

NOBLES: The Shining Host

For Changeling: The Dreaming

"Come with me
for I will take ye
Dancing now -
with all my brothers
I am real,
and like the others"

Meg Davis

Elf Glade

Noble Sword



Nobles : The Shining Host

a Sourcebook for Changeling the Dreaming

Scanned by Zwierzynka

Powered by Zwierzynka

Compressed by Nelly the Elephant

A special release for the Rpg Bookz & Scans from DC++

alias the one and only direct connect hub

available at this exclusive adress :

>>>> rpgbookz.dyndns.org <<<<

Enjoy !!!!

NOBLES: The Shining HostTM



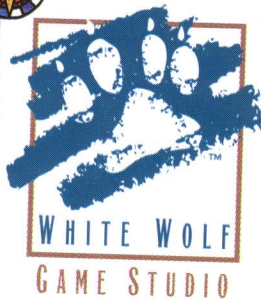
by Chris Howard

Credits

Written by: Chris Howard
Developed by: Ian Lemke
Edited by: Rob Hatch, Ronni Radner
Vice President in charge of Production: Richard Thomas
Art Directors: Aileen E. Miles and Lawrence Snelly
Layout and Typesetting: Aileen E. Miles
Art: David Fooden, Rebecca Guay, Andrew Mitchell
Kudelka, Brian Le Blanc, Brian O'Connell, Richard Thomas, Drew Tucker
Border Art: Henry Higgenbotham
Front Cover Art: Tony DiTerlizzi
Front & Back Cover Design: Ash Arnett, Aileen E. Miles

Special Thanks to:

Richard "Imperial Herald" Thomas, for doing those shields and loving/hating it.
Josh "Vicissitude" Timbrook, for staring into the gaping maw of controversy.
Aileen "Nomad" Miles, for being bitten by the Sega bug.
Kathy "Storytelling" Ryan, for getting to do it again.
Larry "Transcontinental" Snelly, for spreading the gospel of White Wolf to the Mediterranean.
Ash "Mr. Particular" Arnett, for being so.
Katie "Clermont Lounge" McCaskill, for being the hostess with the mostess.
Matt "Obi Wan" Milberger, for his growing collection of Star Wars toys.



SUITE 100
780 PARK NORTH BLVD.
CLARKSTON, GA 30021

©1995 by White Wolf. All rights reserved.
Reproduction without written permission of the publisher is expressly denied, except for purposes of reviews. **Changeling: The Dreaming**, **Mage: The Ascension**, **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**, **Wraith: The Oblivion**, **Vampire: The Masquerade** and **Nobles: The Shining Host** are all trademarks and copyrights of White Wolf.

The mention of or reference to any companies or products in these pages is not a challenge to the trademarks or copyrights concerned. PRINTED IN CANADA

NOBLES: The Shining HostTM

Contents

Introduction	4
Asterlan	8
Book One	
Chapter One: History of the Uasal Sidhe	18
Chapter Two: Rank and Privilege	26
Chapter Three: Politics	36
Chapter Four: World View	54
Chapter Five: Those Who Rule	72
Book Two	
Chapter Six: Storytelling	82
Chapter Seven: The Nobility of Concordia	94
Appendix	105





Introduction

Lord, what fools these mortals be.

—Puck, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

The Dream Lords are in their rightful place of power once more.

The year 1969 marked an event as momentous as the moon landing or the raging war in Vietnam: the return of the sidhe. The lords and ladies of the sidhe are unlike any others in the World of Darkness: untimely ripped from the bosom of the Dreaming and cast newborn into the cold, white light of what humanity calls "reality." They are a people of neither world.

Behind Them: Torn from the Dreaming where they once ruled, the sidhe passed through the Mists of Memory and do not remember their immortal past. Their myths and stories (both racial and personal) are tantalizingly, painfully beyond their grasp.

Before Them: The dark and hostile world the sidhe find themselves thrust into is unlike any they dared dream of in the days of antiquity. The world has changed since they were last part of it, walking among the superstitious throngs of humanity as gods. The simplicity of the farmer in his fields or the shepherd tending his flock in green

pastures has given way to a noisy horror show of supersonic transports, digital highways and nerve gas.

The newly returned sidhe walk a razor's edge between the worlds of past and present, fancy and reality, with nothing to depend on but themselves. A less worthy people may have crumbled in the face of such overwhelming adversity, but in the 25 odd years since their return the sidhe have not only survived, but have triumphed. Shipwrecked on a strange and alien shore, the sidhe drew upon their inner strengths, battling commoner and commoner noble alike to regain their place of leadership amongst the Kithain. What is remarkable is the degree to which, in 25 short years, they have succeeded. The earthbound fae, long resentful of the imperious nobility, nevertheless in large measure now concede them their historical place in Kithain society.

During their long absence many myths and superstitions grew among the commoners. Most Kithain have longed viewed the sidhe with superstitious awe and fear. The time since their initial return has done little to change

this opinion in the minds of many changelings, who (consciously or subconsciously) view the sidhe to be their superiors. Beautiful yet terrible, the sidhe walk the streets among the teeming throngs of humanity, and the look in their eyes is one of proprietary disdain. Something about even the lowest among them gives pause to even the most radical commoner antimonarchist. At the same time, something unsullied and innocent about them touches even the most cynical human.

Many commoners whisper that the nobility protects itself from the reality of the world by living in palaces of spun sugar in the Dreaming. They laugh, knowing that the first strong rain will wash the intruders away. Perhaps this is true. Although the sidhe have fought many great battles with the other Kithain to regain their lost power, their mettle has yet to be tested by the other great powers of the world. Yet the time of this great testing quickly approaches. The great cataclysm that the vampires call Gehenna and the werewolves call Apocalypse gathers like a great storm. The Kithain call this time Winter, and the newly arrived nobility may soon find themselves battling forces beyond any they dared imagine.

Noble Lexicon

- **Children of Lilith** — Vampires.
- **Tuatha de Danaan** — The progenitor race of all the Kithain, according to the sidhe.
- **Dream Lords** — The sidhe.
- **Fionn Sidhe** — Fair sidhe.
- **The Five** — The five noble houses of the sidhe, who returned during the Resurgence.
- **Fomorians** — A brutal and powerful race of misshapen monsters. Traditional enemies of the Tuatha de Danaan and the sidhe. Possibly related to fomori.
- **Hidden Ones** — Human mages who trade in the powers of Banality (a.k.a. the Technocracy).
- **Impulse** — The three main persuasions of Seelie Concordian political life (Traditionalists, Reformers and Modernists).
- **Lost Ones** — Faeries (mostly sidhe) who disappeared into their freeholds during the Shattering.
- **Morphean Oracles** — Kithain soothsayers who specialize in predictions about the Dreaming. The best belong to House Scathach and control much of its destiny.
- **Nertmar Sidhe** — Powerful sidhe.





- **Romantic** — A changeling who gives free rein to her feelings of love.

- **Romanticist** — A changeling who pursues romance as a calling or vocation. Sometimes, one who belongs to a Romanticist organization.

- **Romantic Legacies** — The psychological attributes that define a changeling's romantic personality.

- **Silver Path** — A path of silver that guides and protects changelings in the Dreaming.

- **Sons of Adam, Daughters of Eve** — Humans.

- **Sorcerer / Sorceress** — Changelings who have mastered at least one Art (5 levels) and excelled at another (4 levels).

- **Sun and Serpent** — The border between the Kingdom of the Sun and the Kingdom of the Feathered Snake. One of Concordia's most dangerous flash points.

- **Twilight Time** — The Interregnum.

- **Uasal Sidhe** — High sidhe.

- **The Waking Lands** — The world in which most humans live.

- **Wizard** — A human mage, one who practices Sphere magick.



Asterlan

*And the diviner rose up, stroking his gray beard, and
spake guardedly... this I know and foretell — that you will
never come to Carcassonne.*

—Lord Dunsany, Carcassonne

—As told by the sidhe bard and Glass Circle conjurer, Sir William of Virginia, to the court of Queen Mab.

Now Duke Asterlan was a wise and just ruler, and the Kithain of his dukedom reaped the benefits of his good rule. All the fae, from the meanest of the boggans toiling in the fields to the slugh who live in the catacombs beneath the nearby city (which men call Boston), were contented. His subjects toasted his health, life and good fortunes over draughts of gossamer wine and steaming tankards of goblin ale. Even the vile and brutish redcaps were treated with a measured and appropriate degree of kindness, once they forswore their bloodthirsty ways. In all the lands, there was none to compare with the duke. He was a paragon of all fae virtues: skilled and strong in battle, merciful in victory. Artist, philosopher and patron of the arts, none could match his wit or his fae beauty, both of which were justly famed throughout the lands. Justice flowed from the duke's right hand and righteous might from his left. A rare and radiant stone was on his brow, and that stone was called "wisdom." Truth was the duke's shield and courage was his sword.

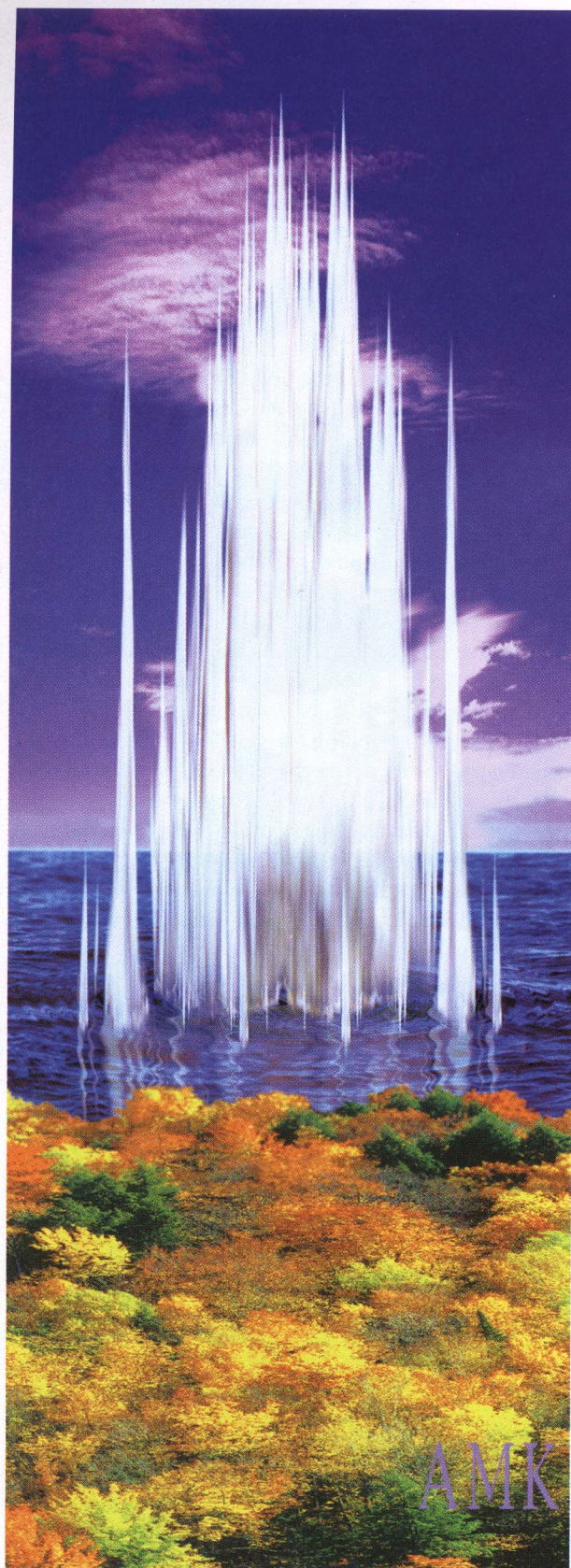
In the few short seasons since the Dream Lords' return from Arcadia, the borders were made secure for the first time in the memories of even the oldest graybeards. The wild and dangerous chimera were mostly slain, and good-hearted creatures, both chimerical and mundane, gave bended knee and lowered head before the duke's train, as was his due. Even the smallest beggar childling could sleep soundly in his bed, content that all was safe and well.

Now it came to pass that the Kithain of the dukedom rose up as one and cried out for a celebration in the duke's honor. Word of the unsolicited celebration spread quickly, even in other kingdoms. In every glade and hearth and lodge the duke's subjects spoke of nothing else. Lord and lady, burgher and peasant sought to outdo each other in the devising of the grandest gift. Honest nocker smiths labored deep into the night over forges of green balefire. Satyr bards and sidhe poets did battle with their own creative demons, in hopes of wresting the choicest morsels of wit and sentiment from the lips of the muses. As the

glorious day drew near, the people's excitement grew. It was also a time that the mortals called "bicentennial," and the festival air sparked 'twixt mortal and Kithain like summer lightning.

The center of the celebration was the duke's palace, that was in those days called Lenoria. Nowhere in all the Dreaming was there a place to compare with Lenoria. Here, it is said, the water married the summer sky. Built on the surface of a great lake, the duke's palace was a symphony of glass and mirrored turrets, each reaching higher than the last. On the day of the celebration the turrets mirrored clouds as white as angel hair. The lake was as blue as the Oracle Stone, and so calm that it created a second great mirror, echoing the beauty of Lenoria to the heavens. The duke's subjects came in their finest raiment, a symphony of finery that might well shame fair Arcadia herself. In the great mirrored hallway, the duke received his grateful people. Beneath their feet the glass floors presented a tableau of fish, both mundane and chimerical, who made their home beneath the palace's surface. Gifts both great and small were given, and in every instance the givers of the gift found their generosity returned tenfold by the duke. The merry laughter of excited childlings and aged graybeards mixed together in a revelry never before seen by the subjects of the dukedom. Besides the gifts of the duke's subjects, however, each of the nine great peoples of Concordia chose a representative to give the best of their kind.

The gift of the satyrs was a lusty ballad of comedies great and greater still. After this the people were even merrier. Laughter fair shook the palace to its foundations, this a palace that a hundred armies could not destroy. Second came the boggans. Six of them there were and each of them held aloft a golden rail. Between them they carried a great golden cauldron. Placed before the duke, the cauldron's lid was lifted and a hundred birds of gold and silver flew out, circling the assembly and nesting in the palace's rafters. The joyous squealing of the childlings at this spectacle lifted even the most dour and Banality-weighted of graybeard hearts.



A waft of cinnamon and incense announced the arrival of the eshu, gaily attired in the colorful voile of a dozen lands. In chorus they wove a musical tapestry of danger and high adventure throughout the throng. For a time the duke and his subjects walked through that tapestry to lands beyond fair Arcadia, beyond the Dreaming itself — yet when the last note was carried off by the breeze, all were safely returned. Next came the pooka, all flash and guile and yellow silk. Their leader, a clever rabbit named Brer, sternly delivered a scholarly polemic on why the duke's lands outshone all others, while all the while his fellows capered and juggled and ballyhooed about him. A second time the foundations of fair Lenoria shook with laughter. The graybeard chamberlain was heard to warrant that it sounded like the Doomsday Dragon itself was at the gate.

When the china stopped its rattling a throng of nockers stood forward. With calm and serious demeanor they presented the duke with the results of a hundred smiths laboring a hundred night: a shield they named Doria. Its surface was as black as the Great Darkness and emblazoned on it was an eagle rampant, red as blood. "A thousand blows will not dent it, nor will a thousand arrows pierce it": such was their pledge. Next came the lordly sidhe and all in the audience were near blinded by their radiance. Highest among them was the duke's goodly cousin and sovereign of those lands, Queen Mab. The mirrors of the hall reflected her flawless beauty into infinity and for a moment all the seasons of Arcadia were reborn in the hearts of those assembled. Her voice made even the oldest young again as she accorded her queenly esteem to the duke: the great sword Tamerlain, given to her by her father, and his father's father before him. Its silver blade, it is said, could cut through the veils of time itself. All was silent for a time, as the queen's magnanimity sunk in.

Next came Borach, a redcap chieftain, and Thulio, a troll warrior. Both were defeated enemies of Asterlan's, bested in fair battle and spared by his great grace.

"We have no gift to compare with great Tamerlain," said Borach. "But, as you did defeat us in fair combat and did spare us, we do offer you our service and our lives. Where'st you go, we will be there to serve you, till the ends of the world and beyond," finished Thulio. Both men bowed low, with sincere humility, and Duke Asterlan allowed that this was as great a gift as any that had been given that day. Last came the sluagh soothsayer, named Surreal.

Now Surreal had no love for the duke, though the duke knew it not. The ugly sluagh was sick for the wanting of a certain highborn maiden, but as long as Asterlan lived, Surreal knew she would never be his. "I bring you the greatest of gifts," he said with an obsequious bow, and so schooled in the arts of deception was he that not even the wisdom of the duke could pierce the fog that shrouded his

heart. "I have long viewed into the Mirror of Souls, a treasure of my kind. I have divined a thousand entrails and drunk deeply from the Pool of Memory. One thing can I, with certainty, vouchsafe. I see a noble sidhe on a horse of white, held aloft by a band of brave men arrayed in armor of gold. I see before him a great silver portal, the Silver Gate of Arcadia!" The sluagh spoke in no more than a whisper, as was the custom of his kind, but to each of those assembled there it was a thunderclap.

