondhand clothing, eschewing any interest in luxury or fashion. Many wear hats to help conceal their faces (without walking around with masks on, as that would surely spook the humans). A few appear utterly disheveled, draping themselves in the filthy rags and looking more like the homeless than anything.

Their miens only reinforce this. Their skin is always covered in the red, brown or ashen dust that occasionally blows off them in an unfelt wind. The grit and grime lurks everywhere upon them: between their teeth, ringing their callused hands, clumping on eyelashes and brows. Shadows, too, drift across them, as if sun-concealed clouds move swiftly overhead.

Background: The Margraves come from various backgrounds, as much a ragtag bunch of changelings as the rumors suggest. One changeling may have suffered merciless cruelties at the hands of the other nobles, and now uses the Margravate as an excellent focus for his anger and disdain. Another might have come from within one of the Courts: having existed as a noble, the politicking and gameplaying became too much to bear, ultimately weakening his Clarity. The Margravate therefore represents a place to escape all that, where politics are simple and bitter social games are (usually) shunned. Other Margraves are young changelings who want to "change" the dynamic, and some are older fae who have been cast into exile for real or perceived crimes. The changelings of the Brim represent a rather eclectic, ragtag bunch of individuals.

Most changelings enter the Margrave with, or soon develop, a strong reliance on Physical and Mental stats. In particular, they tend to favor Power and Resistance Traits (Intelligence, Strength) above anything else. Merits tend to focus similarly (standard Merits for the Margraves include Common Sense, Danger Sense, Strong Back and Strong Lungs). Obviously, Court Contracts are in short supply.

Organization: If the Margravate's numbers in a given freehold support it, the order considers the Brim to be the order's own lesser freehold, like a smaller kingdom that rings the larger. The Margraves tend to have one or sever-

al meeting places, known as "outposts." At the outposts, the changelings of the order gather together to discuss policy, compare tactics, tell war stories or drink themselves into a numb haze. They don't have festivals or dances (unless some old promise demands that they do so), as these hardened fae aren't much for social occasions.

In direct opposition to the Courts and their strangling monarchies, the Margravate adheres to a strict democracy with each member providing one vote. All salient issues and concerns are put before the entire order so that every March Lord and Lady can have a say and help forge the Margravate's direction.

The order only has a few positions unique to the entitlement, and these don't carry greater or lesser power so much as they demand the completion of particular tasks. The *Cartographer* keeps fresh the maps that detail the territory marked by the border marches, but also tends to keep relevant maps of the freehold and the surrounding environs, as well. (He also notes as much as he can about the locations of where other changelings may dwell and operate.) The *Doorman* keeps watch over any known gateways into the Hedge, at least those that lie within the Brim itself. The Doorman also is the one who enters the Hedge when necessary — while the other Margraves are in no way prohibited from doing so, the Doorman is expected to be particularly skilled in walking the roads and knowing the proper paths. The *Crow's Nest* is responsible for policing his own within the order and keeping a vigilant eye on potential threats rising from all sides. He also looks for portents that presage the coming of the True Fae.

Concepts: Angry dissenter, ex-noble from one of the Courts, mad exile from the freehold, paranoid defender, political activist, reluctant liaison, spy for the Courts, unpretentious leader, weird non-conformist union leader.

Privileges

Below is a privilege shared by all March Lords and March Ladies.

Safety of the Brim

The territory defined as the border marches or Brim differs for every freehold, but usually is composed of the land that surrounds the freehold proper (again, loosely defined, but the Margraves make a very concerted effort to map out the boundaries). This generally accounts for at least a few square miles of land.

When within the territory of the Brim, a Margravine gains a number of minor bonuses, for this is *her* territory, and she knows it better than any fancy Court-enslaved fool. When within the accepted territory of the border marches, the changeling gains the following: +1 to her Initiative modifier, +1 to any Perception rolls made (including the Wits + Composure rolls made to detect surprise attacks) and +1 to any Stealth rolls made (as she knows how best to use the land and its shadow to conceal her actions).

These effects end if she leaves the known territory — even stepping over the invisible "line" that marks the border between freehold and Brim, or Brim and what lies beyond, will cut short her bonuses. She gains no penalties while outside her territory from this effect, though the Storyteller may see fit to incur penalties for other reasons.

Rumors of the Margravate

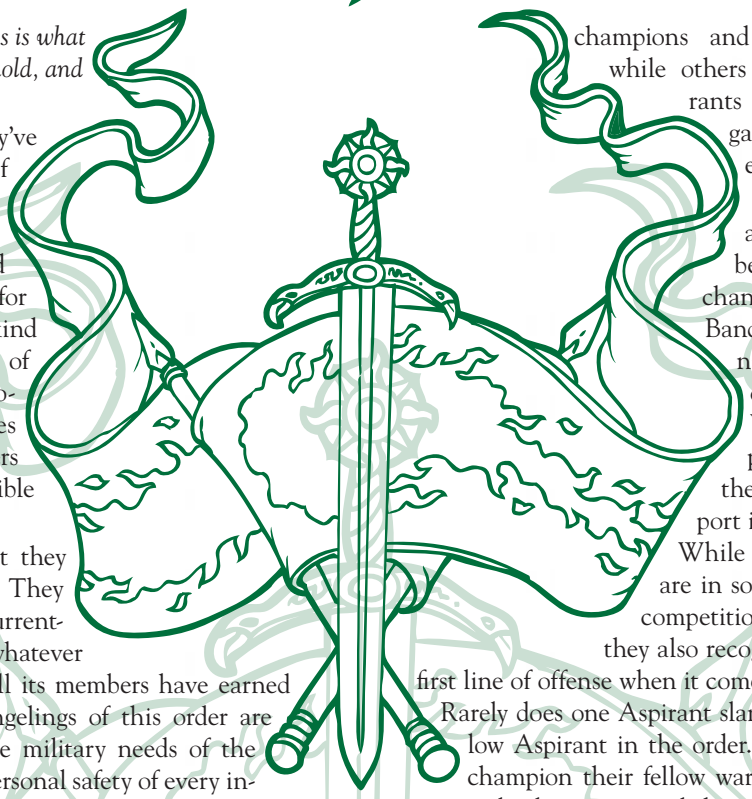
Changeling characters may hear the following rumors regarding the Margravate of the Brim:

• They're building an army. Everybody knows it. Some people hope that they're building an army to attack the Fae, but that's not right. No, the Margraves are building a militia to take over the Courts, to remove them and to install democracy. Some changelings think this sounds well and good, but others recognize the reality — in doing so, they may make themselves vulnerable to attack by the Fae. Nobody wants to be dragged back through the Hedge and down the trods. Nobody wants to go back to slavery. Except, obviously, the March Lords.

• Rumor has it that the Margravate has an assassin within the ranks, and has since its inception. It's said that once a March Lord assassin grows too old or feeble, he begins to train another to take over for him. They assassinate powerful figures from the Court — those who have grown *too* powerful, so the story goes.

• Every year, the Margraves adjust their maps slightly. The Brim grows by a few inches every year, part of some ceremony or festival. Problem is, it encroaches toward the freehold, not away from it. Some even whisper that the March Lords and Ladies believe that the Brim is a living thing, a place with its own mind. They worship it as one might worship old gods or the True Fae. They want it to grow. They want to feed it.

Sacred Band of the Golden Standard



You have my word. This is what I seek. My glory for the freehold, and my name in all the tales.

For as long as they've been around, the fae of the Sacred Band of the Golden Standard have been warrior-poets and glory-hounds, hungry for recognition by their own kind and all the changelings of the freehold. To have stories told about them makes them timeless — it enters their name into the invisible annals of history.

On the surface, what they do is protect the freehold. They serve whatever Court is currently in power, regardless of whatever Mantle or Court Goodwill its members have earned over the years. The changelings of this order are noble warriors serving the military needs of the reigning powers and the personal safety of every individual changeling within the freehold. It all sounds very dignified and righteous.

What these warriors do is noble, yes, but they don't do it for the sake of nobility. They do it for the fame and praise, for the vainglorious pleasure brought on by being the focus of tales and myths. The feats they perform are expected to be truly epic or legendary, and each Gilded Aspirant strives to outperform his last deed. Some rely on clever tricks: being a crack shot with two pistols, having a demeanor charming enough to convince some mirror-eyed monstrosity from the Hedge to turn tail and flee or making boastful gambles ("I can cut that child's shoelaces with a sweep of this fire ax") and attempting to make good on them. Others engage on massive quests to earn their favor: liberating a horror house of underage sex slaves from a neighborhood pedophile, hunting a famous serial killer (who happens also to be a Soulless changeling) or gathering together an army of his own warriors to hunt down the True Fae that's said to haunt that old stretch of swamp south of the city. But again, they don't do these things because they're *right* — while surely that's a consideration, what they're more interested in is being *praised* for their deeds. It's for this reason that some changelings see the members of this order as mighty champions and proud conquerors… while others believe Gilded Aspirants to be pompous braggarts and swollen-headed egomaniacs.

It's ultimately all about the legends, and being in them. The changelings of the Sacred Band love to hear their own names and stories recounted back to them. What's fascinating and perhaps contrary is how the order works to support its own word-of-mouth. While certainly the warriors are in some ways in a constant competition with one another, they also recognize that they are the first line of offense when it comes to giving good press. Rarely does one Aspirant slander the name of a fellow Aspirant in the order. Most do their best to champion their fellow warriors' exploits (at least until it begins to steal their own thunder, at which point any such advocacy ends rather suddenly).

An Aspirant is not immune to corruption, either. While many wouldn't dare besmirch their own honor, others would do it gladly — as long as they don't get caught. Some lie, inventing evidence to support false claims of heroism. Others have been caught orchestrating their own feats, such as cutting a dark deal with a Fae, thus allowing the warrior to "defeat" the Other and earn the praise, even though the defeat was little more than a well-played sham. A rare few turn to outright barbarism, realizing that if they can't earn a place in the stories as heroes, then perhaps they can earn it as monsters, instead. Certainly their desperation for glory is sometimes all-consuming; those who go too long without a "win" may find that they miss the fawning stares and whispered awe, and will do anything to reclaim it.

Titles: Gilded Aspirant (also, within the order they sometimes refer to themselves as "Standard Bearers")

Prerequisites: Wyrd 2, Presence 3

Joining: A changeling joins the Sacred Band of the Golden Standard in one of two ways. The first way is that he does something worthy of talk and awe among the other fae. Anything that gets the grapevine talking

— saving an infant, delving deep into the Hedge, executing his fetch in a bloody rooftop duel — thus draws the attention of other Gilded Aspirants. This order of legend-hungry warriors doesn't see this changeling as competition, but as *kin*. He belongs with them, for he is beyond capable, clearly worth the words spoken about him. In this case, the fae of the Sacred Band are the ones who extend the invite… and they fully expect all changelings to *want* to belong to their order. When a fae turns down the invitation to join such a "gilded legacy," be a part of the so-called Golden Standard, it's an insult of the highest order. Some Aspirants let such a slight slide, but many engage in bitter reprisals, spreading slander (or digging up nasty truths and spreading them, instead) and ensuring that the changeling won't be a part of any lasting legends. The Aspirants hate it when other changelings outside the order gain glory, and do what they must to stop that from happening.

The second way a changeling joins the ranks of the Sacred Band is by pleading to be a part of the order — and most Gilded Aspirants really do demand that a changeling begs. If they find that such entreaties are humble enough and appropriately self-deprecating, they ask the changeling to go out into the world and impress them. Some make this as ambiguous as possible, setting no single challenge beyond that vague charge. Others ask for a specific task to be performed: defeat a beast from the Hedge, steal an earring from a known loyalist or challenge another fae's fetch to a duel and win. Most are honorable enough about this, and completing the task as asked is usually enough to warrant entrance into the order. A few Aspirants play a changeling's eagerness or sycophancy, continuing to demand new tasks (usually ones that serve the Aspirant's own selfish interests), making the puppet dance while the strings are still connected.

It's worth mentioning that, out of the two ways to join, changelings of the first type are generally better regarded within the order than fae of the second. Those who begged to join must work to remove the reputation of being toadies and brown-nosers, even though that's what the order demanded of them to join in the first place.

Mien: Changelings of the Sacred Band like to appear impressive. They wear whatever clothes will earn them attention. They train to physical perfection — or, at least, groom themselves to grant that illusion. Even those Darklings or Wizened who join the ranks take care of themselves as best they can, standing tall and wearing whatever finery will draw others' gazes. Local styles are not

lost on them — a cadre of urban Aspirants might wear the newest sneakers, white suits and gold or platinum medallions. Those with a more medieval predilection might wear a breastplate burnished to mirrored bronze. Many, too, present their weapons of choice in an almost fetishistic manner. It is unsurprising to see an Aspirant with an expensive rosewood-handled dagger (inscribed with poetry or symbols of glory such as crowns, scepters or heraldry) or a gleaming nickel-plated six-shooter used by some famous Wild West showman. Their weapons are often nearly as impressive as they are, as much symbols as tools of war.

An Aspirant's seeming reflects some of his gilded glory, as well. Blemishes and scars fade away (unless they were a part of his seeming before). Teeth grow whiter, and the color or cast of his eyes deepens to a lustrous hue. The changeling's head or body also becomes wreathed in a halo of colored light — often a warm color such as saffron, crimson or the blaze of a righteous fire. Some, though, find that other colors frame them — auras of holy white, flashes of sky blue or the glinting nimbus of sun-splashed steel. An Aspirant with a particularly high Wyrd finds that he has an easier time impressing people, as they can almost sense the aura of a champion as he enters the room. This has a downside. Those of the Sacred Band who possess higher-than-normal Wyrd rarely go unnoticed, no matter when they might want to.

Background: Those within the order were usually of some notoriety in the freehold. Be it a Queen's Knight who saved her life from an assassination attempt or a deposed King undone by a nefarious pledge gone wrong, many of the Gilded Aspirants were known among the fae before they joined this order. Of course, the order also features those younger (or just plain untested) fae without a heroic or otherwise distinguished past preceding them. Some of them are bright-faced eager things, ready to "do good," but just as many were poor nobodies desperate to stand just once in the limelight and feel the fame that washes over the other knights and warriors.

Changelings within the Sacred Band obviously rely first and foremost on their Physical Traits, Strength and Dexterity in particular, but Social Attributes come in a close second (especially Presence). The noble order generally recommends that its members become particularly proficient at one thing — whether it's an unerring shot with a rifle, the ability to sneak into an enemy's territory unseen or the talent to rally armies of street thugs and vagrants behind him. This translates to a few particularly high Skill scores, which might mean that other Skills are left in the dust. (Some don't rely on Skills to earn them notoriety, though. Consider an Aspirant with an unusually high Defense score who "never seems to be where his enemy thinks," or a warrior whose weighty Health stat keeps him alive in even the must punishing of fights.) Those of the Golden Standard prefer to be known for one particular talent, and their stats tend to reflect this over-specialization. (Many also possess either the Fame, Inspiring or Striking Looks Merits.)

Organization: The fae of the Sacred Band stick together. Some form motleys, others simply make time for one another, but they generally don't act in direct competition with one another. As a network of grandstanders and glory-hounds, they lift one another up instead of tearing each other down, thus making the order its own public relations machine. This is why the Aspirants generally specialize in different things, thus helping to ensure that they aren't crossing paths too often with their exploits. If they do cross paths too often, the other warriors may step in and adjudicate, perhaps demanding that one of the two (usually the younger) finds a *different* talent or specialty with which to impress the masses. They also stand up for one another should anyone dare to disparage their legacy. Insult one Aspirant, and you've insulted the very nature of the Golden Standard — you've just called them *all* out. The wrath of these warriors is often humiliating on a public scale (some consider them bullies for this reason). The Gilded Aspirants bring their wrath down upon such offenders in as publicly humiliating a manner as possible — embarrassing them in front of their ruler is ideal, springing upon them whatever scandal or dirty secret could have the most deleterious social effect.

Once annually, usually toward the end of the calendar year, the fae of the Golden Standard gather at a "round table" affair to determine what kinds of epic exploits and minor feats they can perform either together or as individuals to earn glory for themselves. Does a corrupt Queen need to be toppled from her lofty throne? Is there a human gang or cult who has been causing trouble for other changelings and could use to be put into the ground with a show of the Aspirants' valiance? They come together to determine what actions will earn them the most respect and awe from their peers, and then they work on plans to milk the greatest drama from such events. These "round tables" are closed affairs, and performed wholly in secret. If the other changelings knew to what degree these supposed champions manipulated (or outright invented) their own success, the others would be displeased.

Worth noting is how the Aspirants take on epithets appropriate to their individual abilities and deeds. Generally, as one performs greater feats or illustrates his grandiose skills, one takes on new epithets that build upon the old epithets. One Gilded Aspirant might be "Bloody John of the Unerring Arrow" if he's an excellent shot with his compound bow and razor-sharp arrows. As he performs greater feats and builds a larger legacy for himself, his epithet lengthens. Killing his fetch and later freeing a changeling from the clutches of a True Fae might earn him a new, extended name: "Bloody John of the Unerring Arrow, Slayer of the Other and Liberator of Slaves." What other change-

lings don't necessarily know is that a Aspirant chooses his own epithets, with the approval of his fellow warriors.

Concepts: Arrogant jock, bogatyr, decorated police officer, *El Gran Luchadore*, ex-firefighter, famous stripper, heroic soldier, martial arts teacher, pompous pretty boy, renowned stripper ("dancer"), rodeo king.

Privileges

A changeling gains the blessing below upon joining the Sacred Band of the Golden Standard.

The Strength of One's Presence

The Gilded Aspirants generally represent a powerful physical presence — strong, tough, quick. This makes them impressive to most, and allows them greater social leeway than others may possess.

Once per scene, an Aspirant can spend a point of Glamour to add her highest Physical Attribute (whether Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) to any Presence roll she makes. This doesn't work, however, against those who have more cumulative Physical Attribute dots than the warrior herself possesses. For instance, if a target has Strength 3, Dexterity 3 and Stamina 3, that counts as nine Attribute dots total. If the Aspirant has only eight Attribute dots total (Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2), then this ability cannot be used on any Presence rolls invoked to affect that target. The only exception to this is if the Presence roll is meant to affect a crowd; then this fails to be a concern.

Rumors of the Sacred Band

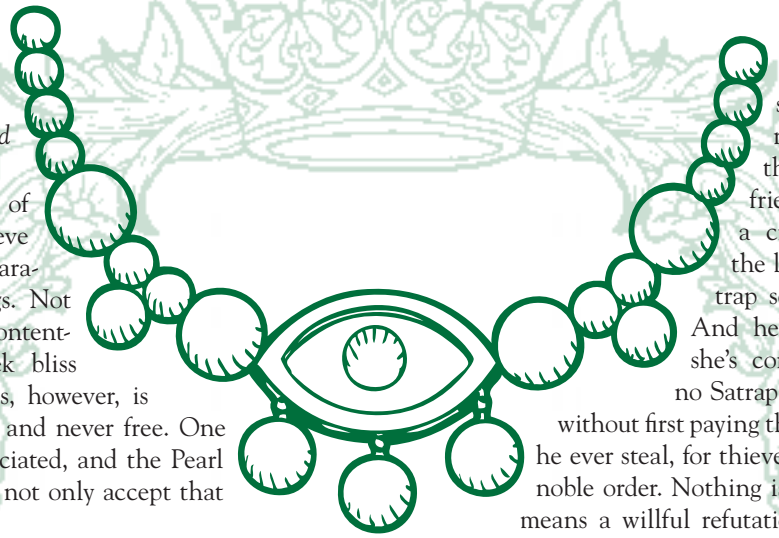
These are rumors that characters may hear about the changelings of the Golden Standard:

• It's all one big conspiracy. Everybody knows it. The Aspirants have orchestrated a grand deception that places them as the heroes of the freehold, when in reality it's just another illusion fueled by the lies that are so common to the fae. But if you dig too deep in uncovering this conspiracy, they'll put you six feet under.

