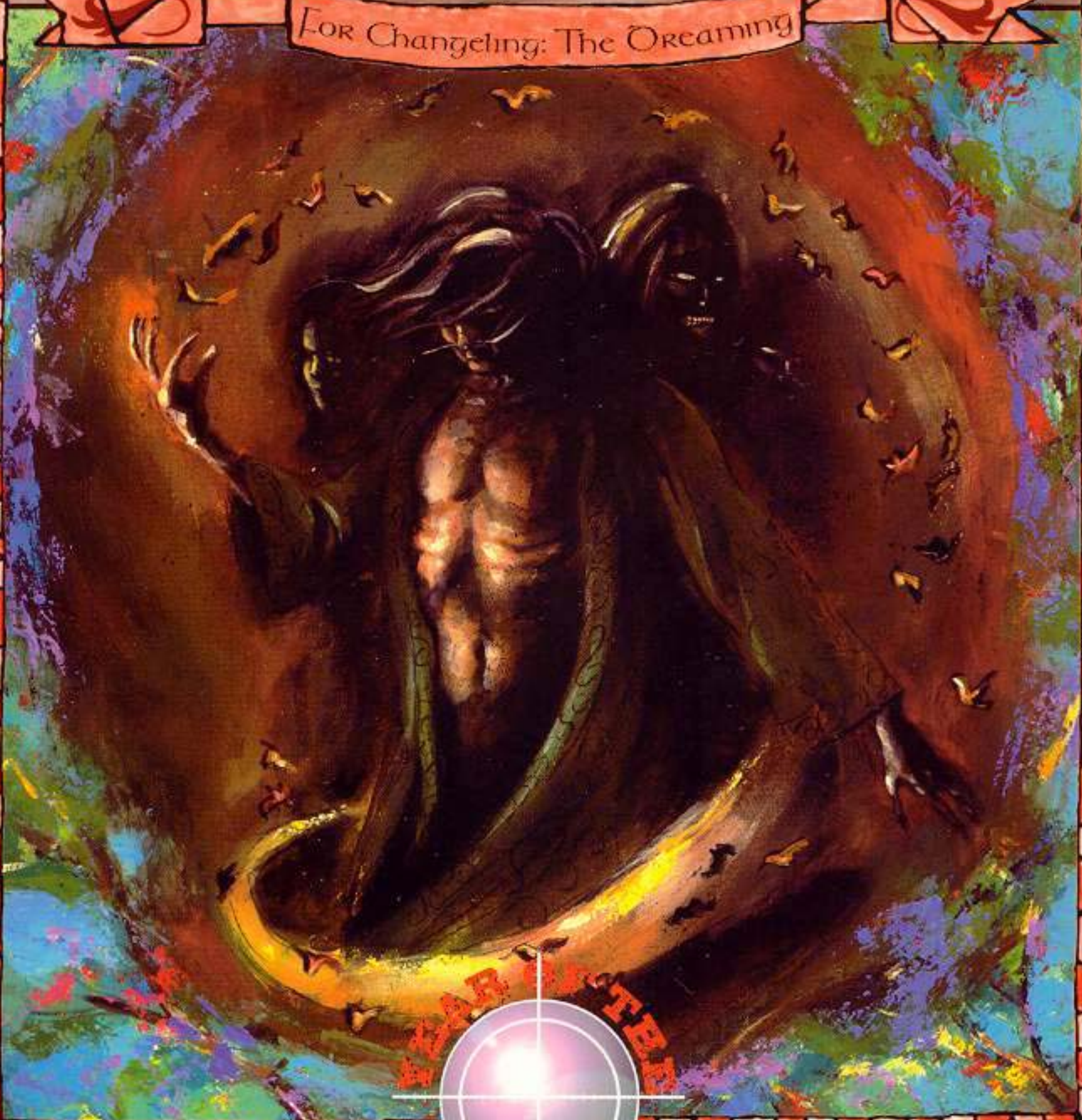


The Autumn People

For Changeling: The Dreaming





The Autumn People

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The Autumn People

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Butterfly

by Brian Campbell

I was once a child of the spring. That time of my life seems so far away now.

When I was a little girl, my mother would let me play in her garden. That, to me, was paradise. The budding roses were my closest friends. I could confide in them. On spring afternoons, I would read stories to the flowerbeds. I didn't know all the words in the books I borrowed from my father's library, but I was able to make up endless flourishes in the tales I told. No matter how elaborate the stories became, the roses would listen in rapt attention. Butterflies hovered nearby to listen, and they would rejoice in the beauty of it all.

Those spring days were the happiest days of my life. Each sunny day was filled with the joy of youth, and my exuberance was such that I felt that I could almost take flight. When a spring breeze would carry through the garden, I remember wishing for wings to carry me off with the wind.



My father always taught me the value of hard work. He wanted his son to be able to provide for his family. I never thought I'd have to learn so much, but he taught me everything I needed to know. In the workshop, we'd work together for hours. The one quality I remember about him was his patience. He could never express how he felt in

words, but the fact that he spent so much time teaching me carpentry said more than any words he could have chosen.

He was always methodical about his work. To him, craftsmanship was the most important thing in the world. Learning that took a long time. When I was five, the nails I hammered always went in crooked, and the two-by-fours I cut with my practice saw were never quite straight. He was always patient, nonetheless, and he taught me that when you start to build something, you let nothing distract you until you're done.

He'd cautiously measure each piece of wood he'd use. He taught me how to carefully place my pencil marks so that I would never be off by more than a sixteenth of an inch. Woodwork was one of the greatest joys in his life. Each time I look at something I've built with my own two hands, I think of his hands guiding mine.



I was a very impatient young woman. Although I was repeatedly caught and chastised, I couldn't help but sneak out of my bedroom window on warm spring nights. With the stealth of a night animal, I'd climb down the tree beside my window and escape. Barefoot, I'd run endlessly through the moonlight. In the middle of the night, I'd return.

My bedroom was a prison. I'd set my stuffed animals on the windowsill, and they'd watch the moon with me. The light of the moon fell like a lover's kiss on the mountains in the distance, and I longed to walk softly on that gentle ground.

At seventeen, I ran away from home.



I got my first job at the age of sixteen. My father had taught me well. He was a very traditional man — I learned that the man of the family should be able to provide. Because of that, I worked hard to make him proud. I knew that one day, I would have a family of my own and that my hard work would pay off. Every day after school, I'd go to my job at the lumberyard. Taking inventory wasn't the most exciting job in the world, but I learned to be dependable. I saved up for my first car — a white 1978 Plymouth. It wasn't anything spectacular, but I had earned it. It was mine.

At the age of eighteen, I packed my high school diploma in my suitcase, loaded my car with everything I needed for my new life, and set off for California.



They found me in the parking lot of a Seven-Eleven. The rips, tears and stains in my clothes made me look more like a feral animal than a seventeen-year-old girl. I had been homeless for many weeks, and my dream was slowly turning into a nightmare. Running from one city to the next, my journey had taken me from Albuquerque to Tucson to San Diego and on through Northern California. The money I had stolen from my parents was running out, and the trip was slowly destroying me. Bathroom sinks weren't a good substitute for a good shower, and the change I picked up on the streets wasn't enough for decent food.

The three young strangers who found me were wanderers, too, but they had been traveling much longer than I had. If I concentrate hard enough, I can remember their faces.

Jack was tall. He walked with a perpetual slouch, and he was kind. On his back, he wore a denim jacket with a brightly embroidered sunset, but he rarely smiled. Runcible was eloquent, yet sly. He was something of a thief, but he was a sophisticated one. His quick wit was even sharper than his skill at acquiring what we needed, and the songs he sang always made me laugh. The third member of our little clique was a young punk named Arthur. We called him Fishlips. He even had a tattoo of a small fish on the side of his neck. He looked like a lot of the punks I saw back in the early eighties, and he wore his bitterness with pride.

Arthur Fishlips owned a van, a lime-green monstrosity that he cared for like a close friend. We were all close friends. We had to be. We all lived close to the

edge, and watching a friend's back is the best way to keep a friendship.

When we finally ran out of gas money, we crashed in a house with a group of college students near a small university in Santa Cruz. Jack, Runcible and Arthur wanted to rest up for a while. They soon considered the town their home, but to me, my home was always the open road. I saved up some money, and after that, I made sure there was always gasoline in the van. When the spirit took us, we would take a quick trip along the Pacific Coast Highway and sing along with the music on the radio.

My three friends were my spring breeze, and I finally had my wings.



The apartment I saved up for was small, but it was mine. Ten hours a day, I worked at a construction site downtown. At the end of each day, I was exhausted. Each day, I pushed myself and tried to prove my worth. The one thing that kept me going was the thought of my next raise.

Money was tight, but on the weekends, I'd drive down to the beach and take long walks. At night, the swing-set near the beach would rock back and forth in the wind, and the smell of the sea would carry across the sand.

One warm summer night, I found her.



Each night, the rest of my little clique would gather around the fireplace. I don't know why. We had performed some sort of ritual there when we first arrived, and we gathered there after each of our road trips. Every night, my friends would argue.

One night, when they started yelling at each other again, I ran out of the house to be alone. Their arguments always seemed so trivial to me; maybe we were just spending too much time together. I think Arthur was jealous that I was spending so much time with Jack. I could always tell Jack's affection for me. He was extremely shy, but his kindness was evident in everything he did. Arthur was always angry, and I think he couldn't understand why I didn't want to spend my time trying to heal his endless bitterness. Runcible never took anything seriously, and you could never quite tell whether anything he said was the truth.

The group was having problems, and I felt the need to break free again.

After wandering down to the oceanside, I found a swing-set by the beach. I ran. It was like I was twelve years old all over again. I wanted to see how high the swings could carry me. As I was carried through the sea breeze, I began to daydream of the swing carrying me out over the sea to a place where I could be alone. Perhaps

I could find an island somewhere, a place where I could sort out my feelings. I dreamt of a paradise as real as my mother's garden, and I dreamt of the tropical breeze flowing out to the sea. I closed my eyes.

I slipped.



She was laughing as the swing carried her to impossible heights. It was as if she had no concern for her own safety. She almost seemed to break free of the earth, as though something within her could not be bound by gravity.

I was stunned. She was simply not possible. Her laughter was unreal. I felt envy for the happiness she radiated, and I felt an admiration for the aura of freedom she carried around her. With it came the desire to protect her, to prevent her from getting hurt.

She fell.



I was bleeding into the sand. The scent of the ocean hung oppressively in the air. The pain made me wince, and my skin chafed as I tried to brush the sand off the bloody stains on my cotton dress.

He stopped my hands.

Carefully, he took a handkerchief from his back pocket and tied it around the cut on my arm. Wordlessly, he picked me up and carried me to his car. Methodically, he fetched a first aid kit from the trunk of his car, and he cautiously tended to the cut.

My heart stopped. I looked up sweetly, smiled, and brushed the hair out of his eyes. Then I descended into the deepest, longest kiss I had ever experienced.



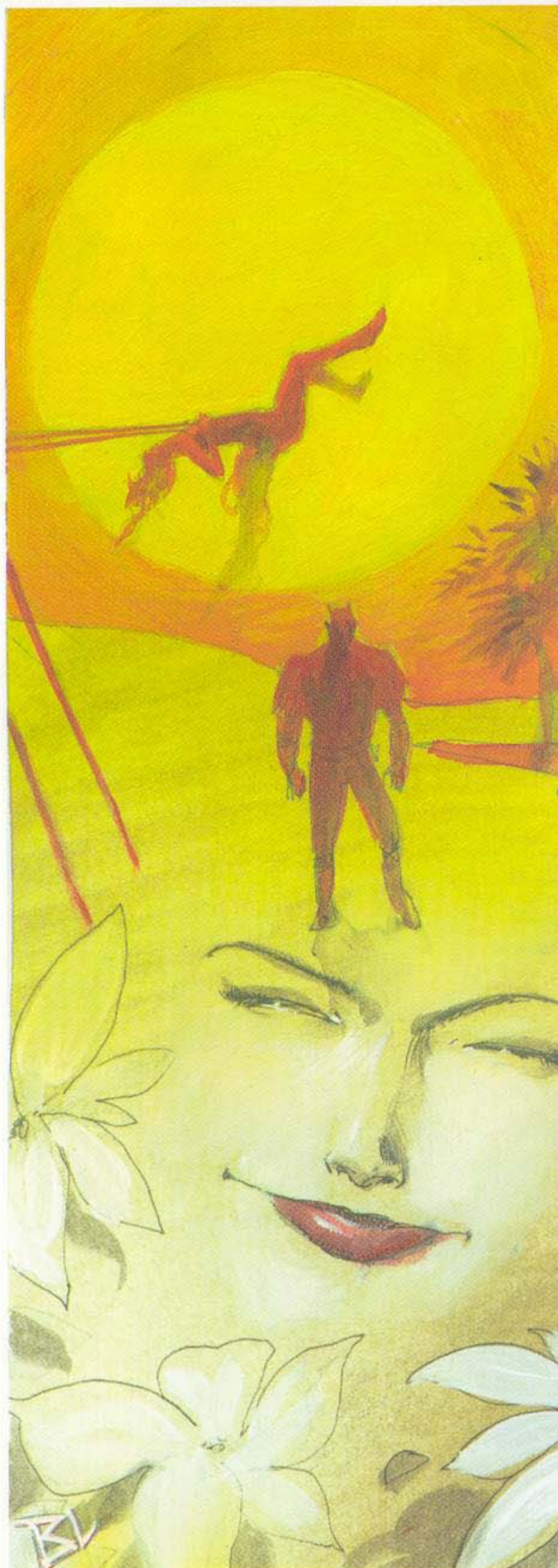
Three months later, I woke up in the middle of the night and turned to see her lying beside me. It all seemed so impossible. How could something so wonderful happen to me? She was flighty and unpredictable, irresponsible and unreliable, but every night, we slept in the same bed in my cheap apartment. Every morning, my first thought was how lucky I was to wake up next to her.



Each day was bliss. Every action I took each day was out of my love for him. I was obsessed. When I cooked a pot of rice for dinner, I thought of how wonderful our next dinner by candlelight would be. When I sorted his socks from the laundry, I thought of how they would keep his feet warm.

When I washed the sheets, I couldn't stop smiling.

I sometimes thought about my friends back in Santa Cruz, but it became harder to remember their faces as the months went by. On humid summer days, I'd fan myself by the window and look out at the horizon.





I don't know where it went wrong.

Each day, I went off to work. Every day, I was overjoyed to see her at home. It all seemed perfectly natural to me. I would buy her little things to keep her happy. I saved up for a stereo, made a down payment on a television, and walked with her through the shopping mall to pick out things for our apartment. I wanted to provide her with a home that would make her happy.

And every day, she seemed a little more uncomfortable. I still had hopes that things would get better. Why wasn't it working? I thought of my parents, secure in their house in Colorado after thirty years of marriage. Somehow, this just wasn't the same.

We grew cold. We would sit in the same room, trying not to hear each other breathe. The candlelit dinners gave way to TV dinners, and the romantic evenings gave way to sitcoms and lassitude.



Ten years later, I sit by the window of the kitchen and look out at the back yard. He spends more and more time away from home. Our first year together seems like another life. The rose garden I planted is struggling to survive. For years, I've tried everything to help them along, but I don't have the green thumb my mother had.

When I look out the window, I have trouble concentrating. It usually isn't very long before the telephone rings or the baby cries. The television drones in the corner to keep away my loneliness.

I never know when he's going to come home. He often stays out late, and I never really know whether or not he's going to come home drunk.

I watch the autumn leaves fall by my window, and I try to remember the faces of old friends.



I've given her everything I can. Even when I tell her I love her, it makes little difference. If I didn't love her, how can she explain all the years I spent saving up for our house? How can she explain everything I've given her? I've done everything my father told me, and I've tried to make my home just like the one my parents had. Nothing makes her happy.

I'm drunk, but I'm warm. I crush the autumn leaves under my feet as I stumble through the night. I don't want to go home.

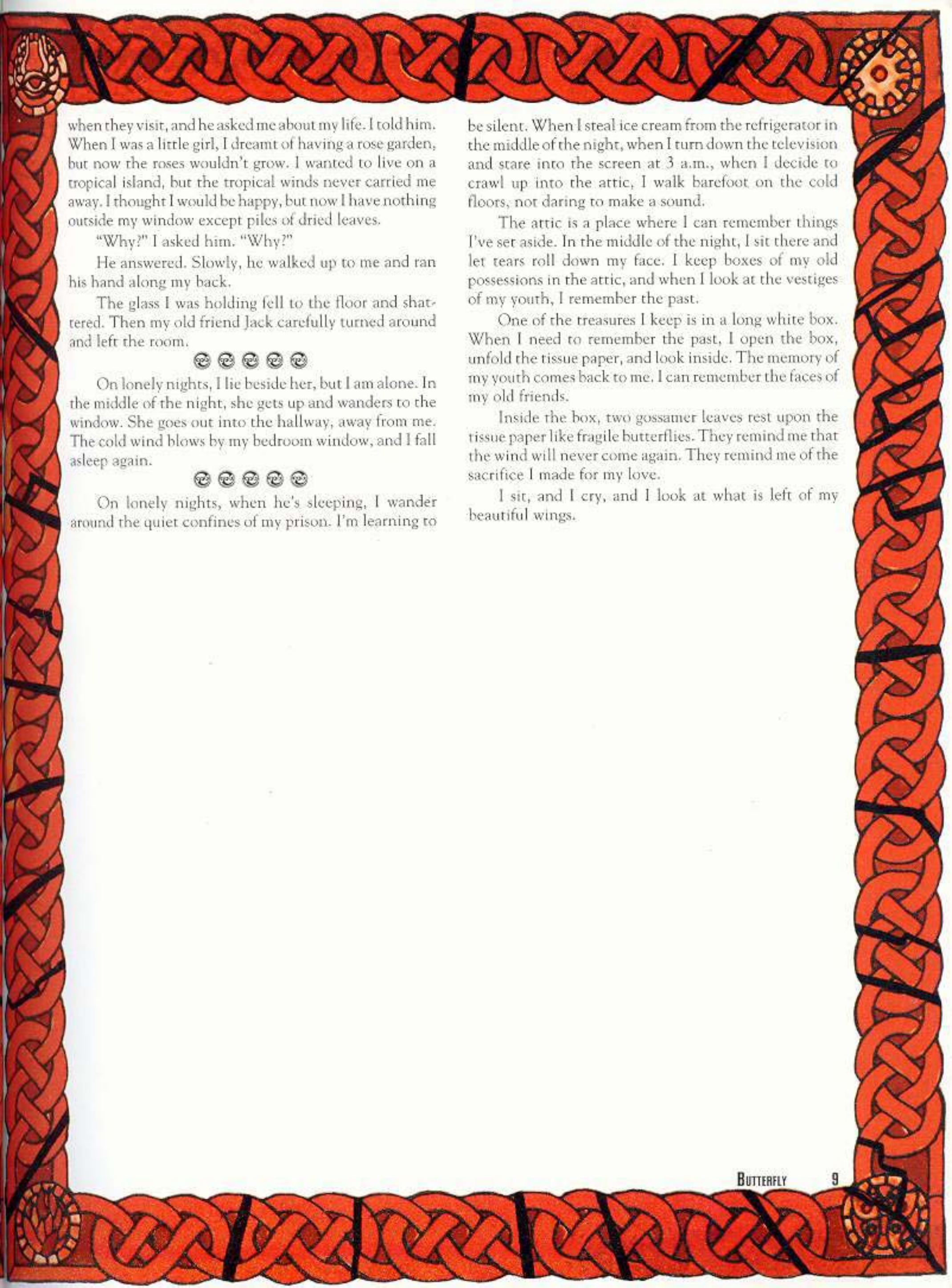


Jack came to my door last night.

I hadn't seen him in ten years. He walked with the same slouch he always had, and his hair still hung over his eyes. There was something odd about him.

He looked as though he hadn't aged a day.

I offered him a glass of wine and invited him inside. He sat nervously on the couch, as old friends often do



when they visit, and he asked me about my life. I told him. When I was a little girl, I dreamt of having a rose garden, but now the roses wouldn't grow. I wanted to live on a tropical island, but the tropical winds never carried me away. I thought I would be happy, but now I have nothing outside my window except piles of dried leaves.

"Why?" I asked him. "Why?"

He answered. Slowly, he walked up to me and ran his hand along my back.

The glass I was holding fell to the floor and shattered. Then my old friend Jack carefully turned around and left the room.



On lonely nights, I lie beside her, but I am alone. In the middle of the night, she gets up and wanders to the window. She goes out into the hallway, away from me. The cold wind blows by my bedroom window, and I fall asleep again.



On lonely nights, when he's sleeping, I wander around the quiet confines of my prison. I'm learning to

be silent. When I steal ice cream from the refrigerator in the middle of the night, when I turn down the television and stare into the screen at 3 a.m., when I decide to crawl up into the attic, I walk barefoot on the cold floors, not daring to make a sound.

The attic is a place where I can remember things I've set aside. In the middle of the night, I sit there and let tears roll down my face. I keep boxes of my old possessions in the attic, and when I look at the vestiges of my youth, I remember the past.

One of the treasures I keep is in a long white box. When I need to remember the past, I open the box, unfold the tissue paper, and look inside. The memory of my youth comes back to me. I can remember the faces of my old friends.

Inside the box, two gossamer leaves rest upon the tissue paper like fragile butterflies. They remind me that the wind will never come again. They remind me of the sacrifice I made for my love.

I sit, and I cry, and I look at what is left of my beautiful wings.





Introduction

*Here we go 'round the prickly pear,
Prickly pear, prickly pear,
Here we go 'round the prickly pear,
At five o'clock in the morning.*
— T.S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men"

We fight to keep our dreams alive.

Dreams come easiest to us when we're young. Before we're taught the way the "real world" is, we live in a state of grace, believing that anything is possible. As children, we take every opportunity we can to act out that unlimited possibility. As pirates or astronauts, ballerinas or ninjas, we turn cardboard boxes into spaceships, backyards into desert islands, and treehouses into armored forts. Fantastic worlds are within our grasp, and fantastic creatures — like faeries, dragons and monsters — seem like they're only a heartbeat away. We can go anywhere... do anything... be anyone.

Somewhere along the way, we lose that enthusiasm. We stop playing and start surviving. Life becomes a matter of getting by, and our idealism is replaced by realism. We seek stable nine-to-five lives, live in quiet homes, and narcotize ourselves in front of flickering television sets. The world of imagination is set aside as our lives become banal. Inexorably, our passion for life mellows into the contentment of security or hardens into the bitterness of failure.

The situation becomes worse if you give in. Surrendering your soul to the mundane world is easier when you see the people around you surrender as well. Your friends get old and settle down, your wanderlust is replaced by a video tape collection and a retirement plan, your energy is replaced by false security, and the need for a good night's sleep becomes the overriding force of your existence. All around you, people give in to the "real" world. The Banality of existence becomes a tangible force, constricting you like a spider's web.

Dreamers have the strength of will to resist. They fight to keep the childhood spark of life they had as children alive, continuing to believe that anything is possible. In the world of *Changeling*, the power of make-believe, of childlike creativity, is real. It exists as a glamorous manifestation of unrestricted creation. Glamour is opposed by the tangible force of Banality we sense around us. Just as Banality threatens to constrict us more and more as we get older, the life of the Kithain is one where the dreamer tries to live her dream despite the growing force of soul-crushing Banality that stalks her.



Weaving the Web

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow
 Creeps in its petty pace from day to day
 To the last syllable of recorded time.
 Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
 And is heard no more. It is a tale told by an idiot,
 Full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.
 — William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Why does the world become so banal? The Dreamer within us wakes us up in the middle of lonely nights and reminds us of the possibilities we've lost. Corporate sell-outs in luxurious homes, failed artists trapped in mindless jobs, passionate lovers in stifling relationships: all wake up and wonder, "What happened?" The human experience is filled with rituals of mundanity that kill the mind and crush the soul. The word "spirit" becomes an obscenity; the word "myth" becomes a lie; the word "dream" becomes synonymous with false hope. The word "mundane," which once meant "worldly," is twisted into a hateful utterance. Sympathizing with quietude, sanitizing their minds for the sake of survival, the mundanes bring a cold chill to the world.

Just as there are people who dream, there are people who kill dreams. Some of them don't realize what they do, mindlessly spreading conformity, denial and narrow-mindedness. They are the Innocents; they know not what they do. Their activities are fully justified from their point of view: Why create a world where we follow our dreams when we know reality will reject them? Why should people fill their heads with "foolish notions" when we know that they serve no purpose? There are a few who believe in their vision of a quiet world so strongly that they make their fear of the unknown part of the environment around them. The coldest of them are insidious. Their ignorance kills and their apathy taints, but their innocence absolves them of all blame. They can't believe in a world of magic because they simply do not understand it, and instead, they create its antithesis.

Not all of these people are so oblivious to the Dreaming. In a world where the supernatural is real, there are also people who *know* of the existence of the magical. It threatens them with its vitality. They root it out and disinfect it for the sake of keeping their quiet lives of desperation. The world has driven them to madness, and they live in a state of envy and fear. Reacting to false knowledge and indignation, they destroy the world around themselves... for the sake of their own survival. They are the Dauntain.

Youth and energy are like springtime, blossoming with beauty and scintillating with vibrancy. Dreamers are the children of the spring. The men and women who

sanitize the minds of dreamers reject the spring. To them, the silent falling of the leaves of autumn is far more musical than the singing of birds in the springtime. The crushing of brittle leaves is far more satisfying than the weaving of garlands. They are the hollow men. They are empty men.

They are the Autumn People.

The Innocents

The average Autumn Person, on his own, is at best only a minor nuisance. You can see them in many forms — the teacher who takes away a child's comic books because they're "trash," the boss who doesn't understand why you don't like being shackled to your meaningless job, or the concerned parent who wants to censor books and television to protect children. There's a message that comes through loud and clear: Don't think, don't dream, and don't hope. The mere fact that they exist in such numbers makes the crafting of Glamour a far more difficult task. Living in a world where our desires are denied again and again hardens us as we block joy and trust from our lives to lessen the pain.

The hollow men are the leaders in any flock of conformists. They're a shining example to the people around them of the triumph of conformity over vision. Stay in line. Obey. Follow. Trust us. We know what's best for you. The walking wounded who follow them lose the will to flee from the pack instincts that have been burned into their souls. The sleepers who follow the Children of Autumn can't see the wonder around them, and the Autumn People are even more determined to keep them asleep. In defiance, the dreamers who deny the life of the Autumn People live in a lucid waking dream, caught in the reverie of their dream world.

There are also children of Autumn whose minds are so patterned by stasis that they can blind the mind's eye of the most imaginative of Dreamers. Unaware of their effect on the people around them, they weave conformity wherever they go, crushing hope, sapping will and closing minds. Their quiet Autumn magic is hard to detect and harder to resist. The only followers of the fall who are more dangerous are the ones who are aware of the existence of the magical in the midst of the mundane. The suffering brought by the Innocents is nothing compared to the havoc wreaked by the Dauntain.

The Cognoscenti

The people of Autumn who know of the existence of the supernatural are far more effective than the Innocents. Life brings them pain, and they seek release. The fae are a mystery to them, and they answer with destruction, cleansing the world of joy. Among their number is the grandfather of deprogramming imagination, a visionary yet deviant scientist named Dr. Anton Stark.



His first victim was a young girl who had escaped into another world. To her, truth and beauty were the same; for she believed she lived in a world where magic was real. She told stories of her vivid life: she danced with satyrs, played with pooka, and knew trolls and elves by name. It was clear to Dr. Stark that her "dangerous tendencies" had to be stopped. If fantasy was the disease, reality was the cure. He slowly shattered her dreams, rationalizing away her fairy tale with psychological counseling, cold reason and arrogant condescension. His victory brought on her childhood's end.

Stories of his techniques live on in infamy among changelings. The fae refer to any soldier of conformity who follows in Stark's footsteps as one of the Dauntain. Many of the Kithain don't realize a darker truth: The Dauntain are actually kin to the fae. They burn with faerie blood. Each Dauntain once had the potential to break through the Chrysalis, but the world has denied each of them that opportunity. Trauma and sorrow, nightmares and pain have made them what they are. They reject their fae nature, deny their own Glamour and strike out at an uncaring world. Once all Glamour is gone, their suffering will end.

They rejoice as the leaves tumble in piles. They ready the flames of twisted reason to burn spirituality from the world, and they prepare for the coming of Winter.

The Passing of Seasons

This is the way the world ends.

This is the way the world ends.

This is the way the world ends,

Not with a bang, but a whimper.

— T.S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men"

The World of Darkness that brings such sadness to the race of the fae was not always so empty. Once the world had the energy of springtime. The soul of the Earth was alive and magical possibility was carried on the breeze. The spring of the world was called the Mythic Age, a time when magic and myth were real. The practitioners of magic cared for humanity, and the fae practiced their magic openly. The fair folk walked along the trods between the Tellurian and Arcadia with impunity. The magical places in the world held energy, allowing faeries to "shallow" into realms where the fanciful became real. The demesnes of the medieval Kithain were as real as the brilliance of sunlight and as vital as the fragrant aroma of flowers.

As spring turned to summer, the scorching influence of Reason descended on the world. The Age of Reason brought the controversy of conflicting philosophies. A world of unlimited possibilities has an inherent disadvantage. If anything is possible, then the loss of that potential is one

possibility. Visionaries who dared to seek out the boundaries of reality tested different visions of what the world could have been. The limiting stasis of reason sundered the Glamour of magic from the realities of existence.

As the schism between the real and the fantastic grew wider, Summer turned to Autumn. The fae felt magic passing from the world. Mythic creatures, starving for the energy that fueled magic, shuffled off to the hidden places of the Earth or passed gently into nonexistence. Other creatures, creatures of the night, felt a sympathy with the drawing of the darkness and manipulated it to their own ends. As the power of the fae faded, the strength of the sadness and misery of the Restless and the Damned reshaped the world.

Now, in Autumn, the power of Dreaming has been forgotten, and the Glamour of changelings is denied by the empty logic that pervades everything. Science defines the boundaries of reality. Realism is the order of the day. Even without the force of the supernatural, reality is reinforced by institutions and beliefs that teach us that creativity is impractical and that survival requires us to relinquish our hopes and dreams.

Winter is close at hand. Shadows grow longer and people grow colder. The fae huddle around the balefires of their freeholds, gathering their own troops. The Seelie keep spirits alive by sharing fellowship, offering hospitality, and spreading cheer. The Unseelie peer through windows at the drawing gloom as they fall into introspection and rejoice that they have already conquered a darker night by exploring the soulless depths of their black hearts. The fae are far from unprepared, for they can see the turning of the seasons for what it is.

The Fire of Imagination

The Kithain are hopeful as they ready themselves for battle. The mystique of cantrips are their weapons of war. They flee the confining walls of offices and schools to roam in search of adventure. They raise their voices in songs and ballads, singing of an ideal world where love is true, justice is sure, and beauty is everywhere. For a changeling, sitting in isolation and maligning the fate of the world seems ludicrous. The Seelie dance in the sunlight, the Unseelie rage in rainstorms, and if the fae work their magic right, the people around them can, if only for a little while, break the threads of Banality that bind them.

Seeking bliss and holding on to hope: these keep the children within us alive. Shut out the droning voices of the Autumn People. Warm yourself by the fire of your imagination and see the Autumn People for who they really are.

Stoke the hearthfire. Winter is coming.



How to Use This Book

Changeling is a game of many moods. The game can inspire manic creativity and rampant chaos, but it can carry a tragic, more twisted side as well. The victims you'll find in this book can help you develop a gentle sadness in your chronicle. The fae experience blissful epiphany, but their heights of bliss are contrasted by the emptiness around them. Each Kithain undergoes her own Hero's Journey, and for the Children of Arcadia, our world is their underworld.

The first half of the book focuses on the world of the mundanes and the lives of the Innocents, the mundanes who complicate the lives of changelings. If you desire a lighthearted chronicle, the Autumn People don't have to be morbidly grim. From a pooka's point of view, they're just *asking* for a good pranking, and "freaking the mundanes" is always a delicious pastime. Unfortunately, even the greatest of liars are aware of how deceptive the hollow men can be. The Autumn People can add a taint of fear to a story if the Storyteller so desires. The strongest of the Innocents weave subtle magic, and once they're organized, they're deadly.

The second half of the book gives complete details on the Dauntain. If the players desire their games to be a bit more confrontational, allow these righteous foes the chance to uphold what they believe. The Dauntain make no secret of their distaste for the changelings, and they actively seek

and destroy what they barely understand. They have their own Dooms as well; each soldier of Autumn has his own reasons for joining the battle, and each has his own twisted idea of redemption. As antiheroes and antagonists, these ruthless Kithain can give the most accomplished of changelings dangerous opposition.