"You, brave lord, more than all those of the Shining Host, are marked by the kindly forces of Dán. A long and perilous road lies before you, if your brave heart compels you to walk it. Many a stout companion you may lose on the way, but in time you are the one fated to bring the Dreaming back to the realms of man, that it may be Spring again."

Now it is not known what Surreal's proficiency as a diviner was, for he is long dead, but of one thing there can be no doubt: Surreal was a skillful and inveterate liar. He baited his hook most craftily with a bait that no sidhe with a heart as noble as Asterlan's could refuse. He mixed equal portions of danger and reward, of flattery and duty in his honeyed lies, and Asterlan, wise Asterlan, saw no deception in him.

With all the celebrations ended, Asterlan called for 30 of his most loyal knights. There was Celtchair of House Gwydion, as brave and as strong as a lion. There was the handsome and always-laughing Idath of House Fiona, fast as a hare and as steadfast as the Scarlet Oak. From the strange and mendicant House of Scathach was the warrior maiden, Winter: silent as death and slightly blood-mad. Many other noble warriors of the sidhe were there, and Borach and Thulio too, who had thrown in their fates with Asterlan.

"None will speak ill of one who refuses this call to duty, for the road ahead is long and dark," the duke told them, but as one they rose and held their gleaming swords aloft. "Lead us into the very depths of the Great Darkness itself and we will follow!" the knights cheered with one voice. Asterlan took with him Tamerlain and Doria, and a coat of silver-blue mail. Then he mounted his great white charger, Chiron. The freehold's trod opened, a blazing portal of scarlet flame, and as one the knights rode through.

At first they road through friendly lands, peopled by those subjects of the duke who chose to live in the Near Dreaming. The Silver Path was broad and true, and the men sang songs of knightly valor. Then came the Wylde Lands, where virtuous encounters grew less and less. Wicked chimerical beasts and Unseelie brigands peered with menace from fen and thicket, though few dared to harass so determined a company of knights. Those few that did met with sorrowful ends, for it is well proved that the least of sidhe knights is a match for any 10 foemen. Still deeper into the Dreaming they rode and still, for a while, the

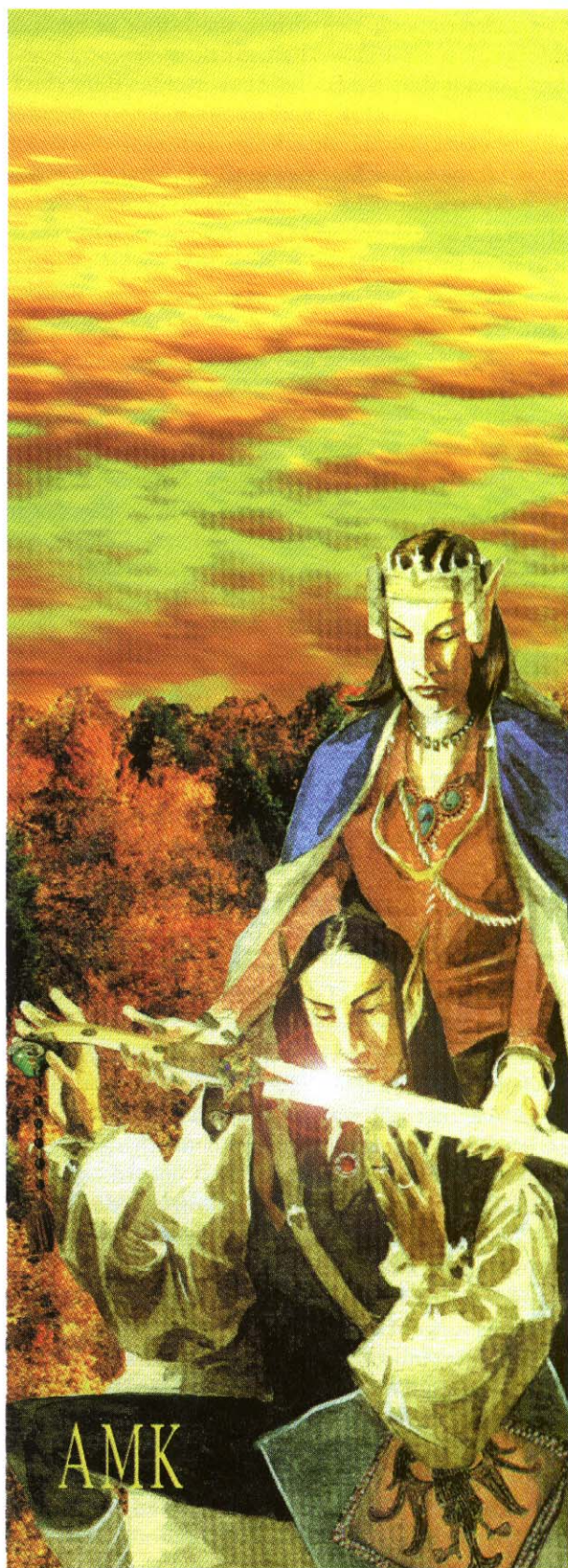


Silver Path held true, though thinner than before. At length they came to the Dark Lands and the Silver Path faltered, sometimes there, sometimes not. Many a bog and treacherous dale they traversed. The sky was always a whirl of dark and sickly hues, like those found on the pallet of a mad nocker painter. Still there was good and knightly company, and those of House Scathach are renowned hunters, so there was no want of food.

The Dark Lands went on and on, seemingly forever. The air grew thick and full of stale and pestilential night vapors. There were great and angry flies the size of falcons, which harried the party day and night. (Though in truth there was little difference between the two in those foul lands.) A constant rain of a black, sickly water fell upon them, soiling their clothes and blistering their skin. Worse too, the clouds hung heavily with the weight of Banality and only the duke's mightiest Arts were of any use. In those lands walked strange creatures from beyond the Dreaming. Some were gibbering things, or flying things; others looked like men from afar, but their darkling eyes betrayed them. Here the first of Asterlan's complement fell in battle. Two brothers, young knights of House Dougal, rode into the thick of the dark men and slew many, but the dark men had fearsome weapons of unbridled Banality. The two were dragged into the baleful sky, despite the cries and curses of their comrades.

At last they departed those cursed lands and for a time their road was clearer. They met an occasional wanderer, here and there; though strange, most were not unfriendly. Asterlan questioned them about the path to Arcadia, but none of them possessed that secret. Then, in a place called Trillium Veil, they met a skinchanger. (Who are more properly called Garou.) This one was a wise graybeard of a tribe called the Fianna, who are oath-friends to our kind. Asterlan charged the venerable Garou to tell them all he knew of the path to Arcadia. The noble creature allowed that he had heard stories of a place called Arcadia's Gate, a portal of silver and gold that must certainly lead to where they sought. Over the Splintered Mountains and then through the Forest of Lies was the path he conjured. The duke invited the wise Garou to join them on their quest and act as guide, but the creature declined. His own quest did he undertake, to find the endings to seven songs, which he swore would give him power over his enemies. So the duke did thank him, bestowing upon him a song of his own composing (for such is the way of showing proper appreciation to the Fianna). They parted company with many good words. Then, with purpose renewed and faith restored, the company did continue its quest.

The Splintered Mountains were properly named, for their once-great peaks were laid low, as if by the wrath of the gods. The lands were craggy and fractured, with spires





of jagged rock that tumbled down on unwary travelers, dislodged by the force of the merest whisper. There were only the narrowest of walking spaces along the faces of many of the mountains. Many a false path was abandoned and retraced so that the knights could retain their trusted steeds. All the while, even the sharpest-eyed among them did not sense that baleful eyes were upon them, casting the darkness of their glance upon their every step. The air was filled with only the most evil-tempered of wind sprites, who delighted in starting landslides in an attempt to trap or crush the band. Still Asterlan's sense of direction was true and the troll Thulio walked far ahead of the party, for mountain craft is the domain of all of his noble kith.

Then, late one night, danger came upon them. Mountain giants, as tall as oak trees, emerged from the rock faces above them, and then of a sudden unleashed a hail of great boulders upon the band. Three knights fell in the first onslaught, and then five more, including dashing Idath, as they battled their way from that valley. The bow of Winter sang its deadly song, while Celtchair and Thulio returned boulder for boulder with the surprised giants. Borach's black ax cleaved at giant legs and to his companions' delight his cap grew redder than that of any redcap's hood in Kithain memory. In final great battle, beneath the mountain's roots, Asterlan swung mighty Tamerlain and a bolt of lightning took the head of the giant king. Even now the giants of those mountains whisper the name of Asterlan with fear and call him "mountain slayer."

Still the perils of the Splintered Mountains were as nothing to the lurking fear that awaited them in the Forest of Lies, which borders between the Far and Deep Dreaming. At the entrance to the forest they met a solitary traveler who warned against their intended path. When they insisted that their resolve to battle the forest was firm he shuddered with fear, but resolved to arm them with what advice he could give. There was a bare fragment of the Silver Path that ran the length of the forest and its entrance was nearby, he told them. They thanked him for his advice and soon found the pathway that he spoke of. It was a slender and twisted parody of the Silver Path that most Kithain know, in places no wider than a hair's width, but it was a path nonetheless. Although it was daylight when they entered the woods, within the forest it was perpetual night. Shadows were chaotic and restless here, some dancing menacingly, maddeningly just beyond the range of perception. Other shadows leaped out to attack the knights with whispered screams and phantom clutches, yet when the knights beat back with their blades and magics the shadows dissolved, as insubstantial as the night. The trees were chimerical monsters with dark and rotten hearts. Their twisted branches seemed at times to

be skeleton fingers, trying to strangle the moon (always crescent and directly overhead), which was the knights' only constant source of light.

Glamour was plentiful here, as the trees had dreams of their own. At first the knights rejoiced in this, but the Glamour was tainted with darkling energies. The casting of cantrips was unpredictable and sometimes their draocht rebounded horribly on them. The troupe rode for what seemed like weeks, but in that perpetual midnight the marking of time became impossible. There was no food to be found anywhere. Even the meanest and most lonely of berries spurned their advances with vile flavor and poisonous humors. The duke's squire ate one and had to be carried for many days. Nor was their luck any better at hunting. No matter how carefully Winter aimed her bow, the target was never where it seemed. Many an arrow she lost before admitting defeat. Slowly their provisions dwindled and before long they would have seemed, to a stranger's eyes, to be a troupe of walking skeletons, with skin stretched tightly over their bones and sunken eyes. When one of the horses died it was a cause for some small celebration. Its demise meant food for a few short days. Six more horses died in this fashion and still they were no closer to the forest's end.

Aside from shadow and tree, or the occasional bat, they saw no living thing. Still the unseen denizens of the forest taunted them with visions. Sometimes the smell of roasting venison and the sounds of merry laughter would burst in on them suddenly, tempting them from the Silver Path. Then Asterlan saw a maiden, beckoning to them from among the trees. Fair she was, with hair of gold and robes of white. She appeared many times, becoming a constant and silent companion to the troupe, but never did they stray from the path in the wanting of her. Then at last they came to a place where the forest parted suddenly. At first they rejoiced, but then their spirits fell. Spread before them the crescent moon lit upon a chasm, many leagues across, with lower depths reaching down to where none dared guess. But the true horror was in what spread across it. Stretching from side to side were great spiderwebs, the greatest of which traversed the entire chasm with strands as thick as a strong man's wrist.

The party's spirits fell to their lowest ebb, for here was an obstacle they feared to overcome and even Duke Asterlan felt a touch of dread. He planned for a while how they might go around the wicked place, but as they turned to leave a plaintive cry rent the air. At the web's far edge, bound with ropy strands, was the lady of the forest and nearly upon her was a host of the most fearsome creatures the duke had ever seen. Spiders the size of mundane elephants tripped delicately along the silken ropes, towards the defenseless lady. Now Asterlan was no fool and he was mindful of the forest's propensity for deception, so

he was wary of a trap. But his noble heart could not turn away from a woman in such dire straits. With not the slightest hesitation he leapt from the cliffside and onto the nearest strand. Scholar that he was in the ways of nature, he knew that not all of the strands on a spiderweb are sticky. After watching the spiders' movements he quickly divined his course. His men waited for him at the cliff's edge, in accordance with his shouted command.

With the speed of a cat he closed the span between himself and the damsel in distress. Strand to strand he leapt, avoiding the clever pitfalls that awaited him. When once he guessed wrongly, Tamerlain flashed with silver fire and the strand fell away. He reached the fair maiden just ahead of her attackers and with a sword stroke freed her from her bonds. Her gratitude for his valor was a wide and evil grin. A single glyph she hissed, in wintry tones impossible for a human throat to form. The very air shimmered about her, as her fair form transformed into the most loathsome of spiders. Five times the size of her minions she was and every inch of her swarmed with her horrid progeny. Spiders from the size of a thumbnail, to those the size of large dogs crawled over her. Black and boiling venom fell from her maw and madness blazed in her hundred eyes. Asterlan choked with the horrid odor that permeated the air. For the first time in his long life he was forced to flee, for he knew he could not overcome such a monster through force of arms. The spider brood laughed at what they thought was his cowardice, for he ran as swiftly as he could.

Asterlan's comrades cried out in anguish when they saw the spiders cut off his retreat. But crafty Asterlan was not retreating. Large the spiders were, and in their place of power, but they could not match Asterlan for speed or guile. Asterlan leapt nimbly from strand to strand. As he did this he sang a song penned by a mortal kinain of the fae for just such an occasion. Soon the mocking call of "old Tom-Noddy" and "lazy cob" and "attercop" carried melodically on the wind as he lured the enraged beasts toward the center of the web.

"Catch the naughty fly! Drink his blood and eat his cursed eyes. Leave his empty husk in the sun lands, 'til nothing is left but brittle bones!" the spiders shrieked in fury. Again Asterlan's companions groaned as a full four score of the loathsome beasts converged on the web's center, obscuring the duke from sight. Then suddenly Asterlan was free and on the web's other side. "Great is Asterlan in the Arts of Wayfaring!" chorused his joyous companions. The spiders knew not what had happened, for they still fought and bit at each other to kill the duke, oblivious to his escape. Asterlan danced around them now, cutting each strand as he passed, while his knights hewed at the web from their side of the chasm.



When at last the spiders realized their mistake, it was far too late. They were tangled up with each other in a ball of their own webbing, and a finer knarl had never been woven. The writhing mass of shrieking monsters was held aloft over the bottomless pit by a mere strand of web on either side. Asterlan, who had made his way back to his companions, took a blazing torch from them and hurled it at the foul creatures. The mass of them screeched and flailed and spat vile curses as they burned. Desperately they tried to untangle themselves from the burning pyre and never was such a hideous tumult heard. But, in the end, not one of them escaped, and a dark and hideous stain was removed from the forest forever.

As the knights rested from the great ordeal, Asterlan thought long and hard. At last he spoke to his men. "I have pondered much the riddle of the Forest of Lies and there is but one answer. The greatest lie is the one told to us before we entered, the one that the Silver Path exists here. To leave this forest, we must leave the path."

The knights were doubtful of this, but trusted in their duke. At first they noticed little difference, but then the moon sank in the sky to be replaced by the sun. It was a poor sun to be sure and the forest was still sinister, even at high noon, but at least they could mark the passing of the

days. Many days passed and still there was no food. Of them only Borach remained fed, for redcaps can eat anything. (And it is well he could feed off rocks and sticks, because a hungry redcap is not the most congenial of traveling companions.) All the horses died, save Chiron, and he was a skeleton of his former self. And still the forest went on and on. Then one day, while they rested, Winter smelled food. Although they had smelled many phantom feasts since entering the forest, they had smelled none after leaving the path. They followed the scent, their stomachs rumbling all the while. What they saw in the clearing made them dumb with amazement.

Before them was a palace, as lofty and as grand as fair Lenoria. But instead of brick or stone or gleaming mirror, it was made entirely of food. Pastries, roast mutton and cheese were its foundations. Towering piles of fresh fruit and candies were its pinnacles. And the smell, the glorious smell, spoke directly to each man's soul. Forgetting themselves, even the most cautious of them flew to the palace's walls. Celtchair grabbed a shingle and Thulio a paving stone. Even Asterlan quite forgot himself and reached to grab a windowsill made of finest white bread. Then suddenly the food became rotten and pestilent in their hands and mouths. A foul reek filled their noses and each man

fell back in disgust and dismay. Without warning they were surrounded by an army of soldiers who wore armor of black. Each of the soldiers was very like the sidhe in appearance, with faces beautiful and grim. And each one carried an Unseelie black blade, limned with a fire of green. Asterlan knew they never could battle such an army in their present condition, so he held aloft his ring of office and turned to the knight whose demeanor marked him as their leader.

"And who are you, who without invite descend upon our palace and eat our home?" queried their leader.