• They really *do* earn a kind of immortality from living inside legends. Truly old and renowned warriors develop a counterpart in the Hedge that looks just like them, built from the raw stuff of Glamour and the Thorns of that strange place. What's created is kind of an anti-fetch, a twin born of that world, not this one, and meant to live as a mad legend in the tangled weave of the Hedge. (Of course, what happens when that anti-fetch decides it wants to come into *this* world?)

• Every time a changeling of the Sacred Band hears his name, it's like a prayer to him, venerating the changeling as an idol. What the Aspirant doesn't know is, supposedly every time this happens, his fetch feels it, too. Some even say that the fetch gains just a little bit of power whenever its Aspirant counterpart is talked about in such a way.

Satrapy of Pearls



I vow to never turn down an offer to buy, barter or sell. Even happiness can be bought and sold, including my own.

The Pearl Satraps of the Spring Court believe that their happiness is paramount above all things. Not satisfied with mere contentment, the Satraps seek bliss whenever possible. Bliss, however, is rarely easy to come by, and never free. One always finds a cost associated, and the Pearl Satraps have chosen to not only accept that cost, but embrace it.

All things are up for purchase, sale or trade. That is the single overriding principle of the Satrapy of Pearls. But it's not just about cars, real estate, old books or new technology. They embrace such material wealth, absolutely. The Satraps are glad to possess and enjoy all the toys the world has to offer — and they are equally glad to offer those toys in exchange for other things. Money and luxury are the feathers in every Satrap's cap. But that's all wealth is: trifling feathers, mere ornamentation. The Satrapy's interest goes far deeper.

And that cuts to the heart of the matter: *everything* is for sale, not just objects and luxuries. Sex, love, hate, betrayal, sorrow… all lie waiting on the auction block, but only the Pearl Satraps believe themselves wise enough to see it and take advantage of it. Commerce extends beyond selling land or buying somebody's horse. A pretty girl's heart is for sale, always, but it takes more than money to get it (usually, at least). And every girl is different, her heart demanding a different price from different suitors. One requires a ready kindness, another asks for casual abuse. Her tears, too, are for up sale for those who know the costs. Her tears, scars, memories, desires — all available to those willing to see the value and pay the price. They can be bottled. They can be sold.

And so, this is what the Pearl Satraps do. On one hand, they please themselves above all others. They go out in the world and what they see, they want, and what they want, they purchase. It's a mad game to serve their vanity, but what else does one have if one is without the joy of conceit? One Satrap sees a silver locket around a woman's neck, and that locket holds the picture of her dearly departed husband. Oh, but the Satrap wants it, and the woman assures him that she'll never give it up. But she will. Maybe money will do the trick (people love money more than they'd care to admit, the Satraps say). If not that, then something else. The return of a lost child? A threat against her dear friend? Revenge against a cruel boss? She'll give the locket up when the Satrap sounds the right price. And he'll take it only when she's conceded to that price; no Satrap will accept something without first paying the proper cost. Nor will he ever steal, for thievery is anathema to this noble order. Nothing is free. To act as if it is means a willful refutation of those principles the Satrapy hold dear.

It's not just about one's own happiness, though. Many Pearl Satraps place themselves as procurators for others, be they changelings, mortals or any of the odd strangers that skulk around the edges of the freehold. Everybody knows that if you need something bad enough, the Satrapy of Pearls can get it for you. A draught of a child's blood? The heel from the left shoe of the Winter Court Queen? A simple apology whispered in one's ear beneath the last full moon of Autumn? Of course. What's desired can be purchased, the Satraps assure.

Titles: Satrap, Pearl Satrap

Prerequisites: Mantle (Spring) 2, Persuasion 2, Wyrd 3

Joining: One must belong to the Spring Court to join the Satrapy of Pearls. The noble order considers the other Courts to have missed the point, thus eschewing the potential of life and the magic that accompanies it. Life is meant to be enjoyed, and if one cannot understand that most basic of concepts, then one does not deserve membership of such noble standing.

One must still prove oneself worthy of the Satrapy of Pearls, however. The proof demanded is simple enough to understand, but often difficult to procure. One must first gain audience with a Pearl Satrap, which isn't difficult as most are glad for the conversation (and the possibility of commerce). In asking for acceptance into the Satrapy, one only needs the say-so from a single other Satrap. In obtaining that say-so, however, the changeling must accept a challenge of commerce as determined by the Satrap. The Satrap will demand that the changeling acquire something from someone: a love letter, a favorite brooch, an embarrassing memory, whatever. In obtaining this, the changeling cannot steal or inveigle it freely. It must be acquired by finding

a price and paying that price — which is what the Satraps do every day. If the changeling is incapable of playing that game and comprehending the give-and-take of universal commerce, then she doesn't belong among the Pearl Satraps.

Mien: Pearl Satraps dress well as an emblem to project their luxury. The Satrapy has no shared standard for style, and so one changeling might prefer the modern trappings of *haute couture*, while another might traipse about in a lavish (even gaudy) silken robe once worn by some ancient Persian governess. Ostentatious displays, while rarely tasteful, work to affirm a Satrap's commitment to wealth of some kind.

A Satrap's mien shifts slightly, too. Mostly, it simply reflects impeccable grooming: not a hair out of place, perfect nails, heavenly skin. The other change to a Satrap's mien happens to his eyes: they become pearlescent, as if they are not eyes at all but perfect pearls thrust into the sockets. It's difficult to tell when a Satrap is looking at you, as his pupils are lost in a sea of opaline white. As a Satrap's Wyrd increases, however, the mortal world begins to feel it. Those with Greed as a Vice have trouble resisting their own avarice, overtaken by a palpable hunger as the Satrap passes by. Mortals may believe that the changeling suffers from some kind of cataract, as well, seeing past the human guise and peering into those unnerving eyes.

Background: It's easy to assume that those who join the Satrapy of Pearls were always narcissistic power-mongers believing themselves to be the cream that floats so easily to the top. Certainly this is true for some, but not for the bulk of the order. No, most Pearl Satraps have had to claw their way up from the bottom, and that's how the Satrapy prefers it. Those who have been poor, destitute or otherwise outcast are the ones who know the true hunger necessary to wear the seeming of the Satraps. And, by proxy, those who know the hunger can therefore experience the true joy of feeding that hunger. It's not just about searching out the mad *joie de vivre* that comes with the purchase of 10 favors from nine women or about the sale of one old man's lifelong dreams, but it's about experiencing it wholly. It's about *appreciating* it.

Some Satraps even seek out those who lurk at the bottom of the food chain and offer a casual reminder that it merely takes the will to pull oneself out of the gutter and climb the ladder that leads to the stars. They don't offer any other help beyond those few words, because a future Satrap must claw his own way up from the underbelly.

Worth noting, too, is that not all Satraps end *up* wealthy. Yes, most do, as it's their bread and

butter (and a symbol of status within the order). But a Satrap can just as easily be a filthy beggar in a back alley, gleefully offering his strange services for a handful of coins or a curious bauble. More important than the status of wealth is evidence of one's conquests in this world of makeshift commerce. Few Satraps care to live without luxury, though, and a truly destitute member of this order is quite rare. (Therefore, most possess Resources 2 at the *bare* minimum.)

Obviously, what the Satraps do requires them to have a strong reliance on their Social Traits, with Presence and Manipulation usually being higher than average. Any Social Skill, with the exception of Animal Ken for the most part, requires attention; the Satraps can use any of these Skills to work out the parameters of a trade or purchase.

Organization: The Satrapy cares little for formal organization. Its members can operate alone or together, it matters little. Provided they uphold the oath given to the other Pearl Satraps, then any sense of unity is thrown to the wind.

Two exceptions to this *laissez-faire* attitude exist, both of which are events held annually by the Satrapy. Each event bookends the season of Spring. Within the first week of the season, the Pearl Satraps hold what's formally known as the Opal Auction of the Springtide Pearl, but most know it simply as, "The Auction." Every Satrap is expected to bring one or several treasures to the table and bid them off at a gala affair (catered to every strange taste, serviced by ensorcelled mortals). The Auction represents a time to show off, as well as a time to demonstrate the Satrapy's considerable skills at obtaining things people might want. It often leaves the changelings of the freehold talking for weeks. How did that Satrap secure a single night's worth of boot-polishing and floor-scrubbing from the Winter Court's second-in-command? Just what kind of creature waited within that blood-colored egg, twitching as it did on the silver platter? How *does* one keep grief in an oaken puzzle box?

The second event is reserved only for the Satraps themselves. At the end of the season, the Pearl Satraps come together for a kind of brag session and show-and-tell, talking about all their successes and failures. Every Satrapy does it differently. One might rent a yacht and sit upon its deck, breathing in the smoldering narcotic fumes of the seeds of strange fruits brought from the Hedge. Others might relax in club chairs in an air-conditioned room or gather in some poor human's penthouse suite (with the mortal bound up and made to witness the affair, his mind reeling with what he sees and hears).

After these events, the Pearl Satraps might go the rest of the year without even talking to one another, though certainly there exists an informal network of back-scratching and info-giving. Remember, though, that each Pearl Satrap represents friendly competition for every *other* Pearl Satrap. He who has the most toys, relatively speaking, wins.

Concepts: Acquisitions attorney, eccentric antiquarian, gleeful mammonite, high-price prostitute, Iago, procurer of pledges, snake-oil salesman, spider in the center of a web.

Privileges

What follows is the blessing available to all changelings of the Satrapy.

Avaricious Finesse

Performing the task necessary to join the ranks of the Satrapy earns the changeling two rewards (as joining the Satrapy is just another transaction with something purchased and something paid). The first and most obvious reward is entry into the Satrapy. The second reward is something to be learned. One of the Satraps will impart a bit of wisdom to a new member of the order, passing along a handful of the secrets she's learned over her time within the Satrapy.

Therefore, upon joining, a Satrap may take a new Social Skill Specialty. The only catch is that this Specialty must be possessed by one of the other local Satraps (for the character must be taught this Skill focus by another within the order.

Rumors of the Satrapy

During a story, changelings may uncover the following rumors regarding the Satrapy of Pearls:

• Somehow, the Satraps always have a small item from every Court's King or Queen except those of the Spring Court. The item is usually small — a single earring, a lucky coin, a knob from one of their dressers — but rumor has it that this small item gives the Satrap major power over the ruler. The Satraps must forge tokens from these items.

• Every Satrap has a secret treasure trove somewhere in the city, usually just outside the freehold's accepted borders. The boxes are usually fire-safe and locked with three different locks (usually padlocks). The Satrap buries the treasure trove or hides it. Each box is supposed to contain all manner of wonders and horrors. A Fairest from the next city over said she found a haunted money clip, a bullet in a jar tagged with a label that read 'magic' and a necklace made of seven severed fingers. After discovering it, she went missing three days later.

• The Satraps know Contracts that nobody else knows, though stories suggest they made terrible bargains to get them. They know some every old and very strange Goblin Contracts, as well. Remember that the Satraps have their price. They'll teach them, but the cost will be steep.

The Scarecrow Ministry

I become the ghost in the attic, the rats in the walls, the shadow in the trees. I remind them all that they can't be scared enough. Fear is my weapon. Better than any sword or rifle. Fear is my ally. Better than any friend or lover.

Bloody Mary. The Man with the Hook Hand. Mothman. These urban legends are pervasive, bled into the cultural consciousness and given a kind of life all their own. Everybody knows the stories. Say her name three times in a mirror in the darkness, and Bloody Mary will come. Sleep at the base of Black Agnes's grave and she'll scare you to death at midnight. That hitchhiker out on old Highway 78 actually died years ago. Urban legends are about fear, and more importantly, about keeping people in line with that fear. Implicit in every legend is a lesson: don't talk to strangers, don't court danger, don't sneak away to have premarital sex and so on.

The Autumn Court changelings of the Scarecrow Ministry seek to use these urban legends to convey their own lessons. They become the monsters in the tales, continuing the purportedly fictional work of the Hook-Hand Man or the Jersey Devil or whatever legend works in a given area. Many Ministers change their names to those of the mythic monsters, embodying fear in a way that most within the Autumn Court are afraid to do.

How do they do this? Some Ministers go farther than others. Some are glad to use illusion and rumor to suit their needs. One changeling might spread tales about having seen the Mothman out by the old paper mill. There the Minister sets up an elaborate ruse with a black sheet on a dark cord that he can whip over an incoming car like the creature from Fortean myth. He pelts the car with bird bones and allows two weak-bulb flashlights to appear as eyes in the darkness. Other Ministers don't think that such artifice goes far enough. A demented Minister choosing to embody the Hook-Hand Man may go find a couple up at the old make-out bluff, and begin to play out the entire myth: scratch on the door with a hook, when the boyfriend does the boyfriend-thing to get out to see what the noise is, the fae kills him, hangs him from a tree above the car and lets his feet scrape *just enough* across the roof so the girl gets scared. For an exclamation point upon the horror tale, maybe the Minister leaves the bloody hook hanging from the driver's side door before fleeing into the night. It's a depraved act, and most Ministers hope they only have to do something like that once in a very long time. Of course, some start to like it, and make opportunities to continue their shift into true monsters of urban myth.

So, *why* do they do it? Humans, and even other changelings, aren't scared enough. The world is dangerous, what with the Gentry out there, snatching lost souls through the Hedge or setting traps for the unsuspecting. And it's not just the Others, either. All kinds of terrors exist out there in the night — bloodsucking fiends, Soulless changelings with hell on their minds, men who steal the skins of animals and become feral things hungry for raw meat. The Ministers work to scare people *away* from such evil. If they know where a gateway into the Hedge lurks, one or several will focus their attentions on that area, keeping the people there scared enough so they don't go exploring. If the Ministry uncovers an old subway station that acts as home to a nest of monsters lives, or an old house where the rats in the walls sometimes swarm and steal the neighborhood children, then the Ministers endeavor to make sure people are properly scared of those places and monsters. See, the Ministers know that evil is insidious. The old legends aren't true because monsters don't want you scared of them until it's too late. But the Ministers *do* want people scared. And they take on the guides of urban legends, Fortean sightings and hauntings to do so.

The Scarecrow Ministers face two prominent dangers. The first is a physical danger: keeping people away from the other horrors sometimes puts the Ministers in direct confrontation *with* those horrors. Monsters don't take kindly to poachers or those who'd make trouble for them. The Ministers know that part of the risk is making enemies out of such wretched beings, but that's part of the oath, isn't it?

The other danger is to their Clarity. They become fake monsters to keep people away from the real monsters — but, in doing so, it's very easy to lose perspective. Sometimes, to enforce the old legends and keep people properly afraid, real blood needs to be spilled and people get hurt. The Scarecrows walk a thin line that sometimes is hard to see — at what point do they become exactly what they work against?

The school kids whisper about the alley they once used as a shortcut when walking home from school, saying how if you go down that alley alone even during the day, hands will pull you into a doorway and you'll never be seen again. Parents tell

another story, about how they heard that someone's been putting AIDS-infected needles in the coin return slots at the old arcade down the block. Even the cops are getting in on it, whispering about how someone's been putting poison in the Halloween candy, or how every time they find a corpse in a house — even one that's died from natural causes — they find a broken mirror somewhere on the premises.

Scary stories and urban legends. Are they real? Most times, no. Sometimes, though, they're real — or real enough to matter, with seeds of truth buried within the tale. This noble order of the Autumn Court takes unto itself great pride in *making* such urban myths a reality. The Ministers give truth to those that already exist in the local consciousness, and they invent others out of whole cloth. Fear is their tool: blunt as a cudgel, sharp as a scalpel.

Why do they do it? First, fear is the way of the Autumn Court. It is what resonates most intimately with the Court's ideals and practices. The Scarecrow Ministry simply chooses to embody that by acting as monsters.

Ultimately, though, the reason they give most often for their actions is that humanity isn't scared *enough*. The world is a bad place, and one misstep into the wrong doorway or down the wrong hiking path might invoke a lifetime (or more) of misery. The Ministers believe they are doing humanity a profound service in keeping them scared, and thus, keeping them safe. Of course, the trick is, it requires the changelings of the Scarecrow Ministry to be proactive. The Ministers accept that humans are fools, just as likely to choose the dangerous road as the safe one — unless they're given sufficient evidence to travel the straight and narrow. Severed fingers, harrowing chases, bad dreams — whatever it takes to keep alive the idea that *Here There Be Monsters*.

How do they do it? Every motley has its ways, some crueler than others. One Minister might use his own capable storytelling to spread a few proper lies caged as true stories. ("Didn't you hear? The meat from their hamburgers contains roach eggs. They incubate in your salivary glands. A friend of my brother's lost part of his face that way. I wouldn't eat there.") Another might use illusion or dreamshaping to ensure the persistence of local myths (in a dream, the changeling might vilify one of the local entrances into the Hedge, thus helping to ensure the dreamer will go nowhere near that place). Others still act out the legends they hope to create, doing whatever grim and grisly act is necessary to keep a tale living long past its first telling (if a dark forest road is known for the misfortune it brings upon those who walk there, a Minister might wait there and, upon finding

a hitchhiker, capture him and slice his Achilles' tendon as a reminder of the myth's potency and truth).

Fear is the goal. Sustaining and creating the tales of fear is the task. The Ministers take it very seriously. Some changelings suggest the Ministers take it *too* seriously. (Worth noting is that the Ministers do not limit their fear-making to mortals alone. Sometimes, the changelings of the freehold must learn to be scared, too, and the Ministers often act as an invisible hand crafting such horror at a distance.)

Titles: Scarecrow Ministers (or just Scarecrows)

Prerequisites: Manipulation 3, Mantle (Autumn) 2, Wyrd 3

Joining: A changeling doesn't choose the Scarecrow Ministry. The Ministry chooses *her*. In fact, for the most part, the Ministry remains secret, known only to a select few within the Court of Fear. The Ministers, once a year (usually Halloween or the Day of the Dead), go through the ranks of the Autumn Court and see if any belong within their order. If they find a worthy candidate, they begin an odd campaign of fear and paranoia against that changeling, testing him at a distance to see how well he handles fear (for one cannot cause fright if one is easily frightened). Maybe they break open the lock on his front door and see how he reacts. Maybe they spread whispers about how that changeling's Keeper has been seen in the skies above the freehold. Over time, they gauge the changeling's reactions and try to break him down to see what he's made of. If they find him capable enough, they extend an invitation to join the order. Refusing the invitation is fine the first time, and fine the second time, for the order always extends the invite three times. The third rejection, however, earns the ire of the Scarecrows. They may do nothing except deny that changeling's friendship — or they may continue their campaign of fear against him.