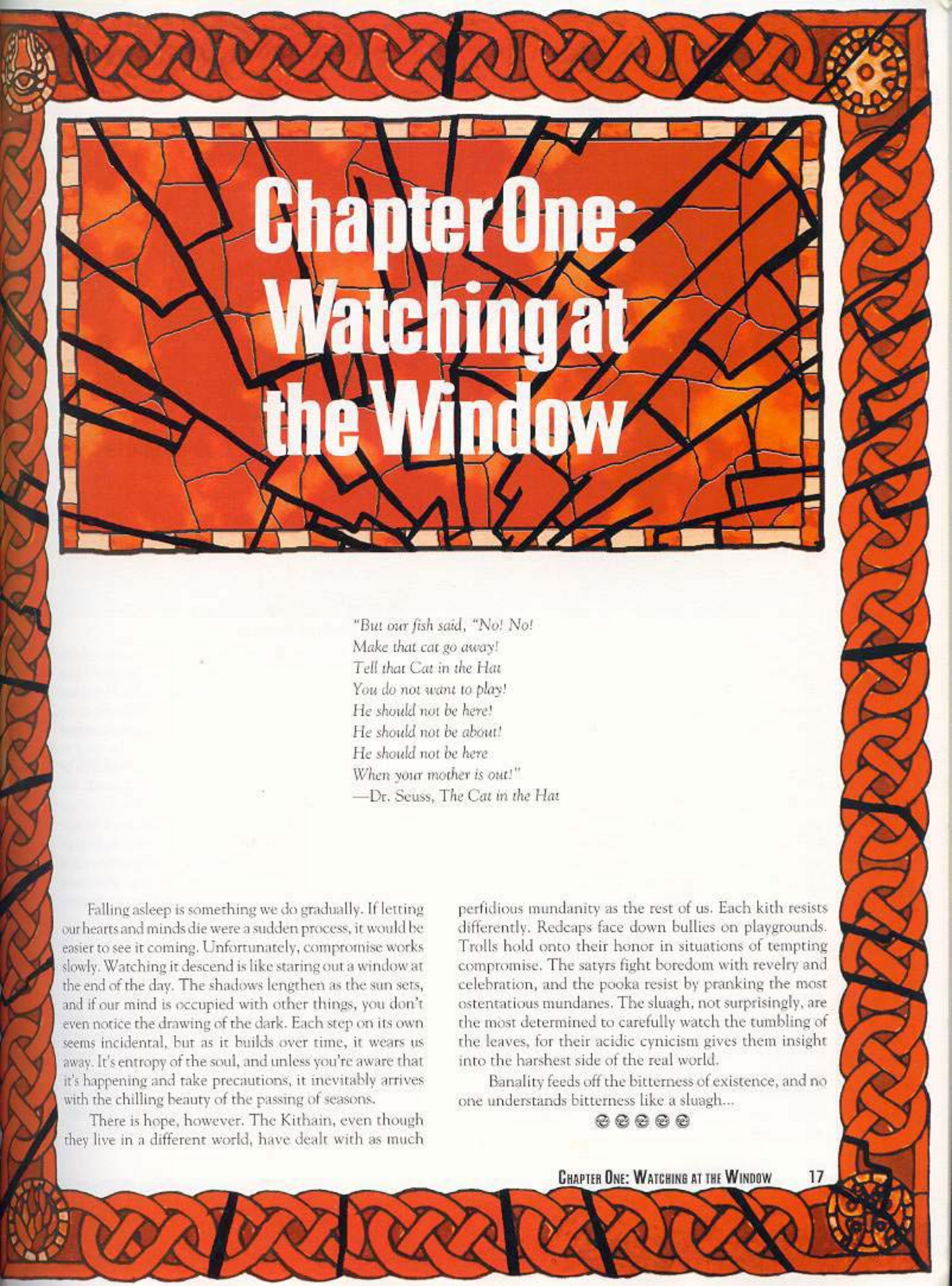
Mood

The hollow ones bring tragic sorrow to a game unless their actions are countered by manic creativity. They lack the vision of the Children of Arcadia, but rather than allowing them to dampen the joy in the game, the Storyteller can use them to inspire it by contrast. They are examples of why we need more Glamour in the world. By learning from their failed example, changelings can find their destiny, whether they seek love, honor, transfiguration or bliss.

Theme

The dominant themes within are the coming of Winter and the death of creativity. With the coming of the cold comes a tinge of ethical ambiguity. The characters in this book are a reflection of their Gothic-Punk milieu. Are they the cause of it... or the result? Are they villains or victims? The characters will see them as anything from nuisances to adversaries, but the Storyteller can use them to develop the setting of his chronicle. The Kithain are anachronisms, fighting to stay alive in a world that is not their own.





Chapter One: Watching at the Window

*"But our fish said, "No! No!
Make that cat go away!
Tell that Cat in the Hat
You do not want to play!
He should not be here!
He should not be about!
He should not be here
When your mother is out!"
—Dr. Seuss, The Cat in the Hat*

Falling asleep is something we do gradually. If letting our hearts and minds die were a sudden process, it would be easier to see it coming. Unfortunately, compromise works slowly. Watching it descend is like staring out a window at the end of the day. The shadows lengthen as the sun sets, and if our mind is occupied with other things, you don't even notice the drawing of the dark. Each step on its own seems incidental, but as it builds over time, it wears us away. It's entropy of the soul, and unless you're aware that it's happening and take precautions, it inevitably arrives with the chilling beauty of the passing of seasons.

There is hope, however. The Kithain, even though they live in a different world, have dealt with as much

perfidious mundanity as the rest of us. Each kith resists differently. Redcaps face down bullies on playgrounds. Trolls hold onto their honor in situations of tempting compromise. The satyrs fight boredom with revelry and celebration, and the pooka resist by pranking the most ostentatious mundanes. The sluagh, not surprisingly, are the most determined to carefully watch the tumbling of the leaves, for their acidic cynicism gives them insight into the harshest side of the real world.