"I am Asterlan, a lord in my own lands. We are hungry knights upon a quest and truly we meant you no harm."

"You are very more like wolves than knights, to behave as you did." Asterlan hung his head, for he knew that they were right, and that even a starving man must not steal his bread. "We will take you to our queen," concluded the dark knight.

Now Princess Marianna was a woman both puissant and passionate, as are most of the Unseelie nobility. When she first saw Asterlan, even in his decrepit state, her heart grew soft, for she knew that she desired him. She then spoke words of welcome, making light of their transgressions, and with a wave of her hand the palace regained its original form and the hall was filled with light and music. They were fed and bathed, and robed in the finest of voile. And when they were made comfortable she asked them of their quest. Asterlan told her and she laughed in merriment. "Then your quest is ended, for 'twixt this land and the next (which is ruled by a king, Seelie as I am Unseelie), there is a silver gate which leads to fair Arcadia itself." Upon hearing this the knights rejoiced and made merry, though Asterlan's heart misgave him. They did stay in the Unseelie palace for a fortnight and each evening there was an entertainment more lavish than the night before. Many of Asterlan's knights made friends and lovers among the Unseelie kind, and Asterlan's heart did misgave him more.

Then finally one day, upon Asterlan's insistence, the queen consented to escort them to the gateway. On a fine autumn day they took to the main road that split the two kingdoms. They saw how on one side of the road the trees were ordered and in full bloom, and the houses were friendly and filled with airy light. On the dark side of the road the forest was twisted and foreboding and even the humblest of dwellings had a dark grandeur. They came upon a thriving city by a sea. The city was built on seven hills, with spires that reached the sky, and it too was divided between light and dark. A grand procession formed about them as they ascended the steep road toward the city's center. At last they came upon a great and ancient wall of white marble, frosted with veins of black. The wall

was invisible from a distance, yet upon close inspection it reached into the heavens. On it were the vines of a thousand year's growth and white doves perched and cooed in their branches. Centered in that wall was a great door, as tall as a hundred men, made of purest white gold. Carved on the door was a great tree and on each branch stood a faerie lord of antiquity.

The great procession stood behind Asterlan in silence, for they too were exiles from Arcadia and word had spread quickly about the Seelie duke from the mortal lands who would open the great door. He approached the door, mounted on proud Chiron, and his men hewed boards out of trees and lifted both the duke and his mount aloft, in accordance with the prophecy. The sea was silent beneath the city and the doves stopped their cooing. Even the wind died as though it had never had a voice. His hand reached for the great silver knocker. And his hand seemed to pass through a thousand seasons as he pulled its great weight back. Then he stopped and gently lowered the knocker to its resting place; not a sound did it make. And he walked away from the door.

The fae of the city drifted away in silence, for they had a hundred such legends about one who would one day open the gates. They had tasted disappointment before. All the way back to Marianna's palace they rode in silence and a pall was upon them.

That night there was a winter storm that blustered in from the sea and the sky was filled with spirits of lightning and rain. Marianna came to Asterlan in his chamber and asked him why he had not knocked on the door. "It is not the true Arcadia beyond the great door, but merely one of its shadows. You are deceived and your long guardianship of this portal has been for naught," he said. His words were spoken kindly, for he feared the revelation might do her harm. Marianna lowered her eyes and spoke.

"Perhaps it is not the true Arcadia, I have entertained this thought often enough. Yet, come with me back to the gate and knock on the door. We will live there in that shadow together — for surely even a pale imitation of Arcadia is greater than all other worlds." But Asterlan swore he would have none of that; he would not live in a lie.

"Then stay with me here in the forest and rule by my side, and you may make of my lands what you will," she said. Asterlan rebuffed her overtures as gently as he could, for she had shown him great courtesy, but Marianna flew into a rage.

"You would refuse a queen in her own palace? Such an insult will not be borne!" And saying this, she turned into a great black serpent and wrapped him in her coils, that he should not escape. But Asterlan was too strong for her and forced open her viselike grip. Then she turned into a



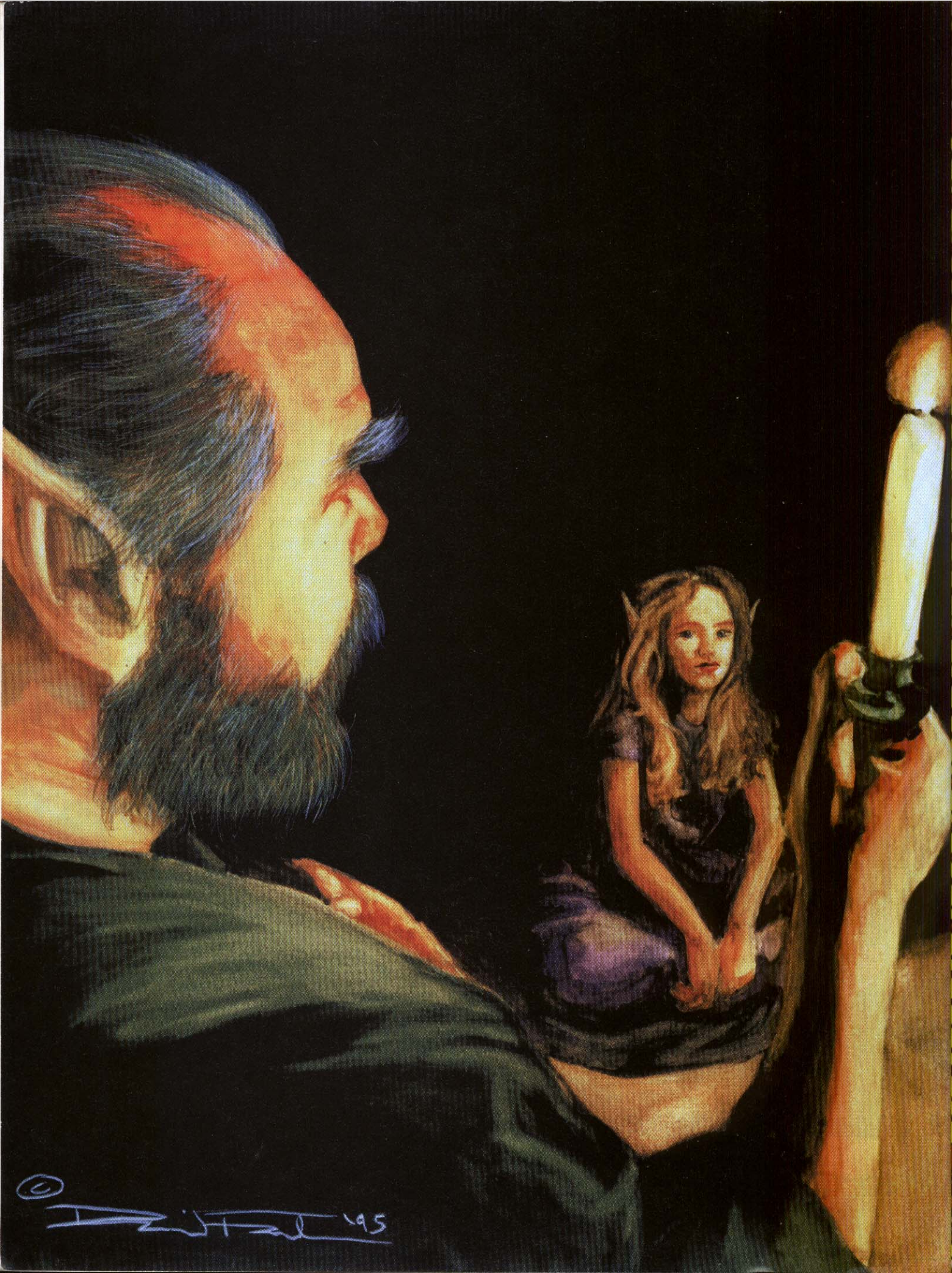
ravening wolf with eyes of green flame, for if she could not have him she wished him dead. Asterlan was her master in the arts of war, however, and evaded her rending fangs. Finally she turned into a great eagle, with feathers as dark as night. She flew for the window, for she knew she was not his match and feared his retribution. Asterlan seized his mighty bow and let fly an arrow, piercing her wing. With a shriek she fluttered to the ground, regaining her original form.

Tamerlain was at her throat now and Asterlan, grim faced, behind it. Marianna knew that she was beaten, but like the queen she was, she would not beg for mercy. Asterlan saw her green eyes stare back into his, proud and defiant, even in defeat. He sheathed his sword then, and helping her to her bed, gently removed his arrow from her arm. "We will speak no more of this," he said.

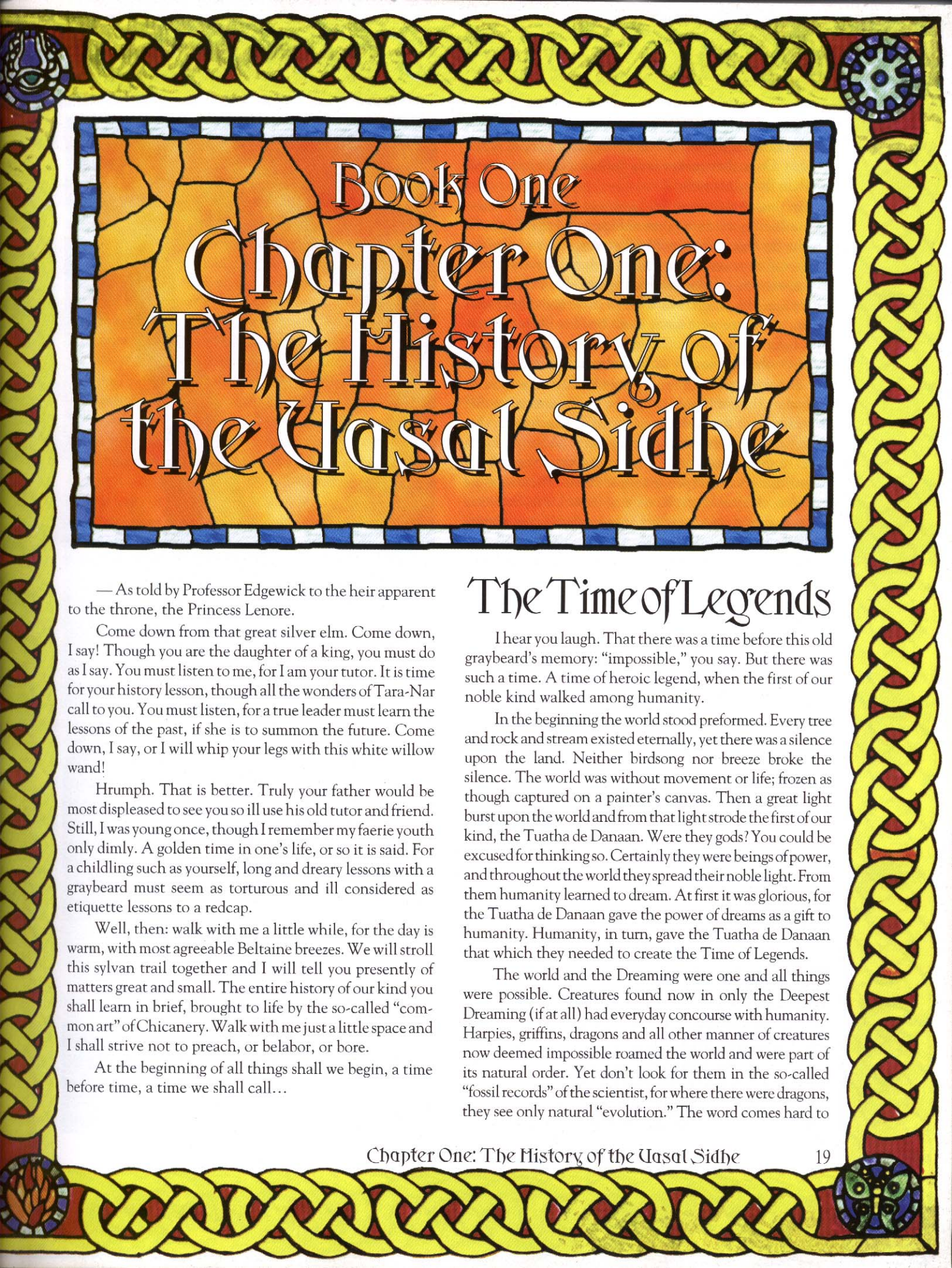
The next morning his procession left the castle, but smaller than when it had arrived. Many of his knights wished to stay among the people of the gate, for though it was not Arcadia, or even its shadow, it was still more like it than any land they knew. Asterlan left each man with a gift, so they might know that he was not angered by this, for the road behind them had been difficult and the road ahead would be harder still. Only Celtchair, Winter, Borach and Thulio rode forth with him now, and their spirits were not high. At the front gate Marianna awaited them. Taking Asterlan aside, she spoke with him a little space.

"Your quest was undertaken on the word of a soothsayer. While I know not what his powers or intentions might be, this one thing I will foretell: I too am skilled in the arts of divination and see before you only the darkest of Dáns; unless you turn from your present path." Then she entreated him to stay once more, and this time not for her sake, but his own. Asterlan would not be swayed, though. While he too now suspected Surreal of falsehood, the quest had taken on a life of its own and he could not bear to kill it. Then she gave him a scarf of gossamer twilight and watched him as he rode into the fog that had rolled in from the ocean. It was thus, on a gray and rainy morn, that Asterlan left the eyes of the Kithain, perhaps forever.

From there they rode farther and farther into the border realms of the Dreaming. And many more tales might be told of him, but none know what they are. Some say that he eventually found Arcadia and may yet return to bring a new Spring to all the lands. Others say that he became weighted down with dread Banality in some far-off land, and lived and died as a mortal man. Yet there are many stories of late in these, the mortal lands, that a ghostly covey of gray Kithain, with dark eyes and swords of flashing red have been seen. And there is a screaming, gray wind about them that cuts through the most Banality-sodden of hearts. And their demeanor is fearsome, but their deeds are those of heroes.



© *[Signature]* 1995



Book One

Chapter One: The History of the Uasal Sidhe

— As told by Professor Edgewick to the heir apparent to the throne, the Princess Lenore.

Come down from that great silver elm. Come down, I say! Though you are the daughter of a king, you must do as I say. You must listen to me, for I am your tutor. It is time for your history lesson, though all the wonders of Tara-Nar call to you. You must listen, for a true leader must learn the lessons of the past, if she is to summon the future. Come down, I say, or I will whip your legs with this white willow wand!

Humph. That is better. Truly your father would be most displeased to see you so ill use his old tutor and friend. Still, I was young once, though I remember my faerie youth only dimly. A golden time in one's life, or so it is said. For a childling such as yourself, long and dreary lessons with a graybeard must seem as torturous and ill considered as etiquette lessons to a redcap.

Well, then: walk with me a little while, for the day is warm, with most agreeable Beltaine breezes. We will stroll this sylvan trail together and I will tell you presently of matters great and small. The entire history of our kind you shall learn in brief, brought to life by the so-called "common art" of Chicanery. Walk with me just a little space and I shall strive not to preach, or belabor, or bore.

At the beginning of all things shall we begin, a time before time, a time we shall call...

The Time of Legends

I hear you laugh. That there was a time before this old graybeard's memory: "impossible," you say. But there was such a time. A time of heroic legend, when the first of our noble kind walked among humanity.

In the beginning the world stood preformed. Every tree and rock and stream existed eternally, yet there was a silence upon the land. Neither birdsong nor breeze broke the silence. The world was without movement or life; frozen as though captured on a painter's canvas. Then a great light burst upon the world and from that light strode the first of our kind, the Tuatha de Danaan. Were they gods? You could be excused for thinking so. Certainly they were beings of power, and throughout the world they spread their noble light. From them humanity learned to dream. At first it was glorious, for the Tuatha de Danaan gave the power of dreams as a gift to humanity. Humanity, in turn, gave the Tuatha de Danaan that which they needed to create the Time of Legends.

The world and the Dreaming were one and all things were possible. Creatures found now in only the Deepest Dreaming (if at all) had everyday concourse with humanity. Harpies, griffins, dragons and all other manner of creatures now deemed impossible roamed the world and were part of its natural order. Yet don't look for them in the so-called "fossil records" of the scientist, for where there were dragons, they see only natural "evolution." The word comes hard to

my lips; still, there are places for divergent paths and dissimilar histories of the world. It is only the machinations of the Hidden Ones that makes one version preeminent over another. But to continue...

In time this Golden Age gave way to Silver, for even "faerie tales" have their prime and their old age. From the Tuatha de Danaan came all other kith. There were the giants, tall as mountains and like the thunder in their rage. There were the pooka, wild and prankish in their ways. There were the sluagh, who lived in caves and other secret places, and there were many more besides. Even in those days, before the coming of kings and queens, the peoples of the fae looked to the wise sidhe for leadership and counsel.