It's not universally true that the Ministry chooses *all* of its Scarecrows. Certainly some have uncovered the existence of the order, which is impressive all on its own. Some who discover their presence have begged to be in the order, and have are been chosen for if their talents at manipulating fear and generating terror are up to par (or at least have the potential to be) — but that is the exception to the rule, not the rule itself.

Mien: Many Ministers dress at least in part like the legends they hope to embody. A Scarecrow who wishes to become a sorrowful or vengeful ghost may wear gauzy gray wisps of clothing, even painting her face with kohl or ash. A changeling hoping to appear as the Hook-Hand Man might wear a long coat and a face-concealing hat, with a rusty gaff hook concealed on his person, of course. Some eschew such melodrama and prefer instead to wear the nondescript rags of the homeless or simple blue-collar garb; whatever it takes to remain hidden until the time is right to drive home the horror.

Generally, a Scarecrow of the Ministry appears in the guise of the Autumn Court, revealing the bloody reds and pumpkin oranges so common to the season. A Minister does find that his miens changes upon joining this noble order, with various elements possibly appearing (and often without the character's choice) as part of her flesh. Most such changes are minor, and evocative of an actual scarecrow: black button eyes, flesh raised in some places with the texture of a burlap sack, various one or two limb joints marked by rope stitching, pits a few bristles of sharp hay and straw sticking out of sleeves and, pant legs. Upon joining, most only show one such element in their seeming. But as time goes on, with Wyrd increasing and Clarity dropping, other elements manifest into one's being. Particularly old or potent Ministers appear as iconic scarecrows with mean jack-o'-lantern grins painted onto their sack-flesh faces, all shadowed beneath the ratty brims of farmer's old hats. Most only have one such element added to their seeming, though these can increase with Wyrd gain. Higher-Wyrd changelings sometimes begin to adapt their seeming to whatever monstrosity they've chosen to mimic (imagine a changeling whose hand literally becomes a hook or whose eyes glow the flickering yellows and reds of the Mothman). If for some reason they don't mimic one legend over another, they may simply appear as a more iconic version of a terrible scarecrow, with jack-o'-lantern grins and skin formed of rough-hewn bags. Mortals tend to feel weak and frightened around any Minister with higher-than-normal Wyrd scores, often needing success on a Resolve + Composure roll to even remain in the character's presence.

Background: Invoking fear often comes from a very real place, born out of a Scarecrow's own buried horrors. Most Ministers experienced an abduction by their Keepers that may have been even more horrifying than what other changelings experienced — dragged through a broken mirror and suffering many cuts, stolen by a pack of dogs with human faces or tortured for hours before being drawn slowly and painfully into the Hedge. Many have horror in their lives even *before* the abduction. Maybe the Minister witnessed her father shoot her mother just before painting the walls with his brains. Perhaps she was locked in a dark closet for hours every time she slighted her stepmother. Or maybe the fear is born of something more primal: almost drowning, a bloody car accident, a haunted house. The point is, most Ministers start out as victims, intimately familiar with the nature of fear. Joining the Court, and then this order, helps them subvert their own fear and turn the table on their victimization (and ensure that others are not so easily abused).

Most Ministers have an affinity for Wits and Manipulation, and are often capable with Skills such as Expression, Intimidation, Persuasion and Occult. Some, too, have high Resistance Traits, as one must be a bulwark against fear as much as a maker of it. Obviously, Contracts with Darkness are common among the Ministers, though many also possess Artifice Contracts because some drive their fear and become the legends by means of their clever works.

Organization: Some Ministers are intensely organized. They form whole motleys devoted to bringing specific fears to the local community. Together they decide on what people should fear, and how best to evoke that reaction. If the house at the end of the block is home to a seemingly kind man with a nice smile who is also a secret child molester, the Ministers might begin to tell terrible stories about that "haunted" place. Alternately, they might manipulate one of the child victims to come forward and relay the horrific story to his parents or the authorities (and this kills two birds with one stone — creating fear of sexual predators and eliminating one particular predator). Others might tell stories to stir secret fear about the Hedge, the Fae, vampires or other supernatural threats to humanity. The Ministry tends to be well organized, meeting regularly and forming motleys whole cloth.

The purpose of such organization is that enforcing horrific legends new and old takes concerted effort — it's not something one does half-heartedly, requiring Scarecrow changelings to become someone different than they were previous to entering the order. They draw out plans, pick victims who would best ensure that a story lives on and share in the illusory artifice of fear-making.

The Scarecrow Ministry, as noted, is a secret order. How the entitled changelings keep the secret is different for every changeling. Some maintain their old identities in front of public view, an act of "play-pretend" that goes by the wayside when it's time to don the guise of whatever frightening legend the changeling has chosen for himself. Others drop off the radar entirely, pretending to leave the freehold for one reason or another and becoming their new dreadful personas entirely. These changelings associate only with other Ministers or Court members, hidden away from all others. While obviously devoted, these fae are also the ones who risk Clarity loss — they start to believe the stories they're spinning, becoming true monsters.

The Ministry has no love for those who fall to their own monstrosity, however. Much as it scares everyone else, the Ministry endeavors to scare its own members, too, ensuring that a serious of brutal punishments await those who "go too far" in their tasks. The Ministry offers little sympathy for the Ministers who cross that line, having an entire book (known simply as the Black Book) detailing hundreds of potential punishments for low-Clarity changelings. Some punishments are meant to help steer a changeling back toward his sanity. Other castigations are meant only to cut short the lives of those who cannot turn back — often in bloody, grotesque ways to ensure maximum effect among the other Scarecrows.

Such organization is generally only in places where the Autumn Court has strength of numbers. In places where the Court is underrepresented, or where the Ministry itself is without many members, organization usually falls by the wayside. In such cases, the individual Scarecrows are left to their own devices, allowed to make fear as their cruel and capricious whims demand.

Concepts: Conspiracy nut, bully, dreamshaper, master storyteller, out-of-work actor, prodigal dreamshaper, reluctant government spook, schoolyard bully, urban legend personified, special effects guru, victim of abuse.

Privileges

Below is a token that the Scarecrows of the Ministry use. Upon joining this so-called noble order, one is allowed to pick out his own mask (either from a local store) or from another Minister's potentially egregious collection. From there, the pledge to become a Minister and create fear infuses the mask with Glamour and forms from it the token found below.

Bugbear's Mask (•••)

This token appears to be like any rubbery Halloween mask that one could buy for $10 down at the Wal-Mart or corner store. Whether the mask is the visage of a bandage-swaddled mummy or the angry face of a Frankenstein monster, the resultant supernatural effect is still the same. When the mask is worn, the changeling chooses a single target and meets the victim's eyes. The victim gains the Phobia derangement (mild), with the mask-wearer as the focus of the derangement's dread (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 97, for the effects of this derangement). The victim literally sees the mask as real flesh and actual bone, its grisly countenance appearing as wretched as the human's imagination can make it (often manifesting as something the person was already afraid of, whether that be a face of crawling spiders or the countenance of a violent alcoholic father). The derangement lasts for the rest of the scene. This token can only be used once per day.

Action: Instant

Drawback: The changeling who uses this token suffers his own mild derangement for the rest of the day: Narcissism. (A character who already possesses the Narcissism derangement sees it become the severe version, Megalomania.) This derangement lasts until the changeling sleeps.

Catch: A mortal or any other character who uses the token without paying the proper cost (Wyrd roll or Glamour point) finds that the mask is particularly stubborn to remove. The rubbery fringe at the bottom of the mask seems to literally bond with the flesh of the neck. Removing the mask also removes a layer of skin, conferring one lethal point of damage.

Rumors of the Ministry

What follows are a number of rumors characters might hear of the elusive Scarecrow Ministers:

• There's a rumor going around the freehold that a Scarecrow's heart changes inside of his chest. It becomes a contorted gourd, filled with seeds, mush and blood. Everybody's afraid to try it, and it seems too horrible to even contemplate, but it's said that other strange items can be found inside a Minister's heart: teeth, coins, rings, pieces of hematite or quartz. Only one such item lurks inside the heart. It's also said that getting this item out of the heart — while still keeping the Scarecrow alive, of course — gives you intimate power over him and his fears.

• The Ministers know dreamshaping Contracts that no others possess. Such powers allow them to linger inside the dream, even live there, carving out strange hollows inside the sleeping consciousness of foolish mortals. From there, the Scarecrows can spin new fears from nothing but the raw stuff of dreams.

• Why is it that a Minister always seems to have some kind of tense alliance with his fetch? Some Ministers work in tandem with their fetches to bring fear to the freehold. Some supposedly even switch places with their fetches for a while, going back to so-called normal lives to regain some of that lost Clarity. Some say that the Ministers' fetches change when their changeling counterparts take the oath to join the order. The fetches become darker, more twisted. The story goes that some become serial killers given over to odd compulsive habits (killing in symbolic patterns drawn on a map, writing weird poetry on the walls in victims' blood, using unusual weapons as the means to murder), almost becoming "human" legends such as Dahmer, Gacy or Manson.

The Tolltaker Knighthood

I give my word to break legs, crush skulls and snap necks. I'll put a bullet in your head and a sword in your heart, provided someone pays me to do so and proves to me why it should be done.

The word around the freehold is that the Tolltaker Knights are the foulest mercenaries found among changelings. With blood-blemished blades tucked into their belts and snub nose revolvers strapped to their ankles, they offer up a single purpose in this world: to hurt people for payment. The rumors are that they're particularly good at it, too, as precise or as inexact as one needs them to be. If one person pays the toll, another person ends up in the hospital — either in a bed, or in the morgue. They're louts, drunkards and murder-for-hire jackboots… or at least, that's what everybody believes.

The rumors are true, mostly. They're mercenaries, yes. They're good at what they do, indeed. But there's one clause to their order's oath that most people seem to forget or ignore, and that's the nature of *proof*. The Knights won't go after a target unless they agree that the cause is justified — and proof must be supplied toward this end. Now, justice is in the eye of the beholder; one Knight may be a tad more lenient regarding what "injustice" deserves meting out the order's trademark brutality, while another may refuse to give into such monstrous opportunism.

The way around this is that the local order is shepherded by a single figure, the Knight Banneret. The Banneret heads the local Knights, and is the only one who can accept bounties. When he accepts a bounty on behalf of the Tollhouse, he also helps to set the price of that bounty. Once assumed, the entire Tollhouse is expected to work toward a given task, whether it's hunting and executing a fetch or stringing up a lecherous changeling in front of all to see.

Of course, what this means is that the relative morality of the Tolltaker Knights is set by the Knight Banneret. If he's a genuinely honorable man who believes in the cause of justice, then the Knights better be, too. If he's a depraved glutton, glad to have blood on his hands, then there waits the watermark for the rest of the Knighthood.

What tasks tend to universally draw the order's approval? Some obvious trademarks of inequity include broken pledges, egregious slights at Court in front of the rest of the freehold, unseemly violence toward another changeling and other broaches of freehold decorum.

It's worth noting that, unless the Knight Banneret is particularly pitiless, the Knights rarely accept a bounty that requires the death or prolonged torture of another. Shattered knees, concussions or merely the powerful threat of violence usually does the trick. They'll assume bounties of bloody vengeance when appropriate, but the standards for such murderous missions tend to be more severe than for other tasks.

What kind of payment can a Knight expect? Money is often an obvious choice, but a bounty may also be paid out in favors, tokens, pledges or the teachings of new Contracts.

Living life among the Knights is bloody and brutal, and many changelings within the order do take to drink or drugs to wear off the blood-curdling screams and bone-breaking crunches that haunt their thoughts and dreams.

Titles: Knight (sometimes called "Tolltaker" by those outside the order)

Prerequisites: Mantle (Summer) 1, Wyrd 2, either Brawl, Firearms, or Weaponry at 2 dots

Joining: Enlisting with the Tolltaker Knights is an often harrowing affair. Most "squires," as they're called before they actually gain entrance into the order, are put through rigorous tests and trials to determine their "salt." First come the physical trials, which range from tests of martial skill to running gauntlets composed of many Knights wielding bats and batons (meant to test the "hardiness of the meat," as some Knights say).

After that come the moral tests. One cannot stand with the Knights if he holds his own ethics in particularly high esteem. While certainly some Knights Banneret adhere to more strident moral codes, most are middling, at best. Their function in the freehold demands it — going out and busting heads and shattering kneecaps is rarely seen as precisely "ethical." And so, a squire is dragged through various tests and trials meant to wear down any reliance on his own code of morals. For some, this isn't too hard, as in joining the Knights they recognized that a deficit of certain principles was probably necessary. Others attempt entry while woefully unprepared and find the tests rather traumatic.

The moral tests vary from freehold to freehold. In one, a squire might be expected to dig up some dirt on a loved one, and then act upon it with some measure of violence. In another, the Tollhouse might simply assign him a small bounty and see just how efficiently he carries out the necessary brutality.

Note that, in many cases, the moral test also looks for those who are *too* debased. A bounty to break the first finger of a pledge-breaker's hand is no good if a zealous Knight enters into the fray and gleefully starts shooting. *Some* moral code is necessary. But so is a measure of ethical "flexibility."

Mien: Tolltaker Knights generally appear physically threatening, with spartan garb, steel-toe boots and flesh stained with grime and blood. Changes to their mien go a long way toward this effect, as well — their flesh grows tough with erratic scars, and streaks of dried blood grow deep and red (and never to be washed away). If a Knight's Wyrd increases to abnormally high levels, he may find that he leaves bloody wet fingerprints or boot prints wherever he goes — prints that, just as the marks on his skin, do not scrub away easily.

Background: It's true that this noble order sometimes acts as a haven (or last resort) for exiles, criminals and other depraved sorts. Some such changelings are truly selfish, concerned only with their own security and sanity — all else be damned. Others see this as an opportunity to forestall their own degeneration. While, yes, the tasks performed by the order are less than moral and require a willingness to carry out unpleasant chores, it at least provides a plateau for some. Here, they can assert their own notions of justice, convincing themselves that by enforcing pledges or intimidating unscrupulous changelings that they are — in the long run, at least — doing the "right thing." It's worth mentioning that the Knight Banneret's own background goes a long way toward explaining the aggregate backgrounds of all the Knights within the order. If he comes from the maggoty underbelly of the city — a street gang, a crime syndicate, a rotten betting ring — then he may recruit from the same source. If he acts more as some tarnished paladin on a crusade to do what's right no matter the cost, it's likely that others with similar experiences will find a home here.

On the character sheet, a Tolltaker Knight is likely to have his Physical stats highest of all, with a reliance on combat-related Skills (the prerequisites to enter the order

demand some martial training or promise). A liberal helping of Intimidation and Stealth doesn't hurt, either. That's not to say that a Mentally-focused or Socially-focused Knight isn't out-of-the-question. The order is happy to have its strategists or liaisons, but by and large, it's about brute force and fast hands.

Note that the order's Knights are likely to use Goblin Contracts; as evidenced by their very purpose, these changelings don't mind getting their hands dirty for the quick and easy payout.

Organization: As has been mentioned, the Knight Banneret acts as the head of the order and, much as a king sets the tone his kingdom, the Knight Banneret does the same for his Knighthood. He determines what bounties and jobs the order takes. He negotiates who deserves what and what kind of payment is appropriate for various tasks. He even determines how the payment is divvied up between his soldiers: does the Knight who actually performed the deed gain the lion's share of the payment? Or do all share part of the reward?

That's not to say he can rule as he sees fit without considering the wants and needs of his mercenaries. While some have the temporal power and supernatural wherewithal to rule the order with an iron fist, most are fully aware that a revolt of angry brutes will get them deposed or worse, decapitated. It is in the Knight Banneret's best interest to keep the order's fae content (which is the highest he can aspire to, for such bitter curs are rarely *happy*).

That said, each Knight works as something of an independent within the order. While some Knights might have contact with one another or form motley-level brute squads who go out and do the order's perpetually dirty work, the Knighthood doesn't require its members to have contact with one another. They meet only when the Knight Banneret declares it necessary, and otherwise the Knighthood is as likely be composed of several lone wolves as of a handful of oathbound motleys.

Concepts: Club bouncer, corrupt cop, ex-con, greedy gangster, mob legbreaker, naïve brute, neighborhood watch member, opportunistic rogue, sociopath, street gang vigilante, Summer Court enforcer.

Privileges

What follows is a privilege available to any who join the Tolltaker Knighthood.

Bounty's Curse

When a Knight Banneret accepts a bounty for a target, that target is marked no matter where in the world he lurks. This curse isn't obvious; not at first, anyhow. It becomes clear, however, if the target engages in combat with one of the Tolltaker Knights.

At that time, the victim of the bounty feels… sluggish. Imprecise. Even a little clumsy. Attacks land with greater frequency. His feet don't propel him forward as fast as they should.

Assume that, only while in combat with another Tolltaker Knight, the victim of a current bounty finds that his Defense is halved (round down), and his Initiative modifier is one less. This can, in many instances, grant the Knight a measure of advantage against his marked foe.

This ability does have its limits. First, the target of a bounty must be identified by the Knight Banneret, and seeing as how some investment of Glamour is usually necessary for this to occur, it's not easy for a Tolltaker to abuse this power. Also, upon entering into combat with an extant bounty, the Knight must first spend a Willpower point to gain access to this blessing (well, blessing for *him*, curse for the other guy).

Rumors of the Knighthood

Below are rumors about the Tolltaker Knighthood that characters may catch wind of during the course of the story:

• No Knight has ever confirmed this, but some say that joining the Tolltakers features a steeper requirement than the order suggests. It's said that the ultimate toll must be paid to join the ranks and reap the mercenary rewards: a loved one. It might be a loved one from before the abduction, sure, but loved just the same. An ex-wife, a daughter, a best friend, a beloved uncle. It doesn't matter. The loved ones must be brought to the Knight Banneret, and what he does with them — well, nobody exactly knows. Some say he simply ensorcells them, adding to his already vast stable. Others say he sacrifices them according to a powerful old pledge. Darker rumors, though, suggest that he delivers them into the hands of the True Fae. Why would this be? Nobody knows that, either.

• They don't like to talk about it, but once in a blue moon, the Knights will accept a bounty against one of their own. It's never a soft bounty, and always involves the death of the offending Tolltaker. And the price is always through the roof, impossible by most to even consider paying. But therein lies the danger of being a Tolltaker Knight — they commit sins against others, sins that may come back to haunt them one day.

• Some have seen the Tolltakers with odd hobgoblins unique to the order. These odd beasts look like little spiders — orb spiders, if biology is to be believed — each wearing the face of the current Knight Banneret. The only time anyone has seen such a hobgoblin is when a Knight unsheathes or unholsters his favored weapon. Some see the spider dancing up the flat part of a sword's blade or down the length of a revolver's barrel (before disappearing within). Nobody knows what these hobgoblins do, or what they're for — but some suspect that they act as spies for the head of the order.

Creating an Entitlement

Storytellers and players should feel free to create their own entitlements. The following section offers suggestions for doing so.