Banality feeds off the bitterness of existence, and no one understands bitterness like a sluagh...

~~~~~



# The Testimony of Arthur Fishlips

\*cough!\* \*cough!\* Excuse me. An excess of phlegm. I can't help it — I am, by nature, a phlegmatic person. I have to be.

So you want to wage war against mundanity? Forgive me for saying so, but I believe that if you're going to win, those rose-colored glasses of yours aren't going to do you much good. Look around you, and perhaps I can show you the world I see.

## Goodbye

I lost a good friend of mine some time ago. She and I never really saw eye to eye, but she respected me for who I was. You never would have thought the two of us were friends. Sarah and I and the rest of our little clique all lived near the University for about six months. The center of our hopes, the focal point of our aspirations, was a lime-green 1972 Volkswagen bus. I liked it because the color was so virulently offensive; Sarah liked it because it was so bright. We all practically worshipped it, because any lull in classes or perceived tragedy in our lives was a good excuse for a road trip.

When she was 17, she was the most open-minded person I knew. The fact that I had the fashion sense of a lobotomized rat didn't bother her in the slightest. She wore her tie-dye shirts with the grace of her sidhe heritage, and I wore my mohawk and plaid with the pride of any true punk. She never kept the same boyfriend for longer than a week, she could fall in love at the drop of a hat, and her mood swings made a raging typhoon look like an afternoon calm. We were young and stupid, driving along the California coast and raising merry hell wherever we went.

I hear she's married now with two kids. She lives in a quiet little home outside of some nasty little town in Northern California. San Something-or-Other, a typical suburban hell where *The Donna Reed Show* is the paragon of family life. I imagine she spends her days worrying about whether she's found all the right coupons in the newspaper, whether the children will like the dinner she's cooked, and whether her husband will come home drunk again.

Where does it all begin? Why does the dreaming have to come to an end?

## Childhood

When I think of what my parents told me when I was a kid, I think of all the ritual phrases. "Keep your hands to yourself! Settle down!" The best things in life are the things you aren't supposed to go near. What's so bad about wanting to move a dead cat to the side of the road,

or croaking in mud puddles with frogs? My parents were always trying to keep me away from cool stuff — slugs, worms and snails were all off-limits. After all, I didn't "know where they'd been!" My dad always said that I didn't have enough sense to come in out of the rain. I think he didn't have enough sense to come out into it.

That's where it all begins. All the best things in life are called childish — cartoons, comic books, games... even make-believe. Children are the only people who realize how powerful "make believe" really is. Changelings know the truth: We all play make believe. Look at a guy walking in a suit to work, or some happy employee behind the counter at O'Tolley's. I watch and learn; they look back at me like I'm some kinda freak. Banality makes us forget that we *all* play roles. If you take your life too seriously, you forget the unlimited potential you have.

Children don't give in to the tedium of life. They don't define their lives by their jobs or let themselves get trapped in regret. The most serious humans forget that throwing off the pain is as easy as dancing a jig in the moonlight or letting out an elaborate belch. Unfortunately, propriety discourages us from doing such things. Parents teach us all the things we shouldn't do. Girls are supposed to be ladylike, boys are taught to hide how they feel, and all kids are told to "act their age." I think the grown-ups are just envious. Children have inexhaustible energy and enthusiasm, and adults exhaust themselves trying to condition it out of them.

Other kids can be much worse about it than adults. In any large gathering of children, all the "normal" kids get together and reaffirm how normal they are. It was bad for me, but it was even worse for my friend Jack. He never knew he was really a troll, but he was always at least four inches taller than any other kid in class. If he tried to stand up straight, other people would get nervous, so he took on a permanent slouch. He kept his voice real low and lowered his eyes.

I never saw him walk without a slouch until he met other trolls. When a group of trolls get together away from all the people who ridicule them, they finally act proud of who they are. Until then, they're like any other kids: ashamed of who they are. That's where Banality begins. You hide, conform, or you stand tall.

When you live like that, you don't want to see the magic around you. It *hurts*. Anyone who has that magic automatically has something you don't. When Autumn People are confronted with magic, part of them wishes it away. I don't blame them. Change is the essence of magic, and when you see reality change drastically in front of you, it reminds you of all the ways the world can change without you. Witnessing Glamour involves admitting that the world can be much different from the safe world you know. Breaking free can be painful, and it's sometimes easier to just hide.





Changelings realize how much possibility they have in their lives. That's how it is with children, too: They really can become anything, but it means breaking free of many of the things they're taught. Some of those ideas come from home, but conformity is also something we learn in school.

### School

Sure, I understand the need for education. I'm not saying all schools are inherently bad, but I will say that school is a place where kids learn to obey. I saw all kids around me rewarded for conforming. The one question you're never supposed to ask is "Why?" Some kids learn that too well. There's a different set of rituals. You stand in line, raise your hand before you speak, take part in sports you don't like, listen through boring lectures and sit still in your seat. When the bell rings, you run onto the playground. When the next bell rings, you run back. If you don't stay within the system, or if you try to beat the system, you're punished.

Sometimes you get so caught up in obeying a system that you never question it. That's what school is. You aren't supposed to question the assignments you do, you just do them. Don't dare ask why you're supposed to learn something. Just follow along. Don't be late to class, pay attention, keep your mind on your work, don't look out the window, don't doodle and don't daydream. When you're done, the teacher will grade you on your conformity.

The Autumn People learn early on too define what's "acceptable" and reject what's different. It's a matter of degrees — the soul chills in some people far more than it does in others. Every human has a touch of autumn, but only a few have it so badly that they hate us, seek us out, and destroy us. I never ran into that until I got into high school.

### High School

The social part of high school does have some advantages. If I hadn't learned about cliques, I wouldn't have survived. Most of getting by in any social environment involves finding the cool people and staying away from the people who aren't. That's how a lot of wilders find each other. They're drawn together.

Unfortunately, the Autumn People band together as well. For instance, some Autumn People are the paragons of so-called virtue who make the honor roll. They get showered with praise and accolades because they conform to the system. High school football heroes, cheerleaders, student body presidents — it's all so banal because the whole social framework is based around conformity. Don't question, smile! If it wasn't for finding the right clique of freaks, the right storm tunnels, and the best times to ditch class, I wouldn't have made it out alive. Where did I go? Straight into college.





## The University

When I think of all those lecture notes I crammed through in college, and all the information that I forgot a few days later, I'm stunned. College is a time when a group of academics decide what you should learn and test your ability to withstand bureaucracy. Your measure of your conformity, your grade point average, is extended into a series of digits. The university becomes your whole life... and after that, it only gets worse.

If you're going to escape from college, you have to wade through a vast bureaucracy, beginning with a curriculum set by other people that defines what's important for you. You need allies. Sarah, Jack Troll, Runcible and I made it through those years together. I saw a lot of people around me who didn't. Mindless sorority girls going for their "MRS." degrees. Dorm rats who skidded through in an alcoholic haze. Brooding loners who desperately tried to paint and draw and ended up with a lot of paint stains on their clothes.

For my clique, the antidote was found in our road trips. We went to SCA events in the woods and learned to fight with swords and shields. We went to Grateful Dead concerts and danced our minds out. Begging for change in Haight-Ashbury, raving with the Unseelie in Golden Gate Park, protecting Greenpeace Zodiacs from sea monsters, helping a wounded griffin in Mt. Tamilpais, egging

the homes of spooky accountants in black suits — it was one adventure after another. We had to deal with mundanity just like everyone else, but we went out and lived as well.

Now Jack's gone, and I sit in this shitty apartment warming up fish sticks in the toaster oven and wonder what went wrong. If it really gets bad, I turn on the television.

## Television

*American television is a vast wasteland.*

— Newton Minnow

My television usually sits in the corner. I don't know why I keep it. I was watching *X-Files* for a while, but now the TV sits in the corner with a "Kill Your Television" sticker across the screen. Television is one big advertisement for the way other people want society to be.

You know what it's like to watch someone watching television. That screen starts flickering, their jaw drops, the eyes glaze, and the mind shifts into neutral. The lips babble back at the screen. The hands on the clock slowly turn. Once in a while, they see something wonderful, but they sit and graze through the channels, letting other people show them pretty pictures and listening to the droning voices tell them what useless products they need to buy.

Excuse me. I need to set fire to my television. I'll be right back.



## Lost Love

Is he gone?

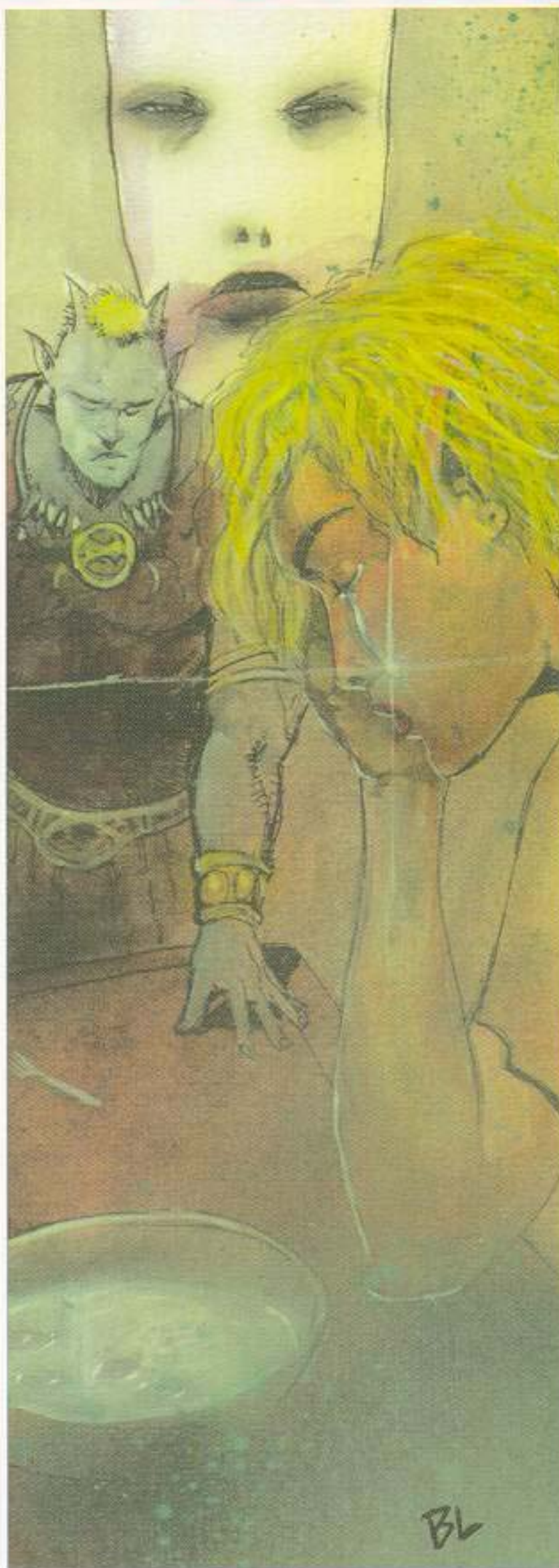
Hi! I'm Runcible! Don't be too hard judging of Fishlips. He's really not a bad guy. He just hurts a little because of the way his life has gone. If a nice sensible pooka like me wasn't around to cheer him up, he'd drift into the Great Gloom like anyone else.

He really shouldn't have fallen for Sarah the way he did. Oh, has he told you that? Sarah, our delectable elf, was his first love. He never told her, but I could tell. That's just part of life. We go through it. One person becomes a wonderful, shining example of beauty and goodness in the world, but when we find out the real world doesn't live up to the way we see romance, the webs across our eyes grow thicker.

Of course, a pooka always bounces right back, but a sluagh? They like to dwell on the mundane a little too much. They've got such a twisted definition of beauty that they like to wallow in their own pain too much.

That's why I'm hiding these carrots in his apartment. One in the freezer, one in his socks, one in his underwear drawer - and there's the sign. **FIND THE CARROTS!**

Sssh! Don't tell him I was here!







## The Day Job

*Monday morning seems it's never-ending*

*Tuesday morning creeping like a nun.*

—The Beatles, "Lady Madonna"

Goddamn television.

Please excuse the apartment. I know my place isn't all that nice, but on my paycheck, it's all I can afford. You want some ramen? Maybe a big bowl of rice? That's all I can offer you.

We've all got our various crummy jobs. When Jack was nine, he wanted to be an astronaut. I wanted to be a garbage man. Working used to seem really exciting, but any job can become tedious. Eventually, you get to the frame of mind where your job is just something you suffer through, and you take on another personality when you're working. Or maybe you try to get so wrapped up in your job that you don't want to have to think about your life outside work. We all have to go through it, and over time, it starts to turn you slowly mundane.

I've drifted through a lot of jobs. Yeah, I could mooch off some faerie freehold, but I don't go around those places much anymore. In fact I don't leave the house much anymore. It's easier to just hide. After a while, you stop caring, stop trusting, stop falling in love. If your job really stinks, you don't have the energy to move by the end of the day.

Of course, you can always sell out.

## Corporate America

*Hey, Mr. Businessman, pointing your plastic finger at me...*

*I'm gonna wave my freak flag high!*

—Jimi Hendrix

Lemme tell ya about corporate life. I had a roommate who used to work for a corp. He needed the money really bad, so when they offered him a salary that made his eyes bugged out, he said yes. He used to be one of the noble sidhe. Now he's in real estate.

Money always has its price.

A corporate environment is one where the structures are more important than the people. The people are the cogs in the machine, and they turn until they're worn down. If the structure made sense, there would be some slight justification behind it, but as the structure gets more and more complex, there are more and more ways for it to break down.

First there are the departments, gatherings of specialists who don't know how to talk to the other departments. On the occasions when they do work with other people, the personal side of it is played down. All the employees live in a maze of cubicles and bureaucracy, so it's difficult to walk through that maze to get to the other rats trapped inside. Even rats deserve better.



The really bad corps make sure that other people monitor and supervise every aspect of what you do. Review cycles, process checks, process flows, procedures — they can all be summed up in five words. Conform, conform, conform, conform, conform.

Don't think, don't hope, don't dream. Don't talk about taboo subjects. Don't talk about sex or religion or personal shit because you might offend someone. Minimize personal contact. Get in, do your job, and get out. If you're really unlucky, you'll also have a dress code. They'll start to mold you into a suit.

The suit is the uniform of conformity. Everything you do is given a veneer of respectability by being dressed up in formal clothes. A suit is just another type of make-believe, except that over time, you become that role. All the feelings you have about your job become complications that you have to put aside. Your emotional feelings — like being trapped — don't have reasons attached to them, so you have to set them aside. After all, those emotions are harmful to the work environment! Your feelings are something you have to set aside to do your job. Doubt and skepticism are disloyal. The only emotions you should feel are team spirit, team pride and empowerment. All of these emotions become as starched and molded as the suit you wear.

But what the hell, I'd be making more money, right? I'd have security, and I'd allegedly have more time for other things if I have a nice secure job. I can make commitments that will hang over my head for years to come: car payments, a marriage, a lease, children. Build the walls around me, and I'll be empowered.

Every day will be Autumn. I'll be sheltered from the world, safe from any bad emotions, safe from any dangerous ideas, and anything that's new or different that'll come along will be kept away so that I can keep up on my car payments, go back to the same home everyday, feel the same guilt every night, and swill down a nice glass of expensive alcohol to make all the bad feelings go away. Then, when Winter comes, I'll be safe in my nice house and won't have to acknowledge anything outside of my little world.

## Comfort

So what's the goal of this whole system? Settling down. I guess I'm supposed to get to a point where I don't feel the call of the road anymore. I'll have a nice safe little apartment filled with shit I don't need. Then I can block out all the possibility in the world, sit in my safe world, and stare back at a TV screen. Of course, if you don't make it, you'll be bitter and living in a shitty little apartment like mine. If the Autumn People get to you, that's the future that's waiting for you.

That's not my life. I fight and I lose. I hope, and hope dies. But I never give up.

Excuse me. The fish sticks are done.

## Hearthfire

There is a way out. It waits in the Dreaming. It burns in your faerie blood.

If you have the right clique behind you and can keep the hearthfire burning, you can survive against the cold. If you can resist the conformity and keep warm, if you can fight of the webs that constrict you and keep your imagination alive, you can survive.

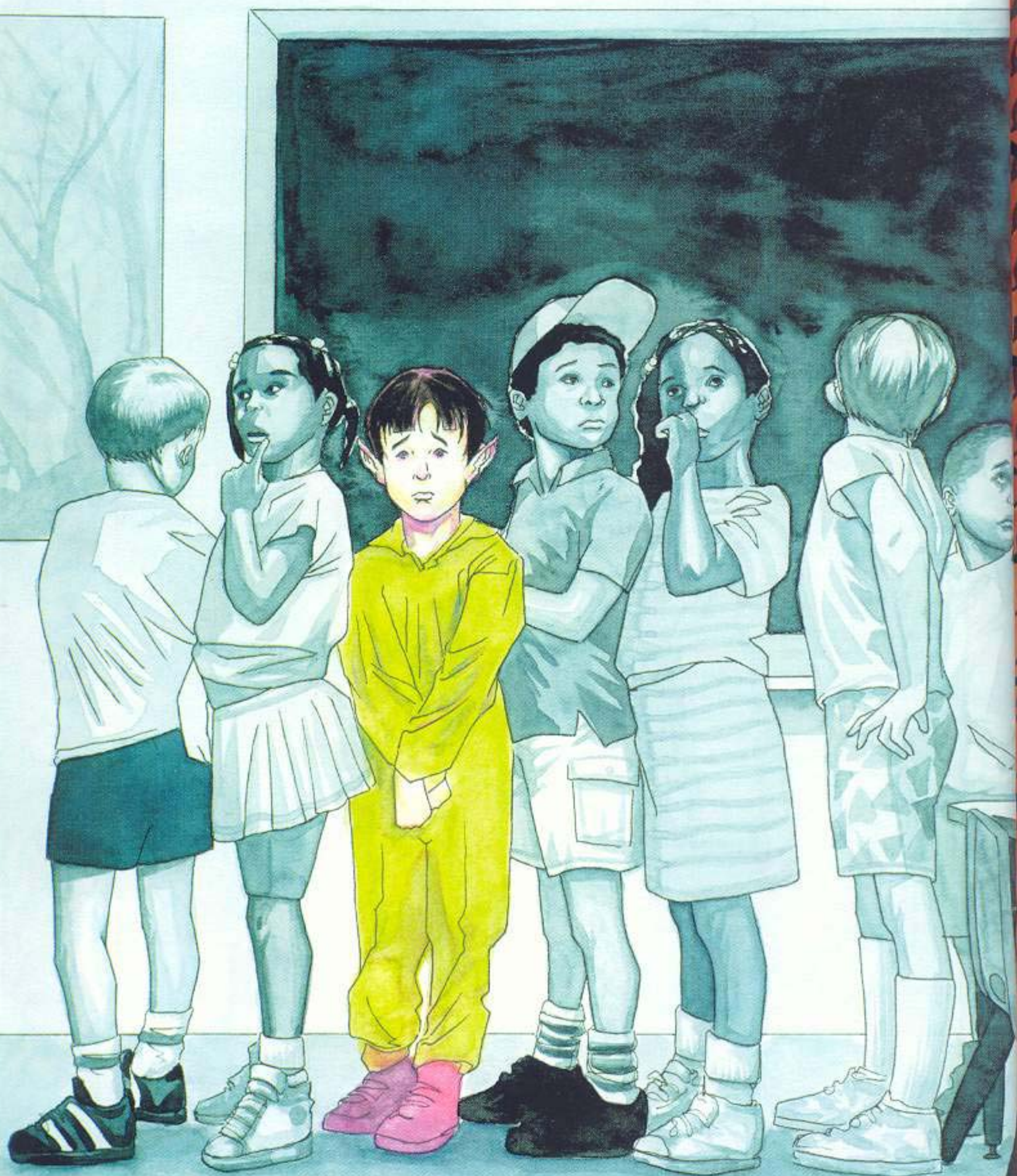
You know what? I'm really tired of them looking at me like I'm a freak. I know that they're the real freaks. The people who want to limit your freedom and trap your mind — the blue-haired old ladies with their beehive hairdos and tight-pursed lips, the television evangelists who say that you're sinful, the uptight parents who label records, and all the repressed people who condemn sex and freedom — they look like the freakish ones to me. You've got to see the Autumn People for who they are.

I had a friend named Runcible once... a rather nice pooka, as they go... who started taking notes about the different kinds of Autumn People. I think I've got a copy of it around here. Yeah, here it is. Under the carrot.

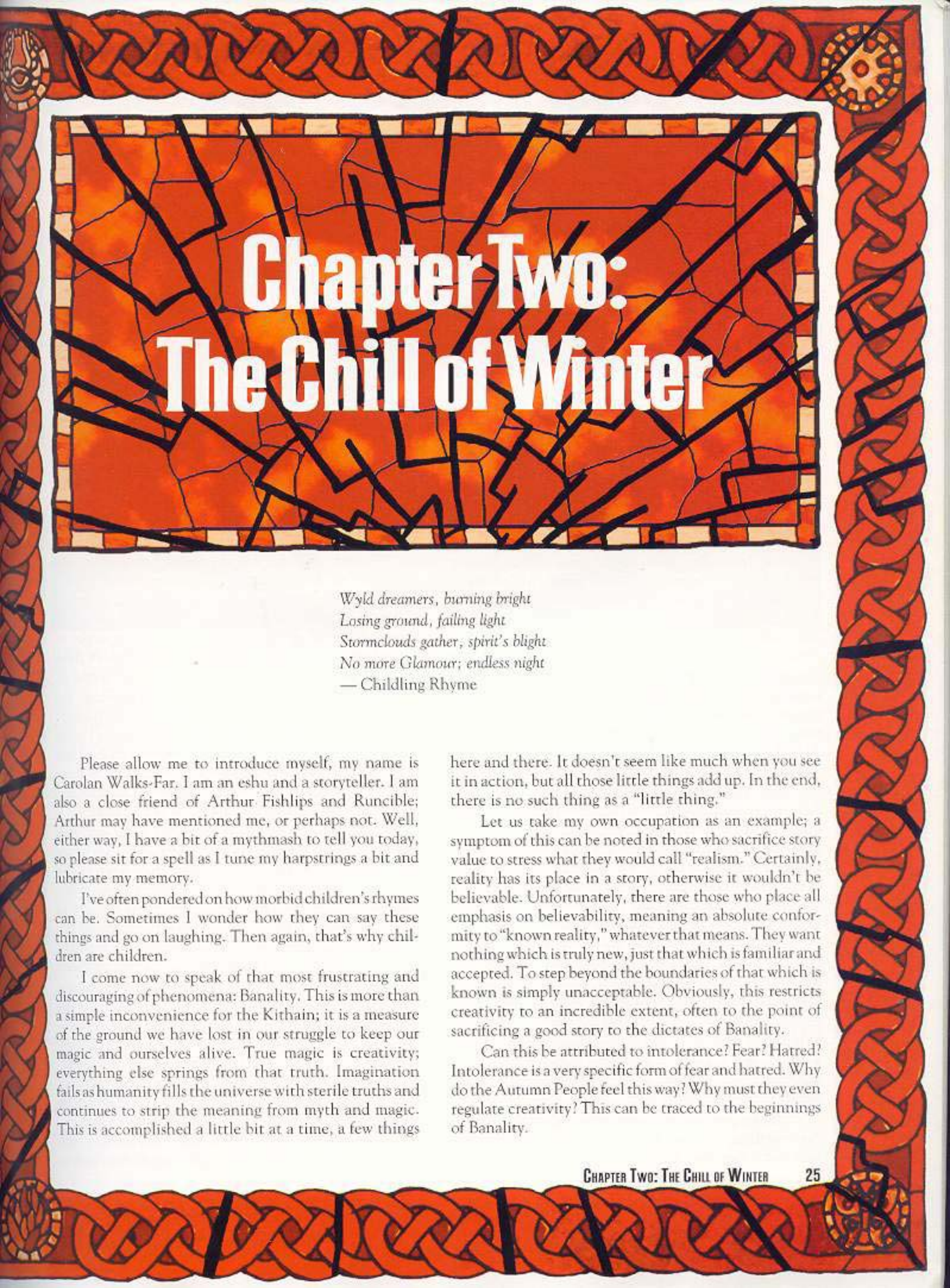
Carrot?



a Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii







# Chapter Two: The Chill of Winter

*Wyld dreamers, burning bright  
Losing ground, failing light  
Stormclouds gather, spirit's blight  
No more Glamour; endless night  
— Childling Rhyme*

Please allow me to introduce myself, my name is Carolan Walks-Far. I am an eshu and a storyteller. I am also a close friend of Arthur Fishlips and Runcible; Arthur may have mentioned me, or perhaps not. Well, either way, I have a bit of a mythmash to tell you today, so please sit for a spell as I tune my harpstrings a bit and lubricate my memory.

I've often pondered on how morbid children's rhymes can be. Sometimes I wonder how they can say these things and go on laughing. Then again, that's why children are children.

I come now to speak of that most frustrating and discouraging of phenomena: Banality. This is more than a simple inconvenience for the Kithain; it is a measure of the ground we have lost in our struggle to keep our magic and ourselves alive. True magic is creativity; everything else springs from that truth. Imagination fails as humanity fills the universe with sterile truths and continues to strip the meaning from myth and magic. This is accomplished a little bit at a time, a few things

here and there. It doesn't seem like much when you see it in action, but all those little things add up. In the end, there is no such thing as a "little thing."

Let us take my own occupation as an example; a symptom of this can be noted in those who sacrifice story value to stress what they would call "realism." Certainly, reality has its place in a story, otherwise it wouldn't be believable. Unfortunately, there are those who place all emphasis on believability, meaning an absolute conformity to "known reality," whatever that means. They want nothing which is truly new, just that which is familiar and accepted. To step beyond the boundaries of that which is known is simply unacceptable. Obviously, this restricts creativity to an incredible extent, often to the point of sacrificing a good story to the dictates of Banality.

Can this be attributed to intolerance? Fear? Hatred? Intolerance is a very specific form of fear and hatred. Why do the Autumn People feel this way? Why must they even regulate creativity? This can be traced to the beginnings of Banality.



## The Coming of Winter

In the early years of humankind, Banality did not exist; or rather, it didn't seem to. In these times, everything was new, so the fae who lived alongside humans were never without a source of Glamour. There was no need for Ravaging, for there was plenty for all.

As time passed, more and more of reality was named by the Dreamers, and as it was named, Glamour was tied up into these names, for names have power. This did not readily reduce the Glamour available to the fae, nor was the effect truly noticed for a long period of time.

Over the centuries, the fae were humanity's constant companions. To doubt the existence of the fae would be to deny the sun or the moon. Many humans saw the fae as gods or goddesses, for they had much power in those days. But gradually, beliefs and attitudes shifted. Religions died and new ones arose to take their place. People became no longer satisfied to accept a supernatural explanation for all they saw. If they were, it was from a limited number of sources, such as the Christian God or Devil and their minions. The fae were simply not needed as they had been in ages past.

Soon, technology arose. At first, since this was the first truly new concept in millennia, there was much Glamour to be gained from these new discoveries. But these scientists did not accept or desire the existence of the fae, and their lack of belief harmed many of those feeding on the Glamour created by their inspirations. It was almost as if the Glamour the fae were drawing from these individuals' creations was actually burning them. Of course the reason for this is obvious now. Perhaps if we had approached things differently, things wouldn't have turned out as badly as it did. Alas, there is no way to know how things could have been changed, so there is no point crying over crushed pearls.

These Kithain were hurt by the Glamour which they drew from the rational men and women of this era. Most simply left the scientists alone, but a few tried to find a way to work with this energy without harm. These were among the first Dauntain. In fact, it is suspected these individuals or their students are manipulating entire societies in order to increase Banality. Ridiculous? Possibly. But take a close look at the world around you, then decide.

Science and technology did not themselves cause Banality to rise. It was the point of view of those who practiced these disciplines which gave it more power. Scientists willing and able to accept, even welcome, concepts and theories outside of those they are taught tend to be less banal than those who try to explain all they see with a limited set of rules. Indeed, any rules are ultimately constraining and may lead to a general increase of Banality among those who adhere to them.

Science provided humanity with explanations for all the little things once ascribed to the supernatural. Diseases were not curses, they were simply microbes. Bad weather

was not caused by wrathful gods, but by the way the wind blew, the climate, the season and numerous other factors. Suddenly, everyone came to view the workings of the world in the same way. Very few were willing to contradict "known facts," and this too gave way to more Banality.

The fae have always been dependent upon humanity's belief and creativity, but belief was quickly fading. Instead, they built upon the foundations laid by the scientific and religious communities of the Renaissance, reinforcing and expanding old views.

What did all this mean? It didn't just mean that the Kithain were no longer wanted, it meant they were no longer needed. Humanity was doing for themselves what the Kithain had taught them so many millennia ago. This was truly unbearable to the sidhe. Rather than face this defeat, the sidhe abandoned humanity to their own devices. Many of the common kith chose to stay on Earth, but with the rising tide of disbelief and Banality, they had to find a way to survive: a means which came to be known as the Chrysalis. With all the trods to the Dreaming closed, it was the only choice. Those who stayed and underwent the ritual were born and reborn into human lives over many centuries.

In 1969, the United States landed a space capsule on the moon, and the flow of Glamour focused by years of science fiction tales and the expectations of humankind forged a trod to Arcadia. This resulted in a huge influx of sidhe from five houses. Have all of them surfaced? I seriously doubt it. Considering their vulnerability to Banality, many of these unfortunates are likely still stuck in their human seemings.

This was a brief, fragile hope, for soon afterward the space program slowed to a crawl and the strength of Banality began to reassert itself. To the horror of all Kithain I knew at the time, the portents of the coming Winter doubled and redoubled themselves. Among the most notable of these signs, unfortunately, is that the number of Dauntain has seemed to have increased greatly in the last 25 years.

The arrival of Winter is a time feared, hated and often ignored in hopes it will go away. Many Kithain are aware that when Winter arrives, their lives, their fears, everything they know and hold dear will be stripped from them, leaving only a barren, gray landscape for the humans to celebrate their dry science. It is not without reason the Kithain are frightened by the future and will do anything they can to stop it, or at least mitigate its effect on them.

Many Kithain hold the belief that Winter will herald the end of all meaning in the world: an Armageddon of the soul which will annihilate all creativity and magic remaining in the universe, leaving nothing to inspire or change. This loss will not be a bang, but a whimper. We will merely gradually wake in our beds, with no memory of who and what we are. Finally, the last of us will be gone and there will be no memory of our passing, as Banality steals even that.

A few heretics believe that Winter (and Banality) will not destroy the Kithain; it will simply banish them back to





Arcadia. Those who take this to heart too closely often skirt becoming Apostates of the Dauntain. Personally, I strongly doubt the veracity of this claim. If the true fae will not allow us in now, why then would they take in one of us who is utterly tainted with the gray thoughts of humanity? (Supposing, of course, even that much remains.)

One belief which is not widely held, but gains more popularity as the time approaches, is that Winter, like Spring, Summer and Autumn, will pass — leading back to Spring, and a new age, an age when we are again accepted. Perhaps not in the forms we wear now, but certainly in some manner. The proponents of this belief state that the world is composed of cycles, that just as humanity no longer depends upon Kithain, mortals must move along to a stage where they are manipulated by and depend on no one, including — *especially* — the Prodigals. To them, Winter will be a time of maturation for humankind, a time for them to discover what their true potential is. When the time is proper, the humans will invite the fae to return, but this time, the humans will be the teachers.

Ultimately, however, most view Winter with much trepidation and fear. They would rather stave off the Autumn as it is now and bring back the halcyon days of Spring and Summer. Winter is death: death without promise, without rebirth. When you get to the heart of the matter, it is death without meaning.

## The Arts of Banality

When confronted with such a vile concept as banal Arts most Kithain will ask, "How in this world could anyone make an Art of Banality?" That's a very good question, and one I hope to satisfactorily answer.

In the first place, they are not truly Arts. I would be more inclined to call them affinities, if even that. The most dangerous Dauntain I have encountered have managed to draw some power from Banality. More accurately, I would speculate they draw power from the destruction of Glamour, but what is the difference, really? Many do not even realize what they are doing or the damage they are causing. This, as well as what they do, is directly related to the means by which they betrayed their heritage.

A typical Dauntain is born of disbelief in his own true nature. He can dispel anything which doesn't fit into his belief system. It would be damnably difficult to do anything with Glamour around such a fearsome creature. How is this different from the average Autumn Person? An extremely banal human can definitely make it more difficult to work with Glamour, but the Dauntain can actively suppress it.



A Dauntain's capabilities are distinguished from her Kithain brethren by their ability to use Banality for her own purposes, to draw strength and power from her connection to it. She strengthens the grip Banality has over her life in exchange for the ability to work it.

These come in two forms. The first type consists of several gifts which are unique unto themselves, which work under their own rules. The second is a twisting of the Arts and Realms to serve Banality. These altered versions of the Kithain's normal abilities serve only to subvert, twist and destroy Glamour, Kithain and chimera. They are not so much defined by what they do as what they twist or negate.

The use of these abilities is not always a conscious choice. The Dauntain often finds herself simply using them unconsciously, in her servitude to Banality. In most cases, the Dauntain does not even understand how her abilities have changed.

Lest some of you worry needlessly, only the most dangerous of the Dauntain seem to develop more than one of these abilities. For the most part, many possess one — maybe two — of these awful gifts.

## Banal Chimera

Banal chimera are perhaps among the most frightening things a changeling can encounter; many of them are much like the Dauntain in more ways than I care to think. Fortunately, they are far more rare than the Dauntain. Unfortunately, most of them are dangerous enough to make me think twice before getting close enough to learn more. Therefore, what I have to impart about them comes from stories I have heard rather than first-hand experience.

Just as there are Kithain who are infected by Banality, there are also chimera who are set loose from the minds of the Dauntain or who have somehow become twisted by the banal world. These chimera exist to devour Glamour in whatever form they can find. Such horrid creatures are ravenous but difficult to identify until they act. Many are known for their cunning and treachery. It isn't that these chimera are inherently more powerful than others, but to survive the Banality in which they exist, they have adapted to become much stronger. Thankfully, these are extremely rare, since the cause of their creation eventually destroys them. Indeed, of those few who survive, many last no longer than hours or mere days.

Even with this power, such chimera are a living contradiction. Banality continually erodes their power, so much that their appetites are forever increasing, which forces them to devour more and more Glamour to survive, until they too are eventually consumed by that

which drives them. Until that time, however, they are exceedingly dangerous.

These chimera are often found in places where Kithain have experienced great hardship and suffering. They rarely understand their reason for being, but are deadly to Kithain nonetheless. Despite their chimeric nature, it has been rumored that some can actually harm a Kithain's physical form in addition to his fae mien.

It has also been said that certain chimerical items can become infected with Banality. Such objects appear to be normal chimerical items, but will cause a form of "frostbite" when they are touched or used. Little is understood about the creation of such items. Most hypothesize that they may be created due to curses, accidents or other mishaps.

### Chimera and Banality

Unlike other chimera, banal chimera actually possess Banality of their own. This Banality cannot be used, unless specifically noted, defensively against the use of cantrips and the like. Despite the fact that the chimera possesses Banality, it is a creature of Dream and cannot exist without belief: at least belief in itself. In order to use your own Banality defensively you must deny your own fae existence; this would mean complete destruction to a chimera.

Chimera can, however, gain additional temporary and permanent Banality. This can come about in the usual manner: destroying a changeling fae mien, killing a changeling or another chimera, failing to overcome a mortal's Banality, etc. If at any time a chimera's permanent Banality reaches 10, it is completely and irrevocably Undone.

In some cases a chimera may be able to use its Banality offensively, though this would be described as an additional power and is not a given ability of all banal chimera.



## The Abandoned

These are the chimera which have been forgotten. Many may have been once valued by a companion, but once the Kithain (or human!) forgets they exist, they sometimes lose a vital connection with Glamour. In most cases, chimera simply vanish back into the Dreaming. However, for some reason the Abandoned manage to survive this loss. In order to survive, they must take Glamour wherever they can find it. This, of course, strengthens the banal grip on them, but that isn't something which crosses these starved creatures' minds.

Often these chimera might have been the archetypal "monsters under the bed," forgotten when their childling finally aged: born of fantasies and ideals which are no longer held close by the person who created them. Like these fantasies, they are no longer important to those who gave them life.

**Therapy:** It might be possible to accept one of these tragic orphans and give it the attention and caring it needs to lose its voracious appetite, though this could be extremely difficult to accomplish.

### Celadyr

This poor chimera was once a playmate to the Seelie Princess Magdalen, of House Eiluned. They were inseparable at all times, always getting into one form of trouble or another. Magda swore an oath of undying friendship and love to her "imaginary" friend, even to the point of cutting her thumb and mixing her blood with Celadyr's. Celadyr was always fun to play with because he could take any form she desired, so he could be anyone or anything. He even knew tricks to make Magda look different, if only to other Kithain and chimera.

Then, one day, Magda grew up a bit — she became a wilder. She made friends with others her age, but Celadyr didn't change. Where before they were best friends, now Celadyr became more of a nuisance. He annoyed, bored and frustrated her, simply because they had grown apart. Unfortunately for Magda, ignoring Celadyr broke the oath she had sworn to him. The effect upon her was not extremely harmful. It was still enough to influence her in ways she never expected, but that's another story....