Seasons beyond counting passed and the Age of Silver gave way to one of Bronze. It may be mere coincidence that this was the age that man too called the Bronze Age, for that is when they first learned to smelt that metal. (A gift, no doubt, given to them by a wayfaring nocker.) Other creatures appeared, distortions and perversions of the fae. There were the vampires, children of the blood-mad faerie Lilith. Sundered too, from the fae were the skinchangers called Garou, who are related in kind to the Kithain pooka. The first cool breezes of Autumn blew, and change and death were in the wind.

Many of the Tuatha de Danaan became bitter and cruel. They fell to warring with each other. Other forces became involved, though who they were, our histories do not say. Perhaps the Prodigals, perhaps...but that would be speculation and is not part of our lesson for today. War tore asunder all that the Tuatha de Danaan had built. The Tuatha de Danaan departed this sphere, or perhaps they were all slain by their own greed. All that is left of them are their children: us, the fae; and first among them the sidhe. With the departure of the Tuatha de Danaan, a new age came upon the world.

The Sundering

This age might be called the Iron Age, for again it coincides with the forging of that metal by man, and iron has ever been anathema to our kind. (I pray that you may never feel its bite as I have, young one.) The Sundering might be likened to the first cool days of autumn, when the leaves begin to die. Humanity turned its back on us, and we in turn did the same to humanity. Although humanity must bear much of the blame for this, we too are not without the stain of guilt. (I see your eyes widen, for this is not what you have been taught before.) Proud sidhe and humble boggan alike turned from humanity, even as it turned from us. For the two were too haughty, greedy or foolhardy to live as one. I say this only because you, young one, may someday summon the future and should learn all of our histories, pretty or no.

Humanity took to the cities. The reasons for this are many. Perhaps great canyons of steel and glass are his natural



habitat. Perhaps they did so to protect themselves from the wyld creatures of field and stream, the fae and the Prodigal Garou, who had grown hostile to their kind. Perhaps it was the machinations of the Children of Lilith, who congregate in those man-made warrens. But I digress... Whatever the reason for this change, humanity learned the ways of hierarchy. Great kings and queens and empires grew among them, and the fae followed in their footsteps. No matter how much you may hear the opposite, we followed them. There, it is said. We fae, we creatures of the Dreaming, are reflections of humanity, and our fate intertwines with theirs. Do not fear, little princess. We are not their puppets, but we must be ever mindful of our place in the scheme of all things.

Ah, but my original point... Humanity created monarchies to rule over it and we followed suit. Great lords and ladies rose among the fae. Chief among them were the sidhe, who were ever counted leaders among our kind.

Great battles were waged for the crown, and many good fae of noble and common stripe were destroyed in the name of king and queen. There were wise and benevolent rulers and there were tyrants; ever should you be mindful of the difference between the two. Great freeholds grew amid the mortal realms and in the Near Dreaming too. Great palaces of dreamstuff, far outstripping the works of mortal monarchs, were built; some approached the grandeur of fair Arcadia itself, or so it is said. Many a great song is sung about those days and rightly so. For while it was a time of growing darkness, so too was it a time of great heroism. Such legends as the Knights of the Red Branch spread throughout the lands, and their great kind are with us, even to this day.

Also in these days were the greatest clashes 'twixt Courts Seelie and Unseelie. Though that enmity has cooled somewhat, it is still a glowing ember, waiting to blaze to life again.

And still for some time, though the distance between Arcadia and the mundane sphere grew ever wider, there remained intercourse between the two realms. Faerie and enchanted mortal alike trod the Dreaming paths between the lands, and this was called the Age of Travel. Many of the great legends of humanity grew during this time. Cuchulainn and King Arthur were the results of this blend of human and faerie stories. Yet, ultimately, the greatest result of this age was the distancing between the mortals and the fae. Great battles raged over the dwindling trods and freeholds as more and more of the uasal sidhe left the lands of men for Arcadia. A great darkness fell upon the land, and that darkness was called...

The Shattering

Perhaps the "Shattering" is not the best name for this period, since it evokes imagery of a sudden cataclysm, a window splintering to pieces in a fraction of an instant.

Indeed, it was a long, drawn-out process, taking place over many human generations. It was the culmination of the Sundering, the crowning event in our ruination. Nobody knows when it began; perhaps when humanity first tilled the soil or marked the passing of the seasons. It doesn't matter. One by one the great noble houses returned to Arcadia, most of them never to return. The five Seelie houses that have come back were also the last to leave. Some speculate that it was their actions in the final days of the Shattering that caused their eventual exile from Arcadia. It was into the crucible of those times that I was born.

Humanity was in the midst of so many changes. The wisdom of the ancients was lost in many places and then reborn again. As "rationality" was rediscovered in the Westerlands, so too was our departure from the mundane sphere accelerated. Perhaps it was different in the Easterlands; even in the best of times our contact with the fae of those lands was not strong. Certainly here, in the lands now called Concordia, the Shattering was not as severe. Along with the nobility, many commoners also departed for Concordia and few of them have returned. Of all the noble houses, only the mendicant House of Scathach stayed in any numbers. Their ways are secret, though, and little is known of their actions in the centuries that followed.

A Black Death fell upon humanity. Untold masses died of sickness and starvation. Humanity, in fear and hatred, sought out those to blame. Demons and devils were the culprits most commonly named, but often the Kithain and the other Prodigals paid the price. Even today there are remnants of the time called "Inquisition" alive; I fear they may yet return. But do not be frightened, young one. Your father is strong and his kingdom is safe.

Ah, but the time of the final Shattering. Those were terrible times in which to live. Hideous times... The strongest works of the Dreaming crumbled like sand castles before the tide of Banality that swept over the world. Kithain fell upon Kithain in those end days. The few nobles who chose to stay warred over the remaining freeholds and trods.

The great portal of Silver's Gate was destroyed in a pointless, foolish battle between two sidhe brothers. The High King of those times, King Falchion, was cut down in final battle at the World's End; a great, rushing darkness took his body. Feudal hedge lords, both sidhe and commoner, rose up in the wake of his death. These corrupt nobles collected tolls along the final trods to Arcadia, demanding dross and barter from the fae desperately seeking escape. Some of them even administered false trods, which led to the Nightmare realms. As I said, terrible times. This practice did not last long, though. After the fall of Silver's Gate, even the secret trods closed. Soon there was nothing left of the noble houses of the sidhe on Earth and a new age was upon the remaining kith, a time called...

The Twilight Time / Interregnum

The final days of the Shattering are my last clear memories. After that, over 600 years of memory stolen! Earth, even the most dim images of it, was closed off from Arcadia, and of my years in Arcadia I remember only hazy images. These years, which we call the Twilight Time and the commoners call the Interregnum, are a blank to all the sidhe. Six centuries — even to an immortal it is almost inconceivable. So much remains unknown about those years. So many changes on Earth. A Renaissance, art and science, the great stories. There was war and discovery, the rise of new forms of government. Two *World Wars*? So much lost. Nor, I fear, is there much I can tell you of the fae who stayed behind. The burgess are reluctant to share their secrets, accumulated over those centuries on Earth. Perhaps they can not be blamed.

Certainly many feel as though they were abandoned by the nobility. Trapped in a hostile world. Forced to wrap themselves in skins of mortal flesh and Banality. Each generation becoming more corrupt and severed from the Dreaming. Even we, who have forgotten so much of the Dreaming, know more of its secrets than they ever will. Still they survived. Can we not do the same?

This was the age of the commoner nobles. Burgess with no blood line came to power through craft or brute force. Some of them led as nobly as any sidhe; in truth, though, most of them were despots. Like ravening wolves, many of the burgess Kithain (though by no means all of them) hunted down remaining sidhe. There is no record of how many perished in the years immediately following the Shattering. Some of the remaining nobility retreated to hidden freeholds, and so survived. But they rarely ventured forth and some burrowed so deeply into their own private Dreaming that they do not yet realize that the five houses have returned. Beware the glens of these Lost Ones, for their inhabitants are often powerful and mad from their isolation. Nor is House Scathach of much aid in reconstructing the years of the Interregnum. Though they aided us when we returned from Arcadia, distrust remains strong between us.

The common nobility was never more than a loose collection of feudal states. They called this confederation the Empire of the Turtle, a name drawn from nunnehi legends, I believe. (Some insist that it has its origins in Garou legends.) They rarely made lasting alliances reaching beyond a single kith. Still, we can be grateful to them for a number of reasons. Many of them were worthy caretakers, tending the remaining freeholds in our absence. They also had the common sense to reach an accord with our Unseelie

brethren. I pray that our current leadership has the wisdom to continue that peace. They kept the remaining races from completely fragmenting during those times. I have said it at court many times and it bears repeating: *When the land is crownless it lacks a soul. When the land is soulless it lacks honor. When a land is without honor, beware the wolf at the door.* Many of the burgess nobles were reluctant to relinquish their power when the sidhe returned. Ah, but I am getting ahead of myself. That belongs to our next chapter, a time called...

The Resurgence

There are some soothsayers who say that they can tell you all about the Resurgence. They claim special knowledge of the causes behind our exile and special insights into our "secret purpose" in the mundane sphere. I have but one thing to tell you about these "wise men." Avoid them. They are charlatans and scoundrels all. If one comes to your door begging a bowl of soup in return for the truth of your life in Arcadia, drive him from your door with sticks and hounds. Certainly there are honorable practitioners of divination (I have some small aptitude for it myself), but no Art can pierce the veil between here and Arcadia. In uncovering the forces behind the Resurgence we have only two honest allies. The first is logical deduction. I know that such a "Banality-laden" practice is not a subject for polite conversation at high households, but it is a useful tool nonetheless. Certain things remain eternal, and one is constancies in the fae character, be it Seelie or Unseelie. Much can be gleaned by subjecting fae behaviors to rational scrutiny.

Our second ally is our own memories, hazy though they may be. My memories of the Shattering are clouded, but mostly consistent. It was so long ago. My memories of the final days in Arcadia, however, are fragile and infuriatingly contrary things. Only images, really. That is all that most of the Five can claim, though some seem to remember more than others. Still, if my memories have any truth in them at all, I can tell you plainly: All is not well in Arcadia. Again, images. Of them, four that seem the most true.

I remember a great conclave in a palace of jade, with windows cut from living emerald. Green balefire, unbounded by brazier and lantern, blazed wildly throughout the throng. Far hazier is an image of a red sea which wailed with tortured voices. Another image: a statue of a great queen, proud and imperious in bearing, but without a head. Finally there was a great dragon, scarlet red and rampant, inverted against a black sun. I do not claim to know what these images mean, but they fret at me and occupy both my waking and dreaming hours.

I do not remember much of the journey from Arcadia through the Dreaming, either. The Mists of Memory stay with you for some time after you pass through them. Even

my earliest days on Earth are a haze. I remember walking freely through the Dreaming, yet a fae walking by my side was in chains. Some of us obviously departed Arcadia under more duress than others. If I left voluntarily, though, I cannot imagine why. I am a scholar at heart, yet when I first became aware of my surroundings on Earth, my hands were covered with blood and I had many wounds.

I heard the flapping and squeaking and rustling of a thousand darkling spirits on the ground and in the air around me. I don't know what they were, but they came into this world with us, from the Dreaming, I fear. They quickly dispersed upon our arrival, before we had the wits to contain them. I fear that our arrival brought a great evil into this world and much devilry has resulted from it, especially among the mortals of this world. This was inadvertent (I hope), yet I must ask myself: Would we not have had some inkling of this happening before we left Arcadia? What were we thinking? What kind of people were we? I beg your pardon, highness, for dwelling on such morbid thoughts. I fear that my mind has tended down such dismal corridors since our arrival here.

Our time of arrival on this plane was dangerous and frightening, but it was also exciting. We arrived individually, or in small groups of two or three. There was no pattern to it that I could discern. We sought each other out. Some of us immediately recognized each other as friends or lovers from the other side. Others were old enemies or complete strangers — but friend or foe, we were all each other had. There were few incidents between us.

I fell in with two others, Lady Sierra and Lord Dyfell. I cannot begin to describe the joy that leapt in my heart as I first discovered that I was not alone in the world. First there were three of us, then 10, then 50, and still more of us drifted in. There was Sir Marx and Lord Dray and True Thomas the Rhymers. Now it may have been a testimony to our wisdom or our luck that we found each other so quickly, but I doubt it. Instead, I believe we worked in accordance with some grand design, predetermined in Arcadia. (Predetermined by whom is another question.) At first we only met with others of our kind, the errant nobility. In the course of our wanderings we also met with the sidhe of House Scathach, which had thrown in its lot with Earth during the Shattering. Although they were suspicious of us (and we of them) they were invaluable in helping us acclimate to our new surroundings.

Soon after that, we encountered the commoners and the so-called "commoner nobles," who had risen during our absence. I must confess (egalitarian though I consider myself to be) that I was quite shocked the first time I encountered a pooka in kingly raiment. (Though in truth, it was a poor parody of such.) We were met with friendship and with indifference. Many commoners, however, looked upon us with a jaundiced eye. In their minds we were a pampered class,

untrustworthy and affected in our demeanor. They accused us of having abandoned them and then returning to reclaim our mantle of leadership as though nothing had happened. Many of their barbs have the sting of truth. Even now, it is up to us to prove ourselves worthy of our old place in Kithain society.

Unfortunately, some of our class did not see things this way. Their arrogance, combined with the natural surliness of many of the commoners, quickly led to several violent incidents. These clashes became increasingly frequent as more and more nobles exercised their ancient rights. Within a year we were at war.

The Accordance War

There are those who sing glowing ballads about this war. I am not one of them. As much as the human war that was unfolding in Vietnam, it was an unnecessary and despicable waste of life. Both sides were arrogant and intractable. For months tensions grew between the commoners and us. Many commoners gathered beneath our banner, while many others rallied against us. There was a general antipathy toward authority in those days, and I believe that our reception was in some measure colored by this. In any event, the violence between us increased. Several peace delegations passed between our two camps, but with little success.

Still, war might have been avoided, if not for... Forgive me. This is difficult — It was a Beltaine Eve, much like today. A delegation of the most powerful commoner nobles in the nation gathered for a final peace meeting. The stated purpose was to fairly divide the newly opened freeholds. I do not know the details, but when the last of them was in the great meeting hall, the doors slammed shut. A band of masked nobles and their retainers fell upon them with swords of iron. Not one of the commoners escaped and the Beltaine Night of Iron Knives Massacre quickly became a rallying cry for commoners everywhere. It also became a symbol of our treachery. War was upon us.

Much of the war is a matter of historical record and I will not belabor it. Lord Dyfell of House Gwydion, thereafter known as High King, led the war effort. He became the noble most hated by the commoners. The most foul of atrocities were laid at his door, including responsibility for the Beltaine massacre. Even now it suits the needs of many nobles to continue this obscene fiction. Since Dyfell is dead, his *de facto* guilt prevents fingers of blame from pointing elsewhere. For my part, I will state categorically that he was innocent of that crime. I knew the man well. He was stubborn, arrogant and infuriatingly brilliant, but he never would have killed ambassadors under a flag of truce. In fact he treated all his prisoners with the utmost respect. No few of them swore allegiance to him after meeting him.

My own suspicions for the Beltaine massacre fall upon House Eiluned, but I admit I have little evidence. I might also add parenthetically that the commoners were not without stain when it came to atrocities in the prosecution of the war. 23 noble children were tortured and slaughtered by boggans in Maryland. I could go on, but suffice it to say we treated our war prisoners far better than they treated theirs. But back to the war... House Gwydion spearheaded the war effort, supported strongly by Houses Dougal and Eiluned. Houses Liam and Scathach stayed neutral throughout the conflict, while much of House Fiona is known to have sided with the commoners! At first the war went badly for us. The commoners outnumbered us considerably and they knew this world. Furthermore, they used mortal weapons, guns and the like, which afforded them great advantage.

I have read Thomas the Rhymer's dissertation on the war, *Fields of Blood*. While I agree with many of his assertions (he is a close friend), I must voice my disagreement with several of his conclusions. His conclusion that responsibility for the Beltaine massacre went no further than the so-called "Berkeley Three" is naive to say the least. Sir Thomas somehow manages to implicate Dyfell (indirectly) and three other conspirators (except for the Unseelie Lord Drummond, conveniently unnamed) without delving into the activities of the then-nascent Order of the Beltaine Blade. He also mentions "sidhe warriors mounted on motorcycles," an image that is (at least at that time) ridiculous. We were new to the world of man and avoided contact with modern technology at all costs. In fact the very act of using a motorcycle at that time would have involved an unacceptable charge of Banality. Our skins have toughened somewhat since that time and even now... Well, I believe I have made my point.

Back to the war. Dyfell was our savior then. Soldiers from all of the Five (and many commoners too) gathered beneath his green griffin-escutcheoned banner. He turned the tables on the commoners, defeating army after army, most of which were many times his in size. Victory seemed to feed on victory, and the tide began to turn. The commoners were routed in a string of major battles. It seemed as though Dyfell was blessed, but then came the Battle of Greenwich. Dyfell broke the back of the famed Eastland Troll Army, under the command of the troll, General Lyros. Street-to-street fighting took place throughout the city of New York. Lord Dyfell's regiment was ambushed in the New York "subways" by the tattered remnants of the 4th Troll Commons Battalion. Some say Dyfell died in fair battle, but the general consensus seems to be that he was killed by treachery from within his own ranks.