Forging the Noble Order

A changeling may choose to band together with other fae and form her own entitlement. Doing so requires her to possess Wyrd 4 as well as at least four other changelings who wish to join this new noble order (whether five is some kind of sacred number, or a number keyed to the vagaries of fate and time, nobody knows). The founder of this new entitlement must spend one Glamour point and a full Willpower dot to forge the supernatural compact that binds the entitled fae together.

In determining the fate and nature of the new entitlement, players or Storytellers should keep the following elements in mind:

Theme

Is the order founded around a particular theme? The characters may not recognize the theme, but it's useful if the players do. A simple one- or two-word theme goes a long way toward helping establish a deeper identity for the entitlement. A theme could be something as broad as "redemption," or "deception," or as focused as "freehold anarchy" or "courtly love."

Oath and Purpose

An order is always founded with some key purpose in mind. This purpose can be lofty ("restore the Spring Court to its full glory in the freehold") or base ("drink, fuck and be merry"). It's good to have a goal in mind whose completion isn't easy. If a noble order's single goal is to assassinate a corrupt queen, then once it's done, what purpose does the entitlement serve? Most goals are either long in the completion ("destroy the four-Court hegemony and create a freehold for the people, by the people") or ongoing ("protect and monitor the known gateways into the Hedge").

Note that the oath should reflect this primary purpose, and may also detail out any of the minor principles that guide the ennobled changelings, as well. This oath is magically binding, a supernatural pledge between the forswearing changeling and the entitlement. Therefore, feel free to write it out — or at least portions of it — in the founder's own parlance and slang. Note that despite any medieval trappings, changelings don't usually speak with such purple patois, avoiding any medieval, Renaissance, or Elizabethan style in their spoken tongue. An oath generally reflects modern language. Some orders may prefer more serious, turgid language — like what one might find in a legal briefing — while others may instead express a more poetic pledge (and thus, one that may be more open to interpretation than what was originally figured upon).

Title

The title that all members of the order share should mean something. While one could choose a random title, remember that a title actually gives some indication of purpose and theme, helping to reinforce the entitlement's flavor. A knight, for instance, indicates a fighter, potentially even a leader in war. A duke or duchess, on the other hand, invokes images of middling nobleman, reigning over a certain territory (or purpose) that is less grand than what a king or queen would possess. A margrave (or *markgraf*) is the governor of border provinces, and so you might end up with an order similar to the Margravate of the Brim. Historically, a landgrave or count had sovereignty of his own people, answering not to any duke or governor, but directly to the emperor or king (and so you may have an entitlement whose changelings are given wide authority by a reigning monarch of one of the four Courts, allowed to operate unbidden).

More sample titles can be found in a sidebar at the end of this appendix.

Prerequisites

Consider any and all prerequisites necessary to join the order. Is the order devoted to one Court over another? Perhaps then some measure of Mantle with that Court is necessary (or, at least, a high degree of Court Goodwill). While this book provides no such examples, an entitlement could allow only changelings from certain seemings or kiths into its ranks.

Trait prerequisites can be as modest or as strict as one prefers. Assume that the more specific and potent the order's purpose, the stricter the Trait-based prerequisites become. A basic, free-for-all entitlement that provides a wide umbrella purpose (such as a "civilian" army that can be called upon to stave off incursions of vicious Fae keepers) may have a prerequisite of Wyrd 2 and nothing else. However, an order whose purpose is far more explicit may have need of more unique changelings. For instance, a group of marauding highwaymen fae riding around on choppers whose express goal is to empty the Court's coffers at every turn may require Wyrd 3, Crafts 2 (to fix up their bikes), Larceny 3 (to pilfer money and goods) and Brawl 2 (to beat down any idiot who'd stand in their way).

Any Trait can be a part of a prerequisite. A band of ascetic changelings might demand its members possess a high Willpower. An order whose goal is to integrate into and help human society may demand high Clarity, while an entitlement of lunatic terrors may ask for Clarity *below* a certain point.

Initiation

A noble order likely has a roleplaying prerequisite as well as the aforementioned trait prerequisites. Some allow entry to any who desire it, keeping a constant "open-door" policy. Others develop vast trials and tribulations, running potential members through a hard gauntlet before allowing them to swear the oath. Once again, initiation should reinforce theme and purpose. An entitlement of Court-serving knights won't ask that a changeling prove his mercantile skills or how talented he is a painter or a poet. Such an order will ask for a display of martial skills, or may ask the changeling to perform a series of small favors for the Court that the entitlement serves.

Privileges

For the most part, privileges remain at about the same power level across most orders, with some small variance between them. Generally, an order has a prerequisite of Wyrd 2 or Wyrd 3, and maybe a few other small Skill or Attribute prerequisites. Since privilege should be loosely tied to the weight of the prerequisites necessary to join the entitlement, you can assume that generally, a privilege follows a few basic guidelines.

If the privilege provides a blessing, it's usually either a small blessing (+1) or Skill specialty granted across the board, or is a slightly larger blessing (+3) that's applicable only in more unique (and thus, rarer) situations. The Rectors of the Wrench, a noble order that's perhaps devoted to fixing and building things, might either have a persistent +1 to Crafts rolls, or may instead have a +3 to Crafts rolls applicable *only* when fixing engines.

Alternately, some orders gain tokens upon joining. Generally, these tokens are of two or three dots, and come with the normal drawbacks and catches associated with magical items of that level.

However, should the prerequisites to join an order become abnormally high (more than Wyrd 3, plus a smattering of other Skill or Attribute requirements), the bonuses may grow accordingly. The entitled changelings may gain more powerful tokens, or may gain larger blessings that offer more potent dice bonuses. In some cases, the level of privilege remains lower, but the privileges themselves increase in number — in other words, an entitlement with high prerequisites may offer a token *and* a blessing to its ennobled members.

Pick a Title, Any Title

As noted earlier, the title available to entitled changelings of a given order should mean something in regards to that entitlement's theme and purpose. Noble titles can be pretty far-reaching, and don't necessarily need to be strictly noble in origin — feel free to look through religious titles, or titles of gentility or modern government, for inspiration. Below you'll find a handful of potential titles from which you may want to choose. Note that only rarely will an order claim a title on the standing of king, queen, emperor or empress; doing so is anathema to those within the Courts, as they already have figureheads with those titles. Some like to snub the Courts, of course, but as noted, this is rare.

The sampling of titles below offers male and female titles when appropriate, as well as the general name of the order or territory possessed by those of given titles.

baron/baroness (barony), bey (beylik), caliph/calipha (caliphate), count/countess (earldom, county), count palatine/countess palatine (palatinate), daimyo (clan or province), earl/countess (earldom), emir (emirate), governor/governess (governance), grand duke/duchess (duchy), khan (khanate), lord/lady (lordship), marquis/marquise (marquisate), prince/princess (princedom), raja/rani (rajanate), sultan (sultanate), viscount/viscountess (viscounty), voivoid (voivodship)

It's also possible to choose from variant strains — military (sergeant), hereditary (father), religious (episkopos) — if need be.

STAWICKI
2007

don't have any idea what band is playing. At present I'm not sure what day of the week it is.

Whatever Mel paid for this stuff, it was *totally* worth it. I need to find her later and buy a few more hits, because my cousin would cream himself over this stuff. I've got one hit left, though, and I'm saving it for someone special.

I find her dancing in a big group of people. I don't know her name, but I think I've seen her here before (then again, just at the moment I'm a little too fucked up to say for certain). I dance my way over and yell, "Hey, you like apples?" at her. If she knows what that means, she'll follow me outside. If not, she'll just think I'm an idiot, and I can live with that.

She follows me out, and the bouncer nods at me because he knows I'll hook him up later if he lets me back in. The girl follows me into an alleyway and says, "Now, what did you say?"

OK, that's weird. Why'd she follow if she didn't understand me? "You like apples?" I ask again.

"Sure," she says.

Now, the end of that particular pickup line is, "Me, too. Wanna fuck?" but normally the exchange doesn't go that far because it's just a quick way to see if someone wants a hit. She doesn't seem like she knows that, but if she's a narc she's got me fooled, so I hand her the pill.

She looks over her shoulder, and says, in a whisper that barely makes it through my haze, "Is that Ecstasy?" Who the fuck calls it that outside of health class?

"Yeah," I say. She reaches for it. And then something really strange happens. She goes flying backwards like somebody yanked on her belt. And I get this dull *thud* in my gut, and my pants are all wet. The pain catches up with me a second later, and I'm on the ground gasping.

This big, muscular bleach-blond dude is standing over me with a pipe in his hands. "Tell you what, dipshit," he says. "You tell your buddies to stay the hell away from Princess Maria, and I'll only hit you one more time."

Appendix 2
The Freehold of Miami

Nature rejects the monarch, not the man;
The subject, not the citizen; for king
And subjects, mutual foes, forever play
A losing game into each other's hands,
Whose stakes are vice and misery.
— Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Queen Mab*

Decadent, sun-drenched Miami, the Gateway to the Americas, is a city that epitomizes both the beauty and the darkness at the core of **Changeling.** From the neon-bedecked skyscrapers of downtown to the art deco finery of South Beach and its endless nightclubs, Miami is one of the most beautiful cities in North America. And yet all that bright color hides a heart as dark and fetid as any city in the World of Darkness. Drugs flow in from South America, and the authorities are powerless to stop them. Poverty and crime are at obscene levels, and in the weird candy-colored light of the neon, things alien and antithetical to humankind lurk. In the nearby Everglades, paths twist and wind between the mangroves, folding in on themselves and trapping the unwary in a swampy Hedge inhabited by ancient, crocodilian nightmares.

This is not the Miami you may know. This is the Miami of the World of Darkness, where all the problems of the real world are magnified and layered atop an ever-shifting foundation of madness and the occult. The surface details are similar, but like a funhouse mirror, the World of Darkness reflects a distorted reflection of the world we know. This is a city of excess in all respects: the rich are richer, the hard partiers party harder and the desperate full of even more desperation.

Bienvenidos a Miami.

Theme

Miami is a city on the brink of war. The Summer Court holds control of the freehold and refuses to relinquish it, and the other Courts grow more dissatisfied every day. The True Fae have been reported skulking at the edges of the city, looking for an opening to descend and drag their wayward servants home. Even within the Courts themselves, schisms and power struggles set camp against camp as influential courtiers seek to gather as much power as they can to themselves, even as they undermine any chance of throwing down the tyranny of the King of Endless Summer.

The theme that predominates in Miami, then, is one of conflict. The Trident is a prime example of a freehold that does *not* work as a freehold should; the cycle of the seasons is broken, and that failure is tearing the structure of changeling society apart. Neutrality is all but impossible, if only because there are so many factions at work; everyone must take a side, or the rumor mill will choose one for them. Rivalries can spring up at a drop of the hat, and the schisms within the freehold can turn old allies into enemies without warning.

This isn't to say, of course, that the only stories that can be told in Miami are knock-down drag-out brawls; conflict takes many forms. Political rivalries, interpersonal conflicts between motley members, even pursuing a romance when another is also interested in the target of your affections are all conflict-driven stories. Even internal conflicts can serve to draw this theme to the forefront, such as agonizing over whether to reveal your return to your former family and friends.

Mood

Going along with the theme of conflict, the mood of Miami is one of a gathering storm. The freehold is poised on the brink of a precipice, and unless someone steps up and does something about it, there's going to be one hell of a fall, with the likely end result of a civil war between the Courts or a full-scale invasion by the True Fae — or possibly even both. Stories told in Miami should have that vague

but palpable sense of dread hanging over them, reminding the players that life in Miami isn't all fun on the beaches.

Inspirations

Miami has been depicted in films and television countless times, especially its heyday during the 1980s. The following are a few sources you might look to for inspiration in capturing the feel of the city.

Scarface: The iconic Miami movie. Al Pacino plays a *Marielita* (a Cuban refugee who came to Miami on the Mariel Boatlift) who works his way from nobody to a drug kingpin — and ultimately is the architect of his own downfall. An excellent look at Miami at its most decadent, and excellent fodder for a Winter Court story.

Nip/Tuck: A look into the lives of two Miami plastic surgeons and the sick, sick people who surround them. Features decadence of a different kind from *Scarface*, but no less quintessentially Miami.

Dexter: A television series about a serial killer operating in Miami, but who kills only other serial killers. Based on the novel *Darkly Dreaming Dexter* by Jeff Lindsay, the title character's isolation and sense of otherness from those around him makes him excellent inspiration for a changeling.

Miami Vice: You knew it had to be here. The TV series definitely looks dated in a lot of ways today, and there were several elements that bordered on the farcical, but the extensive on-location shooting in Miami is what made many of the city's famous landmarks famous. The more recent movie adaptation modernizes the setting and removes the camp, but also largely omits the great locations.

A History of Miami

Although the region now called Miami was first settled some time around 10,000 years ago, there is no indication that there was a sizable changeling society until the current Court structure was created shortly after World War II. Old stories from Spanish explorers and the Native American tribes of the area have hinted that there may have been fae activity throughout the area's history, but it wasn't until the latter half of the last century that the population boom allowed the formation of a proper freehold. Despite the relative youth of the freehold, a rich culture and history have already sprung up among the city's changelings, and an understanding of that history is vital to understanding the state of the city today.

Ancient Times

Little is known of the history of the Miami region before Juan Ponce de León arrived in 1533. Some 10,000 years ago, a tribe of Native Americans built several villages on the banks of the Miami River, but those peoples left behind only a scattering of tools and weapons made from shells. By the time the Spanish arrived, the area was inhabited by the Tequesta peoples. The Tequesta were hunters, gatherers and fishermen who practiced no agriculture, but who possessed a curiously developed religion that worshiped a stuffed deer as a manifestation of the sun and a "god of the graveyard" in the form of a bird's head carved from pine. Reports of human sacrifice may have been exaggerated by Spanish missionaries, but there was certainly an element of morbidity to the Tequesta practice of stripping the flesh from the bones of dead chiefs and then presenting the larger bones as gifts to the chief's relatives. Changeling historians have suggested that these practices may have been designed to placate or ward off the True Fae, but as the only records surviving from the period come from Spanish missionaries, who were somewhat understandably biased in such matters, it is difficult to gauge with any real certainty.

The Miami Circle

The Miami Circle is believed to have been created by the Tequesta approximately 1,900 years ago. Popular archaeology states that the holes were likely post-holes for the supports of a large building, either communal housing or a ceremonial lodge of some sort. Naturally, the changelings have other theories, and many link the Miami Circle to the theory that the Tequesta people worshiped or at least made offerings to the Others and claim that the circle was a gateway to Faerie itself. Others claim that it was not built as a gate at all, but as a prison, and that an ancient and powerful lord of the Fae lies entombed within the limestone bedrock.

Colonial Era

The Miami region was largely ignored throughout the Spanish colonial period. From the mid-16th century to the early 18th century, several attempts were made to establish missions in the area, but they never took hold. What *did* take hold was smallpox and a host of other European diseases brought by the explorers, which largely decimated the Tequesta people. By the time Spain ceded Florida to Britain, the Tequesta were all either dead or relocated to Cuba. Shortly thereafter, reports of mysterious disappearances began to surface among the various attempts at British colonization. At least one attempt at founding a plantation was defeated by a rapid series of several strange vanishings — first slaves and vagabonds, but later respectable white settlers as well. The colonization attempt was deemed cursed, and under the pretense of "difficulty obtaining finances," promptly abandoned.

Story Hook: Empty Villages

Changelings coming into Miami from the Florida Keys have reported seeing ethereal ap-

paritions of Native American villages alongside desolate stretches of the Overseas Highway. Courageous travelers who exited their vehicles and attempted to interact with the ghostly inhabitants of the phantom village claim that the spirits do not react to the presence of earthly beings save to mutter that the Grandfathers of the Glade will soon grow displeased with the lack of offerings given to them. Invariably, the specter and the entire village vanish after imparting this warning.

Throughout most of the 1800s, the population of the Miami area was largely composed of squatters, adventurers and treasure hunters seeking the precious cargo of ships wrecked on the treacherous Great Florida Reef. Miami itself was officially founded in 1842, but largely thanks to the Seminole Wars it would be another 50 years before there were more than a handful of people living there. The construction of the railroad in 1896, and along with it railroad magnate Henry Flagler's resort hotel, saw the population finally begin to grow. The city of Miami was incorporated on July 28, 1896, with exactly 444 citizens.

Modern History

The early 20th century was a time of tremendous prosperity and growth for Miami. By 1900, the population sat at around 1,600 souls. By 1910 that number jumped to 5,400, and by 1920 the population had skyrocketed to almost 30,000 and showed no immediate sign of stopping. Unfortunately, as any changeling seer can tell you, signs and portents can be deceiving. Construction delays and railroad difficulties brought the development boom to a crawl, but it took an act of a wrathful god to end the boom.

The Great Miami Hurricane

In September 1926, the Great Miami Hurricane made landfall. The inhabitants of Miami, largely thanks to extremely short warning and the immigrant population's lack of familiarity with the power of such a storm, made few preparations and, by and large, did not evacuate. In total, the storm inflicted $100 million in damages (an astronomical sum in 1926). The official death toll is recorded at 373, but the precise number may never be known, as many victims were simply reported missing and never recovered.

Popular changeling lore asserts that the "Big Blow" was, if not caused by, then certainly influenced by the Others, who rode the shrieking winds on maddened steeds and snatched up hundreds of unfortunates to be borne away to Faerie. Scattered records, mostly in the form of journals and letters written by artists, poets and other "sensitives" report gargantuan figures dancing in the storm winds or galloping horsemen in the chaotic whirl of debris. Some changelings dismiss the stories as superstition, but the more paranoid (and some would say wiser) shudder at the thought that one day those storm-riders will return with thunderous hooves and howling gales of mad laughter.

The Depression and World War II

Not long after the hurricane, the Great Depression hit, driving the city into further decline. Despite the economic ruin, this period saw the birth of Miami Beach's famous Art Deco district, and the city's generally lax enforcement of Prohibition laws and legalized gambling made the city a popular tourist destination. Today, the Spring Court gives one of their own credit for influencing the city government into "letting folk have their fun," but for the most part, the only changelings who accept this story are the courtiers of the Antler Crown. The '20s and '30s were a time well before the Courts were established in Miami; even if a changeling was involved, there is no way to directly link that historical changeling to the Spring Court.

During World War II, Miami became a major training center for U.S. troops, with a half a million enlisted men and 50,000 officers going through training in Miami. After the war, many of those troops returned to the city, providing a population and economic boom.

The Founding of the Courts

Throughout the early 20th century, there were scattered individual changelings or small motleys operating in Miami, but it wasn't until the postwar population boom that the changelings arrived in larger numbers. Some of them were American servicemen who were taken in Europe and returned home after the war, while others were taken directly from the growing population of Miami itself. Initially, this burgeoning population was scattered and disorganized, but in 1946 three charismatic visionaries came together to attempt to forge order from the chaos.

The first of the three was a U.S. Army sergeant who had been abducted in the Bastogne in late 1944. He returned not long after the end of the war, calling himself Tom Hood, the "Headsman's Ghost." In France, he was initiated into the Autumn Court and brought the idea with him when he returned home to Miami. Tom contacted two of the most personally powerful changelings he could find in Miami: Grandfather Thunder and Rose Thorne, who, to Tom, exemplified the ideals of the Summer and Spring Courts, respectively. A changeling to represent Winter could not be located, and many modern changelings of the Silent Arrow consider this snub to be the principal reason their Court remains low in prominence.