Poor Celadyr, however, had been left by the wayside like an old, worn, favorite toy that had lost its charm. The backlash from the broken oath hit him particularly hard, as the oath, sworn on blood, was part of what gave his existence meaning.

Still feeling his betrayal, he set out to teach the Kithain, especially childlings, a lesson: Never forget an oath, no matter how lightly given. Despite her abandonment, he could not bear to take revenge directly upon Magda, but he began with the others in her oathcircle.







He used his powers and their gullibility to drive them at each others' throats. When he was satisfied with the chaos and quarreling he had caused, he let Magda know he had been responsible and moved on.

Now he is used as a threat to childlings everywhere; they are told that if they break an oath, Celadyr will come and make them pay for it. It happens often enough that it is true, for Celadyr does try his best to punish oathbreakers. If unable to find a true oathbreaker, Celadyr will punish someone he thinks might break an oath. This could be nearly anyone. Celadyr may also use his Kenning to detect oathbreakers, and will try to deal with them first.

If he meets someone he thinks might break an oath (which is any Kithain who has taken an oath), he will use a particularly horrible power he has developed: At the price of five temporary Glamour and an opposed Banality vs. Glamour roll, he may invoke the penalty for breaking that oath upon the Kithain, regardless of whether it was ever actually broken.

Celadyr has begun to erode, due to the harm he has caused the Dreaming. He manages to hold on to existence by gleaning Glamour from his cruel punishments.

**Attributes:** All Physical 2, All Social 3, All Mental 4

**Abilities:** Acting 3, Empathy 5, Kenning 4, Subterfuge 5

**Glamour:** 7

**Willpower:** 6

**Banality:** 7

**Attack:** Punch (2 dice); Bite (3 dice)

**Powers:**

- **Morph** — At the cost of one temporary Glamour, Celadyr can change his appearance to anything he can imagine. He can change another's appearance as well, though at a cost of two Glamour. If the beneficiary of this power is not willing, he must roll Manipulation + Subterfuge (difficulty equal to target's Willpower).

## The Malicious

Born of nightmares and fearsome horrors, these are the anxieties of the Kithain who have allowed their worries over the coming Winter to rule their lives. Their fears take form and substance and go out in the form of a self-fulfilling prophesy. This is their only purpose; unlike the Abandoned, they know of no other existence.

They range from the extremely horrific to the excessively mundane. One such creature was seen as a huge dragon who attacked and destroyed several glens before the nobles organized a force to kill it. Another has taken the form of a fairly normal-appearing old man, but Banality is so strong within him that he erodes Glamour simply by being nearby.





There is very little one can do with these other than attempt to destroy them before they wreak untold havoc upon the society of the Kithain. Given time and numbers, they could tear down everything the Kithain have built, simply to satisfy the fears which feed them.

Some have proposed one possible tactic of dealing with these monsters: pointing them at Dauntain. Dauntain are still Kithain and possess Glamour (however meager that Glamour may be). Perhaps their respective tendencies would tend to cancel each other out... or so the theory goes. This has yet to be tested in practice, as neither Dauntain nor these chimera have presented themselves to the Kithain in any significant numbers or convenient locations.

Some of these chimera seem to be embodiments of concepts. These are not so much true chimera as emotions made manifest. They may or may not have a physical form, but in all cases, they are based on some emotion which birthed them. They are much like Nervosa, except in that they are always related to strong, banal moods.

**Therapy:** No means of "curing" these chimera has yet been discovered. It has been postulated that Kithain with strong enough Glamour and Willpower who gather together may be able to stand against one. They perhaps could even destroy it, through sheer force of will.

## Icewyrmling

This chimera is a dragon formed from the collective hatred of several Dauntain who had sought to destroy Caer Flamingo in the Kingdom of White Sands. While their attempt failed, and they were slain in the process, their focused hatred subsequently created this being.

He seems to have no purpose other than to slay Kithain and destroy their homes. He simply flies, searching, until he finds his intended target. He then swoops in, exhaling an icy blast which solidifies any Glamour it touches into crystalline ice and shatters it. This effect is, of course, invisible to normal humans.

His breath burns like cold iron, his eyes seem to be cut from a glacier, and his presence is always accompanied by a cold wind. His appearance is that of a very angular dragon carved from clear ice. When he touches Kithain, they feel as if they have been branded by the direct touch of cold iron.

**Attributes:** Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 8, Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 5, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

**Abilities:** Brawl 4, Breath 5, Dodge 5, Flight 4

**Glamour:** 9

**Willpower:** 7

**Banality:** 8



## The Fading

There are many ways that a character can be lost to Banality. The following section explains some of these as well as the means of rescuing the character from this near death.

### Voluntary Retreat:

A changeling may choose to voluntarily retreat to her mortal seeming. Any character who takes this route automatically receives a temporary point of Banality. If the character's temporary Banality is higher than her Glamour, the attempt is automatic. The Kithain is now effectively mortal and cannot interact with things of the Dreaming.

If the Kithain's Glamour is higher than her Banality, she must roll her Willpower against a difficulty equal to current Glamour. If this roll is successful, then the Kithain has successfully retreated.

Once the Kithain has retreated, she gets one chance to attempt to return to her fae nature on her own. This is accomplished by rolling her Willpower or Glamour (whichever is higher) against her current Banality. If she gets at least one success, she assumes her fae mien again. If it fails, she is trapped in her mortal seeming. To determine the length of time she is trapped, use the Mists Chart on page 230 of *Changeling: The Dreaming*. Alternatively, the character can be freed from Banality by exposure to Glamour.

### Banality Higher than Glamour:

The Kithain is in danger of temporary memory loss whenever her Banality is greater than her Glamour. This generally begins to occur after a story is over, and can take days to weeks, depending upon the Storyteller's discretion. One way to deal with this is to roll Glamour against a target number equal to Banality each day the character is not actively touched by Glamour. Failure indicates that the Kithain forgets who she is for a period of time, again determined by the Mists Chart. She can, of course, be drawn out of it by another Kithain.

### Banality Above Glamour and Willpower:

Whenever permanent Banality exceeds both permanent Glamour and Willpower, the Kithain is in danger of forgetting herself and becoming a normal human. The closer he is to Banality 10, the more quickly this will happen. This can be avoided by a fairly constant exposure to Glamour. For each point by which the Kithain's Banality surpasses his Glamour, he should spend at least one day a week in a freehold to offset the effects of high Banality. If he does not spend this time in the freehold, he risks reverting to his seeming. Additionally, the character gains one point of temporary Banality each week this requirement is not met. This can be ignored if the Kithain is engaged in a quest to reduce his Banality or is under some oath which prevents him from fulfilling it. In effect, as long as the character is actively involved with other changelings, he is in little danger of reverting to his seeming. This does not mean that every grump should run out and take an oath which frees them from this requirement; see the Cursed Daintain for an example of what happens to those who take oaths which reinforce Banality.

For example, Bryan, a grump with a Glamour of six, Willpower of five and a Banality of eight should spend three days a week in a freehold to avoid gaining more Banality. If he doesn't spend the time in the freehold, his temporary Banality will increase by one each day until it reaches 10, at which point, at the Storyteller's option, his permanent Banality increases by one.

### Banality of 10:

When permanent Banality reaches a score of 10, the Kithain is in serious danger of being permanently Undone. It isn't an instantaneous process, however. It takes one day per point of permanent Glamour and Willpower before it's completed. If the Kithain can somehow drop her Banality below 10 before that time, she will get a reprieve. Note that it is possible for the Kithain to temporarily forget before the permanent result sets in. In this case, it becomes nearly impossible to lose the Banality.



**Health Levels:** OK, OK, OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -3, -3, -4, -5, dead

**Attack:** Claws (8 dice)

**Powers:**

• **Icy Breath**— The breath of the Icewyrn can have one of two effects. First, he may attempt to destroy chimerical structures. The Icewyrn may roll its Banality with a difficulty equal to the target's Glamour (in the case of a freehold, double the freehold rating). Each success destroys all chimerical structures for ten square feet. This power costs one Glamour to use.

Alternately, he may direct his breath upon a Kithain or chimerical creature. This blast does eight dice damage and causes damage as if it were cold iron. The blast has a range of 60 feet and covers a ten-square-foot area. This effect costs one Glamour to use.

## Chimerical Objects

Chimerical objects tainted with Banality are very similar to banal chimerical creatures. Most of these objects have sprung into being from the fears and misgivings of the Kithain, though the most insane of the Dauntain have purposefully built some of these horrid creations to enhance their destructive abilities. Fortunately, these are extremely difficult to build and therefore exceptionally rare.

### The Gray Sword

This chimerical sword has no personality or defining marks. It simply appears to be a gray blade with no adornments or decoration. It was reportedly created by a powerful sidhe of the Unseelie Court who wished to destroy a Seelie rival. Unfortunately, it has found its way into other hands and is rumored to currently be in the possession of one of the Dauntain.

Each time it strikes a Kithain, it adds one point of permanent Banality to its victim. This Banality fades at the rate of one point per day, though if the Kithain struck with the sword forgets her nature as a result of this sword, she is lost forever. King David has indicated that he would grant a boon to any individual or oathcircle who succeeds in locating and destroying the Gray Sword.

## The Undoing

*She is gone. Without a trace. Like a snowflake in the palm of my hand, the Glamour which infuses her seeming and made her what she was... is gone.*

—Sir Liam Wormwood, sidhe knight, lamenting his lover lost to Banality

If becoming Dauntain could be considered a fate worse than death, the Undoing is then a fate even worse than that. The Kithain who experiences this simply







ceases to exist, as if she never were. This is almost always the final fate of Dauntain as they plunge deeper and deeper into a well of Banality.

The Undoing is what most Kithain fear the most, for it is this fate which almost all Kithain must one day face. Those who succumb are the truly tragic, as their story ends not with a bang, but with a whimper. There is no heroic death, no noble sacrifice to save the kingdom.

There are actually two different magnitudes of this phenomenon. The first, and lesser, is simply what happens when a Kithain temporarily forgets who and what she is. This state usually passes when the changeling is once more exposed to Glamour. She experiences a form of "second Chrysalis" as her memories rush back to her, awakening her senses to the beauty which was hidden from her only moments before. Yes, the Mists are a danger to even the Kithain. At times we retreat into our mortal seemings to avoid danger from chimera, only to find if we do this too often, the Mists hoodwink us, and we can't return to what we left behind.

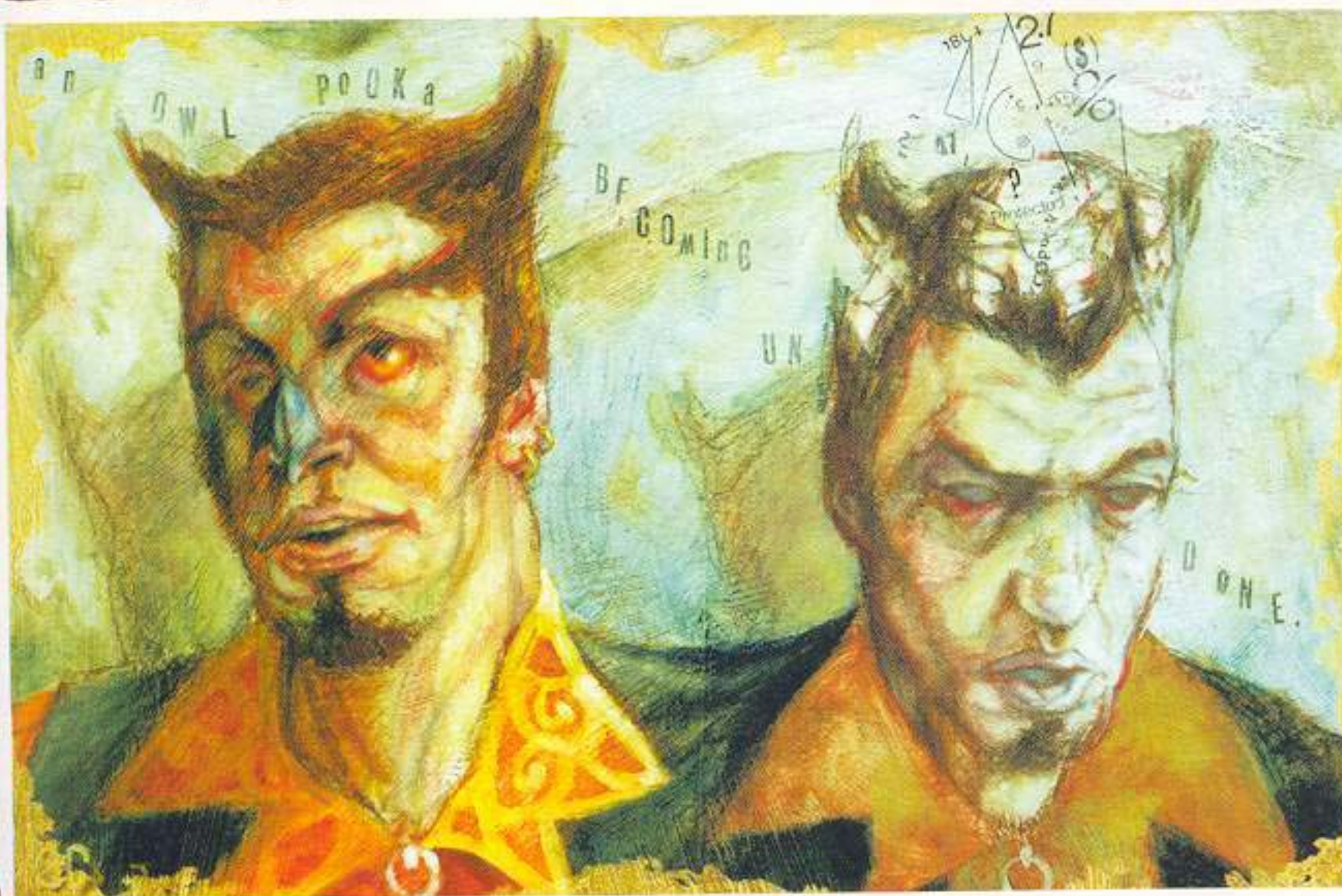
Admittedly, even when we are "normal," we aren't normal. After all, Kithain who have forgotten themselves often have a nagging feeling that something simply isn't right with the world, or themselves. They feel incomplete and unable to fill the void they know is there. Some of us write notes and letters to ourselves in the hopes that we can remind ourselves of what we are and perhaps nudge ourselves back into our true selves.

Too bad such a noble purpose can so often suffer such a tragic failure. This technique of reminding is a painful lesson; we rarely achieve the desired result. More often, the Kithain tosses the note aside in favor of something more important, passing it off as silly or meaningless. Perhaps it only increases the longing to fill that deep, cold void within his soul. Maybe he thinks it makes a good premise for a fantasy story.

The fate of almost all Kithain is to one day suffer the second, and far worse, level: complete forgetfulness. Those fae are Undone by Banality's caress, lost forever, their souls cast to uncaring winds. These are the Kithain who have somehow become so saturated by Banality that their fae nature simply cannot withstand the burden placed upon them. When I come upon a changeling who has been Undone, it is far more painful for me than seeing a dead companion.

Imagine, if you will, meeting an old, dear friend: a friend with whom you have shared many a story, joke or drink. Your friend not only fails to recognize you, but remembers nothing of your common past. It would be a terrible loss, and not only for those who see the result. What would it be like to simply cease to exist? It isn't exactly a comforting thought, yet this is what we risk merely by living.





In most cases the transition is not instant. Indeed, it takes some time for the Kithain to fully fade into her mortal seeming. In fact, if you are watching for it, you can catch it while it's happening. Any true Kithain, Seelie or Unseelie, should be willing to help the failing one before she is lost forever, or even for a little while. Each Kithain lost is yet another bit of Glamour lost. This should not be allowed, yet all too often it is. In some cases we are not capable of stopping the slide, in others we fail to notice it. Sometimes, sadly, those who see do not care enough to stop it. This last is something I am loath to admit, but I have heard of such apathy. It is this apathy which we must all struggle to avoid, lest Banality consume us all. The best way to combat this eventual slide is for the changeling to immerse herself in Glamour before she forgets everything that is important to her. She must take care to balance this immersion with the mundane, lest Bedlam becomes a real risk.

### Social Aspects

Many Kithain choose not to refer to those who have "faded" away. They choose instead to ignore the lost one as if he had never existed. This is not the best way to go about dealing with the problem as it can beget more Banality. How is anyone to learn from the ordeals of others if they pretend the ordeals never happened? When, or if, the Kithain returns to herself, others will act as if she

"took a trip" or was "on vacation." Euphemisms are popular among those who cannot deal with this problem. They fear that exposure to the lost Kithain will infect them with Banality, and that even thinking of the poor souls may be harmful. I am happy to say that these paranoid ones are in the minority.

On the other hand, many Kithain understand the danger in this kind of thinking and work instead to free those who have been trapped, if indeed it is at all possible. Some civic-minded Kithain actively search them out; others simply do what they can when they find one. Finding a lost Kithain is usually a cause for great celebration, welcoming them back into Kithain society. Such festivities are similar to a Saining in many ways, but are a more literal celebration of rebirth.

The returned Kithain usually goes back to whatever tasks and endeavors she was involved with before she forgot herself and reassumes whatever position she held. If she lapses too often, however, her ability to fulfill whatever duties she has may be questioned, especially in the case of nobles.

When a Kithain has fallen to Banality, her greatest allies are the members of her oathcircle. They are the ones most likely to try to pull her out. In fact, the practice of the oathcircle has probably saved more Kithain from Banality than nearly anything else.



TERMINAL-8





# Chapter Three: Gathering Leaves

INTRODUCING  
FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT AND ELUCIDATION  
RUNCIBLE POOKA-NOSE'S  
FIELD GUIDE TO THE AUTUMN PEOPLE  
Volume 1

Compiled, Researched, and Written by Runcible Pooka-Nose,  
Fuzzy Scholar, Troubadour Poet, and Pooka-at-Large  
(At the Behest of His Most Illustrious Fuzziness, The Grand Pooka)

They've been watching you. I know they have.

Humans have a strange fascination with the fair folk, and they tell many curious stories about us. Did you know that you can make a changeling reveal his true nature by boiling an egg in front of him? Did you know that a nocker will abandon a house if someone leaves out a suit of clothes for him? Humans watch us, but they don't understand us. Their tedious old wives' tales and spurious legends have made us seem as mundane as they are.

I've been watching them as well. I've been taking notes, and I've noticed that some of the humans are much worse than the others. The most dangerous are the Autumn People. Despite their name, they can be formidable at any time of the year. As an erudite and worldly pooka, I have taken it upon myself to classify them. I have conducted a study for the past few months to detail the habits and idiosyncrasies of these most dangerous of humans.

Human-watching is a dangerous activity; in fact, they consider it against the law in some situations. The safest place to do it is in a heavily populated area. If you watch carefully, you may see the Autumn People at work. They hide from us, but watching the most herdlike of humans, the Autumn People, can become an enthralling activity. Sit down on a park bench with a nice cold drink and a pair of binoculars, and you'll see what I mean.

Let us away to the shopping mall! To the bus stop, the video arcade and the bingo parlor! Grab your bag of carrots, tuck your ears under your hat, and come with me! The Sleepers await!





## The Classification of Autumn People

There are three common varieties of Autumn People. The first is the Heavy Sleeper. All humans act like they're asleep; magic is around them all the time, but they refuse to see it. Sleepers have been so conditioned to believe that magic is not real that it actually becomes harder to use it in front of them. Heavy Sleepers are more effective than the average human at keeping Glamour from the world.

The second type of Autumn Person is far more dangerous, but also far more rare. There have been cases when an individual of fae blood, or partly of fae blood, has been so frightened by the empty world around him that he never breaks through his Chrysalis. Rather, he is so shocked at what he sees that he gains the unconscious ability to use his latent magic to affect the world around him. He never wakes up; instead, he remains innocent of the true world around them. These rare individuals are known as Autumn Fae. Although they're unaware of the existence of magic, they unwittingly use their own abilities to increase both their own Banality and that of their neighbors. While the Dauntain have a twisted understanding of the world around them, the Autumn Fae don't realize the effect they have. The most charismatic of them hide in flocks of Heavy Sleepers, directing and controlling their actions. The tragic fact is that they are completely oblivious to the harm they cause. They, and the Heavy Sleepers, are the Innocents.

The last type of Autumn Person is the Dauntain, the malevolent fallen Kithain who hunt us. They are far from innocent; they hold onto their false reason and misperceptions for the sake of their own sanity. The Dauntain know of the existence of magic, and they actively seek it out and destroy it. The soldiers of Autumn, however, usually have only partial knowledge of the Kithain. Many of them act out of fear, striking out at a world they only partly understand. To them, the changelings are dangerous lunatics, menaces to the world, or reminders of their own failure. My friend, Carolan Walks-Far, will discuss the Dauntain further in Chapter Four.

Welcome to the world of the mundane.

## Mundanes

Take a look at your stack of White Wolf books. If you flip through the pages, you'll see dozens of types of supernatural characters you can create. In a multigenre game, werewolves can hunt down renegade vampires, psychic secret agents can infiltrate high-tech bases of conspiratorial magi, ghostly prom queens can terrorize high school football players possessed by demonic spirits, and so on, and so on, ad nauseam. That's all well and good, but once a game gets out of hand, there's one type of character that tends to fall by the wayside.

Humans.



That's understandable. Humans usually aren't as glamorous or powerful as most heroes in the Storyteller system, but whether you acknowledge it or not, there are droves of them in the World of Darkness. In fact, it's easy to forget that it's really *their* world. As the supernatural population increases, the plausibility of a chronicle drops. There's a limit to the number of impossible creatures that can exist in one city without anyone catching on.

Bringing mortals into a game can, surprisingly enough, make a game more exotic. Unusual characters seem stranger by contrast. Without them, a game slowly loses touch with the "real world," and the proliferation of high-powered characters increases. **Changeling** is not a high-powered game. Although some groups can play it as a festival of cantrips, the potential for a mellower game is still there. The Kithain are guardians of creativity and imagination, and by eliciting it from the mortals around them, they keep the spirit of the Mythic Age alive. Through Reverie and Ravaging, mortals are a source of Glamour, but because of Banality, they are a troublesome nuisance. The Storyteller can choose from several methods of how to integrate them in a chronicle.

### Sympathetic Allies

*They are not generally bound by the material precepts of our existence, often having the ability to travel instantaneously through the dimensions and vanish altogether.*

*Because of these abilities and characteristics, it has always been a difficult matter for humans to see elves. Children, poets, seers, healers, those gifted with second sight, men and women at tune with their natural surroundings have historically been those most likely to enter into contact with the Little People.*

—Nancy Arrowsmith, *Field Guide to the Little People*

The fae can quite easily interact with human society. Their seemings protect them from discovery, allowing them to become involved in nearly any supernatural or mundane plot. Wise Kithain will try to find human allies, but will also try to shelter them from the truth. As exotic as the fae are, the ones trapped on Earth still have an occasional need of human assistance. Medical aid, research assistance and even police protection are a few examples.

There are also rare cases when a mortal will become a part of Kithain society, if only for a short while. Humans of extremely low Banality have been known to cross the threshold into the Dreaming. This is relatively safe, for when a human regains her Banality, her memories of her encounters with the fae once again become clouded. When a lover or friend who provides a source of Reverie to a changeling finds out too much, the changeling has the option of telling him information for the sake of his own survival. Kithain treasure these companions dearly, for human friends and lovers can bring a sense of objectivity to their lives that many fae lack. It can work the





### Powers of the Autumn People

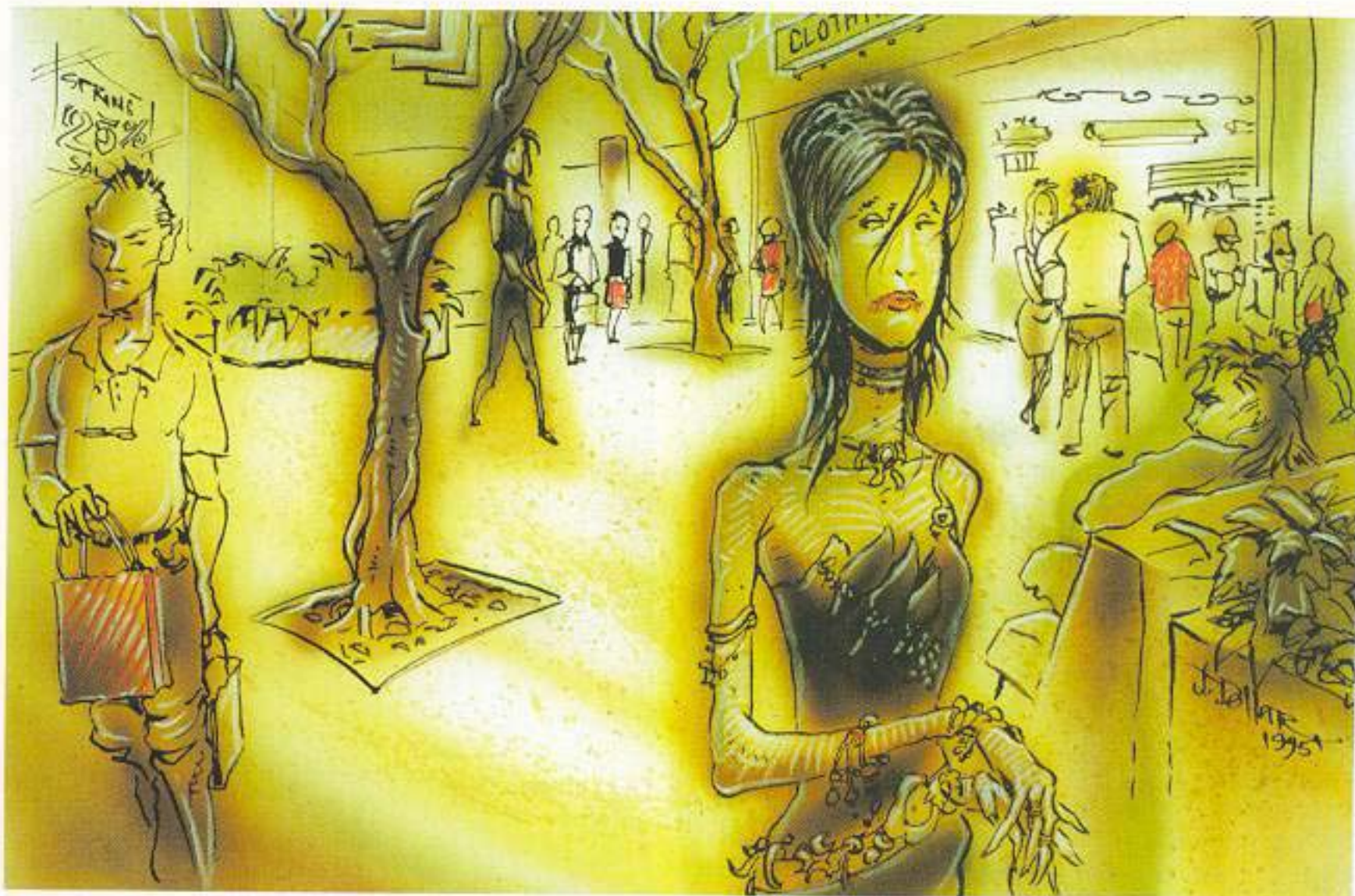
The Autumn People are said to be able to infect others with Banality simply by being in their presence. In fact, it is not quite that simple, though Autumn People do indeed spread Banality through their influence.

An Autumn Person must have some direct contact with a changeling in order to spread his taint. This contact can be a simple quick reprimand by a librarian, or an in-depth conversation with an accountant. Any time a changeling comes into direct contact with an Autumn Person, the Storyteller may decide to check and see how the character is affected. This is done by rolling the Autumn Person's Banality against a difficulty of the character's Glamour. Each success causes the character to gain a point of temporary Banality. The Storyteller may choose to make this roll at any time in which the character has contact with the Autumn Person, additionally, this roll may be made multiple times if the character remains within the vicinity to the Autumn Person in question, though care should be taken that it is not overdone or the character will soon be lost to Banality.

other way as well — a mortal caught up in faerie politics can become ensnared in romantic involvement.

Insightful children have also been known to cross into the world of the Dreaming quite easily. Their innocence protects them from harm, and childlings are always eager to come to their aid if necessary. Storytellers, musicians, enchanted glades and even ghostly allies have been known to make this possible. If Lewis Carroll hadn't been in the right field of flowers when he told stories to his young friend Alice, maybe *Alice in Wonderland* wouldn't have been written...

Mortals become sympathetic once they attain the proper frame of mind. Generally, a human with a permanent Banality score below 3 will be able to notice some elements of the Dreaming. Chimera appear as hallucinations, and Kithain either emanate a sense of unease or an aura of mystery. (After all, this is part of the meaning of the word "fey"!) Humans with a Banality of 1 might be able to see fae in their true forms, but a Perception + Occult roll would be necessary to understand details. Although attaining this state of grace isn't easy, prolonged contact with the supernatural can lower a human's mundanity. Some magic items, such as faerie food and drink, can actually lower a human's score to zero, but this is obviously dangerous. If a human in the Dreaming (or worse yet, in Arcadia!) isn't exposed to sufficient Banality, she cannot leave.







## The Autumn Fae

Hidden in the flocks of mundanes, there are fools who shepherd them. These Innocents are firm enough in their conformist beliefs that they actually have control over the world around them. They're not thaumaturgists or mages; they're usually mundanes with a high concentration of fae blood or fae who now serve stasis instead of dynamism. They're known as the Autumn Fae. Unlike their distant cousins, the Dauntain, Autumn Fae are completely oblivious to the power they control. For the most part they are very similar to the Autumn People and even share their ability to spread banality, however, some of these beings are capable of some degree of fae magic of their own. Though it is most often twisted in its uses, increasing the level of Banality around the user rather than creating wonder.

### Comic Relief and Mundane Encounters

Playing fantastic creatures is easy. We can all imagine how simple life would be if we had magical powers or superhuman abilities. In this game, however, you must play a normal person in a normal world. You must protect yourself from the world of imagination by playing someone who is perfectly ordinary. We all know how easy it is to kill a vampire or roam the earth as an undead zombie. This, however, is nothing compared to filling out a tax form or getting car insurance.

— Günter Häagen • Däaz, from the Introduction to Black Dog Game Factory's *Human: The Protagonist*

Heart-rending tragedy and the onset of insanity have their places in the game, but a comedic approach to mundanes is easier and more entertaining. Although the fae seem unusual, most humans are even stranger from a faerie point of view. Any encounter with mundanes can bring the possibility of adventure. Freaking the mundanes is always a delightful way to spend an afternoon. In the bizarre instance of your chronicle becoming too serious, setting up a few straw men as opposition in your stories is an excellent way to restore the confidence of your heroes.

Here, then, are six such adversaries to start you off...

The Heavy Sleeper is a relatively harmless creature if you keep your exposure to her at a minimum. Prolonged contact with Heavy Sleepers has been known to have dangerous side effects, such as headaches, temporary loss of cantrips, the inability to forget repetitive popular songs, the contraction of mild rashes and an affinity for daytime television. No sensible pooka would stay near them for long!



## The Over-Protective Mother

*"Don't climb on that! What are you doing up there?"*

The Over-Protective Mother shelters her charge from the "ugliness" of the world. By restraining and restricting her young from the world, she also inadvertently shelters them from much of the beauty of the world. Protective Mothers are nurturing and are known to childlings everywhere as potential guardians in times of danger, but Over-Protective Mothers teach their prejudice against the magical and mythical to their children.

This species has also been known to extend its activities to other children as well. It will enter its typical stalking ground and seek its prey: children whose mothers "obviously" didn't do as good a job of parenting as they have. They find childlings or other feral children and decide "what's best for them." The worst ones will try to infect their prey with their banal obsession to keep safe from everything, especially things that mothers do not understand.

Some mothers have even been known to tether their children to them with leashes or strap them into large wheeled conveyances to transport them from one location to the other. If the child is buried under heavy winter clothing or within an elaborate conveyance, one can still identify the warder by her distinctive behaviors. The mother will often have an overly-concerned look on her face, which will often change quickly to a look of irritation or even anger if her narrow sensibilities are threatened. Her posture usually reveals her to be in a perpetual state of near-exhaustion.

In the wild, the easiest way to spot this beastie is to notice the frequency with which she chastises or restricts the activity of her prey. Over-Protective Mothers have been known to stalk the children of other mothers, wild children or childlings. Although most Protective Mothers will express ritual greetings when encountering each other in the wild ("Oh! Isn't he precious! He looks so adorable!"), they have been known to enter contests of dominance dependent on whose child is more precocious or attractive.

**Habitat:** The Over-Protective Mother can often be found on playgrounds and schoolyards, as well as public parks, zoos and any other gathering spot for children. Their preferred behavior is a supervisory one. They establish vantage points from which they can watch any area where kids might potentially have fun.

**Identification:** The Over-Protective Mother will often carry an excessive amount of materials to deal with any potentially dangerous situations her charge might encounter. Overpacked purses with Band-aids, Kleenex, duct tape and other exotic substances keep the predator well-supplied.

I have encountered a curious competition in a local hotel. Various mothers gathered together for the purpose of organizing a "baby beauty pageant." The contests of dominance were most severe, to say the least. The children were forced to wear exotic and unusual costumes and placed on display for prolonged periods of time. Such children are trained (possibly through the use of gratification reinforcement) to smile excessively. My childling friends have informed me that the most effective way to disrupt such gatherings is to resort to Little Rascals' tactics: providing mud puddles to sully clothes, distributing bubbly soda to induce burping, and indulging in misbehavior to encourage similar misbehavior in the Mothers' prey.





## The Restrictive Librarian

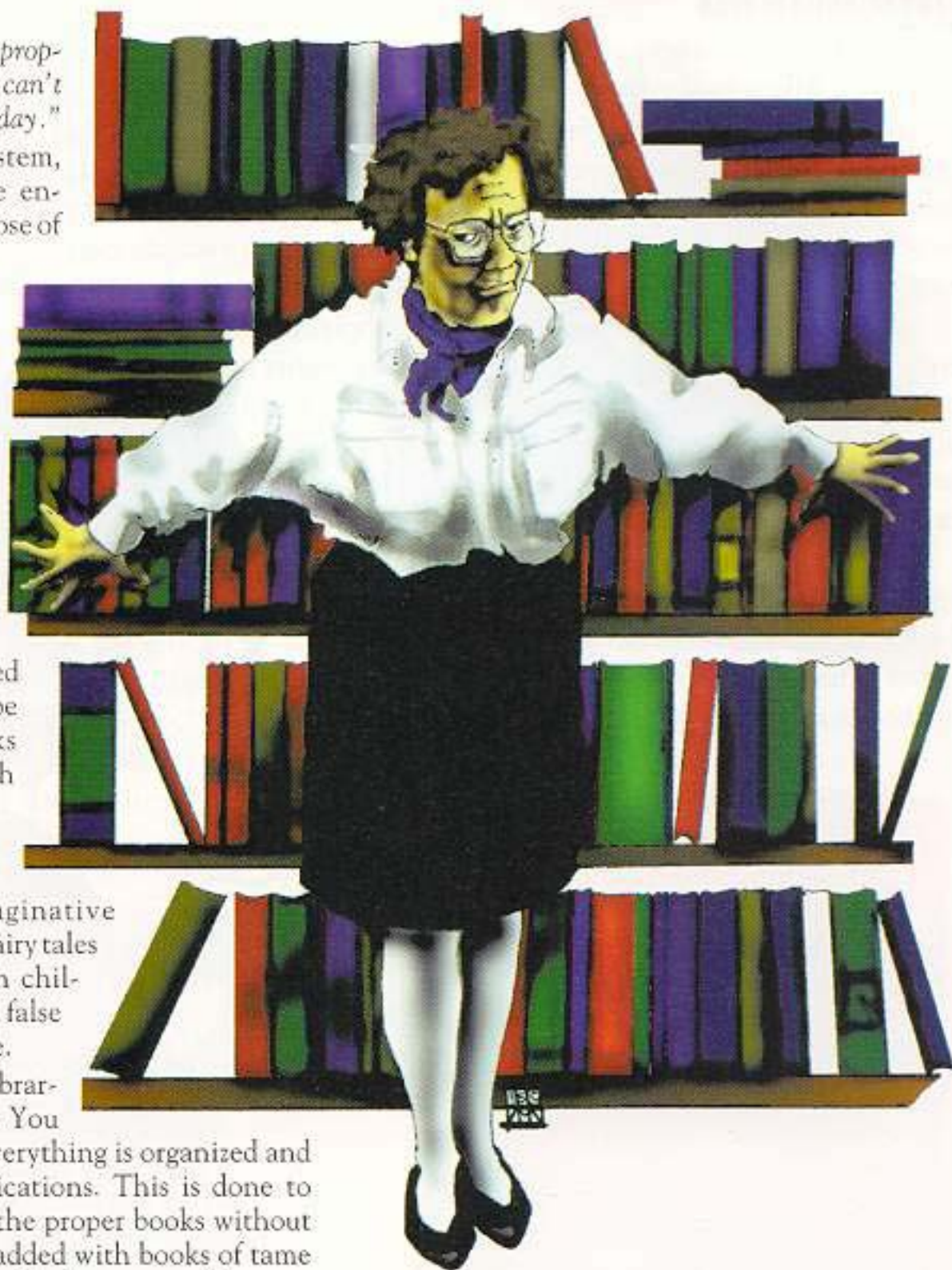
*"Information wants be shelved properly. If you're late bringing it back, I can't shelve it, and the fine is ten cents a day."*

Within the educational system, many followers of the fall have entrenched themselves for the purpose of capturing imaginative children and childlings. One common related stereotype is the Restrictive Librarian. Although her primary activity is the protection of her domain, she is like a Venus Flytrap, constructing an exotic deception to snare the unwary and teach them "proper values."

The Restrictive Librarian gives credence to the established stereotypes. The library must be kept deathly-quiet, and any hijinks from childlings will be met with resistance. Her stalking ground becomes a morose and slightly hostile environment, ensuring that anyone looking for imaginative children's books or enlightening fairy tales will be driven away. The foolish children who are lured in are taught a false image of what libraries should be.

**Habitat:** The Restrictive Librarian isn't just found in any library. You will find her in a library where everything is organized and shelved according to her specifications. This is done to discourage anyone from finding the proper books without assistance. The shelves will be padded with books of tame and minimal interest, but will also be kept pure of dangerous ideas that someone else might deem inoffensive to mysterious third parties who are apparently too frightened to speak for themselves.

**Identification:** Most of the identifying marks of the Restrictive Librarian are found within her habitat. Females of the species will adopt many traditional elements of Heavy Sleeper attire, including polyester, sensible shoes, horn-rimmed glasses and baggy dresses. However, as of late, many book-hoarders have taken on the guise of normal, efficient librarians to discredit the profession as a whole.



A librarian in the southwest thought it would be best to remove any books deemed inappropriate for children from her local library. She further ensured the restriction of 'offensive materials' by misshelving certain books in obscure parts of the library to keep patrons with delicate sensibilities safe. A group of Unseelie childling pooka took revenge after hours by luring her into the children's section and leading her on a Nightmare Ride through the library. Taking the forms of monsters, they leaped from books and chased her until she fell down, exhausted. The terrifying event reduced her Banality enough that she reshelfed all the appropriate books.