I shudder to think what path the war may have taken after Dyfell's death. For all his military victories, Dyfell was a civilizing influence on the war. He conducted his campaigns with honor and often his foes replied in kind. Still,

there were many Kithain on both sides of the conflict who wished for nothing less than the complete annihilation of the other side. These angry voices are with us still, but they were much stronger in those days. I truly believe that they may have gained control of the war if it were not for the appearance of your father. The High King was merely a boy in those days, just one of the many childling refugees from Arcadia. He was one of True Thomas's charges and I had met him once or twice before. My impression of him even then was that he was an extraordinary little boy, though, of course, I had no inkling of his true Dán.

Immediately following Dyfell's death, the commoners of Greenwich went on a killing spree. They were, in the main, redcaps, and even General Lyros could not control them. Several of them caught wind that there were noble children in the area and a hunt was decreed. True Thomas did all he could to protect his young charges, but even he could not be everywhere at once. Young David was separated from his friends, pulled by a siren song from beneath the streets. He was probably not aware of the danger into which he walked. The catacombs house of a particularly loathsome band of Unseelie nockers, as well as many dreadful Prodigals. Still, I am convinced that he would have walked into the maw of the Doomsday Dragon itself, on that night.

The situation for Thomas's school went from bad to worse, and several sidhe children were butchered. As Thomas battled a unit of redcaps in final, desperate battle, David returned. In his hand, David held aloft Dyfell's great blade, Caliburn. The blade burned with a bright gold, where for Dyfell it had burned blue. "Turn and face your king," he is reported to have said. I have little doubt that the redcaps believed his word when they first looked upon him, for they turned and fled shrieking into the night.

When word of a new High King spread throughout the nobility, there were mixed reactions. Some rejoiced that they would not be leaderless, while others considered David an upstart, a boy playing the games of men. From New York, David went to Queen Mab's Kingdom of Apples. After initial doubts, she threw her weight behind him, as did Dyfell's consort, Lady Sierra. It was also at this time that I entered into his service as an advisor. With the combined might of these two royal women behind him, David was quickly able to enforce an end to the war. It was not an easy task, for there was much animosity between the two sides, but through diplomacy and arms, the war's ending soon became a foregone conclusion. The war's end brings us to...

The Present

After the Accordance War, things quickly fell into their current state. In accordance with the conditions of the peace, King David named his lands the Kingdom of Concordia. The



peace that David forged was a just one, though there are dissenters. The commoners were given a much-deserved voice in the governance of the kingdom and many commoner nobles have risen through the ranks through merit or lottery. King David is much loved by the commoners, as is his sister, the Lady Morwen. Yet there are radical commoner bands, such as the Ranters, which even now seek our destruction. The Ranters, led by that violent brute, Ravachol, have shed much innocent sidhe blood since the end of the war.

The Five have consolidated their position and maintain control over the bulk of the freeholds and trods they took during the war. House Gwydion emerged as the leading house, though it controls no more land than any of the other houses. Seven great kingdoms have formed, each ruled by one of the Five. There are many other, smaller kingdoms (duchies, really) as well.

These kingdoms are fluid in their composition and borders. Intrigue among the Five is rife. Many pretenders and would-be kings constantly test the rulership of Concordia, as do the machinations of the motleys and the Prodigals. House Scathach has all but disappeared since the war and controls no land. (Its members' true nature is still unknown.)

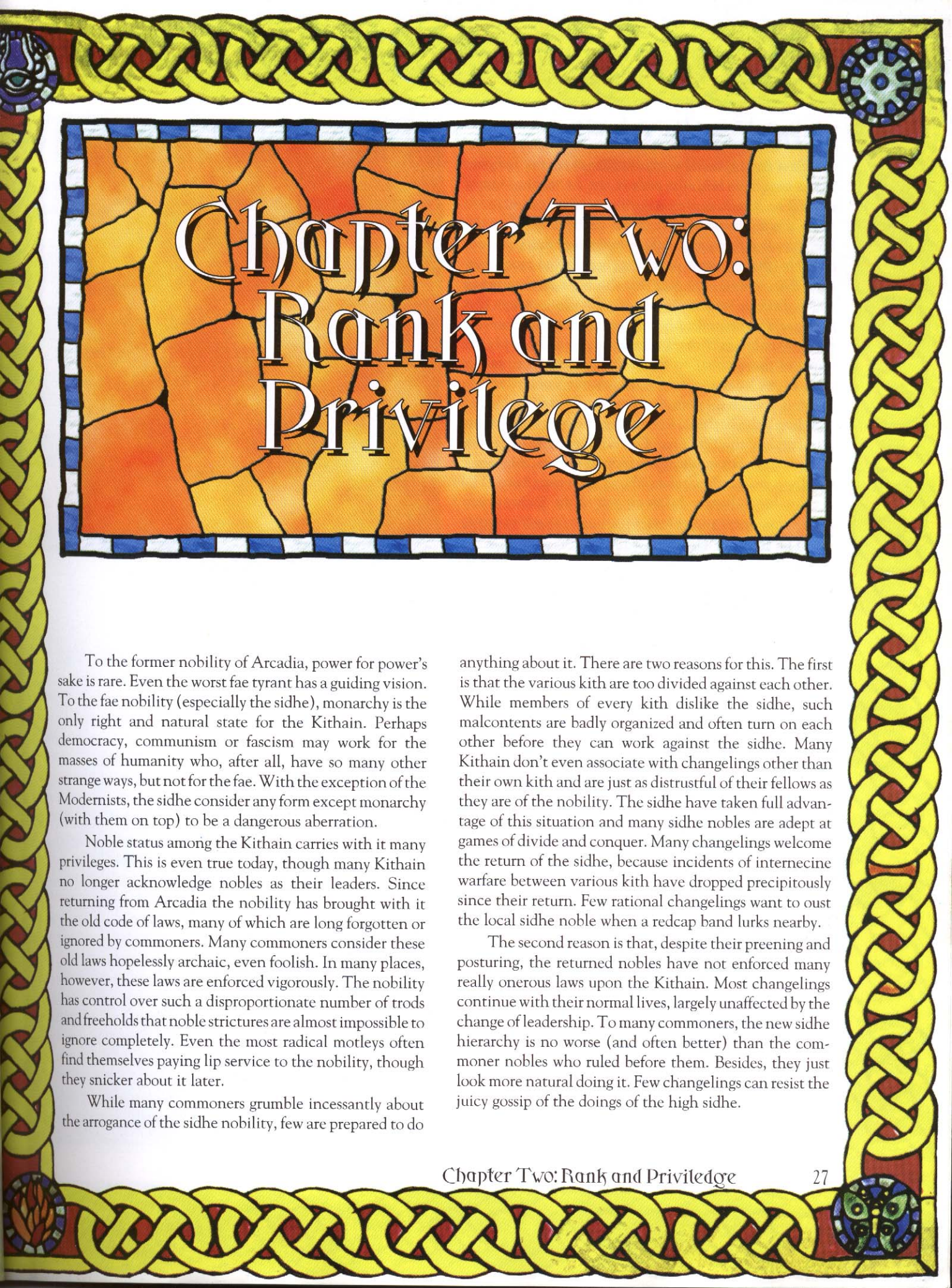
Noble society has divided into three "impulses" since its return to Earth. There are the Traditionalists, who wish that all would return to the times before the Sundering, when the

sidhe enjoyed unquestioned rulership of the fae. There are the Reformers (of which I consider myself one), those who support the traditional institution of the monarchy but desire it to be a more egalitarian instrument. Lastly there are the so-called "Modernists." These fae believe strongly that the nobility must give up its power, becoming part of the modern world. Some who follow this impulse are honorable enough, even visionary; others are the worst sorts of rabble.

Although the nobility has come back into its own, times are not necessarily easy for us. This world is strange and hostile to us; many of us have not fared well here. Former dukes and knights wander homeless on the streets, often falling prey to roving bands of commoner brigands, the Prodigals, or Banality. Despite the games of intrigue played by the Five, things have been mostly calm since the rise of King David, but change blows on the wind. Since the disappearance of Duke Asterlan, there have been many changes among the nobility, and few have been for the better. Strange signs and portents have appeared of late, perhaps heralding a final change of season, the beginning of Winter.

Ah, but the day has become decidedly cold and dark. Perhaps it is time to return to the great hall, where there is light and friendship and warmth. Your father will be there and perhaps he will tell you tales of the future, of the Spring that must inevitably follow the coming storms of Winter.





Chapter Two: Rank and Privilege

To the former nobility of Arcadia, power for power's sake is rare. Even the worst fae tyrant has a guiding vision. To the fae nobility (especially the sidhe), monarchy is the only right and natural state for the Kithain. Perhaps democracy, communism or fascism may work for the masses of humanity who, after all, have so many other strange ways, but not for the fae. With the exception of the Modernists, the sidhe consider any form except monarchy (with them on top) to be a dangerous aberration.

Noble status among the Kithain carries with it many privileges. This is even true today, though many Kithain no longer acknowledge nobles as their leaders. Since returning from Arcadia the nobility has brought with it the old code of laws, many of which are long forgotten or ignored by commoners. Many commoners consider these old laws hopelessly archaic, even foolish. In many places, however, these laws are enforced vigorously. The nobility has control over such a disproportionate number of trods and freeholds that noble strictures are almost impossible to ignore completely. Even the most radical motleys often find themselves paying lip service to the nobility, though they snicker about it later.

While many commoners grumble incessantly about the arrogance of the sidhe nobility, few are prepared to do

anything about it. There are two reasons for this. The first is that the various kith are too divided against each other. While members of every kith dislike the sidhe, such malcontents are badly organized and often turn on each other before they can work against the sidhe. Many Kithain don't even associate with changelings other than their own kith and are just as distrustful of their fellows as they are of the nobility. The sidhe have taken full advantage of this situation and many sidhe nobles are adept at games of divide and conquer. Many changelings welcome the return of the sidhe, because incidents of internecine warfare between various kith have dropped precipitously since their return. Few rational changelings want to oust the local sidhe noble when a redcap band lurks nearby.

The second reason is that, despite their preening and posturing, the returned nobles have not enforced many really onerous laws upon the Kithain. Most changelings continue with their normal lives, largely unaffected by the change of leadership. To many commoners, the new sidhe hierarchy is no worse (and often better) than the commoner nobles who ruled before them. Besides, they just look more natural doing it. Few changelings can resist the juicy gossip of the doings of the high sidhe.

The Escheat

First among the laws of the Kithain is the Escheat. These laws have been the code of the fae for time out of mind. The commoners mostly followed the Escheat, even while the nobles were gone. Most changelings learn the Escheat when they are childlings and follow much of it out of habit (though some provisions are obeyed more slavishly than others). The fact that the sidhe have returned means little in connection to the Escheat, except that there is now a central authority to administer it. Contrary to the grumblings of many dissenters, the sidhe apply the terms of the Escheat to themselves, even more strictly than to the commoners. Even Unseelie nobles tend to follow it, though they often interpret it differently. Nobles who break the Escheat, for any but the best reasons, are ostracized by their fellows. The sidhe may be imperious and arrogant, but unlike many human leaders, they don't usually consider themselves above their own laws. The nobility has a slightly different view of the Escheat than most commoners and enforces its six terms accordingly.

The Right of Demesne — A lord is the king of his domain. He is the judge and jury over all crimes, large and small. His word is law. A noble is to be obeyed by his vassals and respected by all others. A noble is to respect his lords.

Reality: Obviously this right is important to the nobility, since it underpins the monarchical system by which they rule. The sidhe feel they have already done all that can reasonably be expected to “democratize” the institution and are surprised the commoners want more. It is difficult to run an absolutist monarchy when your subjects have access to C-Span. The nobility still strongly believes in the divine right of kings, but the subjects usually don't. Thus the nobility rules through a combination of force, guile, charisma and adherence to tradition.

The Right to Dream — Mortals have a right to dream unhindered by our needs. The Dreaming will die if we steal directly from the font. None are allowed to use Glamour to manipulate the creative process. Although you may inspire creativity in the mortal mind, it is forbidden to give direct instruction.

Reality: The sidhe come from a more civilized time, when Glamour was plentiful and Ravaging unnecessary. Despite the new realities of today, the Seelie nobility strongly enforces this provision of the Escheat. Unseelie lords, of course, do not have nearly the same moral compunctions about Ravaging. Exceptions are made to this rule, but only in the case of extreme emergencies. Included in this right is a prohibition against Dream-Rape (see Chapter 5).





The Right of Ignorance — Do not betray the Dreaming to Banality. Never reveal yourself to humanity. Not only will humankind hunt us for our wisdom, it will bring Banality upon us and destroy our places of power. The more humanity knows, the more it will seek us and the more Glamour it will destroy with its Hydra's gaze.

Reality: The nobility rarely needs to enforce this law, since the commoners follow it strictly out of habit. This law is a matter of survival. The only sticking point is the role of the kinain (human relatives with faerie blood). To survive over the centuries the commoners introduced themselves into human bloodlines. These bloodlines often include relatives who learn something about the fae. Since, however, it is central to the survival of the commoner kith, this part of the Escheat is not strictly enforced in this instance. Many nobles still privately consider human kinfolk to be a technical violation of this rule. Many also consider the mixing of fae and human blood to be degrading to the fae. Some of the more reactionary nobility (e.g. some Traditionalists and the Order of the Beltaine Blade) have even proposed killing any mortals who have learned too much.

The Right of Rescue — All Kithain have the right to expect rescue from the foul grip of Banality. We are together in danger. We must strive together to survive. Never leave anyone behind. Kithain are required to rescue other Kithain who have been trapped by Banality.

Reality: Both commoners and nobles respect this law, though for slightly different reasons. Despite their differences, the commoner kith have developed an "all-for-one" attitude when it comes to rescuing fellow changelings from Banality (and other dangers). The recently returned nobility share these instincts to a degree, but they also have more selfish motives. The sidhe are vastly outnumbered and are desperate to fill their ranks. (They are also more vulnerable to Banality.) This law, then, especially applies to very recent arrivals from Arcadia. These changelings are not yet acclimated to earth. They are often undergoing the Chrysalis and are thus very vulnerable and confused.

Noble law (and most commoner tradition) dictates that a new arrival must be brought to the nearest sidhe house for fosterage and the Fior-Righ. The nobility often sweetens this deal by offering rewards to any commoners who safely bring in such a fledgling in a timely manner. Some radical antimonarchists (e.g. the Ranters) consider newly arrived nobles an easy mark. They may take them hostage for ransom (often some political demand) or even kill them outright.

The Right of Safe Haven — All places of the Dreaming are sacred. Kithain cannot allow faerie places to



be endangered. All those who seek refuge in such places must be admitted. Freeholds must not only be kept free of Banality, but free from worldly violence.

Reality: The sidhe are evenly divided on how they follow this right. While all of them pay lip service to it, many are leery of letting in strange Kithain. Those who deny free access do so because they fear that too many changelings in a freehold may deplete its Glamour reserves. There is also a "security" issue involved. Certain nobles, on the other hand, follow this right to the letter and allow entry to any changeling in need. Nobles who allow this free entry, however, insist that their guests obey the laws of comity. All household rules are strictly enforced. Since the nobility controls such a large number of freeholds, noble adherence to this law is of great import to Kithain society as a whole.

The Right of Life — No Kithain shall spill the life blood of another Kithain. No Kithain shall bring salt tears unto the Earth. No Kithain shall take from the Dreaming one of its own. Death is anathema.

Reality: This law is both strictly obeyed and vigorously enforced by the nobility. Penalties for breaking this law are severe, but in keeping with the right's intentions, rarely include capital punishment. The subtle minds of the nobility usually inflict far more imaginative punishments on criminal changelings. It is especially important to note that the penalty for killing a sidhe is far greater than for killing any other kith. The reasons for this are not completely selfish or arbitrary. According to tradition, a changeling of any other race is reincarnated as another changeling and has a chance to start again. What happens to the sidhe is unknown. (Some say they become commoners in their next life. The horror!) Of course, many commoners are suspicious of this flimsy justification.

Kithain Justice

As an abstract concept most changelings, even the Unseelie, place a high value on justice. They are even more passionate in their insistence that justice be done than are most humans. Their concept of what justice is, however, is somewhat different. Much of this goes back to the old tradition of oathbonding. A promise is not something given lightly among the Kithain. Many changelings feel that if you don't have your honor, you have nothing of value. In fact, when a changeling's solemn word is given, the Kithain justice system rarely needs to get involved at all. Oaths are often backed by the power of Glamour. Even when they aren't, it is unlikely that a changeling will go back on her word. Kithain memory for oathbreakers is long and entails severe social penalties. It is rumored that the

ancient High King Falchion broke a solemn vow and was utterly destroyed as a result.