Tom, Thunder and Rose met in Miami Beach one moonlit night, and Tom outlined his plan to create a freehold of Miami. He offered the other two access to ancient books he had brought with him from Paris, books that described the philosophies and the mystical theories behind

the changeling Courts. In return, Tom himself was guaranteed a place of prominence in the freehold, regardless of the season and current ruler. Thunder and Rose agreed, and at midnight on September 23, 1946, the first pledges of the Trident, the freehold of Miami were sworn.

With the Courts now established in name, the three leaders of the freehold began to spread their teachings, recruiting many of the city's formerly Courtless changelings and establishing their power bases. Even to this day, the original territories of the Courts hold, more or less. Rose Thorne and her Spring Court claimed South Beach and the nightclub district, Grandfather Thunder and the Iron Spear solidified themselves in Liberty City, and Tom Hood took his Autumn Court and fortified himself in downtown Miami.

The Founding of the Winter Court

There was no Winter Court in Miami until the middle of the 1960s. For the first 19 years of the freehold's history, the year was simply divided three ways instead of four. The precise origin of the Winter Court in Miami is subject to a good deal of hearsay and speculation, but the official story goes that the Silent Arrow was founded when a Courtless changeling called La Llorona managed to steal the original texts Tom Hood brought with him from France. La Llorona learned from them the secrets of the Winter Court and chose to make her own pledge with Winter. She brought her new teachings to several of the disenfranchised Courtless of the city, especially those living in the high-poverty, high-crime areas. In a surprise move, the Winter Court seized much of Liberty City from the Iron Spear and established a presence in the freehold.

The problem with this story is primarily that, by 1965, the Summer Court was already the largest and most powerful Court in the city, and it seems doubtful that an upstart Court could unseat Grandfather Thunder. Many changelings suspect that Grandfather Thunder was even then laying the seeds of his eventual takeover of the freehold, and that he introduced La Llorona to the teachings of Winter himself in order to place a wedge between Spring and Autumn.

Recent History

Once the Winter Court established itself and its rightful rule over one-quarter of the year, the freehold settled down for the most part. The Summer Court won back a major victory against Winter in 1980, when the Liberty City Riots erupted in territory controlled by La Llorona and created a tremendous influx of wrath that fueled the Summer offensive. La Llorona herself was killed in the riots (although many Winter Court changelings continue to insist that a Summer Court assassin struck the killing blow) and was succeeded by Jeremiah Sleet, who holds the title of Winter King to this day.

The 1980s are often looked back on as the golden age of the freehold of Miami by many changelings. The decade started off joyously, as the Mariel Boatlift brought 125,000 Cuban refugees into the city. In what the Courts called an incidence of Wyrd creating sympathetic vibrations, concurrent with the Boatlift nearly 100 changelings arrived in the city, freshly escaped from Faerie. Many of these changelings (dubbed *Marielitos* even though they were not part of the Mariel Boatlift) chose to settle permanently in Miami and bolstered the freehold 's power.

As the decade wore on and Miami became the principal point of entry into the United States for South American cocaine, Jeremiah Sleet and his Winter Court established themselves as major players in the drug trade, feeding off the sorrow it generated. Keeping pace with their rivals, changelings of the Summer Court rode (and at least partially influenced) the violent crime wave that came along with the influx of drugs and money. Meanwhile, the Spring Court increased its hold on the city's pleasure districts and rode the high that came with Miami's increasing reputation as America's decadent tropical paradise. Tom Hood kept his own counsel, as he always had, but even the Leaden Mirror was flush with Glamour as the mortals grew to fear the encroachment of drug addiction, the criminals running rampant and even the immigrants taking their jobs.

If the '80s were the golden age, the '90s were the proverbial fall of the Roman Empire. In 1992, Hurricane Andrew ripped through Dade County just south of Miami, sparking panicked rumors of the return of the Great Miami Hurricane and its alleged True Fae masters. The rumor ultimately proved unfounded, but the storm's earthly damage was no less severe. The city's economy was devastated, and subsequent financial scandals earned the city the dubious honor of fourth poorest city in America. The drug wars continued to escalate, feeding the Summer Court's wrath and allowing Grandfather Thunder to make his most audacious move yet.

The Coup and the City of Endless Summer

On June 21, 1999, at the height of Grandfather Thunder's reign, the King of Endless Summer announced that, by virtue of its climate and the general essence of the city's character, Miami would henceforth be known as the City of Endless Summer and that the seasonal governance of the Courts was dissolved. He would still allow the other Courts to hold their current territories, and even to recruit new members, so long as all changelings swore an oath acknowledging the primacy of the Summer Court.

Unsurprisingly, the freehold exploded, with several prominent members of the Spring Court vowing instead to see Thunder's head on a spike. Tom Hood likewise condemned the action and mobilized the Leaden Mirror to force the King of Endless Summer to abdicate and name a successor. Jeremiah Sleet was the only leader to agree to Thunder's terms, as long as Jeremiah and his Court were not required to take sides in the dispute.

Had Tom and Rose combined their forces to deal with Thunder, the whole affair might have been nothing more than a footnote in the freehold's history. As it was, the Antler Crown and Leaden Mirror each made their own play, and were soundly defeated by the knights of the Summer Court. In the shadows and the half-light of neon and street lamps, an invisible war was carried out, masked by gang violence and swept under the rug by a jaded, overworked police force.

It is difficult to say which Court got the worse end of the battle. Tom Hood was killed by Grandfather Thunder's chief enforcer, Deathless Ivan, and the forces of Spring were utterly routed and driven out of the city by the Iron Spear. Rose Thorne and her closest advisers have regrouped in the Everglades, but their numbers are severely diminished. Recently, a semi-independent Spring Court has returned to Miami Beach. Derisively called "Vichy Spring" by Rose's loyalists, this branch of the Court is led by Maria Thorne, Rose's "daughter." The Autumn Court, meanwhile, has withdrawn to its holdings in and around the University of Miami in an attempt to deal with their grief at the loss of the father of the freehold of Miami. In 2003, the Autumn Court finally chose a new leader in one of Tom Hood's protégés, the Autumn Queen Naamah.

The Winter Court has stayed out of the struggle so far and, despite repeated entreaties from the Spring Court's envoys, shows no sign of changing that in the future. Many changelings feel that Jeremiah Sleet is drunk on his own sorrow, and that nearly a quarter century of nurturing the drug trade like a gardener nurtures his plants has utterly consumed the man's soul.

Miami Today

The freehold of Miami, formally called the Trident, has been a seething, bubbling pot of tension since Grandfather Thunder's coup. Thanks to the extended lifespan afforded to changelings, the city has many residents who still remember how Tom Hood brought their city to order and created the seasonal Court that has helped to ward off the lords of

Faerie. The large part of the resistance to the City of Endless Summer has originated with these venerable changelings and those younger idealists they have brought over to their cause. Even within the Summer Court, there are those who would like to see Grandfather Thunder brought down. So far, the dissent has largely been restricted to rabble-rousing and polemic in the coffeehouses and nightclubs the changelings frequent; no one wants to risk yet another civil war so close on the heels of the first, and truth be told, few of the dissidents feel confident in their ability to take on the power of the Summer Court. Thunder's free hand with festivals and revels have likewise kept many of the younger changelings quite content with the present arrangement.

Outside of freehold politics, the city of Miami fares little better. Poverty and crime are rampant, with the city ranking as the third poorest city in the country, the second most dangerous and the city with the second-largest population of adults without a high school diploma. Gang violence is especially high, and the vast amount of drugs that flow into the Port of Miami all but guarantee that organized crime has its fingers in city politics. All of this sorrow and apathy draws the Fae like flies to honey; missing persons reports are astronomical, and even the wisest changelings can't be sure how many are runaways or murders or abductions and how many are taken by the Others.

The following overview of the Trident is broken down by Courts, but remember that membership in a Court is not the end-all and be-all of a character's allegiances. Beyond Court membership there is the overarching matter of the City of Endless Summer and where the character stands on that issue.

The Spring Court

The Spring Court is on the verge of self-destruction in Miami. Completely exiled from the city until quite recently, the Antler Crown has at last reestablished its presence in the city. Maria Thorne's "Vichy Spring" has regained a portion of the Court's former holdings in Miami Beach, but the majority of the Spring Court remains in hiding outside the city. Rose Thorne herself has gone completely underground, fearing that the King of Endless Summer will have her killed should she surface publicly. Her exact whereabouts remain unknown: along with three of her fiercest and most loyal knights, she operates out of the Everglades, relaying messages to her Court by courier. At present, Rose lacks the manpower to attempt a move back into the city, and the death of Tom Hood during the coup, and his subsequent replacement by Naamah, has soured any real chance of an alliance with the Autumn Court.

All this isn't to say that the Spring Court is inactive in the city itself; far from it. At any time, Rose Thorne has at least a half-dozen agents provocateur moving among the city's changelings, frequently disguised as Courtless or flighty party animals with "Vichy Spring." The duties of these agents range from espionage to sabotage to backroom overtures of alliance to the Winter and Autumn Courts. As yet, there has been no move toward overt violence, but if no better resolution can be arrived at, it is not inconceivable that Rose might step up to a campaign of assassination.

Vichy Spring

Two years ago, a small, ragtag band of Spring Court changelings emerged from the Everglades and requested asylum from the King of Endless Summer. Their leader called herself Maria Thorne, and she claimed to be Rose Thorne's daughter. She announced that she had grown tired of her mother's erratic behavior and obsession with restoring the seasonal Court, and that she wished to reestablish a Spring Court in Miami on her own. Quite to the surprise of the movers-and-shakers of the City of Endless Summer, Grandfather Thunder acceded to her request and granted Maria Thorne the title of Duchess of Spring (Maria herself refused to be named Spring Queen until her mother was lawfully deposed) and control of several nightclubs in South Beach formerly owned by the Court of Desire.

The sad truth is that Maria Thorne isn't half the leader Rose was. Maria's attempts to balance recognition of the City of Endless Summer and the rightful rule of Rose Thorne have been, rather than a delicate political balancing act, an exercise in capitulation and weak compromise. Maria's faction is branded traitors by the exiled Spring Court for rolling over for Grandfather Thunder's regime, and at the same time is mistrusted by the City of Endless Summer for its refusal to openly denounce Rose Thorne and her rebellion.

The Summer Court

Miami is the City of Endless Summer, and if the Summer Court has anything to say about it, it will stay that way for a long, long time. Ruled by Grandfather Thunder, an old and wily changeling and one of the only surviving founders of the freehold of Miami, the Iron Spear has established itself not only as the dominant Court in the city but as the only ruling body of Miami's changelings. In the years since the coup, Grandfather Thunder and his followers have waged civil war, survived two successive rebellions and pushed an outlaw Court almost entirely out of the city. And that was just the external politics.

Within its own ranks, the Summer Court has had to deal with a growing rift of discontent, primarily between younger changelings who support Grandfather Thunder and their elders, who tend to remain wary of upsetting the balance created by Tom Hood and his compatriots. Grandfather Thunder's charismatic and forceful leadership has kept this dissent quiet thus far, but as the Others are sighted with greater and greater frequency and the freehold spirals steadily toward anarchy, the carefully constructed façade of a unified Summer Court risks crumbling. The other Courts are held in check by the belief that any attempt to oust Thunder must overcome the full strength of the Iron Spear;

were the level of dissent within the Summer Court widely known, it could bring down the City of Endless Summer.

Internal strife aside, the Summer Court is unquestionably the most powerful Court in Miami. The Iron Spear is easily twice as populous as the Leaden Mirror, the next largest Court, and unlike the Autumn and Winter Courts, the Court of Wrath has firmly entrenched itself in the politics of the City of Endless Summer and thus holds the majority of political clout in the city. Coupled with the abundant wrathful Glamour that hangs over the city and the mystical potency afforded by Miami's perpetually torrid climate, the Court of Wrath has dug itself firmly into the position of primacy and shows no signs of letting go any time soon.

The Summer Court has a cool but civil relationship with the mystics and scholars of the Autumn Court, which Grandfather Thunder has tried consistently to improve, if only to remove the largest potential threat to his rule. So far, his overtures have had little success, but the Iron Spear can be patient when it must. The Court typically looks on Maria Thorne's Spring Court with a mixture of distrust and wry amusement, while Rose Thorne's renegades are considered the worst of traitors; among the Summer Court, the story that Rose has gone mad and allied herself with the Fae has gained more credence than with the other Courts. Relations with the Winter Court are more strained; Jeremiah Snow keeps his small band of misfits mostly clear of the rest of changeling society, but there has been a long rivalry between the Courts stemming from territorial overlap.

The Autumn Court

The Autumn Court is just beginning to find its feet again after the death of its leader. Tom Hood quite literally *was* the Autumn Court, having led it since it was founded in the late 1940s. His murder at the hands of Deathless Ivan threw the Court into chaos, effectively decapitating any further attempts at revolution against the self-proclaimed King of Endless Summer. Reprisals against the Leaden Mirror were brutal, but mercifully brief: three of Tom Hood's oldest and closest advisers were executed for their treason, and four more were exiled from Miami for "as long as summer shall endure." Only now, years after the coup, is the Autumn Court re-emerging as a force within the city.

Tom Hood left no choice of successor when he died (or if he did, it was left with one of the other dead or exiled changelings), and the aftermath of the coup left no one with a clear position of seniority to step forward and claim the throne. Those who made their bids all the same rent the Court of Fear into several internal factions and a quagmire of shifting alliances and broken oaths. Perhaps ironically, the Leaden Mirror was ruled by fear: fear of being on the losing side, fear of betrayal and, most of all, fear that whoever claimed the throne in the end would be unable to live up to the legend of Tom Hood.

The recent emergence of Naamah, one of Tom's youngest and most zealous disciples, as the Autumn Queen has helped to bring the Court back to some semblance of stability. The internal strife has been subsumed, but not forgotten by any means. The Autumn Queen has decreed that there shall be no continuation of the vendettas from previous years and that the Court must now focus on the future and the restoration of the freehold (tacit condemnation of the City of Endless Summer) — which of course means that subtle vengeance and shadowy intrigues are the order of the day.

The Leaden Mirror feeds on fear, and there is much to fear in Miami. From the stories told by homeless children about Satan and his demons driving God out of Heaven to the very real possibility of mugging, rape or assault, from fears of academic failure among the students at the university to fear of expulsion from the in-crowd in the trendy club districts, there is so much fear in Miami that one hardly need cultivate it. The courtiers of the Autumn Court, though, does just that: they whisper in the ears of children that monsters will bear them away if they look into the window of a black Jeep at night, and they follow lone individuals walking home — always at a distance, but always close enough to be noticed. They invent weird stories about sorority house murders and spread barbed lies about who is secretly sleeping with whom. Naamah has seen her Court pass through its own fear after the death of Tom Hood, and she has seen the power that fear can bring. One day, perhaps sooner than anyone expects, that power will be turned like a knife at the heart of the City of Endless Summer, and Tom Hood will have his revenge.

The Autumn Court holds little in the way of actual "territory." Most Court members live in the same general vicinity, with a high concentration in and around Coral Gables and the University of Miami campus, but the Court does not claim any part of the city as "theirs" the way the Summer and Winter Courts do. Naamah claims that this is because the city of Miami should be freely open to all changelings, while the pundits of the other Courts suggest that the Queen of Autumn is afraid of her inability to enforce such a claim. All the same, changelings of the other Courts tread lightly when they visit the university, especially at night. There is a reason why so many campus horror stories begin with "a girl was walking home alone one night, when…"

The Court of Fear holds itself apart from the others, and has done since the death of Tom Hood. Save for the envoy to the Court of the King of Endless Summer, the Court as a whole avoids most contact with changeling society. The Courts of Autumn and Spring share many of the same goals in Miami, and together they stand a good chance of throwing off the yoke of the King of Endless Summer and restoring the processional Court of the season. Any alliance between the two is marred by the immense personal enmity between Naamah and Rose Thorne, an enmity that sometimes trickles down into the rank and file. The Leaden Mirror is almost universally united in its hatred of the Summer Court, either for Grandfather Thunder's abolition of the seasonal Court or the murder of Tom Hood. The Win-

ter Court is given little thought to; if Jeremiah Sleet wants to play gangster and deal in drugs and sorrow, the Autumn Court says let them. They can be brought back into the fold when the more pressing threat is dealt with.

The Winter Court

By all rights, the Winter Court should be one of the most powerful Courts in Miami. The Court's heavy involvement in the drug trade gives them not only wealth and power, but a steady source of sorrow stemming from the lives destroyed by their trade. Never a populous Court, Winter's children are a tight-knit bunch, more like a street gang than a royal Court. Jeremiah Sleet, the Court of Sorrow's King since the late 1970s, has forged his Court into a well-honed machine, growing steadily in temporal power even as it poisons the city around it. And yet, for all of that, the Winter Court remains the weakest of the Courts that remain in the city. The smallest of the Courts (with the possible exception of Maria Thorne's faction of the Spring Court), the Silent Arrow has been marginalized and pushed to one side in matters of freehold politics since the Court was founded.

With a talent for stealth and hunger for the sorrow of mortals, the Winter Court has established a niche for itself in the Miami underworld. The Winter Court is by no means the largest or most powerful group operating in the narcotics trade — wealth and power attracts exactly the attention the Winter Court doesn't want — but word on the street is that the "Snowmen" are a quality operation with an uncanny knack for staying under the radar and worming their distribution network into any neighborhood. Sleet runs his Court like a street gang: new recruits serve as mules, runners and lookouts, while the more established members handle the manufacture and distribution of the merchandise. Initiation rituals are said to be a harrowing experience; being jumped in by a gang of Ogres and Beasts is a process even the toughest might quail at.

Story Hook: Fairy Dust

A new drug has been hitting the streets in recent weeks. Known by the street names "fairy dust," "Tinkerbell" or just "D," the dealers say it's like combining the best of acid and Ecstasy in one hit; you'll see things both wonderful and terrible, and it'll open your mind to things you've never thought possible.

At least, that's the sales pitch. Rumor has it that the Winter Court created the stuff out of goblin fruits and strange psychedelic mushrooms found in the Hedge, and the drug opens your eyes to the wonders of Faerie. The downside, of course, is that when you can see the Others, the Others can see you.

Despite the Winter Court's reputation as nothing more than a gang of thugs and drug dealers, there are several members who try not to involve themselves in that lifestyle. By and large, the Winter Court accepts these changelings and their choices, but even the most adamantly "out of the game" courtiers dread that late-night phone call asking them to do "a favor for a friend." Jeremiah Sleet isn't a man you say "no" to lightly.

The Winter Court holds its seasonal brethren in generally low esteem when it thinks about them at all. The only real exception is Maria Thorne's Spring Court — the Court's party animal lifestyle and links to the South Beach club scene makes the Court an excellent funnel for designer drugs. Some members, particularly older ones, hold a grudge against the Summer Court for the death of La Llorona, but are careful not to beat their breast over it too loudly, lest mourning for the previous monarch be taken as regret over the current one. Likewise, much of the Winter Court has never quite forgiven the Autumn Court for Tom Hood's perceived bias against their Court.