## The Minutia Maven

*"Oh, my. That's a penny isn't it? May I see that penny? I do so like to see a nice shiny penny on the sidewalk. It means I'll have a happy day."*

The Minutia Maven has a fascination for topics that are so trivial that no sensible person would care about them. She might scrutinize pennies to identify when they were minted, politely ask about the ISBN codes on the book you're reading, or crawl around on her hands and knees in a grassy field while identifying as many species of insects as possible. She is generally harmless and always exceedingly polite. Her eccentricity may mark her as imaginative, but the vastly limited scope of her interests is a sign of her preference for a limited world.

**Habitat:** Like some species of Autumn People, the Maven is often fond of lengthy bus rides, long hot nights at donut shops, and benches in the park. She will also politely introduce herself to passers-by, assuming that they will be as fascinated by her topic of interest as she is.

**Identification:** Mavens often have a vast collection of sensible objects to assist them in their tasks. They commonly prefer to have many pockets and are known to favor magnifying glasses, port around reference books, and take pictures of unusually dull specimens.

I distinctly remember a notable encounter with a Maven on a long bus ride in Seattle. She had mistaken a shiny piece of round metal on the floor of the bus for a ten cent piece. After scrutinizing it through both lenses of her bifocals, examining it with a large magnifying glass, and tasting it briefly, she presented it to five different riders on the bus asking for their opinions on whether the object was a dime or a piece of scrap metal. She then proceeded to extol the virtues of dimes minted in Denver over dimes minted in Washington, explain how to make tiny pieces of metal especially shiny, and complain that nothing really valuable could be purchased for a dime anymore.





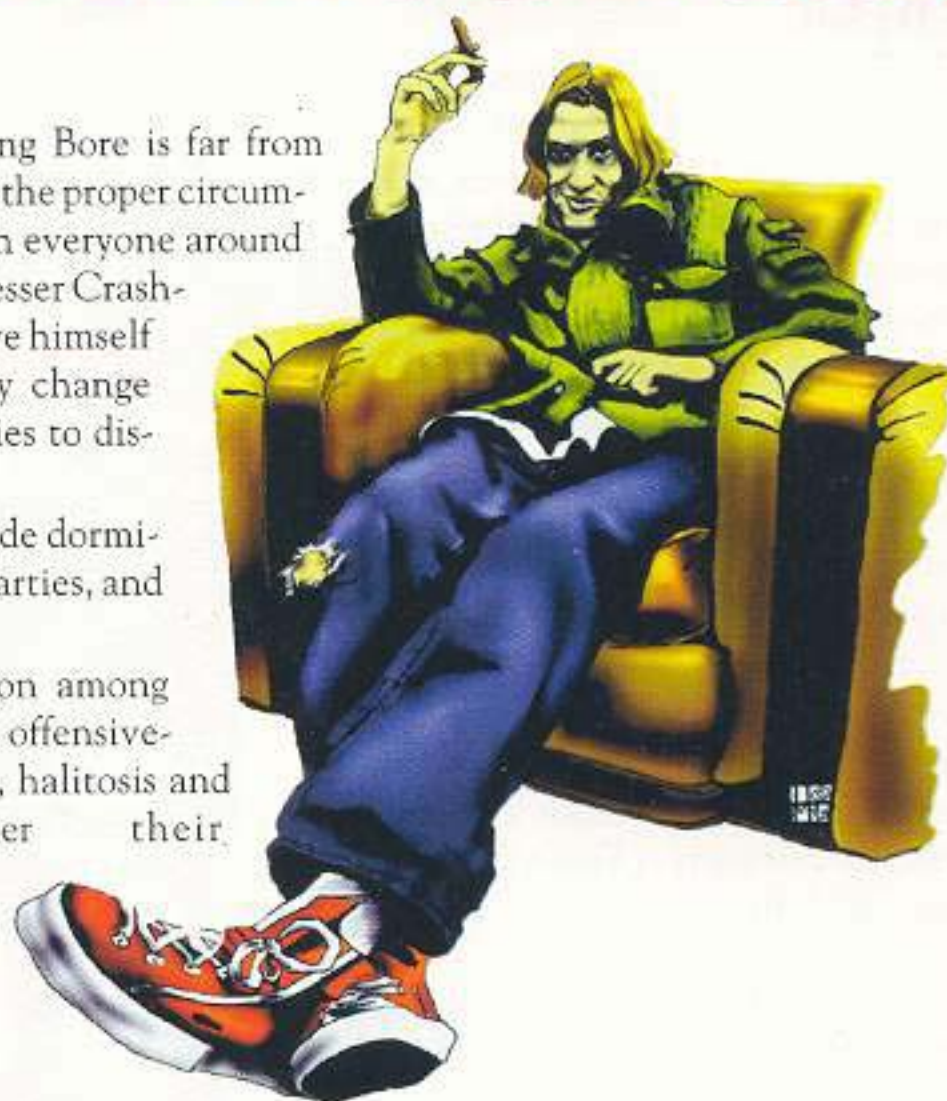
## The Crashing Bore

*"Dude! Beer! Babes!"*

Unlike the Minutia Maven, the Crashing Bore is far from polite. The Greater Crashing Bore will, under the proper circumstances, force the subject of his fascination on everyone around him and demand that they participate. The Lesser Crashing Bore, on the other hand, chooses to involve himself in other people's activities and can quickly change them from enjoyable pastimes to opportunities to display his lack of social graces.

**Habitat:** Preferred stalking grounds include dormitories, bad live-action games, other people's parties, and anywhere beer is available.

**Identification:** Loud clothing is common among younger Bores, and some will enhance their offensiveness by cultivating bad grooming, potbellies, halitosis and unusual body odor. Older Bores will further their complete disregard for the sensibilities of others by harboring a penchant for anachronistic and tasteless fashion, such as two-tone shoes, half-zipped chinos and dress shirts buttoned to the very top.



Although I regard myself as a modest and sensible pooka, I quite lost my temper with a young man who interrupted my reverie with a sizable warren of my lapine cousins. In the midst of my delightful discussion with a young rabbit about the availability of dandelions in the vicinity, he began screaming about how delighted he was to see so much "rabbit meat" around. He began chasing the rabbits around the field, trampling dandelions, and alarming does throughout the warren. I was forced to convince him that he was no longer a human, but actually a mobile dandelion. He was summarily terrorized by three rabbits who chased him throughout the forest and threatened to eat his leafy bits.



I have only once been able to converse with an actual vampire. I had been called upon to negotiate a treaty between the sewer-dwelling Nosferatu and a family of sluagh. The representative of the Nosferatu appeared to me as a strikingly beautiful yet tragically pale creature dressed in the height of Gothic fashion. I accommodated her tastes in fashion by wearing a tasteful, yet informal, ruffled shirt.

Not long after our discussion began, we were met by an unsightly fellow in a black T-shirt who began to question us at great length on whether we were vampires. He then explained how immensely "cool" every aspect of vampiric life was, informed us of his devotion to Black Dog games, asked us about "live action," and challenged us repeatedly to games of "rock, paper, and scissors."

I replied that I was not a vampire, but actually a giant shapechanging rabbit who was merely trying to find his way back to Arcadia. He responded that he wasn't part of that plot, and summarily ran off to find someone to give him "experience" for the evening.



## The Suit

"I feel empowered, and my 401k plan is doing better than ever!"

The Suit is an insidious and crafty beast. While some Seelie changelings attest that the Greater Suit is easily identifiable by his choice in clothing, the pessimistic Unseelie see "being a suit" as something more akin to a disease: a sickness that's difficult to detect, yet highly infectious in an enclosed office.

Suits are masters of camouflage. Some are actually real people who are capable of setting aside their feelings and ethics for the sake of serving a wealthy company. (This variety can be identified by its plaintive mating call: "It's only a job! It's only a job!") Others are highly banal humans who define their identity by their job titles, define "loyalty" as



unquestioning obedience, and justify their actions by their salaries. If an oil tanker crashes in Alaska, if someone in the Third World works low wages while making cheap goods for the Company, or some "cog" in the machine of a corporation is driven to drink by his dehumanizing job, that's someone's else's problem.

**Habitat:** Most suits hide in the fortress of their workplace from nine to five, but lately, this guideline has become less accurate. The "workaholic" will often stay at the office quite late, while the descendant of "yuppie scum" can carry out his duties anywhere thanks to the assistance of laptops, cellular phones, beepers and other similar devices.

**Identification:** Suit society requires elaborate rituals, many of which are performed for inscrutable reasons. Like

How impudent of him to come into my freehold so brusquely! He wore a three-piece blue suit with a power tie and shoes fresh from a shine at the airport. He smiled, hoping I would trust him. Suits smile real well. He held out a business card and was eager to shake my hand. The briefcase he carried never strayed far from his side.

Behind him was his flunky. Yuppie scum. Double-tall non-fat vanilla latte and biscotti in his hands, laptop case slung over his left shoulder, pink polo shirt, yellow sweater tied around his neck, tan slacks, loafers and thick-framed sunglasses. He smiled too. Or maybe he was just baring his teeth.

"Now about this children's book you've written," the suit said. "I think we can increase the sales of your book by using some creative marketing. When you've been in marketing as long as I have, you realize the potential of cross-selling. In exchange for a small percentage of your profits, this line of children's clothing our company has designed is practically free advertising for your book!"


"Oh, yes!" his flunky added. "We'll make *Dr. Bunny's Happy Day* a classic in no time! We'll increase his visibility on the Recognizability Index, streamline his appearance based on user surveys, and take a few of the more objectionable passages out. And look at the lovely prototypes we have of the jackets!"

"And the lining is made of real rabbit fur!" the suit continued. "Now, shall we discuss this over lunch? I'm dying for a bite," he said.

So I bit him.

What can I say? The classics always work.





a hive of bees endlessly dancing around each other in a hive or a swarm of cockroaches endlessly paying obeisance to a pile of dung, a team of suits slowly make their "dances" more elaborate as they gather credit in their bank accounts.

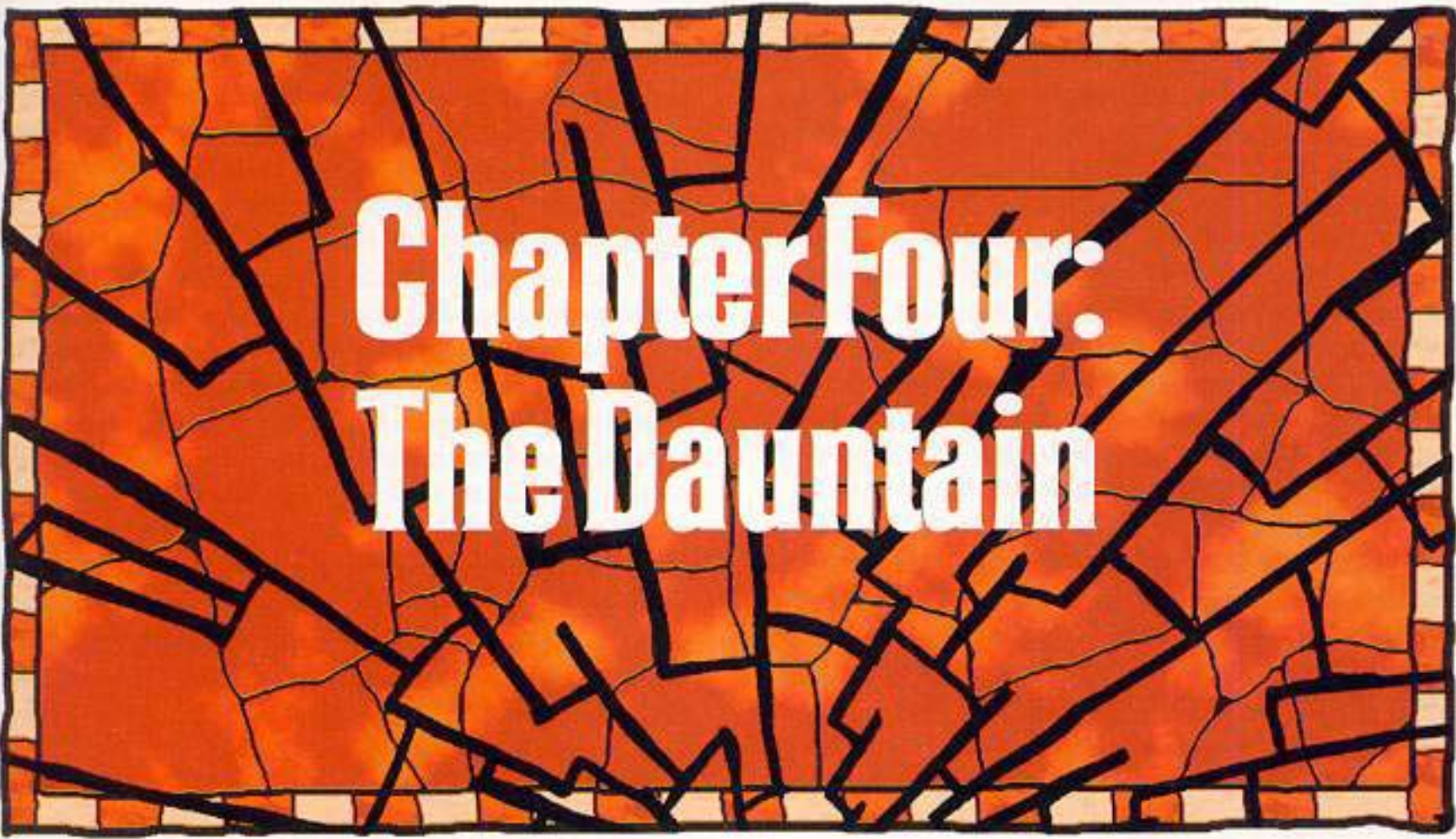
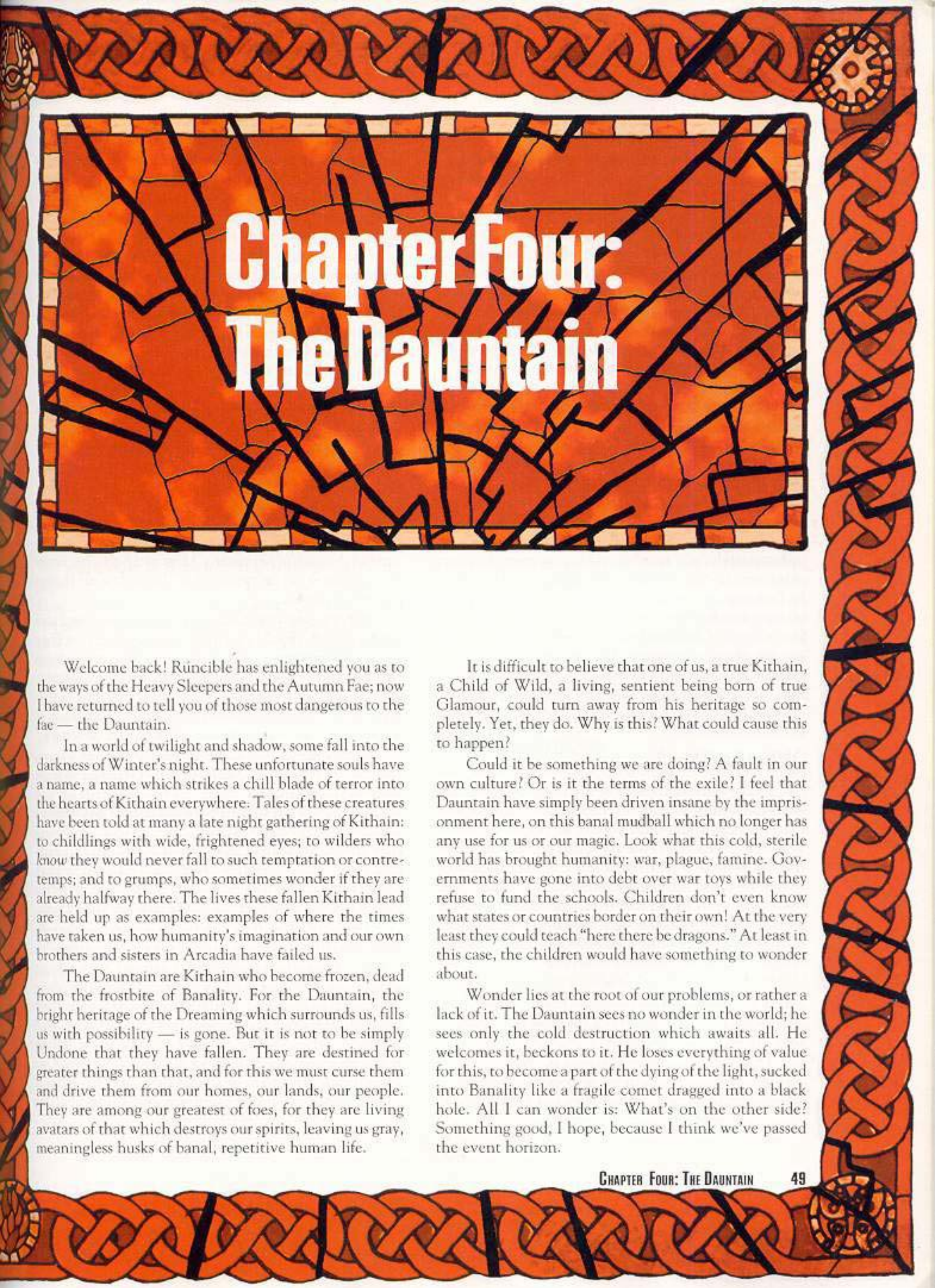
Some philosophical changelings insist on making finer distinctions between the species of suits. Can someone infiltrate a team of suits and still remain human? If someone isn't paid a lot by a corporation, can he still be a suit or is he merely

a victim? Is the distinction between a "suit" and a "cog" merely a matter of salary? Some suits also show signs of wanting to be human, such as organizing company volleyball games, dancing to bad '80s rock and drinking cheap beer whilst wearing ties around their foreheads, or insisting that they're just doing their job to support their families. Simplistic changelings respond to this ambiguity by kenning the Banality of a suit and acting on that guidance.









# Chapter Four: The Dauntain

Welcome back! Runcible has enlightened you as to the ways of the Heavy Sleepers and the Autumn Fae; now I have returned to tell you of those most dangerous to the fae — the Dauntain.

In a world of twilight and shadow, some fall into the darkness of Winter's night. These unfortunate souls have a name, a name which strikes a chill blade of terror into the hearts of Kithain everywhere. Tales of these creatures have been told at many a late night gathering of Kithain: to childlings with wide, frightened eyes; to wilders who know they would never fall to such temptation or contritemps; and to grumps, who sometimes wonder if they are already halfway there. The lives these fallen Kithain lead are held up as examples: examples of where the times have taken us, how humanity's imagination and our own brothers and sisters in Arcadia have failed us.

The Dauntain are Kithain who become frozen, dead from the frostbite of Banality. For the Dauntain, the bright heritage of the Dreaming which surrounds us, fills us with possibility — is gone. But it is not to be simply Undone that they have fallen. They are destined for greater things than that, and for this we must curse them and drive them from our homes, our lands, our people. They are among our greatest of foes, for they are living avatars of that which destroys our spirits, leaving us gray, meaningless husks of banal, repetitive human life.

It is difficult to believe that one of us, a true Kithain, a Child of Wild, a living, sentient being born of true Glamour, could turn away from his heritage so completely. Yet, they do. Why is this? What could cause this to happen?

Could it be something we are doing? A fault in our own culture? Or is it the terms of the exile? I feel that Dauntain have simply been driven insane by the imprisonment here, on this banal mudball which no longer has any use for us or our magic. Look what this cold, sterile world has brought humanity: war, plague, famine. Governments have gone into debt over war toys while they refuse to fund the schools. Children don't even know what states or countries border on their own! At the very least they could teach "here there be dragons." At least in this case, the children would have something to wonder about.

Wonder lies at the root of our problems, or rather a lack of it. The Dauntain sees no wonder in the world; he sees only the cold destruction which awaits all. He welcomes it, beckons to it. He loses everything of value for this, to become a part of the dying of the light, sucked into Banality like a fragile comet dragged into a black hole. All I can wonder is: What's on the other side? Something good, I hope, because I think we've passed the event horizon.



The Dauntain, much like the Autumn People, carry Banality with them as if it were a badge. They enforce the dreary reality which most humans subscribe to as if it were a religious duty — although I am certain that most Dauntain are atheists. This is where their resemblance to the Autumn People ends. Where the Autumn People are like a glacier, moving slowly and surely to cover the green land, the Dauntain are like blizzards, intense, brief and extremely dangerous to those caught defenseless within. Dauntain are usually viewed as random, destructive forces who exist purely to destroy Glamour in whatever form it can be found. They have abandoned their rich history for many reasons over the years, but for some reason they still cling to threads. Some may resent the Kithain for having what they've lost, others may simply hate them for being Kithain. There is no true rhyme or reason to be found by comparing one Dauntain to another. All are unique in their individual quests; even in Banality they live up to who and what they are.

I consider Dauntain to be victims to both the Bedlam and Banality. They somehow lose all intrinsic balance and become murderous madmen. This is, unfortunately, not an easy madness to treat. In many cases, we can cure the Bedlam by exposure to Banality. In this case, however, such exposure will only make matters much worse. Many Dauntain are apparently in the grips of the third stage of Bedlam, even if they are not obviously insane. This is not, however, the same in every single instance. I have seen Dauntain who are frighteningly sane. In fact, they seem to choose this path for themselves with full knowledge of the consequences.

## What Are They?

I have dedicated much of my time these past few years to learning all I can of the Dauntain. I have seen much which would chill you all to the very core of your being. I have felt the icy touch of Banality reach into my heart and try to yank it out in bloody chunks. I have witnessed chimera so steeped in Banality that their presence burned like iron. I have also seen the wonder of a Dauntain brought back into the fold of her kith. It is like beholding a second Chrysalis. Alas, this is a rare event and difficult to arrange.

Now I shall tell you of what I've seen and heard. I trust you will listen and learn, so that you may avoid these same pitfalls that trapped the poor Dauntain, for they are victims of Banality.

The first reasonable question is, "What are the Dauntain?" Most Kithain seem to expect them to be some indistinct lump of Banality out to destroy all

Kithain for the sheer pleasure of it. This view is wrong. Oh no, don't be mistaken — they are dangerous. What they are not, however, is predictable. What may be a beautiful way to deal with one Dauntain may not even faze another. They are twisted reflections of our own kind — they are Kithain. I see that shocks you. Good. Sometimes we all need to be shocked. It's cathartic.

I have seen two kinds of Dauntain. The first sort make a conscious decision to become Dauntain. They are those who are hungry for power or revenge, who choose this path in order to satisfy a personal need. Sometimes I feel the Dreaming has failed these folk, for if it were readily accessible, they would have less reason to abandon it. It is easy to abandon a home one doesn't remember. The second group are those who grasp for the madness when it strikes. The onset of Bedlam is a frightening experience which comes all too often to those who are newly emerged from their Chrysalis with no guidance. Like a drowning person, they reach for any safe point of reference which they can grab. This is usually their pre-Chrysalis human viewpoint. Unfortunately, this isn't a true escape from the Bedlam. Deprived of its normal outlet, it acts instead through other means. Most often this becomes an extreme — even fanatical — hatred of all things related to the fae.

In both cases, the Kithain were not consumed and Undone by the Banality which fills them because they were also saturated with Glamour. Due to various reasons, the temper of the Kithain is flawed despite this balance, and she falls. Most often this flaw manifests as a lack of willpower. On other occasions it manifests in seemingly minor quirks or instabilities.

Both varieties of Dauntain are Kithain who have rejected the bright wonder of the Glamour which surrounds and infuses them, embracing instead the lifeless tones of Banality. These outcasts from a race of outcasts find themselves truly alone. In this loneliness they strike out against that which exists only to nurture them. They seemingly exist only to destroy that which the Kithain find beautiful and magical, with no regard to the consequences or the damage they cause.

They are viewed as vandals in a very real sense. Whichever method they utilize, they will continue to reduce changelings and their Glamour to nothing more than gray dust. This is their only purpose; they are driven to extremes by the Banality to which they have turned. They accomplish this in many ways and in many guises. Some attempt to slay their fellow Kithain, some utilize Banality in horrible ways to destroy chimera and some simply hide, only to lash out in fear or hatred. Some Dauntain give no indication



that they understand what they are really doing. Typically, they develop some form of symbolism around their actions which may or may not show any actual knowledge of Kithain or Glamour.

Why do Kithain go this route rather than simply dissolving in the Banality they embrace? Because the Kithain are expressions of a mythic forces, other facets of the archetypal hero. Anything a Kithain does has a resonance. If a Kithain turns to Banality he will not always be Undone, although that fate eventually awaits him, but he will go down in the style of fallen magicians throughout legend. It's tied into the balance of energies which make up the Dauntain; Banality drives him to annihilate wonder, curiosity, and magic whenever possible, but the Glamour allows him to utilize these forces without being destroyed by them — at least for a time.

No true Kithain — including Dauntain — ever does anything in a small way. If one chooses to fall it will be a spectacularly doomed trip down. On that journey, the Dauntain will take as many as possible with him.

Despite appearances, Banality is neither conscious nor malicious. It is simply the label given to the disbelief of normal humans. For changelings, any human belief has form and power. Disbelief is not "negative belief" or "anti-belief." It is simply a belief in concepts other than those which empower the Kithain. This is not evil, simply evolution of thought as humans outgrow their need for mythic tales and magic. Unfortunately, humankind may not understand what they are giving up by abandoning the sense of wonder and magic they had as children. Perhaps, in a very real sense, the future of the Kithain lies in the hearts and minds of the children.

## How Do Dauntain Come To Be?

Now this is a question which has puzzled our sages for many years; what causes a perfectly normal changeling to reject the life, light and soul of the Dreaming? Why do they allow themselves to become such monsters? How do they survive the transformation into a Banality-filled shadow of their former selves?

The easiest answer is to say there are as many ways as there are Dauntain. However, it wouldn't be fair of me to leave you hanging with such a simplistic answer. The following section details several Dauntain I've learned of in my travels. Each Dauntain, like all other Kithain, each is unique. Her story defines her existence, even in her fall. She is not a cookie-cutter foe, cast from a mold. She is (or was) Kithain and this defines her existence.

Some say that in becoming Dauntain, a changeling must face herself in a struggle for her very soul. This struggle sometimes manifests in a chimerical struggle, as Banality grows within her. In such cases, the changeling may be assaulted by a chimera which strongly resembles her, but twisted in some fashion. Since this is an embodiment of the changeling's own fears, it can often be stronger than the herself, and will often defeat her. This is a struggle of thoughts, ideas and philosophies as the changeling's Banality gains a measure of independence. Others say that this is simply ridiculous and that Dauntain are born, not made. They argue that just as there are Seelie and Unseelie, the Dauntain are simply Kithain who represent Banality. They insist that the fallen are a necessary evil reminding the Kithain of the loss they all face. This is said to be a defeatist argument by many grumps, who are themselves afraid that this is true. To be fair, I can only say that I have no evidence for or against either story.

Many believe that the Dauntain herald the coming Winter, not as a sole harbinger, but as one of many signs. Only the most optimistic generally dispute this. The most heretical of all Kithain espouse the view that Dauntain are simply the next stage of changeling evolution. They claim that this is rendered obvious by the fact that Dauntain are beginning to form their own Arts and Realms from the stuff of Banality. Given time, the Dauntain will outnumber the Kithain, and will serve as a repository for their race until the Winter passes and Spring comes, bringing Glamour back to the world. The less optimistic view is that they simply herald the end of all Kithain.

## The Dauntain Dooms

There are as many different ways for a star to fall as there are paths in the sky. Therefore, no two Dauntain will be exactly the same. Even so, just as those of the same kith will share similarities, there are varieties of Dauntain with more in common than not. This is not to say I can categorize every Dauntain in existence, I can, however, provide a guideline which describes the method to their madness.

The common causes of the Dauntain's fall we call their Dooks, their dark fates. Here follow some of the Dooks I have encountered. Each has a generalized description of their origins, their outlook, how they appear to other Kithain and what I believe their attitudes toward other Dauntain would be. This last is merely a possible insight into their motives. I am not certain that they will react this way; it simply seems most likely.



## The Lost

*"I'm a what? Excuse me? You say I'm crazy because I don't believe this nonsense? I think we'd better have a talk about what's real and what's not, right now. . . ."*

The first and most common means by which a changeling falls is a denial of his fae nature. Human one day and Kithain the next, he experienced a Chrysalis with no Kithain around to guide his way. He could not accept it. His mind could not handle the sudden change in realities, the loss of a firm grounding in what he believed to be true. Where yesterday a library sat, today a castle made of shining glass stands, the guardian lions now live griffins. This can be too much for the human mind to handle.

These Lost are rarely recognized, as most of them are missed upon their Chrysalis. When another changeling does find one, she will often treat him as a particularly dangerous Autumn Person with more than their usual share of Banality. When they are identified, they are considered to be the definition of the Dauntain: Banality-corrupted Kithain bent on destroying all Glamour.

Ordinarily, the changed perceptions would not present a difficulty to the average Kithain. Either he would retreat into his seeming and forget or he would instinctively accept what he saw on a deeper level, even if he reacts with disbelief on the surface. Neither case occurs with the Lost. Instead, to the core of his being, he rejects what he sees as absolutely unreal.

He chooses Banality. Rather than face the wonder of the new world, he withdraws into the comfort of the old. This is not like the retreat which leads to forgetfulness and an eventual reawakening. It is a willing embrace. Because the Dauntain has not lost his knowledge of Glamour, such as it is, he can still see it, feel it, sense it.

This becomes a torment as his very sanity comes into doubt and so he seeks to destroy that which he cannot understand. In the case of those who are newly aware of their nature, they may consider themselves to be utterly insane, their world suddenly turned topsy-turvy. Everything they know is not only utterly wrong, it contradicts everything they see now. To avoid this, they construct a fantasy world around themselves, which is, ironically, as close to their perception of the "real" world as possible. The Dauntain now believes that he has discovered some form of insanity which he must stop. Quite often, this desire to fight the madness extends to any Kithain he encounters. To this end, he will go to amazing lengths simply to remove any Kithain. He will





probably develop an intense hatred for all Kithain and possibly even a revenge complex, believing them responsible for dragging him into this horrible, unreal world which he cannot ever escape.

In either case, the Lost will begin to build elaborate schemes and self-deceptions to justify their actions to themselves and others. They can be quite Byzantine in their thinking in the simple effort to avoid the truth of the world around them. Possible therapy for the Lost involves making them see the truth to existence, bringing them back into the fold.

### Appearance

The Lost, when they have a fae appearance at all, look like famine victims. Their appearance will not be much different from their seeming, yet it is obvious that they are cut off from that which gives them sustenance. With each Kithain destroyed, the Lost grows even more gaunt and unhealthy — until he is finally Undone.

### Outlook

**Kithain:** Poor, deluded fools. They must be brought into the light of reason and made to understand that the dream world in which they live is just that: the stuff of fantasy. Our methods may be harsh, but we ground them in solid reality when we're through with them.

**The Cursed:** They're lost in their own fantasies, just like those crazies who are trying to recruit me into their dream world. The difference is these are dangerous psychopaths.

**Black Magicians:** Self-deluded powermongers who'll do anything to get a bigger piece of the pie. Too bad they don't understand they are grasping at clouds.

**Nihilists:** This is foolish, to waste away to nothing. What good does that do? If you don't act to improve the world, you're part of the problem.

**Apostates:** They spout nonsense and fancy. Just like the others, they need help before they spread their delusions to others.

**Typhoids:** It's often typical of those who have been afflicted with mental illness to attempt to pass the blame along to others. But to try to lay blame for being cured? Sad.



## The Cursed

*"With that, I pronounce a curse upon you and your house unto the final generation. Your daughters will bear sickly children and your sons shall not marry. The first in each generation shall be stricken from Kithain society without recourse. I swear unto you, I shall not rest until you and your family are devoured by the sterile force of Banality."*

Vengeance can drive anyone to extremes. Kithain are no exception to this; indeed, they often take it farther than any human. When a changeling has been wronged by someone, or feels she has been wronged, and the slight goes far beyond any forgiveness possible, she may make the gravest error of her life and swear the Oath of Undoing.

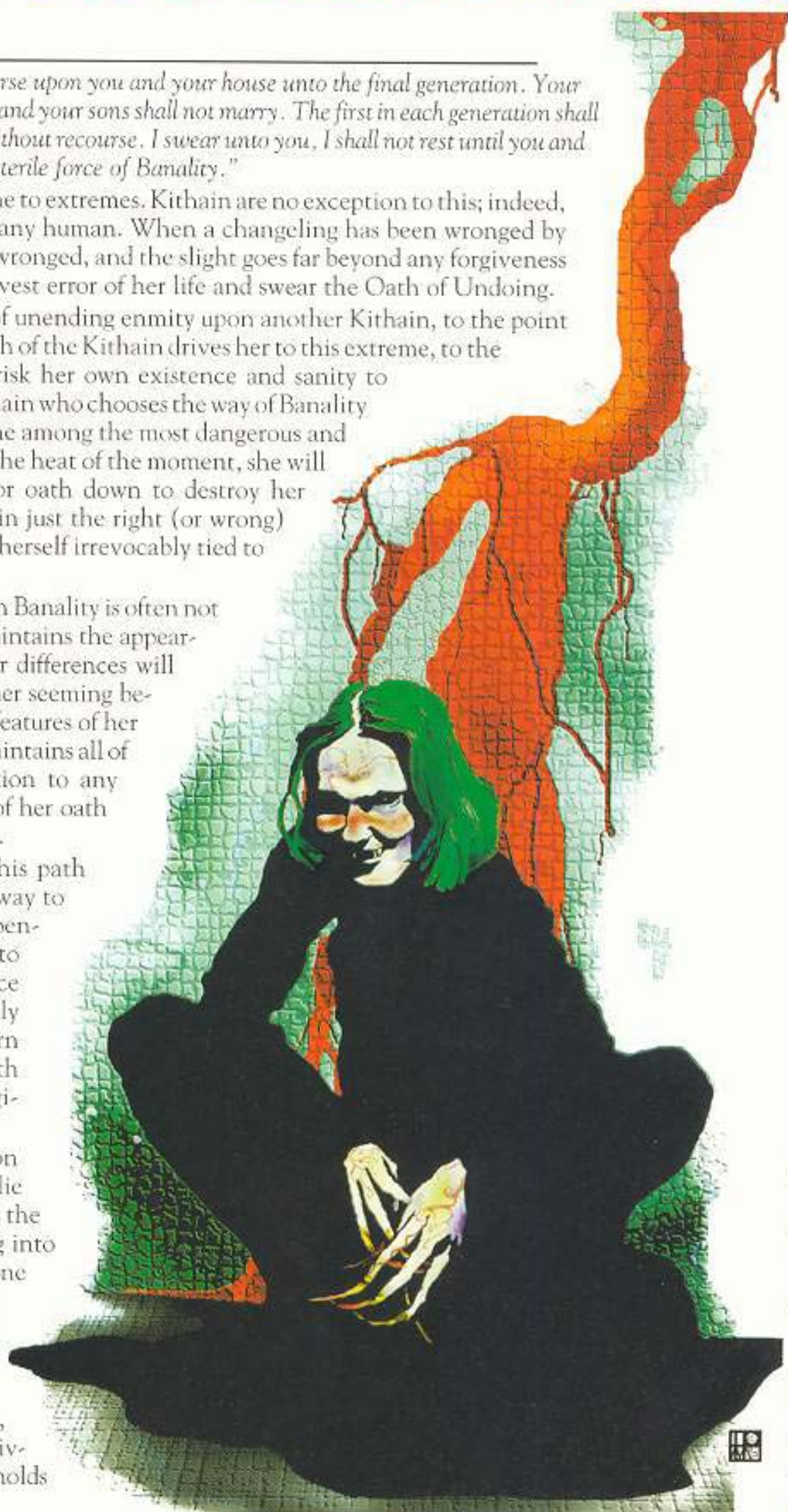
This oath is a declaration of unending enmity upon another Kithain, to the point of death. In most cases, the wrath of the Kithain drives her to this extreme, to the point which she is willing to risk her own existence and sanity to destroy another. This is the Kithain who chooses the way of Banality from anger or revenge. She is the among the most dangerous and frightening of all Dauntain. In the heat of the moment, she will often lay a frightening curse or oath down to destroy her enemies. If the oath is worded in just the right (or wrong) fashion, the Dauntain will find herself irrevocably tied to Banality.

The connection she has with Banality is often not immediately apparent as she maintains the appearance of her original nature. Her differences will become apparent with time as her seeming begins to assert itself over her the features of her kith. Despite this change, she maintains all of her Arts and Realms, in addition to any powers bestowed by the power of her oath and the Banality she is tied into.

The Cursed may choose this path because she sees it as the only way to achieve her goals, which rarely benefit anyone. She may be blind to the price of this path, but once she sets foot upon it, there is rarely any turning back. In fact, to turn back is often to break the oath which set her upon the path originally.

Sometimes, the first steps on this path lie along the Unseelie road; however, this is not always the case. Occasionally, when giving into the excesses the Unseelie are prone to indulging in, this sort finds herself feeding the icy grasp of Banality within her own heart.

The Cursed tend to be among the worst sorts of Ravagers, as their pillaging of human creativity strengthens the grip Banality holds





over the world. The first sign of their shift in focus is often that of the new Dauntain suddenly Ravaging her fellow Kithain for their Glamour. She is also among the most feared, for she is the most visible living embodiment of that which is destroying the bright, fae heart of the Kithain. She is Banality given form and substance, come to devour beauty and replace it with cold, unforgiving truth.

Her salvation lies in causing her to see the consequences of her actions, and convincing her to atone for them.

### Appearance

The Cursed are anger personified. Their eyes flash dangerously and their teeth and fingernails become wicked fangs and claws. They always seem to be filled with violent energy which the slightest error could touch off. Within these ones, Banality is not a chilly, dead thing. It is alive and burning with rage.

### Outlook

**Kithain:** Ignore them. They're not our concern; only our quarry is our concern. He has offended us, so he shall pay.

**The Lost:** Frightening! How could a true Kithain become such as this? To become one with Banality would be as... death... to a Kithain.

**Black Magicians:** Driven by mad lust, these are the worst betrayers of our kind.

**Nihilists:** One such as this deserves to be helped. Perhaps our enemy did this to her?

**Apostates:** Inconceivable!

**Typhoids:** Avoid these at all costs. They are a danger to us as they are to any Kithain.

### The Oath of Undoing

An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. No slight shall go unnoticed, no wound unavenged. I shall hunt my undying enemy, [name of enemy], to the four corners of the Earth, and I shall not rest until either I or my enemy is fully Undone. When I find him, I shall cut out his heart with the keenest blade of cold iron I can find. I shall do everything in my power to reduce my enemy to nothing and to less than nothing.

This oath is dire in meaning. The oath taker gains a permanent point of Banality, and must roll her Glamour against her new Banality as a target number. Success means she feels the consequences before she finishes the oath and may cut it off. Failure means she finishes the oath and is subject to it until it is discharged. If the oath is broken, a point of permanent Willpower is lost; if it is fulfilled, a second point of permanent Banality is gained and the above roll must be made again. This is a terrible oath. It decrees the destruction of a fellow Kithain, which only strengthens Banality. As with most oaths, this is not the only wording possible, merely the most popular.



## Black Magicians

*"Power is truth, truth is power. Beauty is an illusion, a lie spun by our elders to keep us on their rigid path. To see the truth, you will see what it truly is to be a Kithain!"*

They are the least known of the Dauntain, although perhaps the most dangerous. The Black Magician has consciously chosen to take the cold, unforgiving path of Banality out of sheer hunger for power. He seeks nothing from this path beyond fulfillment of his own desires. He understands that this path can and will bring him power beyond his wildest dreams, but his own pride prevents him from recognizing the ultimate price of his choice.

The first step, of course, is the choice. This is when the Dauntain decides to embrace the power of Banality. This can take many directions. Imagine a Kithain who begins to regularly use Banality to fight off the effects of Glamour. He may soon discover that he can use it in different ways, such as to actively destroy things of Glamour, to drive Kithain into their seemings, to selectively remove certain aspects of Glamour (for example, to prevent the use of a Kithain's Birthright, or to alter the sphere of effect of a cantrip) and perhaps even more. In the above examples, the Dauntain gains the ability to use his Arts and Realms in conjunction with Banality. Other means of setting down this path include





making a habit of slaying Kithain, or really any conscious activity (not simple exposure) which can result in an increase of Banality.

This is a doomed path simply because it never provides all that the Dauntain seeks, yet he always feels that he has nearly reached his goal. He is almost always Undone before he finally arrives at his destination. Unfortunately, this Dauntain causes great damage to Kithain society before he is slain or devoured by the forces he wields in his mad quest for gratification. He is consumed by paranoia and hatred as his hunger carries him along darker and darker paths. Shortly after he begins turning, even his closest companions will be suspect in his eyes. He will remove any potential threat to his power as he rampages through the world.

Despite all this, the Black Magician is the most epic of all Dauntain. His quest is a truly anti-heroic one as he seeks that which he can never have and destroys all that he should treasure. For the Black Magician, to succeed is ultimately to fail. His salvation lies in showing him the damage he's done and convincing him to renounce his power madness.

### Appearance

To Kithain, the Black Magician appears sinister and menacing. He seems to loom in the darkness as shadows gather about him like moths to a flame. His voice takes on a chilly, foreboding note which tends to make Kithain — even the sidhe — shiver at the sound.

### Outlook

**Kithain:** Fools, all! They cannot understand that which they willfully ignore. But they will not ignore me when I arrive at their doorstep and bring their precious freeholds down around their pointed ears!

**The Lost:** Deluded fools. How can they truly believe they are different from the rest of us?

**The Cursed:** They are as children playing with matches in a gas station. They know not what power they wield, what potential they waste.

**Nihilists:** These are of no consequence; pay them no mind. Perhaps they'll go away. That is, after all, their ultimate wish.

**Apostates:** They are very easily manipulated. Their ridiculous belief system is a fragile house of cards, awaiting a careless hand to scatter them. Tell them that your enemy poses a particularly dire threat to their faith. Odds are, if you state it properly within their terms, they won't waste a moment to argue.

**Typhoids:** Irresponsible, that's what it is. I wonder if one could lead me to some Prodigal blood? I hear it has amazing properties.



## Nihilists

*"This is the end, my friend. Why rush about and pretend it isn't here? Just accept it; then it will come easier. We can't fight it, you know."*