Unfortunately, changelings sometimes take their insistence on justice to extremes. Sometimes "justice" becomes a euphemism for "vengeance." Not a single slight is forgiven or forgotten, and some of the reprisals Kithain take for wrongs (real or imagined) are truly barbaric. Other changelings can usually protect themselves, to a certain degree, from an aggrieved fellow faerie. The same cannot be said of most humans. Numerous tales abound concerning humans who have cheated or insulted a changeling in some manner. The reprisals for their misdeeds are often far out of proportion to the seriousness of the infraction. Kithain morality tales often end with dishonest humans being eternally covered with stinging insects or being boiled alive for the merest of crimes. These stories are inevitably told from the changeling's viewpoint. Little sympathy is spared for the human. Many Seelie changelings can be as thin-skinned about slights as their Unseelie cousins, sometimes even more so. Seelie Kithain can be very self-righteous if they imagine they have been wronged. Their "righteous anger" is every bit as petty and mean-spirited.

Surprisingly, most nobles are somewhat slower to anger than most commoners. Perhaps this is due to centuries of good breeding or noblesse oblige; maybe it's just their insufferable cool. Usually a noble doesn't need to resort to force or draconian legal methods to maintain order; a withering glare is often enough. However, in certain cases the nobility is called upon to administer justice. The nobility has reestablished its entire system of jurisprudence on Earth, and is not afraid to use it. This system is complex and arcane. Many commoners claim bitterly that it favors the nobility. The court system sanctioned by the nobility is divided into two tiers: Commoner Courts and Uasal (High) Courts. Changelings who choose to live outside the noble-administered system have their own system of justice, but that is a subject for another book. Of course, the nobility doesn't recognize these motley courts.

Commoner Courts handle many of the day-to-day functions of Kithain society. They deal with civil complaints and other "trivial" or local matters that the nobles do not wish to involve themselves in. Most of these courts operate out of commoner freeholds and are enforced by the local constabulary. By tradition a noble may not be tried by a Commoner's Court, though this has occurred on several occasions.

Uasal Courts are the instruments of the nobility and involve themselves in the most serious crimes and matters of state. They consist of seven nobles who stand in judg-



ment of the accused. Their judgments are usually just, but they are also final. They were once far more autocratic, but this has changed, thanks to King David. The accused is granted counsel and has his choice between a summary judgment or trial by Fior.

The Fior

The Fior is a time-honored tradition of the nobility and is also used by many Commoner Courts and even motleys. The Fior is trial by ordeal. There are as many kinds of Fior as there are changelings, and not all of them are used in legal proceedings. (For example, a wooed lover may demand a Fior of her suitor.) In a legal setting a Fior is, in part, dictated by the details of the infraction. A serious crime demands a more serious test to exonerate the accused. Often the Fior is in some way tantamount to the infraction, forcing the accused to address his sins. In a Uasal Court a Fior is almost always backed by Glamour and its decision is enforced by the Dreaming. It is also believed that the investment of Glamour into the proceedings helps to bring about a just decision. (An innocent changeling is helped by the Dreaming during her Fior, a guilty one is hindered.) The results of the Fior are final. Some modern changelings object to the Fior as archaic and barbaric, but surprisingly the vast majority of fae still support it.

Enforcement

The laws of the nobility are enforced by Glamour and tradition. Despite the objections of some commoners, Uasal Courts are generally known for their fairness. Their findings are usually not disputed. When push comes to shove, however, the nobility is prepared to use force to back its laws. These laws are enforced by both noble knights and commoner thanes. There are strict rules to prevent the officers of the nobility from abusing their privileges, though they aren't often needed. Most knights of the court take their charge seriously and are not generally susceptible to corruption. The main problems occur when high-handed sidhe knights fail to take into account the feelings of the local commoners.

Noblesse Oblige

Being a king isn't all perks and reserved hitching posts. Implicit in the Right of Demesne is the nobility's responsibilities to its subjects. There are few nobles (commoner or sidhe, Seelie or Unseelie) who do not take their responsibilities seriously. A noble who does not care for her subjects risks a nasty rebellion, but there is more to it than this. From the time that they are childlings, nobles

are instructed that it is their sacred duty to protect their subjects and to treat them justly. The nobility of the Kithain have a far better record in this department than most human (or Prodigal) leaders. Many nobles even have a romanticized view of "the common changeling" and have been known to disguise themselves to go among them. (It is considered poor form for a commoner to recognize his liege when she is so disguised.)

Despite the nobility's good intentions, noblesse oblige is a proprietary instinct. Many commoners rightly resent the nobility's paternalistic and patronizing ways. In general, the nobility looks at commoners as beloved, but unruly and somewhat backward, children. It is not that the nobility underestimates the commoners (there are many scholarly treatises on "low commoner cunning"), but few consider them equals. Sidhe nobles extend this judgment to the commoner nobles.

Good Deeds

When they are honest with themselves, even the most radical of antimonarchists admit that there have been certain improvements since the return of the noble sidhe.

During the long years of the Interregnum, Kithain society splintered into a thousand factions and small communities constrained by geography. Many Kithain would go their entire lives without meeting changelings from beyond their freehold or oathcircle. All this changed with the sidhe's return. The nobility provides a central, unifying factor in changeling society. Noble freeholds are often cross-kith affairs, whereas most commoner freeholds are more homogenous. Although sidhe contact with other races is in many ways superficial, they still, through the execution of their noble duties, come into a wider range of kith than many other changelings. This gives the nobility a great breadth of knowledge, if not a great depth. If nothing else, many commoners have united out of a distrust for the nobility.

Another positive achievement of the nobility is the opening and protection of the many new freeholds and trods. While the great surge of Glamour in 1969 was not caused by the sidhe, it was contemporaneous with the Resurgence and they usually get credit for it (along with the moon shot). Thus the sidhe's arrival is directly linked with the most positive event in living Kithain memory. Commoners who assert otherwise are usually accused of sour grapes.

Even if they didn't actually cause the Resurgence, the nobility has taken advantage of it to the benefit of all changelings. Prior to the Resurgence the few open trods, and the Near Dreaming in general, were dangerous in the

extreme. Brigands and hostile chimera often hid along the Silver Path, waylaying travelers at will. Sidhe cleaned up the trods to a great extent, making the major ones quite safe. Of course their influence wanes the deeper into the Dreaming one goes. Some nobles have been known to charge tolls to travel trods under their "protection," while others allow free passage to all.

The nobility also guarantees the borders of all changeling freeholds under their protection. Noble tribunals negotiate territorial disputes between competing Kithain. Indeed, strife between changelings has quieted down considerably because of this. Additionally, the nobility acts decisively to protect commoners from incursions by the Gallain, the Unseelie Court and even the Prodigals. The one area where this situation is somewhat reversed is when humans are involved. The sidhe are particularly vulnerable to Banality and hence, do not deal with humanity as easily as most commoners.

Perhaps the greatest benefits reaped by the commoners from the nobility's return are not so tangible, however. The sidhe were always the heart of the Kithain, and when they abandoned the fae during the Shattering, a vital part of the Kithain spirit was severed. Although many commoners are suspicious and resentful of the sidhe's return, they also welcome them back because they are a missing part of the Kithain soul. Finally, as the kith most familiar with the Dreaming and most recently of Arcadia, the sidhe represent a great opportunity for the Kithain to grow. Many commoners feel that the sidhe's return affords all changelings an unprecedented chance to explore worlds long denied to them during the Interregnum.

Power Corrupts

It is a common misnomer that high corruption is solely the province of the Unseelie Court. With the rhetoric of honor and duty forever on their lips, the Seelie nobility are often not suspected of deception, even when the finger of guilt points straight at them. Most of the Kithain nobility (Seelie and Unseelie) have a strong code of ethics. Within that code most of them are studiously honest. Their standards, however, are highly rarefied and not widely understood outside of the nobility. When their code conflicts with the rights of others, it is usually the outsider who suffers. A noble who is well within the code of the Uasal Kithain may easily be acting immorally by another person's standards. Since their code is so cryptic and arcane to outsiders (especially humans), they are often accused of acting capriciously.

Apologists for the nobility often use the above arguments as a catch-all defense for any morally suspect actions by the nobility. Even the most inhumane of noble actions



are deemed by many to have their roots in a strenuous moral code, different perhaps, but no less valid. Unfortunately this is not always the case. Some Kithain nobles are mad, evil or corrupt. These nobles adhere to a code of noble conduct only insofar as it fits their purposes, often only for appearance's sake. Such nobles usually fall into one or more of the categories listed below.

Ideologues — Many nobles have an ideal or a vision that they are moved by. In some cases, however, idealism becomes fanaticism and the noble loses sight of all other considerations. There are several factions among the nobility (e.g. the Beltaine Blade) that encourage this fanaticism. The fae are passionate creatures and none more so than the sidhe nobility. The legends of Arcadia, while forgotten, still loom large in their minds. Many sidhe are supremely confident that they know what is best for all.

Power Mongers — Power for power's sake. This stripe of noble is the personification of the old axiom about the corrupting qualities of power. Being a Kithain noble is a heady and exhilarating existence. Some nobles cannot help but be corrupted by the near-limitless power they wield over both the Dreaming and their fellow Kithain. In general, the higher the title, the greater the possibilities for corruption. Nobles who spend a lot of time in their freeholds or in the Dreaming are especially susceptible to this brand of corruption. There is nothing like a good dose of Banality to knock a powermongering noble down a peg.

Dualists — As a rule the sidhe are more likely to switch allegiances between the Seelie and Unseelie Courts than other changelings. Some nobles bring this eclectic behavior to schizophrenic levels. For most Seelie nobles, the Unseelie side is treated as a one-night stand, an emotional safety valve. Some only let their Unseelie side show once a year, on Samhain Eve — yet a changeling's other nature is an integral part of her, whether she admits it or not. There are some changelings, however, who lose all distinction between the courts, sometimes switching between them moment to moment. Strangely, most of these dualist nobles are highly adept at concealing their true nature and appear as some of the most solid and dependable members of their respective courts.

The Insane — While an outside observer may consider a dualist insane, most changelings would not. There are, however, changelings who would be considered deranged by even the high standards set by the Malkavians (see **Vampire: The Masquerade**). The sidhe are particularly vulnerable to the ravages of insanity for a number of reasons. Their loss of memory and identity, the pressures of plunging unprepared into the modern world, and their undeniable connections

with the Dreaming are but a few. Many sidhe spend most of their time in their freeholds, thus opening them to the ills of Bedlam. Insanity is not usually treated with the same stigma by the Kithain as by humans. Insane changelings are generally accepted and often even revered by changelings as Kithain who have escaped the dread weight of Banality. Most insane changelings are relatively harmless most of the time, but there are exceptions. Insane sidhe are some of the most dangerous Kithain alive. (See the entry on *The Lost Ones* in Chapter Four, for the most deadly of this kind.) Despite the above, sidhe are less vulnerable to Bedlam than other kith who spend a comparable amount of time in a freehold.

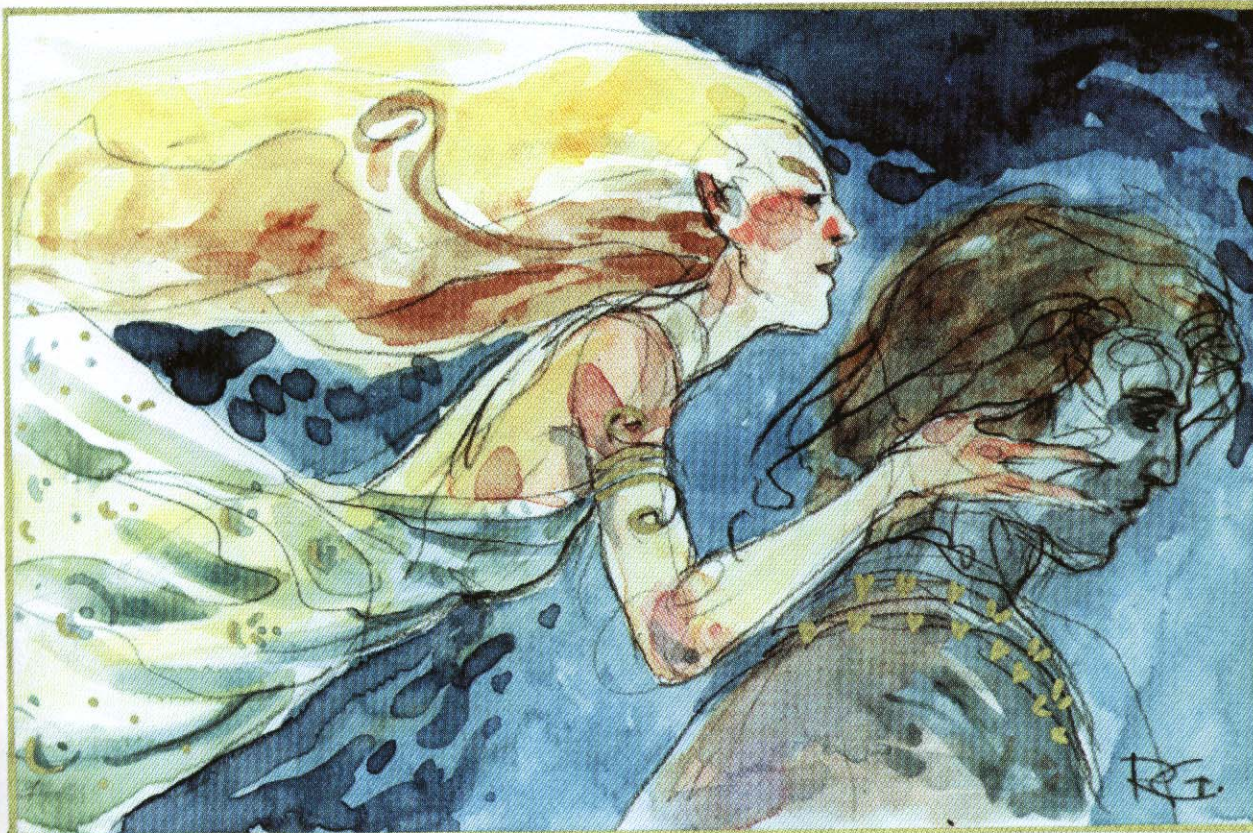
The Burgess

Human faerie tales are full of stories about people who have run afoul of the fae, only to be ensnared and enslaved forever. These stories are true. Enchanted human servants are favored by the Kithain nobility, who never tire of their antics. Many modern and more egalitarian changelings view this practice as barbaric. For all their complaints it is still a common practice to employ human servants. Most such servants are very well treated (sometimes even spoiled) and may even rise to high positions within a royal household. Changelings are very careful to choose humans with the least amount of Banality possible (often artists or children) as servants.

Special Powers

The sidhe have forgotten much of their past and know little of the modern world. Still, there are reasons why they are the lords of the Kithain. Despite their many centuries of amnesia, the sidhe have memories far older than any other kith. There are sidhe lords alive today who remember Charlemagne, the fall of Rome and even the Time of Legends. (Such *Old Ones* are exceedingly rare, however.) They know little of computers or popular culture, but they know the old secrets, denied to all but the greatest scholars of the other kith. Theirs is the knowledge of the trees and the secret places, of the mountain roots and most especially of the Dreaming. Even the sluagh are jealous of the many old secrets known by the sidhe.