The Gateway to the Americas

The city of Miami is located in the northeastern section of Miami-Dade County (originally just Dade County), on the southeastern tip of mainland Florida. The city rests on a broad plain between the Everglades and Biscayne Bay, with the Miami River draining out of the Everglades and running through downtown Miami to Biscayne Bay. The bay also contains several hundred barrier islands, some natural and some artificial, the largest of which is the location of the famous city of Miami Beach.

The entire Miami region was originally part of the Everglades, a vast swamp of sawgrass and mangrove that covered most of south Florida. As settlement in the area has grown, and particularly the population of Miami, the Everglades have been steadily reclaimed for human use. Still, Miami bears the hallmark of its heritage: the average elevation is about three feet above sea level, with the highest elevation barely cresting 15 feet above sea level. The Biscayne Aquifer rests just below the surface; in most places, it is impossible to dig more than 15 feet before hitting water. This makes underground construction all but impossible.

Miami at a Glance

Climate: Miami has a humid, subtropical climate, verging on a true tropical clime. Although technically the city has only recorded triple-digit temperatures once in its history (July 21, 1942), the humidity often pushes the heat index up to 110 degrees Fahrenheit. The city does experience cold fronts from November through March, and even recorded snowfall once in 1977.

Rain is abundant, with roughly six feet per year. Miami is statistically the most likely of any major city to be hit by a hurricane.

Economy: Despite Miami's reputation as a city dependent on tourism, the city is a major financial center, and a prime location for international commerce. Many corporations who do business in Latin America have regional headquarters in Miami, and the city's airport and seaport are among the busiest in the country. Despite this, poverty is a very real problem in Miami, with almost 30% of the population below the poverty line.

Government: Miami is governed by an elected mayor and a council of five city commissioners representing the city's five districts.

Population: The population is just over 350,000 in Miami proper, with 2.3 million in the larger urban area. The majority of the population is Hispanic, and Miami has the largest percentage of individuals who speak a language other than English at home. English, Spanish and Haitian Creole are the city's official languages.

Media and Culture: The *Miami Herald* is the city's primary English-language newspaper, with *El Nuevo Herald* and *Diario Las Americas* serving the Spanish-speaking population. The city has several professional sports teams, including the Miami Dolphins (football), the Miami Heat (basketball), the Florida Panthers (Hockey) and the Florida Marlins (baseball).

The Urban Sprawl

Miami sits along the shore of Biscayne Bay, with the Miami River bisecting the city on a roughly northwest to southeast line. The city occupies an area of about 55 square miles, making it one of the smallest major cities in the country. Miami is connected by several major highways, with I-95 running north-south along the eastern part of the city, I-75 running the same direction through the western portion before turning west into the Everglades (a lonely, desolate stretch of road called "Alligator Alley") north of the city. U.S. Route 1 connects most of the major cities on America's East Coast; the highway passes through Miami and becomes the Overseas Highway through the Florida Keys.

The following section provides a brief overview of several of the most prominent districts in the city of Miami. Obviously, this appendix can only scratch the surface of a city as diverse and fascinating as Miami; Storytellers and players are encouraged to research areas of interest either on the Internet or in travel guides and almanacs if a more accurate and detailed look at Miami is your cup of tea.

A Brief Note on Terminology

For simplicity's sake, the word "Miami" is used to refer collectively to the freehold of Miami and its environs. Several of the locales described below are actually their own independent cities, and are only associated with Miami because of geography, culture and economy.

Downtown Miami

Miami's central financial and business district runs from South 10th Street to North 17th Street, and from I-95 to the bay. The Miami River divides the neighborhood into two sub-districts: north of the river is the shopping and government district most popular with tourists and the terminally trendy, while south of the river is the Brickell financial district. Downtown also hosts several large venues, including the AmericanAirlines Arena (home of the Miami Heat) and the Carnival Center for the Performing Arts, which includes an opera house and a concert hall. Downtown likewise hosts a sizable club district, though one that doesn't compare with Miami Beach. Still, some members of the Spring Court prefer the downtown scene, and changelings of all Courts who fancy themselves more cultured take in attractions such as the Bayfront Park Market and outdoor shows at the AT&T Amphitheater. The Summer Court, unsurprisingly, attends athletic competitions regularly at the arena.

Downtown Miami is renowned for its unique skyline, with many of the buildings decked out in brilliant greens, pinks and orange neons that sometimes make the city look more like Las Vegas in Florida. Urban folklore holds that angels eat the light from those neon-lit buildings; whether or not angels find it palatable is open to debate, but changelings, at least, can gain a point of Glamour once per night by plucking a shard of neon light from the air and eating it.

Of more interest to most changelings, though, is the Court of the King of Endless Summer located in the abandoned Freedom Tower at 600 Biscayne Boulevard. This 255-foot skyscraper was used as a processing center to document and provide medical and dental care to Cuban refugees in the 1960s and '70s. The building was sold off in 1974, after the first major wave of immigration, but the hope and joy of all those people for whom the tower was the first taste of a life of freedom left an indelible imprint on the building. When it was eventually abandoned, the building became a haven for squatters and the homeless — still a place of refuge, albeit in a different way. Homeless children refer to it as "the big pink haunted house," perhaps a reference to its mystical activity.

The upper floors of the building contain a Hollow; if one makes three right turns through three doorways on the top floor, one enters a space reminiscent of the building's

cupola, only considerably larger and decorated in the rich livery of the Summer Court. Thunder's Courts are typically held in the early afternoon, with the sun at its peak and the city at its hottest. On his fiery throne, he hears grievances, settles disputes and addresses problems within the freehold. Lately, and distressingly, this has focused more on responding to alleged sightings of the Others and the disappearance of more than a few changelings.

Coconut Grove

Once an independent city in its own right, Coconut Grove stretches from N. Prospect Avenue in the south to the intersection of U.S. Route 1 and Brickell Avenue in the north, and from Le Jeune Road in the west to Biscayne Bay in the east. Coconut Grove is one of the trendier and wealthier areas of Miami, famous for an annual art festival and the huge variety of restaurants in the district. Coconut Grove has a very Caribbean atmosphere, and hosts many festivals celebrating Caribbean lifestyle, cuisine and music throughout the year.

By night, Coconut Grove comes alive, with an ample selection of bars, nightclubs and shows that cater primarily to a younger crowd: students from the University of Miami, young professionals fresh off work in the financial district and the like. In keeping with the neighborhood's styling, many of these venues feature Caribbean music such as calypso or reggae.

In recent months, a peculiar story has begun circulating among the children of Coconut Grove; specifically among students at St. Stephen's School, a private school for children up to sixth grade. The story came to the attention of a scholar of the Autumn Court while researching the childhood concept of fear, and she spread it to the rest of the Court of Fear, from whence it spread throughout the city.

The story goes that if a child is left unattended on school grounds and admonished to behave (specifically, to *not* engage in a specific behavior or activity) while the adults are away, a terrible fiend called the Great Tall Tailor-Man will burst through the nearest door and horribly mutilate the misbehaving child. Often, the punishment is said to relate to the mandate the child broke: a child who peeps in a filing cabinet after being told not to look around has his eyes sewn shut, a child who sucks her thumb against the teacher's authority has the digit snipped off and so on. Sometimes, the stories say, the Tailor carries the naughty child away to some unknown and grim fate.

Coral Gables

Called the "City Beautiful," Coral Gables is an independent city often lumped in with Miami due to the presence of the University of Miami. Coral Gables is very much a college town, with plenty of student housing, shops and restaurants, and a pedestrian-friendly layout. The city is famous (or perhaps infamous) for its strict aesthetic regulations, covering everything from mandatory bicycle racks to requiring that all buildings, even parking structures, maintain architectural styles that complement their neighbors.

Without a doubt, the University of Miami is the city's most prominent landmark, with its 240-acre campus and several satellite campuses around town. The Autumn Court is thick on the ground here, with quite a few of its members either enrolled or ensconced in staff positions (mostly security, janitorial and similar menial jobs, but at least one Darkling has tenure in the psychology department), and they vigorously defend their "turf" against encroachment. Naamah, the Autumn Queen, holds court on every gibbous moon in the John C. Gifford Arboretum on campus, and several of the younger courtiers are known for putting on a very impressive (and exclusive) Halloween party, complete with "haunted" house (which actually winds into the Hedge in one or two instances, if the stories are to be believed).

Little Haiti

Between 36th and 85th Streets, bordered by U.S. Route 1 and Miami Avenue, lies Little Haiti. Little Haiti (or *La Petite Haïti*) began life as Lemon City, a small agricultural town known for its lemon groves. Lemon City was annexed by Miami in 1925, and over the years, a steady stream of Haitian immigrants gave the district its new name.

Haitian markets and restaurants abound in the district, and voodoo is practiced prominently (albeit usually in secret for fear of discrimination). Thanks to the efforts of several prominent citizens, Little Haiti is gradually experiencing an urban rejuvenation, including the development of the trendy Miami Design District in the southern tip of the district, but crime and poverty still remain very real problems. The Winter Court, in particular, has worked against the renewal process, as Little Haiti is one of the Court's pre-eminent markets in the drug trade.

Recently, the neighborhood has been the site of several violent vigilante attacks on drug dealers; at least three have been beaten to death and dumped at the feet of the statue of General Toussaint L'Ouverture on the corner of 62nd Street and Miami Avenue. One of the victims was an ensorcelled ally of the Winter Court, and several members of the Silent Arrow suspect the Summer Court's involvement.

Little Havana

Little Havana was once one of the largest Cuban neighborhoods in the state. Ironically, despite the neighborhood's name, recent years have shown a trend toward an exodus by Cuban Americans and an influx of immigrants from Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala. Part of the neighborhood is actually referred to now as "Little Managua." Nevertheless, Cuban culture remains a prominent part of the neighborhood and draws many tourists.

The neighborhood is best known for its annual Calle Ocho Street Festival, a part of Carnival. The massive cel-

ebration takes place on 8th Street (hence the name "Calle Ocho") between 27th Avenue and 4th Avenue and attracts more than one million visitors each year, including a sizable portion of the city's changeling population. Calle Ocho has been a tradition among all the Courts, but especially the Antler Crown, for 15 years, and is generally treated as an excuse to cut loose and enjoy the wild side of life.

Miami Beach

Assumed by many to be a neighborhood of Miami, Miami Beach is actually an independent city, albeit closely linked to Miami. Miami Beach occupies the largest of the barrier islands in Biscayne Bay, and is linked to the mainland by three causeways: I-195, the Venetian Causeway and MacArthur Causeway. Famous for its Art Deco district, Miami Beach has been a popular tourist destination for decades; the famous South Beach district in particular has been greatly revitalized by the tourist trade. Before the area was made world famous as a primary shooting location for *Miami Vice*, much of South Beach was home to retirees living in small tenements and to the famous "cocaine cowboys," the entrepreneurial early smugglers of cocaine into the United States.

No mention of Miami Beach would be complete without a discussion of the clubs, bars and nightspots that make the city famous. South Beach (composed of the southernmost 23 blocks of the island) is the most prominent nightclub district on the island, and "exclusive" barely begins to describe it. Typical covers range from $20 to $60, and if the door staff doesn't like your look, you won't get in even with the money. The clubs themselves are mercurial and ever-changing; one might even suspect them of being owned by the Others. A goth industrial club that was all the rage last season might become a hip-hop club that no one would be seen dead in this season; obviously, one must be extremely astute to navigate the South Beach social scene.

Maria Thorne and her faction hold the deeds to three clubs in South Beach: one on Ocean Drive and two more on Washington Street. Currently, they are called Kim's, the Condor and Born, though they may well change at a moment's notice. Vichy Spring claims no actual territory, though, and South Beach is a common haunt for changelings of all Courts. The clubs are popular places to get a Glamour-buzz, negotiate backroom deals or just hook up and get laid (mortals don't have a monopoly on drunken debauchery, after all).

Overtown

Directly north of Downtown Miami lies Overtown, one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city. Created in 1896, the same year Miami was incorporated, Overtown was born out of the Jim Crow laws of the day. The law restricted where blacks were permitted to live, and so the land west of Henry Flagler's railroad tracks was given over to the (mostly black) rail workers and became known as "Colored Town." In its early years, the district was a vibrant and active part of the community and a popular tourist destination, frequently featuring entertainment by the era's most prominent artists, including Billie Holliday, Cab Calloway and Ella Fitzgerald. Over the years, though, as the discriminatory laws were repealed and many residents moved out, the area became one of the poorest places in all of southern Florida. Today, Overtown is a violent, gang-ridden neighborhood with one of the highest murder rates per capita in the country.

Overtown is a bastion of the more aggressive members of the Summer Court, and at least a few of the street gangs in the neighborhood are either led by or composed entirely of Iron Spear soldiers. The close proximity to downtown means easy access to the Court in the Freedom Tower as well.

Liberty City

Along with Overtown, Liberty City is Miami's largest African American community, with more than half of the city's African American population. The neighborhood runs east from 27th Avenue to I-95, and from 97th Street south to 41st Street. Liberty City was named for the low-income Liberty Square Housing Project built in the late 1930s to relieve crowding in Overtown. In the 1960s, Liberty City achieved notoriety as the location of the first fully interracial congregation of the Presbyterian Church in the American South. In 1980, the neighborhood again came to prominence, though for a less noble reason: the acquittal of five white police officers involved in the fatal beating of a black motorist touched off a three-day riot that could not be quelled even by the deployment of 1,000 National Guardsmen and earned Miami a "disaster area" label by the federal government.

Today, Liberty City fares little better than the neighborhood it was founded to help. An extremely poor neighborhood, Liberty City has a high index of violent crime and gang activity; in 1998, a drug war between rival factions of the John Does street gang served as a smokescreen for a skirmish between the Winter and Summer Courts, with the Silent Arrow retaking a sizable chunk of the territory the Court had lost in the riots 18 years earlier.

The Hedge

The Hedge around Miami takes on a semblance of the Everglades that once covered the area: dense, swampy paths wind through impossibly tangled mangroves, and sawgrass lashes thirstily at anyone foolish enough to leave the path. Closer to the mortal world, the detritus of the city bleeds through: used needles, spent shell casings and other relics of the sordid side of life litter the Hedge. In some places, the "path" is not a path at all, but a waterway navigable by barge or raft. Several changelings have reported encountering strange, Charon-like beings poling roughly made barges along these watery trods, witch-lanterns glowing on the ends of their poles. Supposedly, these boatmen will ferry a changeling through the Hedge for a pledge of Glamour or a small token.

The Goblin Market

Every Saturday from the witching hour till dawn, the Bayside Marketplace becomes a haven for nightmares. Goblin barges, poled by strange creatures from the depths of the Hedge, dock along the deserted quays to hawk their wares. Most weeks, the Market is fairly small and consists mainly of a dozen or so barges and boats tied up along the pier. Every new moon night, though, dozens, perhaps hundreds, of goblin watercraft converge on the bay, lay anchor and run gangplanks from dock to dock. In this floating warren of mazelike walkways, an innumerable bounty of goblin fruits, tokens and dreamscapes are bought and sold, alongside wares even stranger and more surreal.

Despite being tied so intimately to an earthly locale, the Goblin Market actually takes place in the Hedge, albeit very close to the mortal realm. On the smaller market nights, each barge sets up a simple, empty doorframe on the dock; patrons walk the pier in the mortal realm and step into the Hedge at each market stall to inspect the wares. On the nights of the grander market, those who know the key can enter the Hedge by passing under an archway near the water while holding a finger bent like a shepherd's crook over the heart. These larger markets are a dizzying affair to navigate. One urban legend among changelings holds that part of the Goblin Market's Contract is that the Others may take any unfortunate who gets lost amid the shifting mass of decks, planks and rope bridges. Prudent changelings hire an experienced guide, or just avoid the Market altogether on those nights — just in case.

Denizens of the Freehold

Miami is home to approximately 100 changelings, not counting the exiles of Rose Thorne's Spring Court. The following characters are among the most prominent: Court leaders, up-and-coming players and just those who have gained a reputation.

Rose Thorne

Quote: *"We have been thrown down, but we will rise again. We have been turned out, but we will return. No matter how stubbornly it clings to the year, no Summer lasts forever."*

Background: One of the three original founders of the freehold of Miami, Rose Thorne was the most fervent sup-

porter of Tom Hood's vision of a changeling society. Taken in 1939 by a Fae Knight of Flowers, her durance was a half-recalled nightmare of crawling through the Hedge on her belly, torn and bloodied by the Thorns as she hunted for the rare blue roses her master fancied. She escaped more by luck than anything else, her long years of wriggling through the tiniest gap in the Hedge to pluck out the precious blossoms allowing her to find a path her Keeper's dogs could not follow.

Rose is one of the oldest changelings in Miami, and with that age comes a great deal of respect. Within her own Court, Rose has attained an almost mythical status, especially since she vanished into the Everglades. Now stories of her circulate like a kind of changeling Robin Hood — if the stories are to be believed, Rose Thorne has done everything from appear to homeless children to protect them from gang violence to drive off a hunting party from Faerie that had cornered several young changelings.

Of course, the official position of the City of Endless Summer is quite different. Officially, Rose Thorne is a madwoman skulking in the swamp, having abandoned any vestige of Clarity and made deals with the Others to assure her eventual return to power. Within the Spring Court, these rumors are the subject of numerous crude jokes, but outside of the Antler Crown, Rose's sanity, at least, is not exactly considered rock-solid. Rumors about Fae complicity are mostly accepted as political rhetoric — but the paranoia that lurks so often in the changeling heart can't help but wonder.

Description: Rose is a striking woman who appears to be in her late 30s. Once, she was invariably dressed in the latest fashions and projected an image of serene self-confidence, but these days her exile has worn on her greatly. The few who have seen her have said she is haggard and drawn, with age and the weight of her struggle lining her face and clad in the travel-stained and ragged remnants of her finery.

To mortal eyes, Rose is a tall, statuesque woman with long, blonde hair and strikingly bright blue eyes. She has full, naturally deep red lips and skin as soft as rose petals. In her fae mien, her skin takes on a slight bluish tinge, and her lips deepen to a dark midnight blue. Rose stems twine around her limbs like green wire, but somehow the thorns never seem to prick her. The Mantle of Spring enfolds her in life; the air around her always smells of fresh-mown grass, and flowers spring up at her feet when she walks. A crown of twined roses chased with silver and glass shines on her brow, marking her as the true Queen of Spring.

Storytelling Hints: Rose is fiercely devoted to her Court and her cause, and will not hesitate to take actions that others might consider extreme in her quest to throw down Grandfather Thunder's regime. She stops short of knowingly sending members of her own Court on suicide missions, but she certainly would not have a problem sending cat's-paws from the other Courts into harm's way if doing so will further her ends.

Years in the Everglades, living like a fugitive (and sometimes like an animal) has worn on Rose's Clarity. The constant press of the wetlands reminds her uncomfortably of her time in Faerie, and her self-control is beginning to crack. Sometimes she dreams that she never left her master's garden, and that her life in Miami has been a cruel trick. Sometimes, she dreams that she has been chosen as a kind of messiah, fated to deliver Miami from the tyranny of Summer. As these delusions gain hold on her mind, there's no telling what she might try.