The path of the Nihilist is particularly lonely, as it begins with depression and hopelessness. The Kithain sees the effects of encroaching Banality all around her and gives up her will to fight. She simply stops struggling to maintain her Glamour. This surrender to fate often manifests as an aura, devouring the Glamour all around her. Her home may seem particularly drab and uninteresting, even to normal people (although a typical Autumn Person may feel perfectly at home). To Kithain, it will seem dead and lifeless, completely lacking any of the joy or color of Glamour.

As time passes, this aura will spread to infect the people and places around her. The garden which was once so beautiful and enjoyable to be around may suddenly lose the sense of wonder it inspires. The young, starving artist living in the studio next door may suddenly find that his painting does not come so easily anymore.

What happens to this Glamour? The Dauntain slowly devours it. She is filled with a hollow aching which can only be satisfied by





consuming Glamour — the fact that she also destroys other Kithain and their chimera is only a bonus — or a curse.

It must be noted that the Nihilist is not aware of the damage she is causing. In fact, she is incapable of noticing it on her own. It must be pointed out to her, although this may drive her deeper into her depression. In fact, most of her own attention is directed inward, as the outside world holds no real attraction to her any longer.

Her rescue lies in the possibility of convincing her to act despite Banality, to act to change the world, not react to the changes in the world. If this can be done successfully without driving her deeper or convincing her to commit suicide, she may rise from her somnolence.

### Appearance

The Nihilist grows smaller within her seeming. To other Kithain, she seems to be withdrawn and harmless. A gloomy aura surrounds her, filling those who approach with the icy touch of despair.

### Outlook:

**Kithain:** They act like puppets on a stage, always charging to and fro. Do they not understand it makes no difference? We're all going to die.

**The Lost:** How ridiculous. Don't they know everyone is delusional? Some just hide it better than others.

**The Cursed:** Does it really matter when the dust settles? No.

**Black Magicians:** Power is nothing. It's like a fire that tries to feed itself.

**Apostates:** After Banality takes us, there will be blessed oblivion. What more could we ask?

**Typhoids:** What was that about curiosity and the cat?



## Apostates

*"You must understand, I do this for your own good. Please, when you see my family in Arcadia, tell them I will be coming home soon. Have a pleasant journey."*

The Apostate seeks salvation in Banality. He has developed a belief that somehow links the final victory of Banality with a return to lost Arcadia. Somehow, he has determined that the Undoing is not truly a final death of the soul, but a rebirth into the faerie home.

This is plainly heretical thinking to any living Kithain. It is a complete negation of everything they have been taught since their Saining.

"How," they might wonder, "can something which is the antithesis of our lifeblood be our salvation?"

The Apostate's answer is that it does not destroy, but rather forces Glamour back into Arcadia, where it belongs. Banality is not a destroyer, but a balancer.

Many attempt to convert others to their cause. For some, this is their primary means of spreading destruction and dissension among Kithain. When this fails, they will attempt to slay those who refuse their salvation. Their ultimate goal is the destruction of all things of Glamour on the Earth and they never lose sight of this goal, regardless of how reasonable they may sound.





Apostates are dangerously insane, dedicated to their cause with a fanaticism which is truly frightening to behold. If given free reign, they can and will destroy as much Glamour as possible.

Their salvation lies in learning that Glamour belongs on Earth as well as in Arcadia.

### Appearance

The Apostate has eyes filled with madness and pain. His clothing is often rags upon his body, due to neglect. He is prone to making outlandish statements and frightening proclamations at any moment; think of a wild-eyed fanatic.

### Outlook

**Kithain:** They believe themselves locked here forever, but we have found the key.

**The Lost:** They serve our cause and do not even realize it. How they would rant and rave if they only knew.

**The Cursed:** So self-centered. They should be focusing their efforts to saving us all, not damning a few.

**Black Magicians:** Selfish. Stupid. Insane. They will be the ruin of us all.

**Nihilists:** To be capable of accepting help, one must first help one's self.

**Typhoids:** These must be dispatched as cleanly as possible before they spread whatever infected them to others.



## Typhoids

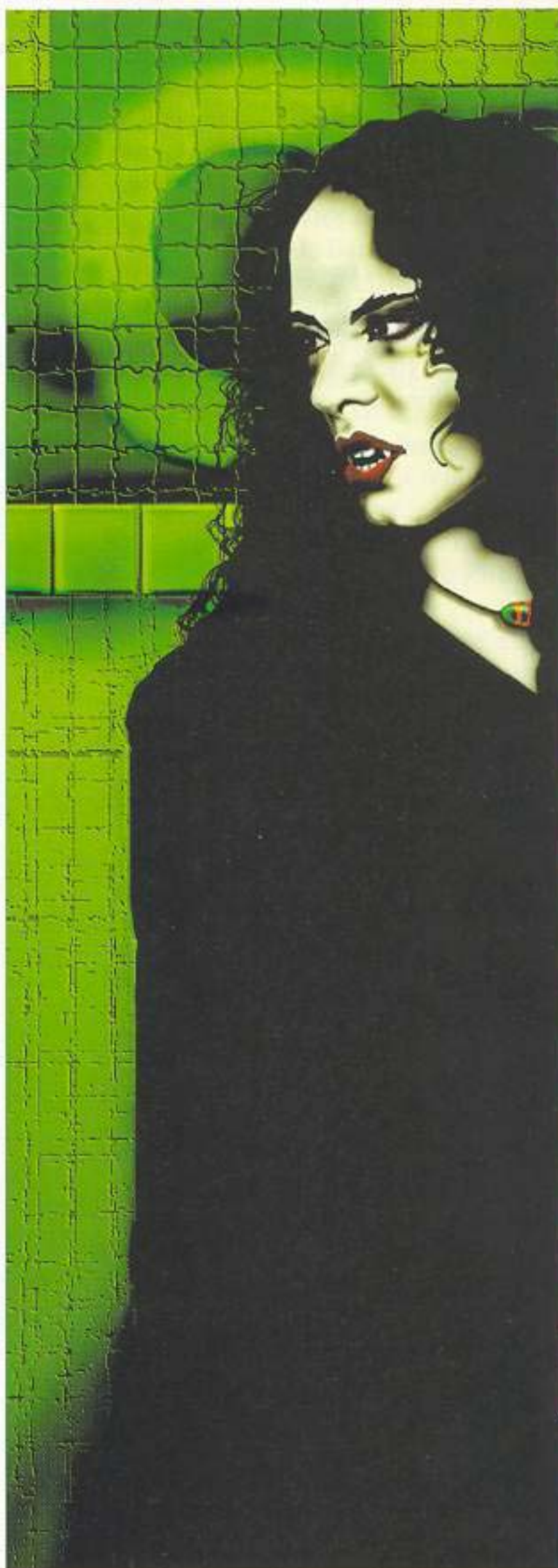
*"Where are the flowers? I miss them, blooming in the spring. Now it's always cold. Why is that? Doesn't the sun ever shine any more?"*

These are Kithain who often become Dauntain through no conscious or unconscious choice of their own. Rather, the change comes about due to the actions of other beings. They may be fed the blood of a vampire, have their Glamour devoured by a Dauntain or chimera, or they may simply walk into the wrong place. Prolonged exposure to people infused with Banality can sometimes lead to this. As with any other means, however, this is not a reliable indicator.

The most common means of infection involves being around the Autumn People. Perhaps she is treated by a psychiatrist for her "insanity" and is, in turn, driven mad. This isn't the most common means, of course. Many are the Kithain who have been opened to the wonder and the magic of the Dreaming, only to return to their everyday lives, everyday jobs. To many mundane folk, their jobs are unbearably dreary. Imagine how much worse it must be for someone whose very essence is Glamour. If they stay with this untenable situation, it will only get worse as they are subjected to more and more Banality every day. Finally, something gives. These are the Kithain who do not know when to let go. They'd be better off trying to find a way to make a living which is less harmful to their nature, but due to some level of inflexibility, they refuse.

No one is really certain who would be susceptible to this means of transformation. Some feel that it is more a matter of intent than the actual events, others believe that it may be the nature of the Banality to which the Kithain is exposed. Simply being around the Autumn Fae tends to fill the Kithain's soul with a dark fog. This is also the most insidious cause, as the Kithain is unlikely to notice what is happening to him until it is far too late. In truth, no one really knows how these victims are brought into Banality's fold.

The salvation of the Typhoid lies in somehow removing the source of the infection.





### Outlook

**Kithain:** Was I like this once? How could I have been so naive? I understand so much more now. I wish I didn't.

**The Lost:** I find it useful to know where they are. When necessary, I can use them against my enemies.

**The Cursed:** Such a pointless waste of energy. What meaning do oaths have?

**Black Magicians:** We have far too much in common for my comfort. I wish they would disappear.

**Nihilists:** You're born, you live, you die. They just make a habit out of the last bit.

**Apostates:** They're crazy to believe this nonsense! Religion has no more meaning than we do. What's the point of trying to meld everybody?

### Appearance

Of all the Dauntain, the Typhoids vary most widely. One who associated with vampires might become pale and gaunt, with red eyes and the hint of fangs, while one who was exposed to Autumn People may appear to be perfectly normal. A normal human, that is.

### Use of Cantrips

Many of the Dauntain still use cantrips, though often in an altered form. Each of the different Dooks have different beliefs on the use of cantrips, discussed below.

Though most Dauntain can use cantrips, they must abide by different rules for their use. As usual, Glamour must be spent in order for the cantrip to be cast. Dauntain, however, have the option of spending a point of temporary Banality in order to not have to draw a Bunk. Bunks are usually anathema to most Dauntain, and they will do anything to avoid them. For the purposes of casting cantrips, temporary Banality should be recorded as temporary Glamour in this case, with the initial number of temporary Banality equaling the character's permanent Banality.

### Gaining Glamour/Banality

Obviously, Dauntain do not recover Glamour in the usual manner. They can glean Glamour from artists and Dreamers, though this takes the form of a peculiar form of Ravaging known as Rending. In order to Rend Glamour from a Dreamer the Dauntain must simply identify an individual as a Dreamer. This done, the Dauntain must engage in conversation or some form of communication with the individual. During this conversation the Dauntain must proceed to cause the person to disparage about their own works or self-worth. This can be done by making critical comments and just generally verbally abusing the hapless sot. This process most often leaves the Dreamer completely exhausted and with strong feelings of self-doubt. Many have even been driven to suicide after having been Rended by one of the Dauntain. It should be noted that Rending is just as effective on changelings as it is on Dreamers.

In order for a Dauntain to regain temporary Banality, she must cause Banality in another. This is known as Tedium. It can be accomplished in generally the same manner as Rending, though with more of an intent on causing the individual to feel hopeless about the world rather than herself. Examples of Tedium might be to expound upon the number of deaths caused in a given war, to discuss the current poverty and homeless situation, or any number of other horrors which afflict our world. Any other act which causes another to gain Banality can also be effective.

**Systems:** In order to determine if an individual is a Dreamer, the Dauntain may roll Kenning + Perception (difficulty 6). Once a Dreamer has been identified, the Dauntain may attempt a Rending by rolling his current Banality (difficulty 7). The number of successes indicates the number of Glamour gained. Any character so Rended is at risk of gaining Banality from this experience. The victim automatically gains as many points of temporary Banality as points of Glamour gained by the Dauntain. She may resist this by rolling Willpower (difficulty 6). Each success reduces the temporary Banality gained by one. Additionally, Banality caused in this manner may be used to restore lost temporary Banality as well.



When attempting to gain temporary Banality through Tedium the character must roll his Banality (difficulty 6). Each success causes both Dauntain and victim to gain one temporary Banality point (the victim may resist with Willpower, as above). It should be noted that the victim of Tedium need not be a Dreamer.

### **The Lost**

These Dauntain don't often use cantrips, at least not consciously. The reason for this is that most are not aware of the potential gifts which would be theirs by birthright. Of those few who do possess Arts, they nearly always use them to cancel out other uses of Glamour, rather than to actively create effects.

### **The Cursed**

At first, the Cursed will cast cantrips like other Kithain, but he will rapidly find himself shifting over to more "banal" uses of the Arts as his change becomes apparent. Regardless of where he sits with Banality, his cantrips will be focused toward fulfilling his vengeance in whatever manner possible.

### **Black Magicians**

Much like the Cursed, their use of cantrips remains largely the same. In fact, it rarely changes. They are known for augmenting their power rather than altering it. Even so, many use their newfound affinity for Banality, and rather creatively.

### **Nihilists**

The Nihilist can and will use cantrips. She may use Chicanery to cause someone to ignore her, or Wayfare to cause someone or something to leave her presence. Nihilists are also known to keep track of the world around them with cantrips once they have withdrawn completely. They may not understand what they see in the same manner we do, but they can perceive and react to their surroundings on some level.

### **Apostates**

The Apostate prefers to use cantrips which can convince other Kithain to join his cause and abandon their old ideals. He also enjoys using the cantrips to destroy Kithain as expediently as possible. He does not wish to cause unnecessary pain, but simply wants to rescue all Kithain from the dread weight of Banality. If his Banality increases as a result, so be it. He is something of a martyr in any event.

### **Typhoid**

The Typhoid will often forget that he can use Glamour, let alone invent new ways to utilize it. There are, of course, exceptions. These are dangerous, as they sometimes make use of a multitude of strange abilities. Those who have been altered by Banality show an incredible

resistance to it, as well as great facility with their own cantrips. Then again, that may simply be a story to frighten childlings.

## **Stigmas**

The Dauntain are invariably marked by their strong connection to Banality. These marks usually manifest in the Dauntain's fae mien, perhaps causing it to become faded or more mundane. In some, however, these Stigmas provide a means through which they can direct Banality for their own ends. These are marks which affect the soul far more than the body, and many of them can render a Dauntain fairly unrecognizable as anything other than a normal human. Each Stigma a character possesses subtracts one from anyone's Perception for purposes of determining anything unusual about the individual. If Perception is dropped to zero, the Dauntain is indistinguishable from a normal human.

A Dauntain will gain a Stigma more or less at the Storyteller's discretion, perhaps after spending experience points toward this goal. The one hard-and-fast rule regarding Stigmas is that when a Dauntain takes one, he also gains a point of permanent Banality. Therefore, although they are certainly powerful, they hasten the Dauntain's Undoing.

In most cases, Stigmas of this sort are rare and unique. Not all Dauntain possess them, and fewer still possess more than one or two (more would be suicidal). Storytellers are certainly welcome to use any of those Stigmas presented here, but it is highly recommended that each Dauntain be given unique powers based on their personalities and reasons for becoming Dauntain.

### **Conversion**

This frightening power can transform Glamour into Banality. The Dauntain rolls her Banality against the Kithain's Glamour in an opposed roll. For each success, convert one temporary Glamour into temporary Banality. The Dauntain gains one point of temporary Banality each time he uses this Stigma.

### **Disbelief**

The Dauntain can impair any chimera or Glamour-based effect through her disbelief in fae things. This ability does not require focus or thought, it simply occurs. The Dauntain rolls her Banality against a target number equal to the casting Kithain's permanent Glamour. Each success removes one of the Kithain's successes. This can also be used to damage chimera. A Banality roll against the chimera's Glamour causes one Health Level of damage per success until the chimera is destroyed. This roll is made only once each time the target comes into the Dauntain's realm of awareness (the Dauntain need not even know she is aware of her target; her subconscious is





what does the damage). The Dauntain can choose to further inhibit cantrips or chimera (if she consciously perceives them and actively denies their existence) by spending one Willpower for each additional roll she wishes to make.

### Erasure

The Dauntain's touch removes all traces of Glamour from a person, place or thing. By simply walking through a place, or touching a person, the Dauntain literally destroys any associated Glamour. This can be much like Ravaging, but far worse. The Dauntain rolls her permanent Banality (target number 7). Each success subtracts one temporary Glamour from the target. Each use of this Stigma subtracts one from the Dauntain's temporary Glamour or adds one to his temporary Banality.

### Hatred

The Dauntain with this Stigma may direct it at the source of his rage to directly damage the Kithain's fae mien (not the physical body). Simply roll Banality vs. Glamour (as Disbelief), although the Kithain may roll her Glamour against the Dauntain's Banality to resist. Each success inflicts the loss of one temporary Glamour. Note that this is often used in conjunction with weapons of Glamour, for the Cursed is rarely satisfied with simply killing his foe — he must Undo her.

### Iron Ward

Some Dauntain are very resistant to the touch of cold iron, as if their separation from Glamour has given them some form of buffer. It has been quite shocking for a Kithain who has gone to great lengths to find a weapon of cold iron to use on a traitor who has become Dauntain only to see him laugh the blow off. Whenever struck by cold iron, the Dauntain rolls his Banality score as soak dice.

### Numb

Many Nihilists can destroy emotions. Like Disbelief, this Stigma is not consciously used. However, those who fall under its spell cease to care about the world around them. Make an opposed Banality vs. Glamour roll. Each success transforms one temporary Willpower point into temporary Banality.

### Ravage

This is somewhat like normal Ravaging, but it allows the Dauntain to steal Glamour from everything which may have it. She can steal it from Kithain, Chimera, humans, Treasures, art, etc. By so doing, she may even cause the Kithain to forget who and what she is. If she does it often enough, the memory loss will become permanent. Make an opposed Glamour roll. Each success takes one temporary Glamour point and adds it to the Dauntain's total. Optionally, with Kithain, it may add one temporary Banality per



success. The Dauntain gains one temporary Banality per use of this Stigma, or one permanent Banality each time a Kithain is Undone by this ability.

## Final Words on the Dauntain

This is hardly a difficult question to answer; the Dauntain exist for one simple purpose and this purpose is ultimately the same. Despite whatever excuses it may be clothed in, whatever the Dauntain may believe about her actual motives, all Dauntain exist to eradicate all that is wonderful and magical from the world. They are truly avatars of Banality, and so the glory of imagination and creativity is not only closed to them, it is anathema. It matters not that this path will always lead them to the Undoing; they still follow it to its tragic end. Only a rare few return to the ranks of the Kithain.

They work to destroy all Glamour for all time, and they will do anything to achieve this. Annihilation of chimera, Undoing of Kithain; all is ultimately for this final end. A few have shown the power to completely eradicate entire freeholds. These, fortunately, are the rarest of a rare breed.

This is not to say they all behave as if cut from the same mold; on the contrary, they are as individualistic and unique as any normal Kithain. They have hopes, fears, loves, hatreds, and desires. These, more often than not are the catalysts which cause them to seek refuge in Banality.

Does this make what they do healthy? Not at all! Are human serial killers normal and well-adjusted? Every society seems to have its misfits and the Dauntain are ours. Unfortunately, their own insanity makes them dangerous to us in ways many of us will never expect to discover. That is part of the tragedy of losing The Dreaming.

A Dauntain is dangerous, but if you can reach the Kithain in his heart and soul, you may find a way to draw him back to the way of Glamour. The Dauntain who may be reached in this fashion is lamentably rare, and the one who actually drags herself out of the spiritual quagmire we like to call Banality is even rarer. Such a cure is far more difficult than curing Bedlam. Dauntain seem to suffer from a bit of Bedlam as well as their own affliction, and the normal cures involving exposure to Banality only make things worse.

About the Dauntain I will say this; they are everything that we are not. They destroy where we create, they dull and drain where we inspire. They thrive where we fade and they erode what gives us life. That is the unfortunate truth of the matter; Banality has us outnumbered. But the Dauntain are as driven as the best of the Kithain. One cannot deny that we are driven. What would any Kithain do were I to point out a zone of

Glamour? A place filled with artists, art and beauty? She would dive into their midst like a starving woman upon a banquet. (To be fair, she might show more restraint, but you take my meaning.) These gray monsters have a need to destroy that which gives them life and meaning, that which permeates their being and provides them with their magic. This is certainly not a sane desire by any means, but it is a strong compulsion. To accomplish this, the Dauntain will do anything, Ravaging a human artist until he is utterly drained of anything remotely resembling creativity or free will, or worse, bending all of his powers to destroy a freehold. One band even staged an assault on the home of the High King, although the siege didn't come close to succeeding.

Glamour reaches into the very core of their beings, to their hearts. It touches something they sometimes cannot stand to face, so they erect a shield against it, retreating to an opposite extreme. This extreme is dry, dead and sterile when compared to the bright wonder of Glamour. This will lead to their Undoing, but that never stops them. To some, the Undoing would be a blessing.

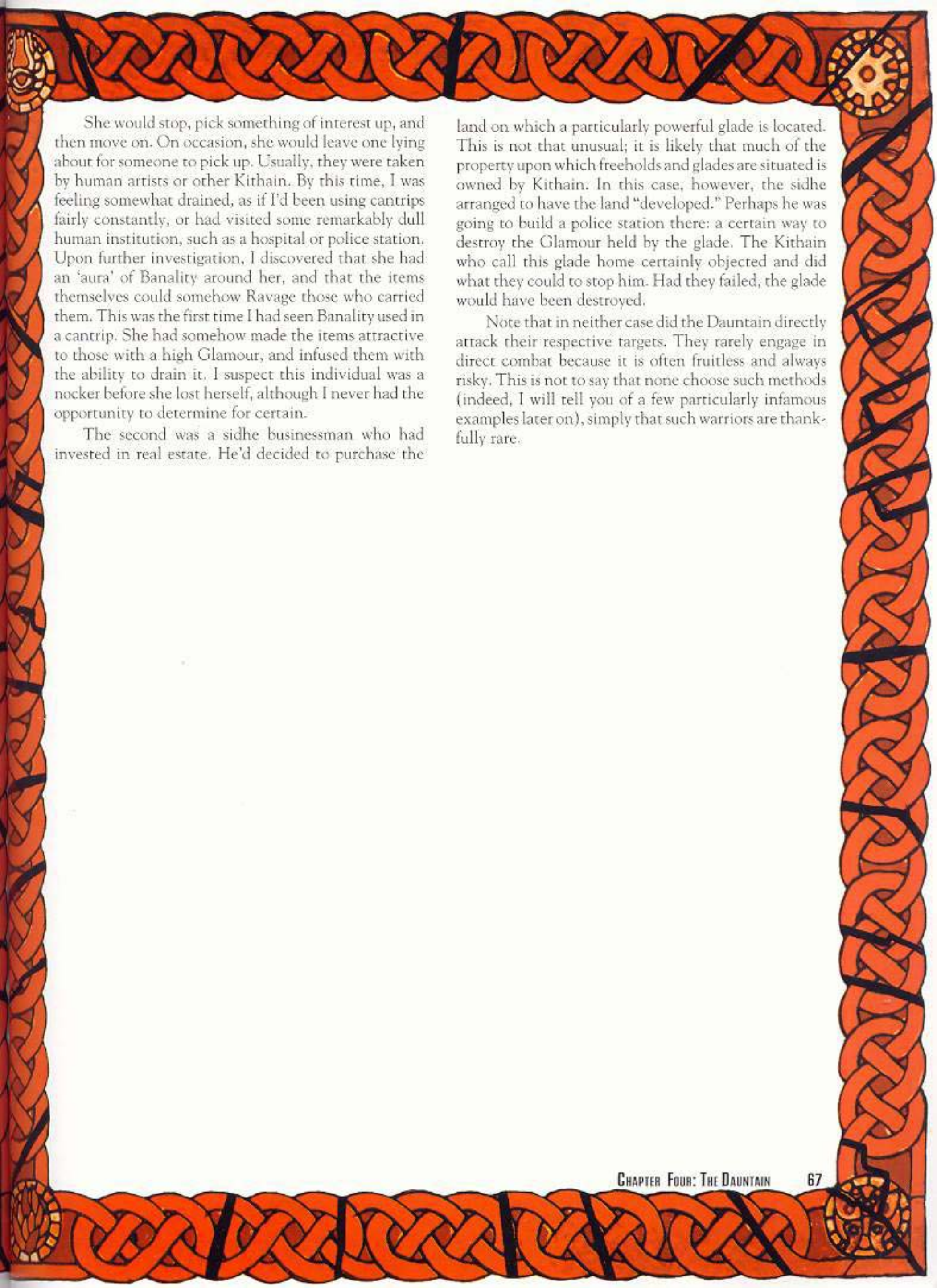
To others, it is a curse. None believe that will ever happen to them. Well, allow me to revise that; the Apostates look forward to it and the Nihilists wish it would happen right away (inasmuch as they wish for anything). I find her truly unfortunate, the Dauntain who has turned to Banality's taint only to discover the price is far more dear than she expected. The ones who find this truth are sometimes on a road to recovery. Sometimes, though, they refuse to believe it.

They're lying to themselves, I say. If they didn't care to pay the price, they wouldn't have made the decision. It's a cold belief, but I'd rather help a Kithain who made the wrong decision from fear of the unknown than one who thought it was the cheap route to power.

To normal Kithain a Dauntain may seem to be diabolical, insane and perhaps even incomprehensible. The Dauntain exists to destroy everything we hold dear, whether he does it from malice or believes he is helping deluded humans. Some may seem extremely normal, but only within human terms. Even these have a fanatical drive to spread their "normalcy" to others. No, I don't understand them either.

Since I don't want to present them primarily as monsters who sally forth to slay their enemies with blades of cold iron (although there are those who do this), I will present the methods of two I've observed during my travels. The first was a homeless woman who seemed harmless enough at first, although my curiosity was roused as to why she in particular attracted my attention. This in mind, I kenned her, and determined she was Kithain, although it was deeply suppressed. I had an odd feeling about her, so I followed and watched.





She would stop, pick something of interest up, and then move on. On occasion, she would leave one lying about for someone to pick up. Usually, they were taken by human artists or other Kithain. By this time, I was feeling somewhat drained, as if I'd been using cantrips fairly constantly, or had visited some remarkably dull human institution, such as a hospital or police station. Upon further investigation, I discovered that she had an 'aura' of Banality around her, and that the items themselves could somehow Ravage those who carried them. This was the first time I had seen Banality used in a cantrip. She had somehow made the items attractive to those with a high Glamour, and infused them with the ability to drain it. I suspect this individual was a nocker before she lost herself, although I never had the opportunity to determine for certain.

The second was a sidhe businessman who had invested in real estate. He'd decided to purchase the

land on which a particularly powerful glade is located. This is not that unusual; it is likely that much of the property upon which freeholds and glades are situated is owned by Kithain. In this case, however, the sidhe arranged to have the land "developed." Perhaps he was going to build a police station there: a certain way to destroy the Glamour held by the glade. The Kithain who call this glade home certainly objected and did what they could to stop him. Had they failed, the glade would have been destroyed.

Note that in neither case did the Dauntain directly attack their respective targets. They rarely engage in direct combat because it is often fruitless and always risky. This is not to say that none choose such methods (indeed, I will tell you of a few particularly infamous examples later on), simply that such warriors are thankfully rare.









# Chapter Five: Storytelling

## Relations

Like the Kithain, most Dauntain are very individualistic. While many may seem similar to the Kithain, each Dauntain has a reason for turning to the banal path. Each has found his own way to betray all that he stood for as Kithain, and this is rarely similar to another Dauntain's view.

Many choose simply to ignore their brethren and do their work alone, even attacking other Dauntain at times. Others actively seek those like themselves, generally in the search for servants or allies. Many Dauntain, such as the Lost and Typhoids, are not even aware of the existence of other Dauntain. If they knew, they might even try to destroy them as well.

A Dauntain's willingness to cooperate should be based on his reasons for being Dauntain and current circumstances. Alliances may shift, dissolve and reform at any time, often without warning. The Dauntain are rarely sane by Kithain standards, and as such, should not be readily comprehensible to the fae. If they

are, the reason for the Dauntain's quest should chill the Kithain to their very bones and cause them to fear for their very existence.

## Dauntain Solutions

Neither court openly supports any known Dauntain. Such Banality-ridden creatures are destroyed whenever possible. Some, however, whisper of unwholesome alliances between the Unseelie and the Dauntain, though most dismiss these as nothing more than rumors.

## The Seelie Court

Those of the Seelie court will have nothing to do with the Dauntain. There are some kind-hearted (some would say foolish) individuals who seek out these lost members of Kithain society in an attempt to heal them and bring them back to the Glamour they have forsaken. Still, High King David's policies concerning the Dauntain are quite clear.



### High King David's Proclamation on the Dauntain

**"Do not approach a known Dauntain if you can avoid it; their auras damage our lives and magic. They possibly even infect us with the Banality they carry within themselves like a dark poison. Some even say they are immune to cold iron. If you should encounter one, take word immediately to the local nobility, for it is their duty to rid their realms of such beings. If you attract a Dauntain's attention, you may lead him to the rest of us.**

**"If he poses an immediate threat to you, and you are uncertain whether you can best him, strive to escape and contact those you feel can. If you and your oathcircle are capable of conquering him, do so. Do not, under any circumstances, lead him to a freehold or glade while he is tracking you.**

**"These creatures seem to possess an uncanny ability to scent us out. Keep that in mind if you encounter someone you suspect of being Dauntain. Under no circumstances attempt to explain your nature to him; he will not believe you. Worse, his disbelief may burn, even kill. In most cases, he will simply cause you to retreat and forget for a time, but those who are more fully infused with the taint of Banality can do much more."**

### The Unbroken Circle

King David has charged several Kithain to hunt Dauntain and either kill or rescue them from their madness. All have proven their competence and loyalty to the throne and the Dreaming, and all have been knighted by King David — if they did not already have a title. They travel across North America in search of the telltale signs of Dauntain. When they find one, they enlist the aid of the local Kithain in putting an end to this menace.

There are currently fifteen Kithain who have been accepted into the oathcircle, of which only six are sidhe. Each new member must take an oath before King David upon entry into this order. Their motto is "To king, to Glamour, to the Dreaming!"

A changeling who is to be initiated into the circle must first be knighted, if he has not been already. King David then holds out Caliburn so the oathtaker may grasp the blade with his right hand, hard enough to break the skin. The oathtaker holds the blade while reciting the oath.

### The Oath of the Unbroken Circle

*I, [name], vow to King David, to the kingdom of Concordia and upon my blood on the sword Caliburn, to fight Banality wherever it arises, to rescue all Kithain who fall into its clutches, and stop the depredations of Dauntain whenever possible. I will not endanger other Kithain by needlessly exposing them to excessive Banality, except when the Kithain understands the risks and is willing to take them.*

The benefit of taking this oath is that a Kithain gains one permanent point of Glamour and one of Willpower for the time she follows the oath. She may also reduce the difficulty for Social rolls which pertain to Kithain, chimera or other creatures of Glamour by two.

The penalty for breaking this oath is a permanent loss of one Willpower and one Glamour. The Kithain also loses any advantages gained due to Rank. The only way to cancel this out is to undertake a quest of King David's choosing and complete it to his satisfaction within a reasonable period of time.

To be selected for entry into this order is considered to be a high honor for any Kithain. Many of the younger sidhe vie for appointment into its ranks, but since King David chooses three new members a year, plus whatever he needs to fill out losses, it is not often that one is chosen.

### The Unseelie

The Unseelie tend to follow King David's edicts. However, there are those who skirt the edges of Banality in their rather unethical practices. I refer specifically to the Ravagers, for which the Unseelie are famous. It is suspected that many regular Ravagers may in fact be Dauntain, or in league with them. But then, many things are said of the Unseelie.

Generally, if an Unseelie can direct a Dauntain to where it can cause enough harm to be a nuisance (although they will do their best to avoid slaying another Kithain... usually), they will do so.

### Ties With the Shadow Court

Some Unseelie are believed to actively encourage the use of Banality for their own advantage. In actuality, the relationship between the Shadow Court and Banality goes back as far as faerie history. The Unseelie have always been traditionally associated with the colder, darker seasons, when the sun sets sooner and the nights are longer.

In elder days, when Glamour flowed freely and humans believed that which they now call myth, the two Courts held to an agreement which was ancient even then. Under this agreement, the Seelie Court would take the crown of the fae in mock battle in spring, and hold it through the summer. When autumn arrived, another battle would be waged; this time the Unseelie would take the Crown through the autumn and winter months. This





## Dauntain Chronicles

This is not highly recommended, as Dauntain are dedicated to the destruction of the gossamer light of dreams and imagination, and such a chronicle could turn into a constant stream of "So, which freehold do we erase tonight?" It can easily devolve into a fairly boring scenario with time. With that out of the way, I will put down some guidelines for creating such a chronicle.

Dauntain are solitary creatures for the most part. Most of them do not even understand there are others like them, and if they do, they usually realize that these others will probably have goals directly opposed to their own. For example, a Dauntain who refuses to believe in the Kithain will not accept, say, an Apostate, who believes she is *still* Kithain. He would probably ascribe the same insanity to her as he would to any other Kithain he encountered.

There are cases of cooperation. One example includes several Dauntain of the same stripe being recruited by a "mentor," who then coordinates their efforts. One such group is described in "The Quixote Syndrome," in the *Book of Storyteller Secrets*.

After deciding you wish to run a chronicle of this sort and how many players you'd like to handle, you must then set a goal for the chronicle. Here are a few suggested types, one based on each category of Dauntain.

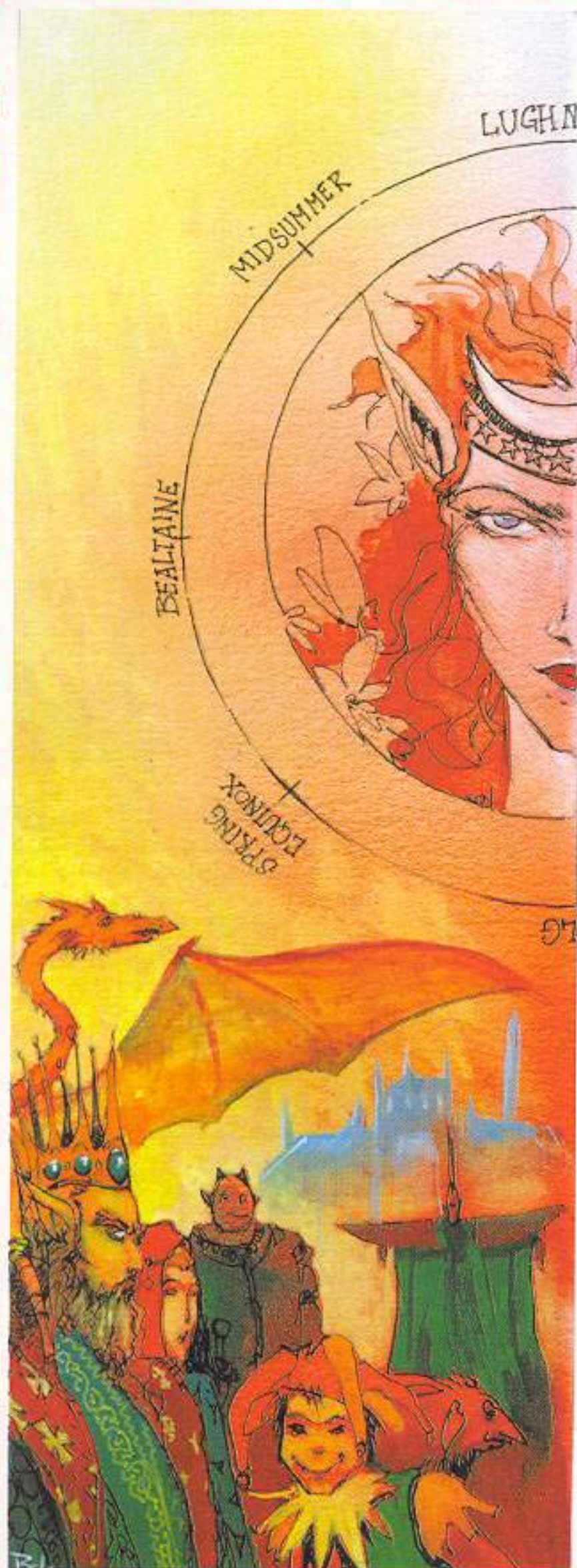
went on for centuries. In fact, it did not stop until after the sidhe retreated to the Dreaming.

It very interesting that we, as a whole, consider the darker seasons to relate to Banality, and the brighter seasons to Glamour. Why is this? Where do the roots in this association lie? Is there some relationship between the Unseelie and Banality? The Seelie and Glamour? I find this difficult to accept, as the Unseelie embody many aspects of Glamour just as the Seelie do.

Now, I have seen a few things which have made me extremely curious towards the nature of the Dauntain, as well as some of the Unseelie. I cannot truly explain what they are simply because I cannot put my finger on it. To explain: Last year on Samhain, I attended an Unseelie celebration. Sometime during the night, I drifted near a group of Kithain engaged in a quietly heated discussion. One turned to me and commanded that I leave. The strength of his sovereignty and my own state of inebriation left me little will to resist. However, I cannot shake the feeling that at least one of those Kithain felt wrong. He didn't feel like a Dauntain, but... Ah, silly rambling. I did imbibe a little too much at the time, and it is probably all my imagination. But even so....

If what I perceived is true, the implications are great: If a cabal of Dauntain have infiltrated Kithain society, how can we be safe from their depredations? Especially if they hide in our midst?