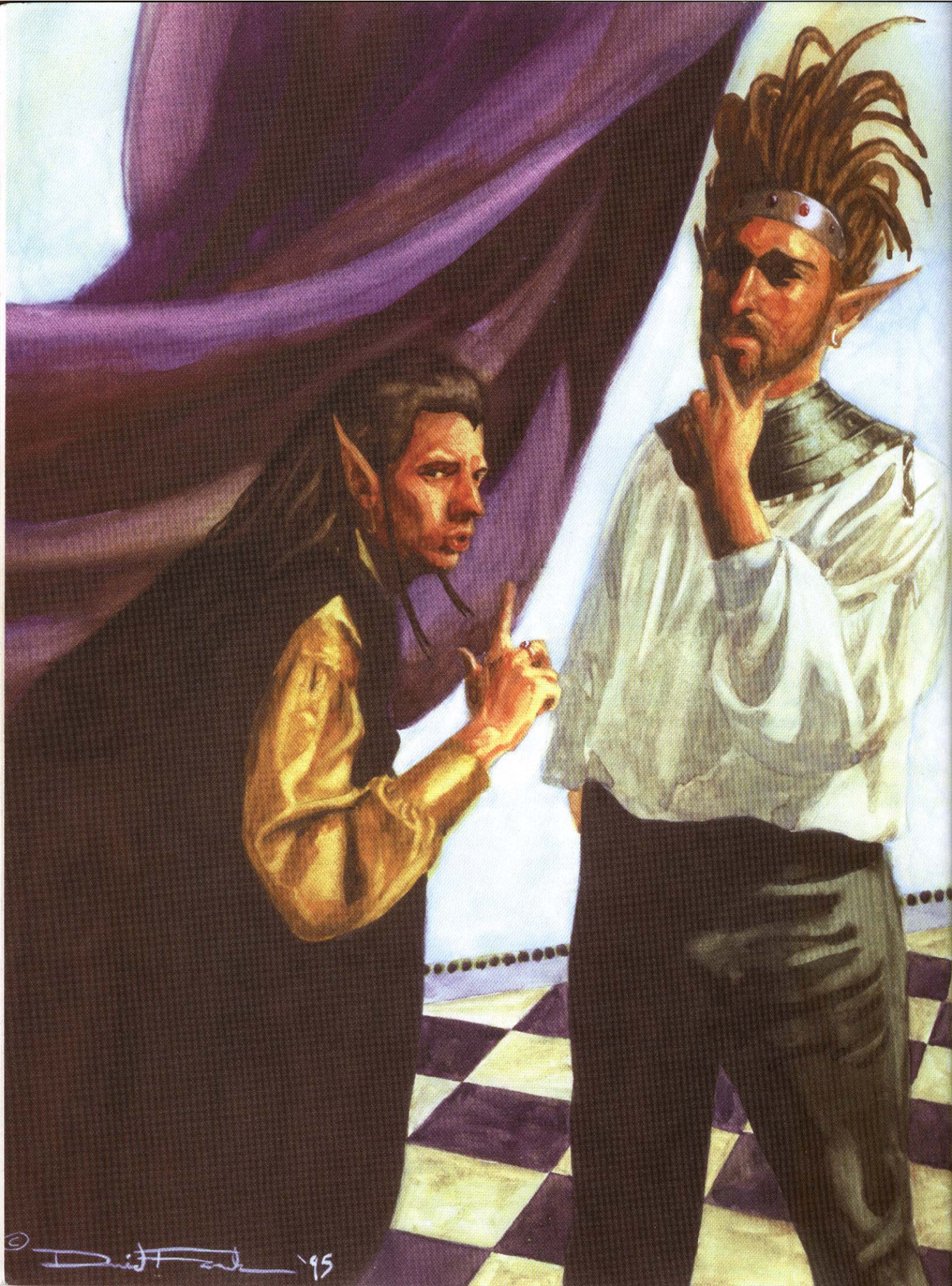
While in their freeholds, safe from the icy winds of Banality, they recreate the high magics of yesterday, unseen by other Kithain for centuries or even millennia. It is little wonder then that many commoners welcomed them back as the true leaders of the Kithain. Noble freeholds are magnificent affairs, sometimes approaching the grandeur of Arcadia itself. The sidhe



have a special affinity for the Dreaming and are also known to live in time somewhat differently from other Kithain. As a result the sidhe wield the Arts of *Chronos* and *Dream-Craft* far more easily than any other kith. (See Chapter Five for full details on these two Arts.)

Permanent Cantrips

While in their freeholds the nobility (and some highly talented commoners) are able to cast cantrips that withstand the rigors of Banality and time. Permanent cantrips require the expenditure of permanent Glamour and the Art of *Chronos*. (See Chapter Five for more details.)



Chapter Three: Politics



My Dearest Entrant

My most hearty congratulations on your Samhain Eves raid. It was most daring, most unexpected. Your use of the Hell Night riots as cover for your skulduggery was treachery worthy of an Eiluned. Marvelous. I note with interest that, along with the Gulliver Stone, you have purloined much of my remaining wine stock. Touché. You certainly know how to injure a man. Enjoy the wine while you may. I personally surveyed the carnage left by your ruffians and found your letter. Was it really necessary to slash the tapestries?

I am sending my reply to your considerate missive in the hands of an enchanted manling since I no longer trust you to let our messengers pass unmolested. I am only sorry that it must be delivered on the point of a knife, in the back of your friend Orda. But then, pookas are overly plentiful these days. Just consider this my way of trimming the herd.

I am gratified to hear that you are enjoying the Gulliver Stone. Placed it on your mantel eh? Try to conjure my personality away with it. I beseech you. Ah, but you are not that foolish, a pity. But I forget myself. I write this letter to address your tedious attempt to expose the treachery of the Beltaine Blade through your Modernist allies in Parliament last week. (Your blundering attempt to blame the Blade for last month's assassination attempt against Queen Laurel was good for a few laughs in the salon.) If this is indicative of the level of political opposition I can expect from you, I encourage you to stick to your usual tactics of midnight bombings and whispered, back-alley slanders. You have clearly been amongst the burgess too long and have lost all of your old subtlety.

I listened with interest to your rambling manifesto. Come now 195 demands? Even your supporters were asleep by the end of it. In truth, I mourn for the days of our old games of political debate. A skirmish of wit, an assault of logic, the beauty of a subtle verbal riposte. It is a pity that you must now adopt the ways of the burgess. In your blind quest for such alien, human ideologies as liberty, equality and fraternity, you have forgotten the older, dearer concepts of loyalty, duty and honor. Are we not all Kithain trapped in this hostile world together? Would you cut out your own heart, that you would turn against all that we hold dear? Ah, but I fear that my words do not have the power to move you, thus, I fear I am forced to more stern methods of persuasion.

Your daring raid on Caer Paine and the theft of my Gulliver Stone was quite an accomplishment. I agree that I must cede you a rook in our little game of chess. In return, I have taken your queen. Your consort, Lady Courtney, came to me without your knowledge to talk peace. I am, of course, not fooled by her duplicity or yours. She is now a guest in one of my homes (on my mantel, as it were). Although blind, she is quite lovely and engaging. It would be a pity if harm came to her. I assure you, though, any discomfort to her will be caused by your actions, not mine. Her safety is held hostage by your good behavior from now on. If you behave as the gentleman that you used to be, I will conduct myself towards her with all the rules of hospitality.

Your move.

With Respect,
Duke Dray

ps. Since you may distort this letter for your own crass political motives, it is written on goblin parchment. It should be burning in your hands even now.



Politics

The politics of the high sidhe are unlike any others in the World of Darkness. Born of a more subtle, civilized time, their politics are a model of mannerly comportment. This civilized veneer, however, conceals a hard-headed, often vicious culture of pitched political skirmishes and treacherous backstabbing. Only the immortal schemes of the vampires and perhaps the machinations of the Technomancers match it for subtlety and complexity.

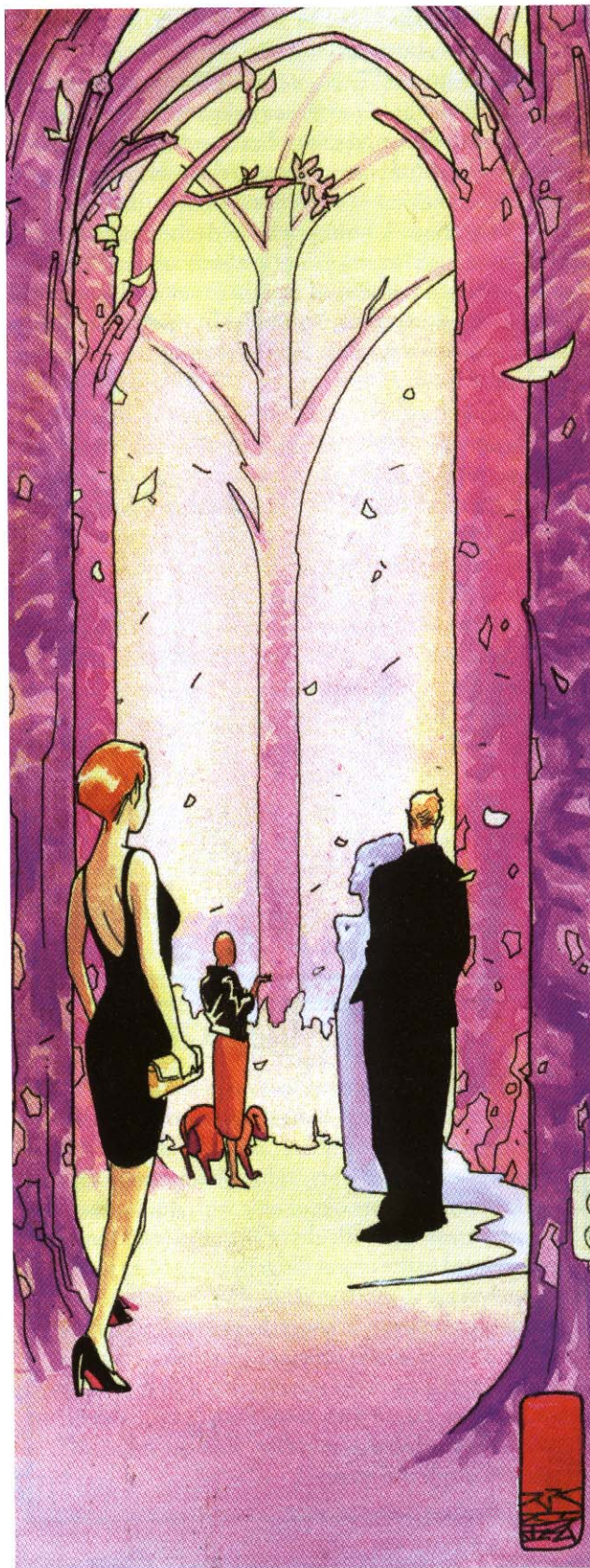
With little memory of their lives in Arcadia and scant understanding of the modern world, the sidhe nobility still addresses the issues and petty grudges of half a millennium ago. Old house rivalries and medieval concerns are just as frequently debated as issues of modern import. As a result, many commoners consider the sidhe's gyrations archaic and irrelevant. With their monopoly over the trods and freeholds, however, the Dream Lords wield an undeniable power over Kithain society. Commoners ignore this power at their peril.

Within the boundaries of Kithain society, the policies of the nobility are strongly enforced. Both sidhe and commoner nobles have keen insights into the racial psyche of the Kithain and the philosophy of rulership. Commoner nobles, of course, differ from the sidhe in their methods of leadership. The sidhe's greatest weakness is their ignorance of the "real world." Their concept of monarchy doesn't extend beyond the Kithain, except in the most general terms. Like the Garou, they wield little power in the human sphere. Many commoners escape the edicts of the nobility by immersing themselves in the human world. Conversely, many sidhe escape the trials of rulership by escaping farther into the Dreaming.

Form

Few things can match the pageantry of a high noble's court in full session. Here is the heart and the power of the Kithain soul. The nobility has spared no expense in recreating its pre-Sundering glory. The commoners have literally watched the legends of yesterday spring back to life before their eyes. Kithain artisans (especially the nockers and boggans) are richly rewarded for their efforts and work tirelessly to build the greatest of wonders for the nobility.

Innovations in faerie architecture incorporate secrets from Arcadia and modern (human) construction methods to create a grand synthesis unlike anything else seen on Earth. A building boom has taken place over the past 25 years, with great structures being constructed all over the



near Dreaming. The grandeur of the nobility is not limited to architecture, however.

The faerie nobility are a regal and imposing assemblage and would be, even if met naked in a muddy field. (They do this sometimes, but that's another story.) The sidhe in particular seem to carry with them their own inner light. When they meet in royal concourse, this effect is greatly magnified. A train of nobles decked out in court finery is enough to take one's breath away. Political brinkmanship is considered a pleasure, as well as vitally necessary, by most nobles, especially the wilders. Even the gravest of proceedings are animated and punctuated by moments of levity.

Form is the key to content in a noble court. The slightest change of the troubadour's melody, the arch of an eyebrow, or the subtle wearing of a royal favor may indicate the most important of political shifts. Commoner observers are allowed in most royal court sessions. The political theater that this provides has become all the rage among commoners, as well as among the nobility. This is especially true since so many other aspects of Kithain life are reflected so vividly in the affairs of court.

Here there is intellectual stimulation, honor, intrigue and romance. The sidhe, especially, have a way of making the most dry and prosaic of arguments burn with a passionate intensity. Those not used to these debates may find themselves completely swept up in the proceedings, becoming vehement proponents or adversaries of things they cared little about before the meeting. Duels have been fought over subtle historic points or the proposed color of the carpeting in the foyer.

Staying in Form

There is a rhythm to every court session and no two are exactly alike. Changelings who fail to make a Perception + Empathy roll (difficulty and number of successes needed vary; sidhe characters reduce difficulty by two) are out of sync with the proceedings. (Increase the difficulty of all Social and Mental rolls related to the proceedings by two.) Most noble conclaves are so subtle and fast that the uninitiated often miss the entire point of the proceedings if they blink. If there is one constant complaint that the commoners have of the nobility, it is that they seem to be more taken with form than with content. What they fail to realize is that, with the sidhe, the two are much the same.

Content

Despite their sometimes affected manner, the fae nobility are deadly serious when it comes to matters of survival. Great matters of the day include the negotiated settlements of territorial disputes (land disputes equal instability), the administration of trods and freeholds, and enforcement of the Escheat. Additionally, the nobility has its hands full trying to curb the excesses of the Unseelie Court, learning the ways of the mortals, and divining the intentions of the Gallain and the Prodigals. These matters weigh heavily on the minds of the nobility.

Structure

There are two official venues for political debate among the Kithain. The first is any royal court session, the other is the Parliament of Dreams. There are four types of royal court sessions, listed below in ascending order of secrecy. They are the open court, the closed court, the privy council and the reune.

Open Court — Open court sessions, while not common, are by no means as rare as they once were. King David sees to that. Open court is held in either the court of the local noble, or in an open venue such as a festival. Sometimes impromptu sessions are held in taverns. These sessions are often raucous affairs, full of life and wildly differing points of view. They are the best opportunities for commoner changelings of every stripe to be heard directly by the nobility.

Closed Court — This is what most commoners picture when they think of a noble court. Closed court meetings are the political venue most frequently employed by the nobility. Commoners often attend (when permitted) to petition the nobility or act as observers. The venue is tightly controlled, however. This is the most formal of all the noble courts and adherence to decorum is strictly enforced. The majority of the day-to-day decisions of the nobility are made here and the doings of the court are generally available to Kithain society at large.

Privy Council — Privy council meetings are secretive affairs, open only to the lord and her closest advisors. Matters of great import are discussed here and decorum is not as vigorously enforced, so that the advisors may speak their true minds. Indeed, privy council meetings can be every bit as raucous as open court meetings, especially when participants break out the wine. Although great projects (e.g., waging war) are planned for here, they are not always initiated here.

The Reune — The reune is the most secretive of meetings between the fae nobility. It is rumored that many

history-making decisions are first forged here. Often this type of secret rendezvous is combined with a lover's tryst (see Courtly Love below). The reune may be a meeting between secret allies, or dire enemies. Detractors of the nobility often accuse it of "governance by reune."

The Parliament of Dreams

The Parliament of Dreams is the official governing body of Concordia. King David founded the Parliament in 1971, in the hope of offering the commoners a voice in their own governance. While considered a noble effort by many, its effect on the imbalance of political power has been largely cosmetic. Representatives (called Advocates) may be sent to the Parliament by every freehold with a membership over 15. Given their disproportionate power over the freeholds, the sidhe, while not a majority of the body, still hold the balance of power.

With over 40 percent of the seats in the Parliament, the sidhe would seem to have an almost guaranteed plurality every time. The sidhe are not monolithic in their policies, however, and there are many splits in their power structure. Commoners and commoner nobles fare little better in their attempts at unity; thus much of the governing is done through coalition.

With their numbers and their ability to sway people through charisma and rhetoric, the Traditionalist sidhe get their way on most issues. There is, however, enough

opposition to them that the proper coalition of commoners and more moderate sidhe, and commoner interests can occasionally thwart their plans. Laws passed by the Parliament are subject to approval by the nobility in the territory affected by the law. Unfortunately, the Parliament does not yet have the power to enforce its edicts against the face of consolidated resistance by the nobility. The sidhe representation in the Parliament of Dreams is far out of proportion to its numbers in the general population (only 5% of all Kithain in Concordia are sidhe). Because of this, many commoners feel that the Parliament is something of a farce. The mood of the Parliament is somewhat akin to that of the English Parliament. It is lively and animated, punctuated by verbal jibes. The Parliament is guarded by a cohort of Red Branch knights, by order of King David.

Political Impulses

There are many political philosophies among the Kithain of Concordia. Most of them fit into one of the three categories listed below.

Traditionalist

It is a common misconception that the only Traditionalists left among the fae are the sidhe nobility. In fact a sizable portion of the commoner populace is also highly orthodox in outlook. The ethos of the Traditionalists goes back to the closing days of the Age of Legends. Traditionalists believe strongly in the right of kings and in the inherent leadership abilities of the sidhe. Traditionalist loyalties are particularly prevalent among the sidhe, trolls,

The Parliament of Dreams

Political Power by Impulse

Sidhe Nobles 42% (Traditionalist 20%, Reformer 15%, Modernist 7%)
Commoner Nobles 20% (Traditionalist 8%, Reformer 4%, Modernist 8%)
Commoners 38% (Traditionalist 15%, Reformer 7%, Modernist 16%)
Total 100% (Traditionalist 43%, Reformer 26%, Modernist 31%)

Political Power by Kith

(Sidhe 42%, Boggan 14%, Troll 9%, Nocker 8%, Pooka 6%, Satyr 6%, Sluagh 5%, Redcap 5%, Eshu 5%)

Sidhe Political Power by House

(Gwydion 12%, Eiluned 10%, Fiona 10%, Dougal 6%, Liam 3%, Scathach 1%)

Political Power by Court (Estimated)

(Seelie 95%, Unseelie 5%)

nockers and boggans. The Beltaine Blade is made up entirely of the most reactionary of this philosophy.