Seeming: Elemental
Kith: Woodblood
Court: Spring
Entitlements: None
Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 5
Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3
Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 3
Mental Skills: Academics 2, Occult (Fae) 4, Politics (Freehold of Miami) 4
Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl (Thorny Limbs) 1, Stealth 3, Survival 3
Social Skills: Empathy 4, Expression 2, Intimidation 1, Persuasion (Rhetoric) 5, Socialize 2, Subterfuge 3
Merits: Allies (Changeling Revolutionaries) 3, Harvest (Protecting Street Children from Harm) 3, Hollow 8 (Size 2, Amenities 2, Wards 3, Doors 1), Fame 2, Mantle (includes Crown) 5, Retainer 4

Willpower: 8
Clarity: 4
Virtue: Justice
Vice: Pride
Initiative: 5
Defense: 2
Speed: 9
Health: 8
Wyrd: 5
Contracts: Mirror ••; Smoke ••; Elements ••••• (Plants and Thorns), Eternal Spring ••, Fleeting Spring ••
Pledges: The Reaper's Pledge (protect children from harm in exchange for a large palm frond left in a cemetery), Good Neighbors Pact (Maria Thorne)
Glamour/per Turn: 14/5
Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Range*	*Dice Pool*	*Special*
Brawl	0(B)	–	3	–

Maria Thorne

Quote: *"What? I can't hear you. Can you say that — oh my God, I* love *this song! You wanna dance?"*

Background: Maria Thorne claims to be Rose Thorne's daughter, and the Spring Queen has never publicly denied the claim. Whether the claim should be taken in the literal, biological sense or a more metaphorical one has never been clarified by either woman. Maria remembers (or claims to remember) little of her time in Faerie or of her life before; she emerged from the Hedge in Miami Beach in the late 1990s, shortly before Grandfather Thunder's coup. At the time, the Spring Court had a strong presence there, and when a motley of Broadback satyrs in the middle of a bar-crawl of epic proportions found her and saw her resemblance to their Queen, they immediately took her to Rose. Neither has spoken about what transpired in that meeting, but Maria was formally brought out to the Antler Crown as "Maria Thorne." It wasn't until some years later, after the coup and the Spring Court's exile, that she began to expressly call herself Rose's daughter, a claim that rallied several discontented courtiers to join her in her return to Miami.

It is widely speculated, especially amongst Rose Thorne's loyalists, that it was only the Thorne name that lent any weight to Maria's exodus; had her name been Maria Bramble, they sneer, she would have been lucky to convince even one changeling to return with her to the city. While this theory may be a slight exaggeration, it certainly is not entirely without merit.

Description: Maria is a short, slender Latina woman with full, luscious features and tightly curled hair that reaches her shoulders. In her mortal guise, her skin is the color of light coffee, contrasting with her dark, almost black eyes and cinnamon hair. To the eyes of the fae, her hair takes on an iridescent quality, shifting between blue and red and all the colors in which roses can be found. Her ringlets tighten up and twist into more complex patterns, making her hair resemble a flowing mass of roses in various stages of blossom. Her scent is that of a rose garden in the height of bloom.

However others see her, Maria is always dressed in the trendiest and most revealing outfits on the South Beach club scene. She favors blues and reds and blacks, and is almost always accompanied by one or two hangers-on, whether mortal groupies or changeling cohorts.

Storytelling Hints: Maria fancies herself a savvy politician and skilled leader like her mother, a delusion bolstered by the fact that she "persuaded" Grandfather Thunder to give her and her followers South Beach, but in truth she is more akin to the queen bee of the high school clique: she leads by sheer force of personality, good looks and the reputation of her name. Maria is more interested in being left alone to dance and party her life away in whatever club happens to be the hot spot of the week than in forging any sort of real political entity. Unless she savvies up rather quickly, she may well find herself forcibly pushed out of the top spot by one of her more ambitious hangers-on.

Seeming: Fairest
Kith: Flowering
Court: Spring ("Vichy" faction)
Entitlements: None
Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 1
Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 4, Composure 2
Mental Skills: Academics 1, Computer 1, Occult 2
Physical Skills: Athletics (Graceful) 3, Firearms (Pistols) 1, Larceny 2, Weaponry 1
Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression (Dance) 5, Socialize (SoBe Club Scene), Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2
Merits: Barfly 1, Contacts 3 (South Beach Rumor Mill, Bouncers, Designer Drug Dealers), Court Goodwill (Summer) 1, Mantle 3, Resources 3, Retainer 2, Striking Looks 4
Willpower: 3
Clarity: 5
Virtue: Charity
Vice: Lust
Initiative: 7
Defense: 4
Speed: 11
Health: 8
Wyrd: 3
Contracts: Dream ••; Vainglory ••, Fleeting Spring ••
Pledges: The Motley Pledge, Pledge of Horn and Bone, Good Neighbors Pact (Rose Thorne)
Glamour/per Turn: 12/3
Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Range*	*Dice Pool*	*Special*
Knife	1(L)	–	3	–
Light Pistol	2(L)	20/40/80	9	–

Grandfather Thunder

Quote: *"I'm very sorry you feel that way. Perhaps we can find an… alternative way to resolve your grievance."*

Background: A longshoreman named Juozapas Tirva was one of the people reported missing and never found after the 1926 hurricane. When the howling storm reached its peak, the Lithuanian immigrant was speared by a lance of white lightning, wielded by a laughing giant made of wind and rain. Juozapas was not seen again for nearly a decade, and when he returned, he was a different man. The storm lived in him, and he in it; during Miami's notoriously bad thunderstorms, he would often walk the piers alone, drinking in the fury. Some said he actually missed his captivity, and longed to return to the endless maelstrom of his Keeper's palace. Others said the stubborn old bastard was after revenge, and that he walked those docks screaming his Keeper's name until he was hoarse, a cold iron hammer clutched under his coat.

Even without a unified Court structure in Miami, Thunder quickly rose to prominence. He had a reputation for being able to solve other people's problems, usually in a forceful, even brutally direct fashion. Within a month of his return, he had tracked down his fetch and beaten it to death with a claw hammer, and rumors circulated in those days that he had even beaten down an exiled Fae. When Tom Hood arrived with his knowledge of the Courts, Thunder (already called Grandfather by then) readily swore to the Iron Spear and spent the next decades building his power base.

Grandfather Thunder may well be the oldest and most personally powerful changeling in Miami. Certainly he is the most temporally powerful, and the oldest changeling known to be active. Already a respected figure in Miami even before Tom Hood returned from Europe, Grandfather Thunder was initially a strong supporter of the seasonal Court. It was only as the years wore on, and the respect and awe he'd held in the days before the freehold of Miami lessened, that he began to grow discontent with his lot. The coup came as a brutal shock to the entire city, and it was in large part that shock that allowed him to seize control so completely. Now he just has to hold it.

Description: Grandfather Thunder is a wiry, imposing man who looks to be in his late 60s. He has long since shed his image as a rough-around-the-edges dockyard worker, trading in oilskins and steel-toed boots for tailored suits and Italian leather shoes. He tends to dress in dark colors with a single, striking accent — a charcoal suit with a sky-blue tie, for example. In his mortal mien, he has a thin fringe of gray hair and a deeply lined face with dark brown eyes.

His fae guise is similar, but his hair deepens to the bruised black of a thundercloud, and lightning flashes in

the deeps of his eyes. A phantom smell of ozone surrounds him, and the fiery crown of Summer hovers over his head. Whenever Grandfather Thunder enters a room, the temperature seems to rise by several degrees — perceptible even to ordinary mortals, as his powerful Wyrd cannot be entirely contained by the Mask. When he grows angry or is in the presence of sufficient wrath, a faint halo of St. Elmo's Fire flickers around him, leaking through the Mask as well.

Storytelling Hints: For all that he projects the image of an invincible, all but infallible ruler, Grandfather Thunder worries about the legacy of his reign. Changelings are not immortal, after all, and he has lived a long life even by the standards of the fae. Moreover, recent reports have begun to suggest an alarming increase of sightings of the True Fae, and it cannot be denied that a number of changelings have gone missing over the past few years. In the darkest parts of the night, Grandfather Thunder wonders if perhaps his actions have damned his city.

Thunder's rulership takes a page from the Caesars of old: give the people bread and circuses to placate them, give them largely free reign to do as they will, but punish any dissension with brutal efficiency in the hopes of discouraging any repeat performances.

Seeming: Elemental

Kith: Fireheart

Court: Summer

Entitlements: None

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 6, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 6, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Investigation 3, Occult (Fae) 4, Politics 5

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl (Thundering Fists) 3, Weaponry (Hammers) 4

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression (Oratory) 5, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 6, Streetwise 2

Merits: Danger Sense 2, Eidetic Memory 2, Fast Reflexes 2, Iron Stamina 2, Allies (Local Government) 2, Contacts (Occult, Changeling Society, Neighboring Freeholds) 3, Inspiring 4, Resources 4, Retainer 5, Status (Freehold) 5, Harvest 4, Hollow 13 (Size 4, Amenities 5, Wards 4), Mantle (includes Crown) 5

Willpower: 8

Clarity: 4

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Speed: 11

Health: 7

Wyrd: 7

Contracts: Hearth ••; Elements ••••• (Thunderstorm), Vainglory ••; Fleeting Summer •••, Eternal Summer •••

Pledges: Commendation (liege for all sworn changelings of the City of Endless Summer), The Knight's Oath (liege for all sworn knights), Good Neighbors Pact (Jeremiah Sleet)

Glamour/per Turn: 20/7

Frailties: Cannot sleep in a room without at least one open window (minor taboo), pained by skin contact with copper (minor bane)

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Range*	*Dice Pool*	*Special*
Brawl	0(B)	–	6	–
Maul	4(B)	–	12	–

Deathless Ivan

Quote: *"Ha! That was funny. Try that again."*

Background: Russian folklore tells tales of Koschei the Deathless, a cruel and vicious man who could not be killed because he kept his soul bound up in a needle, which was hidden inside an egg, which was in a duck, which was in turn in a hare, which was in an iron chest buried under an oak tree on a distant island. While Deathless Ivan might not have gone to quite those lengths to ensure his immortality, he is certainly nigh-impossible to kill, and the presence of his soul is something to be disputed. The huge Ogre serves as Grandfather Thunder's personal bodyguard, chief enforcer and, rumor has it, assassin.

Description: However one sees him, Ivan is massive. Almost seven feet tall and topping 350 pounds, the man is a hulking wall of ugly muscle and sadistic grin. Unless attending a Court function (in which case he crams himself into a tuxedo), he tends to dress like a drifter: layers of frayed, torn and dirty clothes, sturdy boots and a wool cap pulled down over his head. In his mortal guise, Ivan is ugly; in his fae mien, he is horrendous. Skin the purplish shade of a new bruise and a face that looks like it's taken a trip through a meat grinder are shocking enough, but the most unnerving aspect of his mien is the ragged tear in his chest that seems to show the empty space where his heart should be. The reds of his Summer Mantle only seem to further discolor his flesh away from any living hue.

Storytelling Hints: Deathless Ivan rarely speaks, and when he does it is in a voice utterly devoid of passion or life. Those who have seen him smile have reported that they would rather face down the Wild Hunt with not even an iron nail for self-defense than see that smile directed at them. That his sanity is eroded is not in doubt, but how he got that way and how Grandfather Thunder came to control him are subjects of considerable debate.

Seeming: Ogre

Kith: Stonebones

Court: Summer

Entitlements: None

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Investigation 2, Occult (Fae) 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (Overpowering) 5, Drive 2, Stealth (Ambushes) 2, Weaponry 4

Social Skills: Intimidation (Torture) 4, Streetwise 1

Merits: Brawling Dodge 1, Danger Sense 2, Fast Reflexes 2, Fighting Style: Boxing 3, Giant 4, Iron Stamina 3, Iron Stomach 2, Strong Back 1, Mantle 2, Status (Freehold) 3

Willpower: 7

Clarity: 3

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Gluttony

Initiative: 6

Defense: 2

Speed: 12

Health: 10

Wyrd: 4

Contracts: Smoke •; Stone •••; Fleeting Summer •• ; Goblin — Trading Luck for Fate, Delayed Harm

Pledges: Commendation (Grandfather Thunder), The Knight's Oath (Grandfather Thunder)

Glamour/per Turn: 13/4

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Range*	*Dice Pool*	*Special*
Brawl	0(B)	–	10	–
War Axe	5(L), 9 again	–	14	–

Naamah

Quote: *"I've got a better idea. Why don't you shut your mouth, do what I tell you and start spreading the rumor of a spree killer on campus?"*

Background: Queen Naamah rules the Autumn Court with an iron hand that belies her seeming youthfulness. She took power after several years without an Autumn monarch, and while her supporters say she was chosen by the shade of Tom Hood himself, her opponents prefer to think that she was settled on simply because the Court as a whole was tired of infighting, and the other hopefuls thought she would be most easily controlled from behind the throne. As it turns out, they were wrong. Headstrong and stubborn as only a teenager can be, Naamah backed that willfulness with a razor-sharp mind and a zealous devotion to the ideals of Tom Hood. After forcing all of her subjects to pledge fealty to her and forswear any continuation of grudges left over from the interregnum, she turned the wisest and most fearsome members of her Court to the task of focusing and harvesting the ambiance of fear that hangs over the city of Miami. Fear, Naamah believes, is a weapon as sharp as any sword and baneful as the coldest iron. When the city's fear is sharp enough, it will be the key to destroying Grandfather Thunder.

Description: Naamah is a tall, willowy girl who appears to be about 16 years old. Her skin is the pale of a china

doll, made to seem even paler by her jet-black hair and deep green eyes. She wears round, wire-rimmed glasses and favors sheer, simply cut dresses in blacks and midnight blues.

In her fae mien, her black hair takes on a richness mortal eyes have never dreamed of, with layers of different shades of black that somehow all seem to be the purest black imaginable. Her skin becomes almost pure white, and her eyes lose any definition between white, iris and pupil. Her figure seems impossibly thin, as though she might snap in half like an autumn twig at any moment.

Storytelling Hints: Naamah is a quiet, calculating young woman who seeks to emulate her teacher in all things. She tries to lead the Autumn Court the way Tom Hood did, but the infighting and chaos since his murder have weakened her Court. In order to regain a foothold of power, and to muster the fear she believes will allow her to destroy Thunder, she is quite willing to make life a living terror for the mortals within her domain.

Seeming: Darkling

Kith: Antiquarian

Court: Autumn

Entitlements: None

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics (Research) 4, Computer 2, Investigation 3, Occult 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Larceny 2, Stealth (Blending with Crowds) 3, Weaponry (Swords) 2

Social Skills: Empathy (Fears) 3, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Subterfuge (Careful Omission) 3

Merits: Eidetic Memory 2, Encyclopedic Knowledge 4, Meditative Mind 1, Allies (University of Miami Faculty) 2, Contacts (College Students, Bad Neighborhoods) 2, Mantle 3, Hallow 4 (Size 2, Amenities 1, Wards 1)

Willpower: 7

Clarity: 5

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 6

Defense: 2

Speed: 9

Health: 7

Wyrd: 3

Contracts: Hearth •; Mirror •; Smoke •••; Artifice •; Darkness ••; Fleeting Autumn ••; Eternal Autumn •

Pledges: The Motley Pledge, Pledge of Horn and Bone

Glamour/per Turn: 12/3

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Range*	*Dice Pool*	*Special*
Brawl	0(B)	–	1	–
Rapier	2(L)	–	7	Armor Piercing 1

Story Hook: Bloody Mary

In the homeless shelters around Miami, children tell stories of a wicked spirit called Bloody Mary who murders children in their beds. According to the story, this Bloody Mary is not summoned by a silly party game in a dark bathroom; she hunts children through the night, and once she's seen your face, she can find you anywhere. The children ascribe her various origins — she is the Devil's wife, or she is an angel gone bad or she is a mother who killed her own children — but what the stories don't tell is that Bloody Mary is the invention of the Autumn Queen, Naamah, as an early experiment in honing extant mortal fears into something greater and more focused.

Or at least, she *was*. Lately, the stories have become more frequent and varied, and they are being told by more than just children. Adult mortals, changelings and even other supernaturals have begun to tell of sightings of this supposedly fictional entity. Have the stories of Bloody Mary actually come to life? Have they attracted the attention of one of the Others, who has taken the guise of Bloody Mary for its own purposes? Or did Naamah not in fact invent Bloody Mary as she'd claimed?

Cerastes

Quote: *"Look, you didn't hear this from me, but…"*

Background: Leon Fame (almost certainly an assumed name, but the only one anyone's gotten him to admit to) has always been good at duplicity. Before he was ever taken to Faerie, he made a respectable living as an attorney, chasing ambulances for fun and profit. He was married to a pretty girl he'd met in high school, but that didn't stop him smooth-talking his way into every bed that caught his fancy. He bilked his clients out of most of their settlements, and he wasn't exactly forthcoming with his taxes. Perhaps it was his knack for deceit that drew the Serpent to him, or maybe he just happened to look enough like a bright, hot mouse to catch the Fae's attention. How long he spent in Faerie he can't say — his captor enjoyed toying with Cerastes's perception of time and fate. At least once, he thought he had escaped his slavery, returned home a changed man and began a happy life anew with his wife — only to see her dissolve into the Serpent's form, laughing at him, and cast him back into his cage.

Cerastes escaped for real a year ago, and found his way back to Miami. He fell in with the Autumn Court, and despite private doubts that this is anything more than another of his Keeper's jests, Cerastes allied himself with the faction that promoted Naamah as Tom Hood's successor. Thanks in large part

to his manipulations of rival factions, Naamah now sits on the Throne of Autumn, and Cerastes enjoys a prestigious, if not exactly risk-free, position in the City of Endless Summer.

Cerastes is Naamah's envoy to the City of Endless Summer. He ensures that the Court's interests are maintained, and also watches Grandfather Thunder's courtiers for any sign of weakness, which Cerastes dutifully reports to his Queen. Just as the serpent he resembles, Cerastes is subtle, diligent and clever — and also mistrusted by his own Court and the others alike. He is seldom seen at gatherings of the Leaden Mirror, spending almost all of his time in the Freedom Tower with the influential and powerful Summer Court. His own Court suspects him of "going native," while the City of Endless Summer cannot help but suspect the solitary member of the Autumn Court so regularly in their midst is a spy.

Description: Cerastes is a tall, slender man with smooth, artificially tan skin and green eyes that run to jaundiced yellow in the right light. He is prematurely bald, with small ears and thin lips often twisted into a sly smile. In his fae mien, his skin is finely scaled, and his facial features almost nonexistent. Sharp teeth glint in a serpentine smile, and small, scaly horns jut from above his eyes.

Storytelling Hints: Cerastes isn't entirely convinced that any of this is real. Sometimes, that uncertainty paralyzes him with fear, and sometimes it makes him excessively reckless — after all, if he's still trapped in his Keeper's den, what does he have to lose? Paranoia aside, he tends to look out for number one first and foremost. He is loyal to his Court, in his fashion, but he has no qualms about screwing over anyone else if it will benefit him.