## Orphan

The newly reborn Kithain found themselves in a world they can't understand, among things they don't want to see. Rather than face the truth, they hid. Somewhat. They did not manage to pull away from Glamour completely, so they are still aware that "something" is out there and want to make it go away. So they find ways to destroy these things before they are driven even crazier.

In such a chronicle, Kithain and chimera are best depicted as an eerie presence, just at the edge of awareness, springing into full-fledged reality for a few moments, only to disappear again. They should appear to taunt and befuddle the Dauntain, driving them to more heinous acts to stop the visions.

From here, the characters should be given a purpose. It would be a dull game that relied on the Dauntain going from one Kithain to the next, killing them to make the weirdness stop. Ideally, the Kithain should drag the characters into stranger and stranger events, until either their sanity breaks or they are Undone. More rarely, the Dauntain may throw off their limitations, becoming full Kithain and being accepted into the society.

The contrast in the last case must be incredible. The Dauntain have gone from a cold world filled with strange things flickering at the corners of their eyes to a bright, colorful world filled with wonder.

## Revenge

This is best suited for single players, but it can work for an oathcircle. The basic premise is that some individual or group wronged the Kithain terribly, so he swears some form of horrible revenge upon his foe.

Killing a Kithain feeds sterile reality, as yet another bit of wonder has fled the world forever, so such an oath serves only to increase the banal grip on reality. As such, he who takes the oath directly serves Banality. Once the oath has been sworn, he will know what he has done, but he cannot break the oath without further strengthening Banality's hold upon his soul.

This theme may last for a single story or an entire chronicle, as the Kithain pursues the object of his vengeance. It ends, of course, with the breaking of the oath, the death of the offender or that of the oathtaker.

What is the object of vengeance like? Does he deserve this revenge? Is he vile as vile can be, or is he simply the victim of circumstance and manipulation? Either way, how will he defend himself against the attacks of the wronged Kithain? Will he himself turn to Banality to defend himself? Will he call friends?

Speaking of his friends, does he have any who care enough to swear blood-vengeance upon the one who would dare to kill him? In such a case, a vicious cycle can be created, where entire motleys and oathcircles can be



drawn into this "circle of fire" where the survivors attempt to bring vengeance upon those who wronged their friends and loved ones.

The climax of this sort of chronicle occurs when the Dauntain is about to bring vengeance upon her hated foe. Does she do it, thus fulfilling her oath? Does she look into the frightened eyes of her quarry and realize that fulfillment isn't worth the price and renounce her oath? This is the measure of a true hero, one who can forgive slights for the greater good. Will she hesitate long enough for him to escape, thus starting the pursuit cycle all over again?

In the end, either the quarry is dead, or the Dauntain forswore her oath. If she did the former, she gains Banality for killing another Kithain. If she did the latter, she might gain Banality and penalties for breaking an oath. In such a case, the Storyteller should consider the circumstances under which the Dauntain became forsworn. If it was from an honest desire to preserve Glamour, then the Banality gained as a result of the oath may be lost in a sudden burst of Glamour. Other reasons could have other results. Ultimately, whatever makes the best story should dictate the decision.

### Quest for Power

For whatever reasons, the characters have decided to betray everything of import to them for the simple gratification of power. Instead of removing the characters, the Storyteller can use this change to make an interesting and entertaining chronicle.

In this case, the Dauntain have decided to seek power for its own sake. For such, power is always available, but at a price. At first, they will receive gifts which they had never even had an inkling of before, but as time goes on, the price will eat at their souls.

They find themselves needing more power to do things, even that which was once easy, and thus they draw more heavily from that same source which gifted them before. This force which has been so effective is simply raw Banality. Such a thing may seem like a contradiction, but to a Kithain to whom everything has some mythic significance, or is a part of a greater story, it makes perfect sense. The Dauntain should change, perhaps becoming colder and more arrogant over time. Other Kithain may shun them as their mere presence causes discomfort. Their "aura" may simply be "wrong." Perhaps they flaunt their power and the local nobility decide to have them imprisoned or executed. Trafficking with Banality is about as close to evil as one can get in Kithain eyes.

Eventually, the Dauntain will either be devoured by the forces they seek to control or they will find a way to give up this power which costs so much. Being devoured is easy; they need only continue on their path without





changing course or slowing down. The other option is far more difficult, as the group must somehow cleanse themselves of this power with which they have saturated their beings. This is difficult, as the Dauntain generally need to go on some sort of quest to purify themselves by their deeds; they must not ever during this quest draw upon their banal abilities. They must instead rely upon their (probably limited) abilities which were either reduced, ignored or both during their mad quest for power.

Ultimately, should they succeed in what should be an incredibly dangerous and long journey of redemption, they will once again be Kithain. Some suggestions as to what they might need to do include:

- Taking responsibility for the consequences of their actions and doing what they can to reverse the damage caused or the suffering inflicted, or at least making up for it in some way which costs them.

- Destroying or negating some great threat to the Kithain.

- Creating a way to bring the wonders of Glamour to more people. This may be something like writing a role-playing game which fires the imaginations of those who play, or actively introducing people to wonders they never would have imagined on their own.

There are, of course, many more possible tasks which may be required before the Dauntain are redeemed. It is recommended that these duties be difficult and potentially dangerous.

### Seeking Oblivion

This is more of a psychological chronicle (and is perhaps best for solo play), as the Dauntain is drawn into herself and her own nightmares, dreams and other internal struggles. For some reason or other, she has retreated from the world around her and lives solely in her own world which she has created within. She faces her own demons on a daily basis and often cannot stand to deal with them. She would rather curl up into a ball and become nothing rather than face her own self-rationalizations.

This chronicle should be a bit bizarre and dreamlike, but everything which happens should have a strong personal relevance for the Dauntain. Also, many of the things which will happen are likely to resonate with the Dauntain on some level and should often be something which can make her uncomfortable, possibly to an extreme degree. As such, the player should trust the Storyteller not to overstep any boundaries, and the Storyteller should allow the player to put a stop to anything if it goes too far.

Ultimately, this is about soul-searching, because the character is literally searching her own soul for some sort

of meaning. To find meaning, one must be willing to face the most uncomfortable truths about herself. If she does this and draws herself out of her self-imposed retreat, she will not only pull herself from the sterile grip of Banality, she will also strengthen herself in ways which most people could never fathom. At the very least, this sort of ordeal can give a character incredible depth. How many people have taken a tour of their own minds and faced down their demons? Very few.

This sort of chronicle can also be mirrored in the outside world, as the Dauntain's companions try to find some way to draw her back into reality. To them, she is lifeless and unresponsive. Perhaps they must find something which holds incredibly deep meaning for her and find some means of drawing her attention to it, or perhaps they must find a way to enter her dreams and show her the way back out.

In either case, the journey back out will be as dangerous and frightening as any other trip through the underworld, but when success finally arrives, it will taste all the sweeter for those who underwent the ordeals.

### Journey Home

This is a particularly intense chronicle theme, as the characters will be fighting for firmly held beliefs, unto the point of death. While one character's mien is in slumber, he has visions of Arcadia, or so it seems. This may go on for a while, until they become full-fledged scenes with incredible detail. It is simply the normal yearning for Arcadia, but for those who are particularly vulnerable, it seems to point out the way of things.

Each time the Kithain has retreated into his seeming to avoid the effects of Glamour, he always ends up in Arcadia. As a result, he may decide that the way back to Arcadia lies in embracing and serving Banality, and manage to collect a motley of like-minded fae.

Once on this path, it is difficult to get back off. The Dauntain now have a mission in life, a crusade. They will save the Kithain from themselves and everything else by apparently destroying them with Banality. This, they may believe, will send the Kithain back to Arcadia, despite the exile.

This can be run from either point of view, although these Dauntain make better enemies than characters. The Kithain will have to stop these lunatics while they recruits to their cause those who fear Banality and never seeing Arcadia.

Finally, the climax will come when the Apostates are cornered and either brought to see the destruction they've caused, or destroyed.

Ultimately, Banality is simply a doom for Kithain, it is no salvation...

Or is it?



## Typhoid Mary

These Dauntain have somehow been exposed to Banality directly. Perhaps one is a Kindred ghoul who has suddenly realized her Kithain nature, or another was seriously hurt by cold iron and never really recovered. Regardless of the cause, the Dauntain must now deal with their change.

Due to some circumstance, the Dauntain carry some unusual form of Banality within themselves which seeks to get out and spread itself to others. (For group chronicles, it's most likely that all characters were infected by one source, or each other.) Perhaps the Dauntain revel in this, perhaps they are utterly unaware of it, or perhaps they seek a cure.

The first type works best as an enemy, but the other two could make for interesting characters. As described above, perhaps a ghoul suddenly finds herself becoming a Kithain, yet she is filled with the direct power of vampiric Banality. This is not necessarily a good thing, as this power will try to spread itself to other Kithain, by whatever means available. If the Dauntain is unaware of this, she may unknowingly bring doom to several Kithain as she leaves a bit of the infection with each she meets.

If the Dauntain is aware of her condition, due to whatever means, be it Kindred blood, a curse, or perhaps direct exposure to another Dauntain's or chimera's power, she may decide to attempt to correct it. In this case, as is often necessary, she will need to seek a way to cleanse herself, and it will rarely be easy.

Even the taint brought by Kindred blood will not fade after a month, when the power of the blood does. The taint itself is of Banality and touches the soul itself. The Dauntain must seek a way to cure herself of this dangerous infection before it spreads.

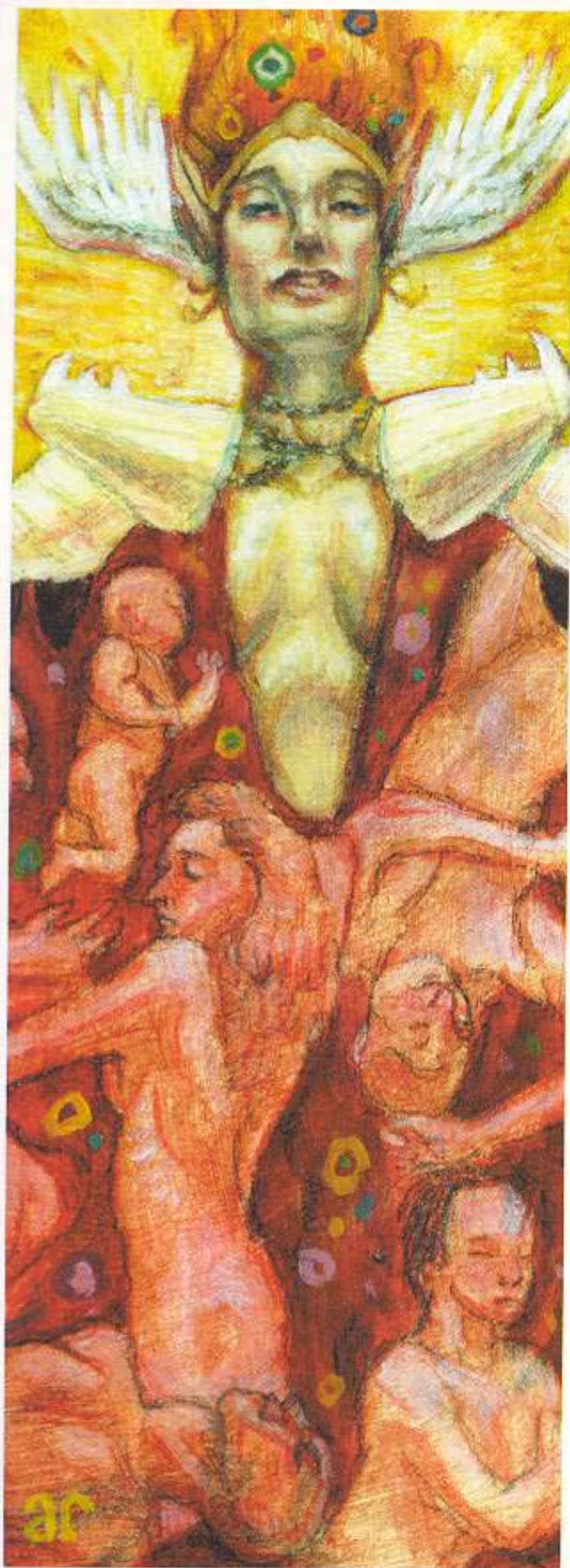
Perhaps there is a rare or unique treasure, or perhaps a chimera item, which can effect a cure. If this is a case, it may be guarded by strange and wonderful chimera or even true faeries who have been oathbound to protect it from any of Banality who may seek to destroy its properties. These guardians will not be well-disposed toward allowing a Dauntain of any sort access for whatever reason. The Dauntain must prove that she earnestly seeks a release from the power which grips her soul. Even then, the cost to the treasure must be considered.

Is the Kithain's soul worth the possibility of destroying such a valuable item which could, at the right moment, turn the tide against Banality? Let the Dauntain justify herself.

Finally, the Dauntain must get to the treasure and use it to free herself. This can entail many things, including a series of riddles, the possibility of the Banality within her taking form to combat her directly, even a shapeshifting contest. It all depends upon the mood the Storyteller wishes to bring into the chronicle.







## Notes on Dauntain Chronicles

While each of the chronicle suggestions includes a means of redemption, it is not absolutely necessary or even desirable in all cases. Dauntain may enjoy being what they are and revel in destroying Glamour wherever and whenever they can. There is, of course, a price for this. Remember that nothing in life is ever free, and Dauntain on such a path will eventually be destroyed by the forces they wield. That is the price of the power.

Remember that most Dauntain are never returned to their former status as normal Kithain. In fact, most are unmade by their very weapons as they quest to destroy that which they could have been. Those who do reach some form of redemption are rare individuals indeed. Their stories will be sung by the bards for ages to come, both in Arcadia and on Earth.

## The Becoming

Each Kithain generally goes through some fairly general steps when becoming Dauntain. It is an inversion of Campbell's archetypal Hero's Journey. The Dauntain are, however, heroes of a fashion. Often, they fight for what they believe in, what they believe to be true. Yes, this will often result in the destruction of what most Kithain hold dear. To many Dauntain, however, they are fighting an enemy they consider as vile as the Kithain view the Dauntain.

They are flip sides of the same coin, but there is no way they will ever resolve the differences that lay between them. They are driven by mutually exclusive forces and reconciliation is not in the stars.

Now we shall embark upon the Dauntain's Journey.

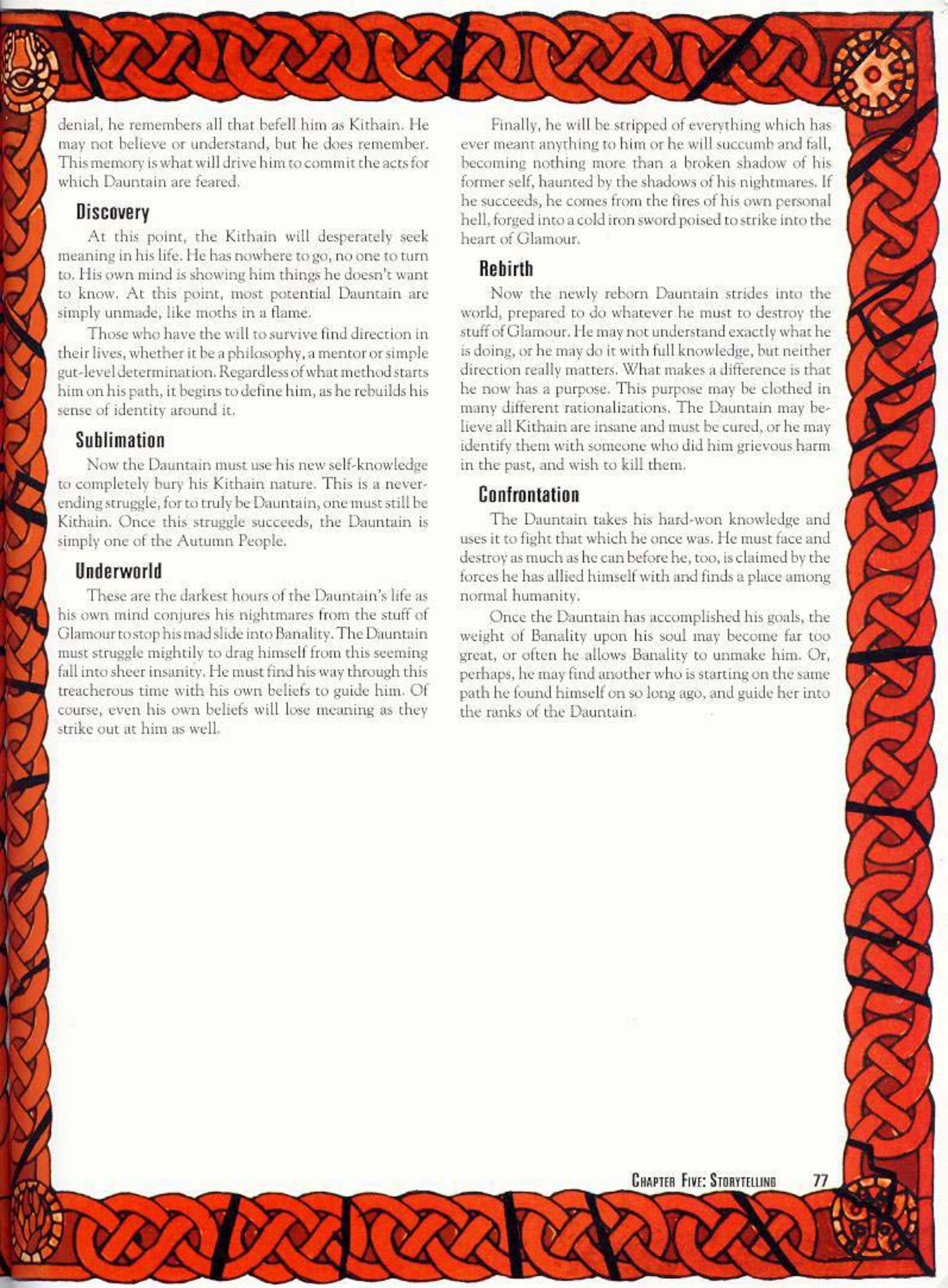
### Being Different

To begin, something must set the Dauntain-to-be apart from other Kithain. Something about life as Kithain simply does not sit well with him. Perhaps he cannot accept the existence of Glamour, or perhaps some strong emotion has driven him away from the beauty of Glamour and he can only find a path through the cold truth of Banality.

Kithain are not normal, banal people. Even those who turn to serve this sterile concept do so in a manner which befits a mythical being. However, the Kithain has rejected or been rejected by his society, or has left any chance of ever joining it. He must turn his back on the magic and beauty which make up the life of a Kithain. He rebels against the life and light of Glamour, choosing instead the sterile path of Banality.

The Dauntain is in the process of becoming that which denies everything he ever was, but he doesn't forget. In forgetting, one is simply a human. In simple





denial, he remembers all that befell him as Kithain. He may not believe or understand, but he does remember. This memory is what will drive him to commit the acts for which Dauntain are feared.

### **Discovery**

At this point, the Kithain will desperately seek meaning in his life. He has nowhere to go, no one to turn to. His own mind is showing him things he doesn't want to know. At this point, most potential Dauntain are simply unmade, like moths in a flame.

Those who have the will to survive find direction in their lives, whether it be a philosophy, a mentor or simple gut-level determination. Regardless of what method starts him on his path, it begins to define him, as he rebuilds his sense of identity around it.

### **Sublimation**

Now the Dauntain must use his new self-knowledge to completely bury his Kithain nature. This is a never-ending struggle, for to truly be Dauntain, one must still be Kithain. Once this struggle succeeds, the Dauntain is simply one of the Autumn People.

### **Underworld**

These are the darkest hours of the Dauntain's life as his own mind conjures his nightmares from the stuff of Glamour to stop his mad slide into Banality. The Dauntain must struggle mightily to drag himself from this seeming fall into sheer insanity. He must find his way through this treacherous time with his own beliefs to guide him. Of course, even his own beliefs will lose meaning as they strike out at him as well.

Finally, he will be stripped of everything which has ever meant anything to him or he will succumb and fall, becoming nothing more than a broken shadow of his former self, haunted by the shadows of his nightmares. If he succeeds, he comes from the fires of his own personal hell, forged into a cold iron sword poised to strike into the heart of Glamour.

### **Rebirth**

Now the newly reborn Dauntain strides into the world, prepared to do whatever he must to destroy the stuff of Glamour. He may not understand exactly what he is doing, or he may do it with full knowledge, but neither direction really matters. What makes a difference is that he now has a purpose. This purpose may be clothed in many different rationalizations. The Dauntain may believe all Kithain are insane and must be cured, or he may identify them with someone who did him grievous harm in the past, and wish to kill them.

### **Confrontation**

The Dauntain takes his hard-won knowledge and uses it to fight that which he once was. He must face and destroy as much as he can before he, too, is claimed by the forces he has allied himself with and finds a place among normal humanity.

Once the Dauntain has accomplished his goals, the weight of Banality upon his soul may become far too great, or often he allows Banality to unmake him. Or, perhaps, he may find another who is starting on the same path he found himself on so long ago, and guide her into the ranks of the Dauntain.



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# Chapter Six: The Power of Autumn

*"The trouble with you, Phoney Bone, is that you don't know how to have fun!"*

*"The trouble with me is I got a brain!"*

—Phoney and Smiley, Bone #15

Just as changelings draw upon the power of cantrips, Autumn Fae and Dauntain reaffirm their rejection of the unlimited worlds of the imagination by meditating on the soul-numbingly dull. Living a life without the vestige of a clue can become so painful for the people around these individuals that observers can become temporarily incapable of creative thought. Soldiers of Autumn wish the rest of the world was as banal as they are, and they can have that effect on everyone around them.

## The Power

Autumn Fae and Dauntain do not require Glamour to "empower" themselves. They are an integral part of the mundane world around them, and so they don't need to find true power within themselves. There's no shortage of dullness in the world. For the enlightened and imaginative, finding magical power involves recognizing the eminence within yourself, exploring your identity and searching for a paradigm of reality. For these beings, empowerment is a matter of following an artificial structure that denies your internal processes and immersing

yourself in a dull, dreary environment. Using these powers takes effort, though: A successful use of an autumn power results in the character losing a temporary point of Banality or Willpower (Storyteller's choice). Through force of will, or by leaking his taint of infection into the world around him, the world becomes a duller place in which to live.

## You Want to Play a What?

Yes, players have the option of creating Autumn Fae or Dauntain as characters or briefly enacting the fall of a treasured character. The rules for this are actually very simple and can be accomplished with only minimal tampering with the basic character creation system.

Creating an Autumn Fae uses many of the same character generation rules as generating a normal Kithain character. A player or Storyteller may choose what kith the character would have been, but the character gains no benefits or penalties from the kith (ignore the effects of Birthrights and Frailties). Additionally, the character does not gain access to any of the usual Arts and Realms





## Duration

Unless a particular duration is listed, the duration of an Agenda depends on the number of successes. For these three Agendas, the duration is as follows:

| Successes | Duration                                          |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 1         | One minute (game time or real time)               |
| 2         | One minute (game time) or one scene (real time)   |
| 3         | Five minutes (game time) or one scene (real time) |
| 4         | One day                                           |
| 5-6       | One session                                       |
| 7-8       | One story                                         |
| 9         | One chronicle                                     |
| 10        | Permanent until reversed                          |

If two times are listed, choose the longer duration. If the effect is "permanent," it can't be reversed until the target's memory of the event is erased or an event occurs in the story that would drastically affect the character's personality (such as a Seelie becoming Unseelie).

— Autumn Fae cannot cast cantrips. Finally, an Autumn Fae character may choose one level of Agendas.

In order to create a Dauntain character, follow the rules exactly as if you were creating a Kithain character. Choose Arts and Realms as usual, though depending upon the character's Doom, she may or may not have access to them. The character may choose three levels of Agendas in addition to any Arts he possesses.

Neither Autumn Fae nor Dauntain characters should take the Chimera or Gremayre Background trait. It should also be noted that Agendas may be bought with freebie points or raised with experience as if they were Arts.

## Rolling Dice!

In order for an Agenda to be successful, the player must roll dice. Each Agenda's description details what roll must be made. The difficulty for this roll is always equal to the target's Glamour or Willpower (whichever is highest).

## Burnout

Idealists win the hearts and minds of those around them, but the coldest of souls can block out feelings and thoughts to sap one's will. When attempting to use any of the powers of this Agenda, the character must roll Empathy + Manipulation.

### • Mindblock

The target will be unable to think about one topic of the sleeperling's choice. For instance, a satyr may be unable to think about sex or a troubadour may forget how to play his lute.



### • • Heartbind

The target will be unable to feel one positive emotion of the user's choosing. The difficulty of the casting can be increased if the emotion is particularly strong. (Not feeling joy might be a standard roll; however, the difficulty of stopping True Love might be increased by three.)

### • • • Obsession

The target will be obsessed with the thought of one dull activity and will actively try to pursue that activity until it is fulfilled in every excruciating detail. This is sometimes commonly invoked by having the caster badger the target until he gives in. ("Don't forget to do your taxes! Don't forget to do your taxes!")

### • • • • Acquisition

The target will be obsessed with acquiring samples of one type of object. For instance, the target might suddenly become enthralled with the idea of looking for bright shiny pennies or collecting bad superhero comics.

### • • • • • Geek Out

The target loses all interest in the subject he once held most dear and takes up a dull hobby. His change in personality is affected so severely that all rolls involving social interaction are increased by 2. ("Yes! I love you! Allow me to play my latest love ballad for you on my new accordion!")

## Stultify

This Agenda has the goal of altering the target's perception of the world. If he is deeply inculcated with an excessively mundane mindset, he will gain insights into analyzing procedures and deconstructing processes. When using this power the character must roll Perception + Leadership.

### • Rosetint

The target reexamines any one topic he previously despised and instantly see merit in it. He will repeatedly talk about it in sympathetic terms and try to convince others of his newfound enlightenment. ("The Three Stooges aren't really that bad. I never realized how much I identified with Larry.") Autumn Fae or Dauntain with at least three dots in Computer can execute this Agenda over the Internet by creating "HappyNets" filled with smileys [ :- ) ] and ::hugs::.

### • • Dull Impulse

The target will perform one harmlessly dull task repeatedly for the duration of this Agenda. This primary activity will become the most important thing in the world to him. Examples include washing a car, dusting an





apartment, or washing his hands repeatedly. He can perform other activities, but he will physically resist anyone attempting to stop him from his primary task. ("I'm the focal point for this action item, and no one's going to stop me!")

### ••• Proselytize

The target is affected by a Dull Impulse, but he will also actively try to get others to participate. If the user sticks around, he gets one extra die for each additional person the victim converts (up to a maximum of three additional dice). If the user achieves five or more successes, the effect will involve ideas and loyalties instead of activities.

### •••• Procedural Addiction

The target will examine one activity in such a manner that he must analyze every step of it. Normal activities take twice as long. If the user scores at least three successes, the target must recite each step as he performs the task.

### ••••• Micro-Management

This is similar to Procedural Addiction, but the target will create procedures for everything. He will then try to teach these procedures to others. If he succeeds, however, his student may learn one new Ability at a

reduced experience point cost! (Reduce the cost of learning the ability by two points, but do not reduce it to less than one point.)

## Webcraft

The force of conformity and stasis is the force of the Weaver. Lacking empathy for creativity, the forces of the Weaver bind reality in her lifeless, dehumanizing web.

Just as changelings draw upon the power of cantrips, Autumn Fae and Dauntain reaffirm their rejection of the unlimited worlds of the imagination by meditating on the soul-numbingly dull. Living a life without the vestige of a clue can become so painful for the people around these individuals that observers can become temporarily incapable of creative thought. Soldiers of autumn wish the rest of the world was as banal as they are, and they can have that effect on everyone around them.

## The Power

Autumn Fae and Dauntain do not require Glamour to "empower" themselves. They are an integral part of the mundane world around them, and so they don't need to find true power within themselves. There's no shortage of dullness in the world. For the enlightened and imaginative, finding magical power involves recognizing the







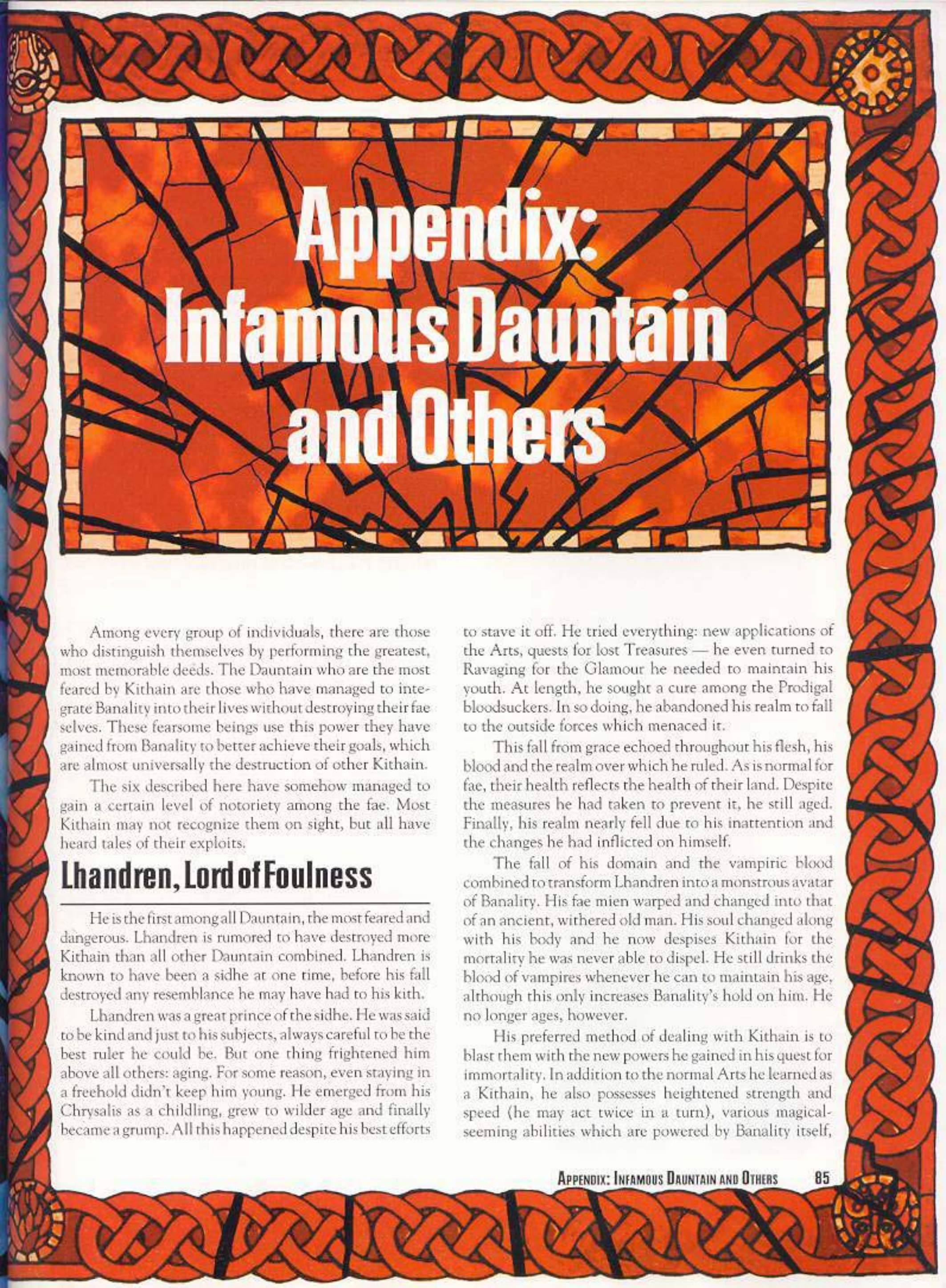
imminence within yourself, exploring your identity, and searching for a paradigm of reality. For these beings, empowerment is a matter of following an artificial structure that denies your internal processes and immersing yourself in a dull, dreary environment. Using these powers takes effort, though: a successful use of an autumn power results in the character losing a temporary point of Banality or Willpower (Storyteller's choice). Through force of will, or by leaking his taint of infection into the world around him, the world becomes a duller place in which to live.

Just as changelings draw upon the power of cantrips, Autumn Fae and Dauntain reaffirm their rejection of the unlimited worlds of the imagination by meditating on the soul-numbingly dull. Living a life without the vestige of a clue can become so painful for the people around these individuals that observers can become temporarily incapable of creative thought. Soldiers of autumn wish the rest of the world was as banal as they are, and they can have that effect on everyone around them.









# Appendix: Infamous Dauntain and Others

Among every group of individuals, there are those who distinguish themselves by performing the greatest, most memorable deeds. The Dauntain who are the most feared by Kithain are those who have managed to integrate Banality into their lives without destroying their fae selves. These fearsome beings use this power they have gained from Banality to better achieve their goals, which are almost universally the destruction of other Kithain.

The six described here have somehow managed to gain a certain level of notoriety among the fae. Most Kithain may not recognize them on sight, but all have heard tales of their exploits.

## Lhandren, Lord of Foulness

He is the first among all Dauntain, the most feared and dangerous. Lhandren is rumored to have destroyed more Kithain than all other Dauntain combined. Lhandren is known to have been a sidhe at one time, before his fall destroyed any resemblance he may have had to his kith.

Lhandren was a great prince of the sidhe. He was said to be kind and just to his subjects, always careful to be the best ruler he could be. But one thing frightened him above all others: aging. For some reason, even staying in a freehold didn't keep him young. He emerged from his Chrysalis as a childling, grew to wilder age and finally became a grump. All this happened despite his best efforts

to stave it off. He tried everything: new applications of the Arts, quests for lost Treasures — he even turned to Ravaging for the Glamour he needed to maintain his youth. At length, he sought a cure among the Prodigal bloodsuckers. In so doing, he abandoned his realm to fall to the outside forces which menaced it.

This fall from grace echoed throughout his flesh, his blood and the realm over which he ruled. As is normal for fae, their health reflects the health of their land. Despite the measures he had taken to prevent it, he still aged. Finally, his realm nearly fell due to his inattention and the changes he had inflicted on himself.

The fall of his domain and the vampiric blood combined to transform Lhandren into a monstrous avatar of Banality. His fae mien warped and changed into that of an ancient, withered old man. His soul changed along with his body and he now despises Kithain for the mortality he was never able to dispel. He still drinks the blood of vampires whenever he can to maintain his age, although this only increases Banality's hold on him. He no longer ages, however.

His preferred method of dealing with Kithain is to blast them with the new powers he gained in his quest for immortality. In addition to the normal Arts he learned as a Kithain, he also possesses heightened strength and speed (he may act twice in a turn), various magical-seeming abilities which are powered by Banality itself,





sharpened senses and the ability to warp minds to his will. Despite his frail appearance, he is extremely dangerous.

Lhandren is part ghoul and entirely Dauntain. His desire to destroy other Kithain is only exceeded by his desire for eternal life. He hopes to find a more permanent means of immortality in the future and has heard rumors of a cabal of beings who are truly immortal; they cannot even die. This information came to him by way of a rare bit of old Egyptian writing which he managed to obtain from his contacts within the Arcanum. This manuscript is the only reason he has not turned to the vampiric Embrace (which to him would truly indicate failure). If he succeeds in his mad bid for true immortality, there is no telling what havoc he may wreak upon Kithain everywhere.

**Doom:** Typhoid

**Court:** Unseelie

**Legacies:** Peacock/Regent

**House:** Eiluned

**Seeming:** Grump

**Kith:** Sidhe

**Physical:** Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5

**Social:** Charisma 1, Manipulation 5, Appearance 1

**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

**Talents:** Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Dodge 4, Intimidation 3, Kenning 4, Subterfuge 3

**Skills:** Drive 2, Etiquette 4, Firearms 3, Leadership 4, Melee 5, Survival 3

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 3, Investigation 4, Linguistics 3, Mythlore 3, Occult 4, Politics 4

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 3, Mentor 3, Resources 4, Retinue 3

**Agendas:** Burnout 5, Stultify 3

**Arts:** Primal 5, Sovereign 4, Wayfare 2

**Realms:** Fae 5, Scene 4

**Stigma:** Disbelief

**Glamour:** 6

**Willpower:** 9

**Banality:** 8

**Equipment:** Lhandren often carries a very functional sword cane with a blade of cold iron (diff. 6, Strength + 3).

**Image:** Lhandren appears to be a normal human in his mid-to-late 20s, although his fae mien appears to be an excessively ancient man, with wispy hair and bony features. Despite this, he is extremely strong and durable, and he moves with deceptive agility. His favored clothing is very conservative.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You are bitter because of your rapid aging and you expect to be Unmade at any time as a result. You will do anything you can to forestall this fate,



even to the point of Ravaging any humans or Kithain within arm's reach. You haven't forgotten the loss of your place in Kithain society and you blame the Kithain for this. For their rejection, you have sworn vengeance upon all kiths unto the end of Glamour. In fact, if you can bring that about, you will be happy to do so... if only to gain your vengeance.

**Notes:** If you have *Vampire: The Masquerade*, Lhandren is the ghoul of a powerful Tremere who wishes to study Kithain. Give Lhandren the following: Auspex 1, Celerity 1, Dominate 2, Potence 1, Thaumaturgy 2, Path of Corruption 2, Spirit Thaumaturgy 1.

## Lt. Karen Croyd, SFPD

Karen's adventures began when she ran away from home; she was 13 years old and quite capable of taking care of herself or making important decisions. She couldn't see why her parents didn't understand her or her needs. It didn't help when, during her first night away from home, she had a series of soul-searingly vivid nightmares which threatened to tear away her sanity. It helped even less when she awoke to see one of the creatures from her nightmares bending over her makeshift bed. It vanished nearly immediately, but her fear did not.