Seeming: Beast
Kith: Venombite
Court: Autumn
Entitlements: None
Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2
Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1
Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 2
Mental Skills: Academics (Trivia) 3, Computer 1, Occult 2, Politics 1
Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl (Bite) 2, Drive 1
Social Skills: Animal Ken (Reptiles) 3, Intimidation 2, Persuasion (Hypnotic) 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 3
Merits: Court Goodwill (Summer) 1, Mantle 2, Meditative Mind 1
Willpower: 4
Clarity: 5
Virtue: Faith
Vice: Greed
Initiative: 5
Defense: 3
Speed: 10
Health: 6
Wyrd: 2
Contracts: Mirror •; Smoke •; Fang and Talon ••• (Snakes); Fleeting Autumn ••
Pledges: The Motley Pledge
Glamour/per Turn: 11/2
Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Range*	*Dice Pool*	*Special*
Brawl	0(B)	–	4	–
Bite	0(B)	–	5	Toxicity 2 poison

Jeremiah Sleet, the Winter King

Quote: *"I can move seven keys in from Colombia by this time next week. The question is: can you pay what I'm asking?"*

Background: The inner-city ghettos of Miami have always been a breeding ground for crime. In many ways, it's expected; one can't grow up in an environment like that and *not* develop a heart as cold and hard as stone. Jeremiah Sleet — he has long since forgotten his original surname — was born into one such place. He doesn't remember which neighborhood was his; maybe Overtown, maybe somewhere else. He ran with his first gang when he was 13, and by 16 had already earned a reputation as a good one to have on your side in a fight. In early '77, while Jeremiah's gang was embroiled in a turf war with the Kings of the Glades, a rival crew, Jeremiah crossed paths with one of the Kings at a local cemetery where

both had buried fallen gang members. The King was ready to rumble, but Jeremiah, cold and methodical, pulled a gun and shot the young man dead. On that night, snow fell for the first and only time in Miami. On that night, Jeremiah disappeared. Two months later, a man who might once have been Jeremiah dug his way out of a grave and fled into the night, where a Winter Court motley found him. When La Llorona died during the Liberty City riots, Jeremiah Sleet took over operations of the Winter Court. The Silent Arrow very likely owes its continued existence to his leadership and ability to unify the disparate courtiers of Winter.

Sleet has watched for too long as the Court tried to earn its place in the freehold of Miami, only for courtiers to be ridiculed, pushed down and hunted like animals when it amused the more powerful Courts. Let Spring and Autumn lick their wounds and nurse thoughts of vengeance, let Summer stick its collective neck out and draw the ire of the Others. Jeremiah will do what the Winter Court does best: disappear, survive and wait. Let them all forget that the Silent Arrow even exists. When the Cousins come and carry them all away, then Winter will truly reign in the City of Endless Summer.

Description: Jeremiah is a blade-slender black man in his mid 40s, with close-cropped hair already faded to stark white and eyes so pale they look rheumy. He tends to dress stylishly but not ostentatiously, favoring shades of white and cream. In his fae mien, he resembles a days-dead corpse: ashen skin with a bluish undertone, blank, clouded eyes and a cold, clammy touch. A still, icy patch of cold hangs around him at all time, and colors seem to mute to gray in his presence. The bone and pewter crown of winter sits heavy on his head, and when he speaks, all other sound nearby seems muted as though by a heavy snowfall.

Storytelling Hints: Jeremiah Sleet runs his crew with a firm, guiding hand and a ruthless pragmatism that befits the heart of Winter. Loyalty is tested frequently, and failing a test means a severe beating if the offender is lucky. Outright traitors (more to the cops rather than another Court), by order of Sleet himself, are never so much as touched by the Court of Sorrow's enforcers. Invariably, before the next new moon, the traitor's body is found frozen stiff, with a rictus of agonized horror etched forever on its face.

On the other hand, Jeremiah Sleet looks after the loyal members of his Court as if they were family. The rest of the Courts turned on them, he reasons, so all the Silent Arrow has to depend on is itself.

Seeming: Darkling

Kith: Gravewight

Court: Winter

Entitlements: None

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Investigation 3, Science (Pharmaceuticals) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Firearms (Pistols) 3, Larceny (Breaking and Entering) 4, Stealth (Keeping Still) 2

Social Skills: Intimidation 3, Streetwise (Drug Gangs) 3, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Danger Sense 2, Fleet of Foot 3, Quick Draw 1, Allies (Criminals) 2, Contacts (Police, Longshoremen) 2, Mantle 3

Willpower: 6

Clarity: 4

Virtue: Temperance

Vice: Greed

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Speed: 14

Health: 7

Wyrd: 3

Contracts: Mirror ••; Smoke •• ; Darkness ••; Fleeting Winter ••, Eternal Winter •••; Goblin — Shooter's Bargain, Fair Entrance, Diviner's Madness

Pledges: The Motley Oath, Good Neighbors Pact (Grandfather Thunder)

Glamour/per Turn: 12/3

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Range*	*Dice Pool*	*Special*
Brawl	0(B)	–	6	–
Light Pistol	2(L)	20/40/80	9	–

Brer Spider

Quote: *"No, I'm sure we've never met before."*

Background: To the Autumn Court, Johnny Shanks is a Leechfinger sleep researcher, studying the medical side effects of night terrors on mortals even as he harvests Glamour from his subjects' fears. He's eccentric, but harmless; if anyone asked, they'd quickly learn that no one seems to know when he joined the Leaden Mirror, but no one ever does. To the Winter Court, Black Jules is a shadowy Skitterskulk lurking in the abandoned tenements in the bad part of town. If you're having troubles with an enemy, he can brew you up a poison that no magic can detect and even the heartiest constitution can't resist. All he asks in payment is a stray cobweb from your dreams. To the mortal inhabitants of Little Haiti, Old Ti is an *houngan* of considerable power and wisdom. When you're troubled by bad dreams, he can sell you a charm he learned from an Ojibwa medicine man that will give you the sweetest dreams you can imagine.

In truth, all three are the same man. The changeling who calls himself Brer Spider wears many faces, and it's a rare individual who knows more than one of them. No one knows where Spider came from or how long he's been here, but those few who even know he exists know him as the pre-eminent oneiromancer in Miami. He has studied dreams as few others before him, from the mystical aspects to the psychology and the physiological aspects.

Description: Brer Spider wears so many faces it's hard to even guess which one might be real. He has been tall and short, fat and whip-thin, white, black and everything in between. He's been a Beast and an Elemental, a goblin soldier and a fair demon lover. He's even been male and female.

The face he shows most often, at least to those who meet him in his identity as Brer Spider, is a middle-aged man of indeterminate Haitian or West African origin in an old-fashioned zoot suit and fedora. He smiles readily, but even when he's smiling at you he seems to be enjoying a private prank at your expense. To those with eyes that truly see, his eyes are beady and black and sometimes seem to come in quantities greater than two. Sometimes, out of the corner of an observer's eye, she'll swear she saw a mandible briefly unfold from his cheek, but Spider never seems to notice or acknowledge it. On the rare occasions he stands in an area bright enough that he casts a shadow, he appears to have eight limbs.

Storytelling Hints: Brer Spider is mostly interested in continuing his studies in peace, but if a fellow changeling offers Spider an interesting enough price, he can be persuaded to put his considerable skills in another's employ. He uses his numerous identities to get whatever he needs from the Courts without the fuss and bother of actually joining one, and beyond that he leaves the politics to the politicians. Always interested in acquiring rare and exotic dream-relics from the Hedge or from the minds of dreamers, he can be a useful (if fickle) ally or mentor if placated with gifts.

Seeming: Wizened
Kith: Artist
Court: Courtless
Entitlements: None
Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 5, Resolve 2
Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 1
Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 5, Composure 2
Mental Skills: Academics 3, Computer 1, Occult 5, Science (Dream Study) 3
Physical Skills: Larceny 2, Firearms 2, Stealth 3
Social Skills: Animal Ken (Spiders) 2, Empathy (Cold Reading) 4, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 5
Merits: Meditative Mind 1, Harvest (Mortals Who Use His Dreamcatchers) 3, Court Goodwill (Autumn) 2, Court Goodwill (Winter) 2, Hollow 9 (Size 1, Amenities 1, Doors 5, Wards 2), New Identity (Johnny Shanks) 2, New Identity (Black Jules) 2, New Identity (Old Ti) 2
Willpower: 4
Clarity: 5

Virtue: Prudence
Vice: Envy
Initiative: 6
Defense: 4
Speed: 10
Health: 6
Wyrd: 2

Contracts: Mirror ••••; Smoke ••; Artifice •••; Fang and Talon • (Arachnids); Dream ••••
Pledges: Pledge of Horn and Bone
Glamour/per Turn: 11/2
Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Range*	*Dice Pool*	*Special*
Heavy Pistol	3(L)	30/60/120	9	–

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Changeling: The Lost

Name: | Concept: | Seeming:
Player: | Virtue: | Kith:
Chronicle: | Vice: | Court:

Attributes

Power	Intelligence: ●OOOO	Strength: ●OOOO	Presence: ●OOOO
Finesse	Wits: ●OOOO	Dexterity: ●OOOO	Manipulation: ●OOOO
Resistance	Resolve: ●OOOO	Stamina: ●OOOO	Composure: ●OOOO

Skills

Mental
(-3 Unskilled)

Academics OOOOO
Computer OOOOO
Crafts OOOOO
Investigation OOOOO
Medicine OOOOO
Occult OOOOO
Politics OOOOO
Science OOOOO

Physical
(-1 Unskilled)

Athletics OOOOO
Brawl OOOOO
Drive OOOOO
Firearms OOOOO
Larceny OOOOO
Stealth OOOOO
Survival OOOOO
Weaponry OOOOO

Social
(-1 Unskilled)

Animal Ken OOOOO
Empathy OOOOO
Expression OOOOO
Intimidation OOOOO
Persuasion OOOOO
Socialize OOOOO
Streetwise OOOOO
Subterfuge OOOOO

Other Traits

Merits

_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO

Flaws

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Contracts

_____ OOOOO
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Pledges

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Health

O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Willpower

O O O O O O O O O O
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Glamour

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Wyrd

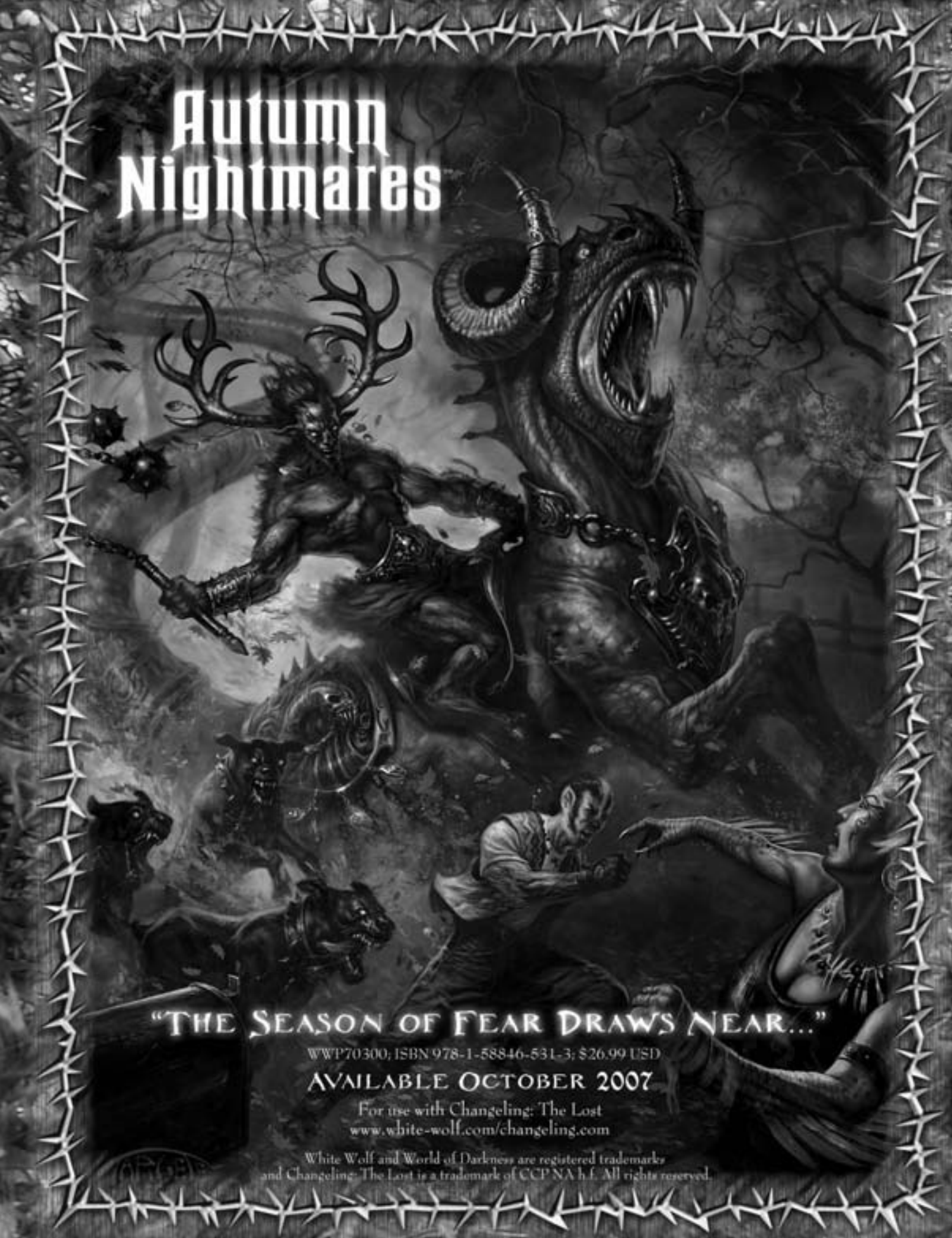
● O O O O O O O O O

Clarity

10 _____ O
9 _____ O
8 _____ O
7 _____ O
6 _____ O
5 _____ O
4 _____ O
3 _____ O
2 _____ O
1 _____ O

Seeming Blessing: _____
_____
Seeming Curse: _____
_____
Size: _____
Defense: _____
Initiative Mod.: _____
Speed: _____
Armor: _____
Experience: _____

Attributes: 5/4/3•Skills 11/7/4 (+3 Specialties) • **Seeming**: Choose 1 free Skill Specialty in Athletics, Brawl or Stealth; Record Blessing and Curse • **Contracts** 5 dots • **Merits** 7 • (Buying the fifth dot in Attributes, Skills or Merits costs two points) • **Health** = Stamina + Size • **Willpower** = Resolve + Composure • **Size** = 5 for adult human-sized • **Defense** = Lowest of Dexterity or Wits • **Initiative Mod** = Dexterity + Composure • **Speed** = Strength + Dexterity + 5 • **Starting Clarity** = 7 • **Wyrd** starts at 1 dot • **Glamour** starts at 1/2 maximum (determined by Wyrd).



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Light in Shadows

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
1	f	l	u	x	d	c	f	a	l	l	f	x	l	x	d	e	s	h	s	i	t	e	f	a
2	n	x	x	a	r	f	h	e	d	r	a	a	x	a	n	t	r	x	s	g	a	u	r	u
3	x	e	e	s	i	e	r	a	e	n	n	t	n	o	o	f	e	a	e	g	d	o	l	s
4	t	v	k	t	n	g	w	e	n	c	o	s	r	r	r	o	t	i	n	e	g	o	r	p
5	a	n	i	a	n	o	c	o	e	g	e	c	m	o	m	r	s	d	k	s	x	d	q	i
6	w	a	a	a	s	o	l	a	t	m	e	l	l	y	m	s	a	a	r	u	m	e	u	c
7	c	o	g	n	u	r	s	a	a	h	o	l	s	o	x	w	m	c	a	h	s	r	i	e
8	o	x	r	n	e	a	o	c	t	r	c	t	i	s	g	o	n	r	d	t	a	d	e	x
9	t	r	c	r	n	v	a	f	d	d	e	t	u	n	h	r	o	a	n	n	t	n	s	e
10	l	i	a	c	a	b	o	s	a	r	o	p	a	h	g	n	r	l	i	a	n	i	c	c
11	l	a	t	c	r	e	r	c	i	n	e	o	r	w	o	u	i	l	s	c	a	k	e	o
12	u	u	h	e	l	u	n	u	l	r	a	e	l	r	a	e	b	n	r	a	h	i	n	t
13	m	s	t	c	o	e	m	i	n	a	d	c	d	b	v	o	e	r	e	s	p	t	c	e
14	s	a	r	m	s	e	r	a	t	d	b	o	r	e	g	a	l	a	t	e	a	h	e	r
15	r	i	a	e	i	e	t	a	a	n	d	a	h	a	i	v	l	i	n	e	a	g	e	i
16	c	l	t	u	t	u	n	l	p	r	a	t	c	n	o	i	t	c	u	d	b	a	e	e
17	g	t	q	n	r	s	r	e	a	p	f	m	l	s	w	o	d	a	h	s	e	n	o	b
18	n	e	p	a	a	e	n	c	s	o	r	l	d	w	s	o	g	i	t	s	a	m	t	k
19	r	o	l	a	v	l	u	o	s	a	o	e	o	a	u	h	u	m	o	u	r	s	c	n
20	m	t	i	l	r	l	t	n	m	d	n	w	n	u	t	a	m	m	u	z	i	e	h	a
21	o	a	i	t	e	a	a	a	d	u	e	u	k	t	c	v	i	t	a	e	r	t	m	i
22	d	s	s	g	i	i	d	o	o	r	b	s	l	a	i	l	e	b	g	h	s	y	e	h
23	a	i	a	q	d	r	o	o	e	e	e	o	a	r	v	c	n	r	c	e	p	l	k	t
24	d	c	a	r	u	l	a	w	x	i	x	b	i	e	n	e	e	s	x	a	c	o	h	r
25	y	t	a	b	b	e	o	p	i	r	o	r	v	f	i	t	t	a	t	a	g	c	e	a
26	h	u	o	t	l	l	r	x	p	e	r	i	e	s	l	o	r	h	t	o	z	a	t	c
27	g	i	f	t	f	e	x	a	x	a	c	m	x	o	r	c	e	n	t	i	m	a	n	i
28	d	l	o	h	e	e	r	f	d	f	i	o	p	n	h	l	e	n	i	t	n	e	s	x
29	a	l	c	h	e	m	y	i	x	e	s	s	y	b	a	p	r	i	m	o	g	e	n	x
30	e	l	y	s	i	u	m	x	e	x	m	x	f	i	r	s	t	b	o	r	n	x	x	x

COMING NEXT YEAR

You remember your home.

You remember what it was like,
before They took you.
The sound of your family's voices,
the smell of your home,
the colors of your neighborhood.
Even after the blinding glories
and pitiless dark wastes of Faerie,
you remember.

Your memories were a beacon.
Without them, you would never have found your way back
through the twisting maze of the Thorns,
to collapse torn and exhausted on the cool earth
of the world you were born in once more —
to find that your home was no longer yours,
that an impostor had taken over your life,
that you had been changed.
Yours is beauty and grotesquerie,
illusion and iron,
insight and madness.

Where will you go now that you are Lost?
Who will you love, who will you war against,
who will you make of yourself?
How will your tale end?

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Changeling
The Lost