The dreams returned every night without fail. She somehow realized that they would keep coming until she "let them out." So she did. Or rather, she drew them, painted them, brought them to some form of life on paper. She discovered that each nightmare she drew weakened. The more vivid the image, the weaker the offending vision.

She somehow managed to get herself to San Francisco despite troublesome developments, and managed to make a niche for herself among the street kids. One in particular attracted her strongly, a young man named Rob. He was witty, always knew where the coolest stuff was and truly loved her art. At first, everything was just fine for Karen. Then the headaches started. They were little things... she'd be in the midst of drawing a picture when one struck, then she couldn't draw again for a day or two. Unfortunately, the headaches grew worse. Also, without the drawing, the nightmares came back. When the headache (which had resisted everything she could find to take for it) finally faded, she would go into a frenzy of drawing to rid her head of the images which dwelt there.

One night, when the nightmares were at their worst, she awoke to see Rob hovering over her, a vicious gleam in his eye and a cruel twist to his smile. She grabbed the nearest heavy item at hand — a flashlight — and hit him with it repeatedly. He ran away from her, cursing her name to the uncaring night. His words sent a chill down her spine which has never left.

It wasn't much later when the police roused Karen and turned her over to Children's Services. Getting





caught did not do her frame of mind any good, but it did shape her ambitions for the future. Karen hated the idea that anyone had more power over her life than she herself did, and she projected that feeling onto the police who caught her. She decided that the best way she could control her own fate would be to become a police officer herself.

It didn't help that her parents decided that they did not want her back with them, so California Children's Services controlled her fate — but only because the police handed her over. She didn't bother to try to run away from the foster homes she was shuttled through. She would simply be caught again and Karen could not countenance the idea of always being locked up. Instead, she worked on excelling in her studies to maximize the possibility of acceptance at the academy.

She graduated with honors and moved on to the police academy with a strong sense of purpose. She wasn't in this to serve and protect, except to protect herself. She was in it to control her own destiny and destroy those who would bring nightmares. She never told anyone that she was convinced Rob was bringing her nightmares and stealing something precious to her. Other people, too, now gave her an eerie feeling, reminding her of Rob. She watched them carefully, certain they would bring nightmares given a moment's notice. Fortunately, the nightmares never returned.

The turning point in Karen's life came during her first day on the force. She happened to spot Rob in the midst of some (obviously) illicit business, so she called to him to halt. He, of course, did not. She chased him down, only to have him lash out with the nightmares.

This was the last straw for Officer Croyd. She had no desire to be Rob's plaything again. Instead of succumbing, she fought her way through the mad visions he threw her way and grabbed him. Her hatred seemed to take on a tangible force. She lost control and attacked him. Each blow hit like a hammer; he couldn't even fight back. When she was done, he was comatose.

She left him lying in the gutter. When Karen returned to her partner, she told him that the perp had escaped. However, the encounter had done something for her resolve. She knew she could identify the monsters like Rob, those who would rape a young girl's mind for dreams. So she decided to hunt them down and make them pay for their crimes. She hasn't considered that not all of these beings would do such a thing or not. She believes they are monsters who invade minds and destroy sanity for the sheer pleasure of it.

In the time since she began, she's been promoted to lieutenant and received several commendations. Karen has begun to suspect that Rob's people form a shadow society which lives alongside, but not within, human society. They hide themselves so as to better devour

dreams, but are not themselves human. She has never told anyone else of her vendetta. Instead, she uses her position as lieutenant in the SFPD to organize some operations against the monsters, keeping them off balance. She hunts them more directly during her off hours. She has noted that when she strikes one of these creatures, they react as if burned. Even a slap across the face causes them to flinch as if an open flame were held nearby.

Until recently, Lt. Croyd has not ever seen more than one of these beings at a time. This time, however, she has found a small group of them. Through her contacts, she has determined that they prefer to congregate in a coffee shop known as "The Toybox." Her next plan is to organize some form of police raid — perhaps on the pretext of dealing drugs — to put them off balance. Then she will hunt them down.

**Doom:** Lost

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Paladin/Beast

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Unknown

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Intimidation 2, Streetwise 3

**Skills:** Drive 2, Firearms 4, Leadership 2, Melee 3, Stealth 2

**Knowledges:** Computer 1, Investigation 3, Law 2, Linguistics 1, Medicine 1

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 4, Resources 2

**Agendas:** Webcraft 4

**Arts:** None

**Realms:** None

**Stigma:** Iron Ward

**Glamour:** 3

**Willpower:** 8

**Banality:** 7

**Equipment:** Badge, uniform, tonfa, .357 Magnum pistol (not issue, but she somehow gets away with more than usual).

**Image:** Karen is a tall, cold-eyed, athletic woman with severely cut black hair. While on the job, she is always in uniform. Off the job, she wears comfortable clothing which affords maximum freedom of movement and conceals whatever weaponry she chooses. Kithain who actually overcome Banality enough to ken her kith will see that her eyes, teeth and fingernails are of iron and her hair has a metallic sheen.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You're a woman driven by a need for satisfaction. You won't relinquish your mission until you feel you've fairly traded an eye for an eye. This



isn't likely to happen soon; you blame the Kithain for the soul-destroying feel of Banality. You don't attack Kithain on sight, but rather prefer to observe and attack later with more information. For the most part, all you've done is strip a few Kithain of their temporary Glamour and sent them scurrying for medical attention (of whatever sort they use). You greatly crave a lasting way to deal with these monsters.

## Brand, the Burning Wrath

Brand was born the youngest child of four siblings. He was not treated well by his older brothers, who considered him no more than a punching bag for their frustrations. His first years in school weren't an improvement; he was just one of those children who attracted abuse. Perhaps it was his small size, or his bright red hair. In actuality, it was all these and more. When he was old enough (to his mind, at least) and everything became too much for him to handle, he'd wander off to a special place which no one else knew about, where he could sit for hours and daydream of the nations, people and creatures he wished had been a part of his life.

When his Chrysalis began, he wasn't exactly surprised. He wasn't expecting it, but it was certainly what he'd been hoping for. It was a miraculous journey into the magical world he'd known all along was there. A small motley had watched over his Chrysalis (two of whom were childlings and fellow students at his school) and took him in to teach him the ways of Glamour.

For a time, everything was fine. He had friends and family who accepted him for what he was and he could finally defend himself from his tormentors (a little cantrip will go a long way). He was fine until he became a wilder, when he grew utterly insecure about his ability to do anything. All that childhood ridicule had an effect on his self-esteem, and mixing it with puberty and the transition into the wilder state did him no good whatsoever.

The arrival of Reyna, a fox pooka, did little to help. She tormented Brand mercilessly, seemingly poking fun at his every fault and playing the cruelest jokes she could think of. In truth, she wasn't treating him any differently than anyone else. She'd just emerged from her Chrysalis and was simply enjoying herself. One night, after a particularly harrowing joke involving some baling wire, matchsticks, a pickup truck and a Wayfare cantrip, Brand snapped. His Unseelie Legacy surged to the fore and he completely lost his temper. When he came to his senses, Reyna lay dead at his feet.

He felt two distinct sensations while looking at the corpse. The first was the bone-deep chill of Banality settling into his body and soul. The second was a





thrill at the feeling of power the killing gave him. He proceeded to dispose of the evidence in the best manner he knew how; he ate Reyna's remains. While he ate, he felt a measure of Reyna's power pass into him and this thrilled him even more.

Brand wanted to experience that feeling again, so instead of returning to the freehold (where he knew they would question him about Reyna), he instead tracked down another Kithain he didn't like much; a sluagh who had never spoken to anyone's knowledge. Brand found him, killed him and ate him. On this occasion, he took the time to savor his feast; sure enough, he felt the cold touch of Banality dwindle. It did take him a long time to devour the sluagh, however. This was only the beginning for Brand; it took little to set him off and plenty to sate his appetites. He discovered that he gained nothing from normal humans, and he could take the power from Kithain without killing them first. The flavor of their pain was purer than that of their death.

It has been three years since Brand devoured Reyna. In that time, he has probably slain and devoured at least a hundred Kithain to satisfy his insane craving. Those Kithain who attempt to track the activities of Dauntain believe his hunger has increased greatly recently.

**Doom:** Cursed

**Court:** Unseelie

**Legacies:** Outlaw/Bumpkin

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Redcap

**Physical:** Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5

**Social:** Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Brawl 5, Dodge 2, Intimidation 4, Kenning 2, Streetwise 3

**Skills:** Crafts 2, Drive 2, Etiquette 1, Firearms 2, Melee 3, Security 2, Stealth 2

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 1, Investigation 3, Medicine 2, Mythlore 2, Occult 1

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 2

**Agendas:** Stultify 3, Webcraft 1

**Arts:** Chicanery 2, Legerdemain 2

**Realms:** Nature 3, Fae 3

**Stigma:** Ravage

**Glamour:** 6

**Willpower:** 7

**Banality:** 7

**Image:** Brand's seeming is a short, muscular, teenage young man with his nose, lips, eyebrows and various other body parts pierced. He prefers to wear leather biker gear which is covered with spikes. His fae mien is mostly that of a normal redcap, although it is twisted by the rage and frustration which drives him to devour his fellow Kithain.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You know that every Kithain you meet is out to torment you. If you torment them first, they can't ever hurt you. You also fear that if you lose the supply of Glamour you get from devouring Kithain, you'll be lost to Banality forever. Besides, you just love the taste of Glamour-infused flesh.

## Sylva, the Passive

Sylva's parents always lavished her with much attention, more than enough to satisfy any child, and Sylva enjoyed it—at first. As she grew older, the attention began to cloy. Sylva came to feel that her life was impossible, that she could do nothing without her parents stepping in to see what was going on. The only reason she stayed with them is because of the money. Her parents were very wealthy and Sylva certainly benefited from this.

Her life continued like this until her 16th birthday, when her world turned topsy-turvy inside-out. Several strange "guests" arrived for her party, and nobody questioned their presence. They took her into her room and watched. When it was over, they welcomed her into Kithain society. This was the world in which Sylva wanted to live; a world of magic and dreams. It also was something her parents couldn't be a part of, and this gave her some amount of satisfaction.

This satisfaction didn't last long, however, for it seemed that every task Sylva undertook was doomed to failure. She could do nothing right, and eventually no one was willing to deal with her on her own terms. She left her oathcircle and moved to an apartment where she could get away from everyone. This was the first step which led to her spiraling fall. Other steps followed soon after; each increment stripped away some of her ability to care about the world around her. At some point, she reached bottom and lost all concern for anything. She fell into a catatonic depression through which no one has been able to reach her. The apartment manager found her in this condition after three days and took her to a psychiatric institute for care. Although she never arose from her catatonia, she eventually began subconsciously using cantrips to reach out and explore her surroundings. Then she began to systematically Ravage each of the patients for all the Glamour she could get. The more Glamour she absorbed, the more conscious she was of her surroundings. Unfortunately, she also withdrew more into herself. She was incapable of drawing out of her funk. The institute was a dream world to her, someplace she visited in her mind—certainly not real. Indeed, nothing was real to Sylva.

Her Ravaging slowly transformed into something even more subtle and dangerous. Sylva began to subconsciously drain the Glamour from all who came near her. Indeed, anyone within the same building was a valid target for this sapping of spirit. The closer one came, however, the more drastic the effects were. The doctors





wrote this change in mood off to any number of factors, making notes about "incarceration-induced depression" and "identification syndrome." Any Kithain who approach Sylva's domain will feel some loss. As they penetrate deeper into her zone of influence, they are pricked by self-doubts, disappointments and regrets. They'll feel the weight of all their failures, real and imagined, come crashing down as if they were physical burdens that had to be carried. She somehow chips away at her victims' self-esteem and confidence, even as she strips away their Glamour.

A Kithain who remains long enough, or gets too close, is in real danger of being Undone. The local duke is aware of Sylva's existence and her effect on Kithain, so he has declared the institute to be off-limits to all Kithain, except to end the threat of Sylva's existence.

A solution needs to come soon, for Sylva's influence is expanding beyond the boundaries of the building and may soon spread to cover enough area to seriously threaten the Kithain. She affects humans as well, and with their increased Banality, they can affect Kithain.

Doom: Typhoid

Court: Unseelie

Legacies: Wretch/Orchid

Seeming: Wilder

Kith: Nocker

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 1

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 1, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Empathy 1, Expression 4, Kenning 2, Streetwise 2

Skills: Crafts 1, Drive 3, Etiquette 2

Knowledges: Enigmas 3, Linguistics 1, Mythlore 1, Occult 1

Backgrounds: Resources 5

Agendas: Burnout 2, Webcraft 1

Arts: Chicanery 1, Soothsay 3

Realms: Actor 3, Fae 2, Scene 5

Stigma: Erasure

Glamour: 3

Willpower: 4

Banality: 8

**Image:** Sylva would normally be a very attractive young woman were it not for the fact that her long catatonia has left its marks on her. Even so, she has a tragic beauty. To Kithain, she looks as if she is dying, as her kith slowly fades to nothing.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You simply lie catatonic in your bed; you don't really do anything. If you were to awaken, you'd have a serious problem with self-confidence and don't believe you can do anything right.



## Joseph van Nocenti III

Joseph has been a grump for as long as anyone has known him. He first appeared in August of 1969 in Daytona Beach. Joseph was a street person at the time, although any who could see his true mien would know him for what he was: a noble of House Liam. He was knowledgeable in things of the Dreaming, and his command of cantrips was quite impressive. It seemed that he wasn't overly concerned with Banality, which is highly unusual for a sidhe. Rumors circulated that he was one of the Síocháin, although Joseph never confirmed it. He took a neutral stance during the Accordance War, and stepped in to help mediate when the commoners and nobles worked out their differences more peacefully under King David's direction. Afterward, he was advisor to the king in the Kingdom of the White Sands.

He enjoyed travelling and took the opportunity to go anywhere, anytime. In his researches, he found many references to old freeholds in the far corners of the world, and his travels were most certainly directed toward finding some of these lost fragments of the Dreaming. He met with limited success, which was more than he expected. One of his successes led to his ultimate downfall. He had spent weeks travelling through the wilderness, seeking the clues which would lead him to his destination. He suspected that a very strong concentration of Glamour existed at this site, protected from the ravages of Banality for centuries.

He found it. From outside, it was a fortress of incredible splendor, with beauty unmatched in the mortal world. With much excitement, he made his way inside with the help of cantrips. He had tried to get the attention of any faerie within, but received no answer. Once inside, he saw that the freehold was a shambles. Something had slain the faerie who dwelt inside and destroyed much of the freehold. All the damage was chimerical, obviously not the work of humans.

He used his skill in Soothsay to speak to the dead fae. The story thus revealed frightened him to the extreme. One of the faerie had been driven insane by the confinement, had wanted to go out and find the Dreaming, to see the human world, to do something. He had to be locked up by his companions simply to maintain their own sanity, and they would not allow him to die. Unfortunately for them, his madness gave him power. He used that power to destroy them all, but found that he couldn't escape — one of the fae had put wards against his egress. These has worked beautifully, and would still have were the freehold still secure.

Joseph immediately left the freehold to find and stop this mad, darkling faerie. This search led to a battle that raged across the wilderness, and even into a nearby city, where Joseph arranged for assistance to drive the mad one

away. This apparently succeeded, for he returned home with no further problems — at least for a time.

On the next new moon, it struck again, seriously damaging the chimerical forms of several members of the court and resisting all attempts to drive it away. The battle lasted until police came to investigate the disturbance. Normally, police are not a welcome sight to the Kithain, but in this instance, since they drove the faerie away, the court was happy to see them.

This event gave Joseph an idea. Since Banality did not affect him the way it affected most Kithain, he came to the conclusion that he could somehow safely wield it against the faerie. He tried to work out ways in which he could focus his Banality directly at things of Glamour and destroy them. It took a surprisingly short period of time for him to work this technique out, and not much longer to test it. The chimera he destroyed were nothing important in any event.

He went forth to destroy the faerie, but his attitude was colder, more dangerous. Where he was a researcher and explorer, he was now a destroyer. His attempt to destroy the mad faerie succeeded, and he earned a baronetcy as a reward. That wasn't enough for him, however. He desired more. In fact, he wanted the throne of the White Sands. To accomplish this, he honed his new power to a razor keenness. He practiced on any chimera or Kithain he could capture. With time, he found he could do a great many things by utilizing Banality and Glamour together in his cantrips. He could do anything from absolute destruction of Glamour to selectively neutralizing aspects of it. Joseph found that he enjoyed the power he discovered.

For a time, he used his power in the service of the Crown, as he did not feel he was strong enough to make his bid. It did not take long, for when such power as he tempts is fed, it demands more and more to keep the hunger sated. He finally made his attempt to take the throne from the king. It was an epic battle, wherein chimera and Kithain fought on both sides in a terrible civil war. The deaths were many and mercy was a rare thing. Joseph was very near to succeeding, with the old king at the point of his faerie-iron sword and his supporters on the verge of slaying the other members of the king's court. He moved to behead the king when High King David Ardry and a retinue of his paladins strode in. The battle turned tides very quickly, with Joseph's people being knocked comatose by the chimerical weapons the paladins carried. Joseph began gathering his power for one final blast of power, to destroy all Kithain within the room. Suddenly, the insane faerie, the one whom he had corrupted himself to destroy, arrived and carried him off to places unknown.

King David and his oracles have not been able to determine if Joseph still lives or where he may be, but there is a title in store for any who capture or kill him.



Indeed, only House Liam desires his Undoing more than King David. They state that he is a living violation of all the House stands for. Even the Unseelie are behind this.

Joseph has already made plans for his next move; he intends to assassinate the real movers and shakers among the sidhe nobility and eventually work his way up to King David. His ultimate goal is not to rule the Kithain, but to destroy them. He has also gathered supporters for this move. The faerie who had rescued him from the paladins' chimerical swords had disappeared again, but it was no matter to Joseph. He must avenge his defeat upon the nobility and this takes precedence over all else.

**Doom:** Black Magician

**Court:** Unseelie

**Legacies:** Riddler/Sage

**House:** Liam

**Seeming:** Grump

**Kith:** Sidhe

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social:** Charisma 5, Manipulation 5, Appearance 6

**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

**Talents:** Alertness 4, Dodge 3, Empathy 3, Expression 5, Intimidation 4, Kenning 5, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 3

**Skills:** Crafts 2, Drive 3, Etiquette 4, Leadership 4, Melee 3

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 5, Investigation 3, Linguistics 4, Mythlore 5, Occult 5, Politics 3

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 3, Greymyre 3, Holdings 4, Resources 5, Retinue 3, effectively Rank of 1 for purposes of Sovereign

**Agendas:** Burnout 3, Stultify 2

**Arts:** Primal 5, Soothsay 4, Sovereign 5, Wayfare 3

**Realms:** Actor 5, Fae 4, Nature 3, Prop 3, Scene 4

**Stigma:** Erasure, Hatred

**Glamour:** 8

**Willpower:** 10

**Banality:** 8

**Image:** Joseph is a sardonically handsome man who seems to be in his mid-30s. He has appeared to be this age since he first appeared in 1969. This lends credence to the idea that he was, at least at one time, Síocháin.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You are charming and witty when around others, especially when you wish to bring them over to your point-of-view. Your words appeal to the basic hatred many commoners feel for the nobility, and your natural charm makes it incredibly simple to talk people into thinking your way. When you set your mind to a task, you will finish it. On occasion, however, you feel the weight of the sacrifices you have made and wish that you had taken a different path. These are the times when you withdraw from the world around you and meditate. It doesn't take long to justify your actions to yourself again.





## Terrence Devereaux

Before his Chrysalis, Terrence lived a life devoid of meaning and hope. His father liked to take his frustration at life out on his wife and kids and Terrence was afraid to fight back. At school, he did well enough, but this earned him the contempt of his peers. For these reasons, Terrence made few friends until his years in high school. Even then, those few he made he kept at arm's length. He compartmentalized his life, so school was one part in itself, and work another part. He never discussed other aspects of his life with anyone; he didn't discuss family with his friends, and he didn't discuss school at home.

On the day his Chrysalis happened, his father was beating him black and blue. He was resigned to the beating when the most amazing thing happened; he was transported to a place where everything was perfect and beautiful. There were others there, and they welcomed him with open arms and told him of his heritage as an eshu and a Kithain. He nearly wept at the beauty of the place. When he came to his senses, he looked at his father, sitting in front of the television with a six-pack of beer, and walked out the door, never to return.

He never had any troubles getting from one place to another. It seemed that every step of the way was laid out for him to see... and take advantage of. He knew this was his birthright as eshu and Kithain, so he did not question it. Unfortunately, no matter how hard he sought, his talent with ways and paths never brought him to this land of his dreams. He saw others like him, but avoided them rather than lose sight of his quest. He was driven from one place to another simply to find the gateway he knew had to be there.

After a year of travel, he encountered his first chimera. The thing was a horrendous, beer-drenched bellowing monster. It brought back so many memories he instinctively hid rather than fight it directly. When he did this, he found himself back in this lost home. He eventually awoke from his dreams only to find himself living at home again, with only fading, tattered remnants of his dreams to drive him onward. Again, he left. This time he sought others like him, others who might wish to find this secret place which so eluded him.

Terrence managed to find his way into Kithain society. After all, it is the eshu gift to be where he needs to be at the right time. He learned all he could about fae life, so he could better understand his visions. He learned much, including how Banality is the enemy of all Kithain, and how some are Undone, never to return. He realized in a flash of insight that the way to his true home lay right before him, and had all along. It lay in the Undoing. He came to the conclusion that the Undoing was not the final destruction of the faerie mien, but





rather Banality was forcing the fae out of a world in which they did not belong.

Armed with this idea, he began an evangelical crusade to drive Kithain back to their spiritual home, Arcadia. To better implement this, he used his incredible powers of persuasion to bring others to his way of thinking. He drove home as strongly as he could the importance of the Undoing in saving the Kithain from Banality and exile.

He is only waiting for the right moment to start his crusade, to lead his army of heretical Dauntain in a war to destroy the kingdoms of the Kithain on earth. He strongly believes that this is necessary to restore the natural order of things. Still the Kithain refuse to acknowledge such a truth, fighting instead to survive in an obviously hostile world.

Terrence is charismatic, sincere and an utter sociopath. He believes his way is the only right way; anyone who believes otherwise is obviously wrong. He often comes across as a friendly eshu gentleman, but he is among the most dangerous of Dauntain for a reason. The worst thing about his crusade isn't what he intends to do, but that he doesn't truly believe in it. He wants to believe it, but that hasn't happened yet.

**Doom:** Apostate

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Saint/Fatalist

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Eshu

**Household/Motley:** The Guiding Light

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social:** Charisma 5, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3

**Mental:** Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Empathy 3, Expression 4, Kenning 3, Subterfuge 4

**Skills:** Drive 2, Etiquette 1, Leadership 4, Performance 4

**Knowledges:** Computer 1, Enigmas 3, Investigation 2, Mythlore 1, Politics 3

**Backgrounds:** Gremayre 5, Title 2 (not awarded, but treated as such)

**Agendas:** Stultify 5, Webcraft 3

**Arts:** Chicanery 5, Soothsay 3, Sovereign 3, Wayfare 3

**Realms:** Actor 2, Fae 3

**Stigma:** Numb

**Glamour:** 8

**Willpower:** 6

**Banality:** 7

**Image:** Terrence is a handsome, personable young man. He prefers to dress very comfortably; his outfit is often composed of jeans, T-shirt or sweatshirt and sneakers. As an eshu, his eyes are even more unusual. They seem flat, as if he had looked upon the source of the universe, and found nothing there at all.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You are charming, personable and downright driven. Take the time to observe other Kithain to see if they're the sort you want to recruit. If they are, broach the subject gently to gauge their reaction. You thought you found meaning once, but it eluded your grasp. You desperately seek it again, this time by bringing a religious conviction to those who need it. Perhaps by leading them into this, you might find something to believe also?

## Alex Hayward

Alex was a born Goth. For his entire early life he was incredibly moody, often given to dark brooding. He would say the most morbid things just to see what sort of reaction he could evoke. This all came naturally to him; he saw the world as a dark decaying place with little hope or need for survival. With this point of view came a certain amount of resignation.

It was only natural that he found others like himself, others who saw the canker in the heart of the rose. They formed a band to share their pain and gloom with the world, christening it "Exquisite Agony." They sang about the dark side of the human spirit; death, despair, fear, loss, hopelessness and more were grist for their cathartic mill.

They achieved a moderate level of success. They toured the country, attracted groupies, and were even eyed by a few independent labels. This life continued for some time. Each gig got a little worse as the money ran a little lower, the pay always barely enough to make up for expenses. Alex turned to one of the groupies for companionship and found her a remarkably sympathetic listener. She helped him crystallize some ideas, write some new songs, and bring the band back on track.

Soon after, they got signed. It wasn't a major label, but it was better than what they had. Now they at least saw a profit from their efforts, as well as moderate fame. Fame wasn't important to Alex, however. His vision was important. Melinda, the groupie, helped him realize his vision, helped him bring it to the audience in bloody, decayed chunks.

Exquisite Agony eventually achieved a higher level of stardom as they toured more extensively and sold more albums. Their music reached an all-time high, which made what happened next all the more tragic. On the night of All Hallows in 1994, tragedy struck. After the show was over, the members of Exquisite Agony retired to their dressing rooms to relax for a few minutes before the normal after-show parties began. Melinda and several of the other groupies, all of whom had followed them from the start, awaited the band's arrival.

Alex doesn't remember much of what happened next that night. What he does know is that the remainder of his band committed suicide, and Melinda's groupies were responsible. They drained his bandmates' souls or some such thing, and they lost their will to live. He also remembers





Melinda's face. Not the face she showed to the world, but her *real* face. It haunts his nightmares now. But, these days, his life has meaning.

The opening band had also been attacked, and all but one survived. They compared notes and decided that Melinda and her friends were some kind of psychic vampires. They swore to track Melinda down and find out what she was... then kill her.

Alex's attitude changed after he was so thoroughly Ravaged by Melinda. He saw that his life was futile, and despite the fame and money, was going nowhere fast. He chose to change that and try to do something that would make a serious difference. He decided to hunt down monsters like Melinda, and kill them. He and his new companions eventually found Melinda, after a two-week chase. They caught her, interrogated her for information about her nature, and finally killed her with a cold iron knife.

Alex wasn't entirely unprepared for the existence of supernatural creatures. His grandmother (a true strega) taught him how to curse for self-defense when he was much younger. He's carried that knowledge with him into this hunt and sometimes uses it to surprising effect.

Alex and his band of Dauntain cutthroats are now looking for more Ravagers to kill. Their main strength lies in their knowledge; they know about Banality and iron. What else do they need?

**Legacies:** Paladin/Beast

**Physical:** Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social:** Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Expression 3, Intimidation 2, Kenning 1, Streetwise 3

**Skills:** Drive 2, Firearms 2, Leadership 2, Melee 1, Performance 4, Stealth 2

**Knowledges:** Investigation 2, Mythlore 2, Occult 2

**Numina:** Cursing 3 (see *The Quick and the Dead*, page 57)

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 5, Resources 3

**Willpower:** 6

**Banality:** 4

**Equipment:** Sharp iron implements, .45 automatic, 10-gauge pump-action riot shotgun, hearse.

**Image:** Alex is tall, pale and has long, straight dark hair. He likes to wear androgynous clothing with many dark colors, along with lace or leather. He sometimes wears makeup, such as deep burgundy lipstick and powder for an even more pale look.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You have only one facet to your existence any more, and that's destroying the monsters who devoured your friends. You've given up on much of your old Goth outlook; after all, dwelling on morbid fates just isn't that cool anymore. Speak quietly, twitch your fingertips every now and again, and never forget. Never.



# The Autumn People

## The Coming Darkness...

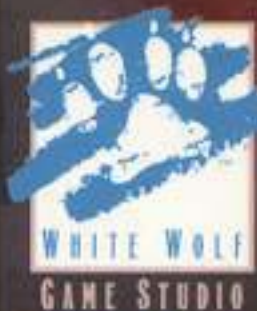
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