Reformer

Reformers believe that the best system for the Kithain is a constitutional monarchy, administered by philosopher-kings and open to the will of the people. King David and Queen Mab are prime examples of Reformers. Reformers are usually portrayed as the political centrists on the Kithain political spectrum. While often true, this is simplistic. Reformers come in many stripes and have widely divergent agendas.

Modernist

Modernists are rare among the sidhe nobility. Modernists either cautiously accept the modern world as a reality that must be dealt with, or embrace it totally. Given the sidhe's vulnerability to Banality, this later course is quite dangerous. House Scathach is a predominantly Modernist House. Many sidhe childlings also show Modernist tendencies, much to their elders' chagrin. Countess Anne (see Chapter Seven) is a prime example of a Modernist sidhe.

Unseelie Nobles

Among the greatest concerns to the sidhe nobility are the activities of the returned Unseelie sidhe, the so-called Shadow Court. While the sidhe nobility went about the difficult task of usurping leadership from the commoner nobles, the Unseelie Court seemingly disappeared. This is of special concern, because unlike the commoners, the two courts of the nobility never made peace. Indeed, many theorize that it was war between the two courts in Arcadia that led to the exile of the five Seelie houses. Many fear that the Unseelie Court is biding its time, waiting for an opportunity to strike. Recent signs indicate that they are reemerging.

Despite these concerns, the Seelie nobility recognizes that the Unseelie is an integral part of every changeling's nature. For this reason there are no rules preventing Unseelie nobles from participating in such governing institutions as the Parliament of Dreams. Actually this decision is not completely for unselfish motives. With the Unseelie Court mostly underground, such contact is one of the few ways that the Seelie Court can keep tabs on them. The number of admitted Unseelie Kithain in such institutions is very small (about 5 percent).

There are, of course, no true methods to discern whether a changeling is Seelie or Unseelie, except by their actions. Some fear that there are really far more Unseelie

fae in positions of power (even kings and queens) than is evident. (It is rumored that both Queen Aeron of Pacifica and King Meilge of the Kingdom of Willows lean heavily toward their Unseelie natures.) It must be conceded that the Shadow Court may have the same concerns about Seelie spies in their midst. Since the Seelie nobility experienced great resistance and resentment when they returned from Arcadia, it is assumed that the Unseelie sidhe may have many of the same problems in reacclimating themselves to earth. House Ailil is the only Unseelie house that the sidhe know has returned, but there are always rumors of more. It is also rumored that the Unseelie nobility remembers far more about the exodus from Arcadia than they let on. Any Unseelie noble will, of course, laugh at this assertion.

It is generally believed that, like the Seelie Court, Unseelie political life consists of three political impulses. The Unseelie "Traditionalists" wish to return to the old ways, when the Seelie and Unseelie Courts took turns at power over the course of a year. Another impulse believes that the Seelie Court has ruled long enough and that it is time for the Unseelie Court to take complete power. Fae of this impulse believe that the current Seelie leadership has upset the natural order of things by ruling for as long as it has. The third Unseelie impulse believes that there should be no rulers at all. It is unknown which impulse currently holds the most power in the Shadow Court.

Mouses

Most commoners see the nobility as a singular entity with monolithic goals and ideals. This is incorrect. The nobility is split along many lines. Divisions exist between Seelie and Unseelie Courts, political impulses, and especially among the various houses. Although most of the six Seelie houses pull together in times of crisis, they spend much of their time in low-level, internecine rivalry. Even nobles of the same house do not necessarily get along. The houses are listed below in descending order of political power.

Moose Gwydion

Gwydion is generally acknowledged as the house of rulership. Its leadership is generally wise and fair, and thus, not usually challenged. House Gwydion ferociously defends its leadership position against all comers. Even House Eiluned gives its members a wide berth when they are on the warpath. Gwydion is the most traditional of all the houses and is generally reputed to have the best warriors, though House Fior disputes this. Most Kithain look to it to defend them against the schemes of the Unseelie Court. House Gwydion is a close ally of House

Dougal and is highly suspicious of House Eiluned. High King David and his sister, Queen Morwen, are of this house, as is Chief Greyhawk of the Kingdom of the Burning Sun and Queen Morganna of the Kingdom of the White Sands. Technically speaking, the Kingdom of the Feathered Snake (Mexico) is ruled by the troll Duke Topaz, a vassal of King David's. It is hotly contested by the nunnehi, however, and may soon fall.

House Eiluned

Although House Eiluned and House Fiona have equal representation in the Parliament of Dreams, House Eiluned is generally considered the stronger of the two. Only House Gwydion has more power. House Eiluned has a strong Unseelie component to it and is forever challenging the power of Gwydion, probing it for any weakness. Because of its dark reputation, House Eiluned is not generally trusted by the other houses. It thus makes its alliances elsewhere. The Eiluned, King Meilge, rules over the Kingdom of Willows in the southeastern portion of Concordia.

House Fiona

Although the sidhe of House Fiona are considered flighty at best by most other nobles, they still have a natural aptitude for political power. They seem to regard it as some sort of game. Despite its political aptitude, House Fiona rarely uses its power offensively, preferring instead to maintain a strong defensive position within a stable status quo. Geographically, House Fiona holds far more land than any other house in Concordia. Its power extends over three kingdoms, ruled by a triad of three powerful women. The Kingdom of Northern Ice, ruled by Queen Laurel, includes all of Canada and Alaska. The Kingdom of Pacifica is ruled by Queen Aeron and the Kingdom of Apples is ruled by Queen Mab. House Fiona is the most egalitarian, and probably the most popular, of the noble houses. Much of its politics are driven by its strong romantic tendencies.

House Dougal

Gruff, honest and practical, the lords of House Dougal generally consider political intrigue to be an unworthy pursuit and a waste of time. Despite their lack of guile, they are not easily fooled by the machinations of the other houses. House Dougal is politically pragmatic. It views House Gwydion as the house best fitted for rulership and usually supports it. It has little patience for the political machinations of House Eiluned. Queen Mary Elizabeth of House Dougal rules over the Kingdom of Grass, situated in the midwestern portion of Concordia. House Dougal

prefers to settle its disputes "honestly," through force of arms, rather than through political means.

House Liam

This outcast house holds little sway in the sidhe power structure. Members of House Liam are widely traveled, however, and are thus sought out as advisors by other houses. House Liam is rumored to have secret alliances with Houses Fiona and Scathach, though these rumors are unsubstantiated. House Liam holds little land outside of a few urban fiefs.

House Scathach

Even more than House Liam, the members of House Scathach are dispossessed and without political power within mainstream fae society. Although they were of great help to the returning nobility during the Resurgence, many nobles have chosen to forget this fact. House Scathach shows little interest in wielding temporal power within fae politics and is particularly distrusted by fae Traditionalists. It is rumored that they have dark alliances amongst the Gallain.

Rulership

The changeling nobility are indoctrinated in the ways of leadership from childhood. Whether born to the smallest of knightly fiefdoms or the high palace of Tara-Nar, the philosophy of rulership is as ingrained a habit as breathing air. Every sidhe (and most commoner nobles) knows instinctively what her role in Kithain society is. Sidhe live their role to its fullest extent. There are many levels of rulership within the nobility, and each has a very specific and different place.

The Kingdom

The kingdom, whether it is the great Kingdom of Concordia or one of the smaller kingdoms that make it up, is the largest building block in Kithain society. It is no surprise, then, that it is the most difficult to rule. Schemers, malcontents and social climbers (noble and commoner) abound, and many monarchs show signs of grumpdom before their time. In many ways the monarch is the kingdom; in the Dreaming the environment reflects the nature of the ruler in physical terms. See below for more complete descriptions of individual kingdoms.

The Duchy

Duchies, ruled by dukes or duchesses, typically consist of many freeholds and encompass entire regions and large cities. Duchies hold vast power, not only because of their

rank and territory held, but because they have a lock on power in the Parliament of Dreams. A monarch who has a treacherous duke or duchess in her kingdom is in for some tough sailing. Fortunately most of this rank are dependable in their defense of the crown. The Dreaming within a duchy also conforms to the character and moods of its ruler, though this is influenced by the character of the king or queen. Nobles of this rank are renowned for maintaining strict order in their houses; thus, they usually don't have as much to fear from treachery within. They do have to deal with the treachery of the counts from below, however.

The County

Counties, ruled by counts or countesses, are made up of no more than four freeholds (usually two or three). For some reason more counts and countesses are schemers than is any other rank of nobility. This is reflected in their counties, which are usually hotbeds of scandal and intrigue. This reputation is widespread and honest countesses usually have to go an extra mile to prove their intentions. Counties are also usually the target of the most commoner revolts, hence they have a reputation for being the most draconian nobles in their enforcement of the law. The environment within a county is affected by its ruler, though this is influenced by the lord above it.

The Barony

Baronies, ruled by barons or baronesses, consist of no more than two (usually one) freeholds. Kithain barons are usually a solid and even-tempered lot, more loyal to the king than to the count above them. More often than not, a barony is a happy place, full of light and music. Most barons are close to their people and are strongly supported by them in times of trouble. Baronies are usually no larger than a few city blocks or a few square country miles. Baronies are weakly influenced by the moods of their rulers (this influence is strongest within the immediate household), though this is influenced by the lord above it.

The Fiefdom

Fiefdoms are small territories held by either barons or some knights as a reward for loyal service. Fiefdoms exist at the sufferance of the lord above it and may be dissolved if deemed necessary. Fiefdoms may or may not include a trod or freehold. If the fief does include a freehold, the mood will conform to its ruler's character, though this influence rarely extends beyond a single building. Fiefdoms are usually tightly administered and thus stable. Most

knights (even Unseelie ones) are honorable and their fiefdoms behave accordingly.

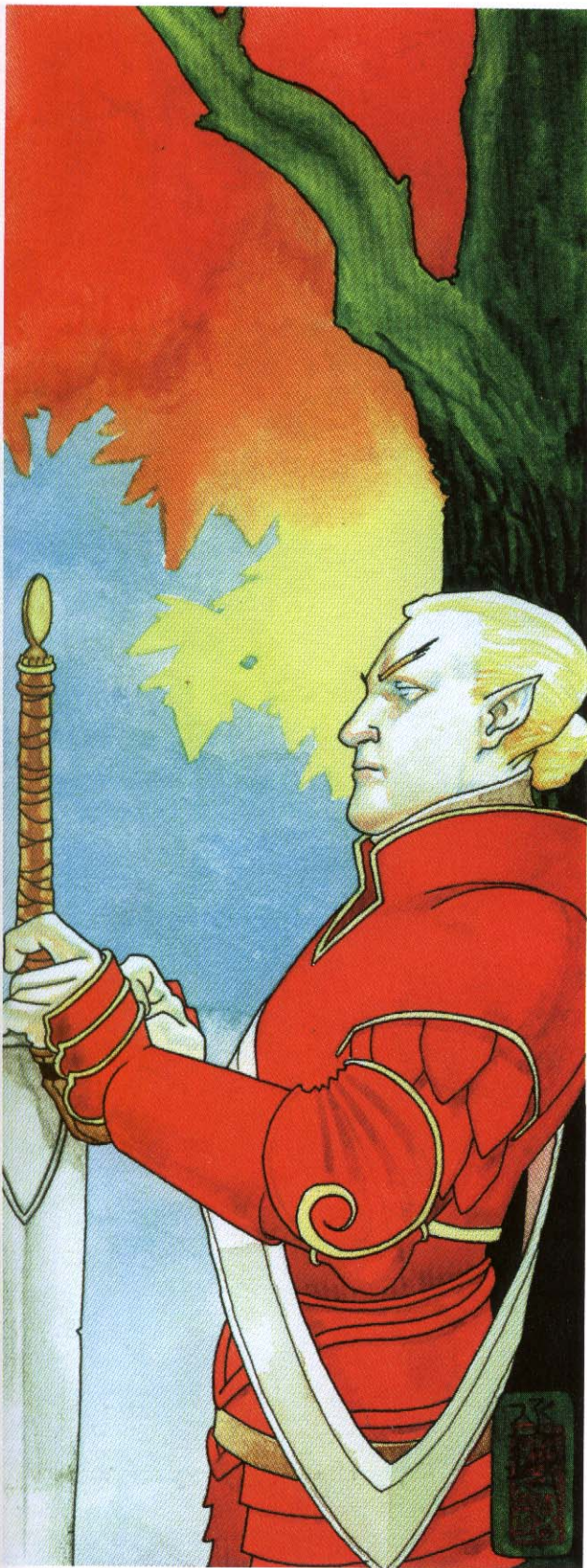
The Household

If the household is in disorder, the kingdom is in disorder. This is true of the smallest fiefdom and the greatest kingdom. The household describes the immediate freehold of the noble. It includes her family, retainers and other hangers-on. The household may be the greatest source of strength to the noble, or it may destroy her utterly. Kithain history holds many examples of high lords brought low by a faithless spouse, or scheming children.

The Nobility and the Dreaming

It is not known by what device the nobility affects the Dreaming. It is frequently observed, however, that the sidhe nobility have a much stronger effect than commoner nobles in this regard. Most Kithain historians trace the possible cause for this back to pacts made between the De Denaan and the first sidhe during the Age of Legends, while more modern fae allude to the power invested to them by the conscious collective. None can say for certain, though. The "control" over the Dreaming wielded by the nobility is neither conscious nor complete. Instead the long-term nature of the Dreaming in a given area conforms to its lord's general character (if the lord is calm and serene, so too are her lands). Short-term mood swings may be reflected in more temporary ways (i.e., a storm, or a plague of chimerical locusts).

This phenomenon has harmful as well as helpful implications. If the lord is in a dark mood, a chimerical storm may worsen this condition. Furthermore, chimerical beings tend to gather in places which are conducive to their basic nature. A territory ruled by a disagreeable noble is infested by all manners of chimerical monsters. These creatures may serve the lord of this territory, but they are just as likely to attack her. This is one of the reasons that Unseelie lands are rare. Lords of these areas spend much time and effort defending their home front. Nobles have a certain affinity for chimerical creatures attracted by their own moods and may dispel chimera within their realm through an expenditure of one point of Glamour (more in the case of truly potent chimera). Conversely, the lands of a benevolent lord may contain all manner of benign and wondrous creatures.



Secret Societies

Strange women lying in ponds distributing swords is no basis for a system of government. Supreme executive power is derived from a mandate by the masses, not some farcical aquatic ceremony.

— The Constitutional Peasant in “Monty Python and the Holy Grail”

Both the political and the social lives of the nobility are rife with secret societies. Whether these societies are deadly political cabals, or fashionable artists cliques, they have a profound effect on fae society. Some prefer to work their will through the dissemination of information, while others employ terror and assassination. Some are at least somewhat known of by the general Kithain populace, while others are truly secret.

Red Branch Knights

Of all the knights in faerie history, none compare to the Knights of the Red Branch. Tracing its founding to the Age of Legends, the Red Branch is justly known for its bravery, honor and fighting prowess. The Red Branch is respected by noble and commoner alike for its pursuit of justice for all Kithain. The knights are oathbound to each other and move as one in all matters. Many of the Red Branch are employed as private guards by the High King and carry out these duties in an exemplary fashion. The Red Branch is known to have its own strict moral code, however, which its members follow above all other concerns. When the High King of antiquity, Falchion, became oathbroken, the Red Branch abandoned him to his fate.

Red Branch knights rank among the best fighters of the Kithain. Although they still primarily employ archaic weapons (swords, bows, etc.), they are also trained in the use of firearms. They are predominantly (but not exclusively) sidhe Traditionalists. The only real qualifications to join are to be proved in battle and virtue. Some commoners have been knighted on the spot for rendering good service to the Branch (though this is rare). Red Branch knights are required to aid those in true need (even humans and Gallain), to fight honorably and to spare those who surrender. No knight of this order is ever known to have broken his word. The Knights of the Red Branch have no common uniform, but most of them wear predominantly red.

The Beltaine Blade

The Beltaine Blade is a shadowy secret organization, somewhat akin to the historic Star Chamber. Its members are sidhe nobles dedicated to the preservation of the traditional oligarchy. Although it supports the monarchy

in principle, it is far more interested in empowering the feudal nobles. To this end they have worked to weaken King David while tightening their own grip on power. The Beltaine Blade has adherents in powerful positions, including at the court of Tara-Nar. Although the Beltaine Blade is exclusively sidhe, it uses commoner races as soldiers and assassins. The Blade's current project is to disenfranchise the trolls, whom they consider a threat to the "true nobility" (e.g., them).

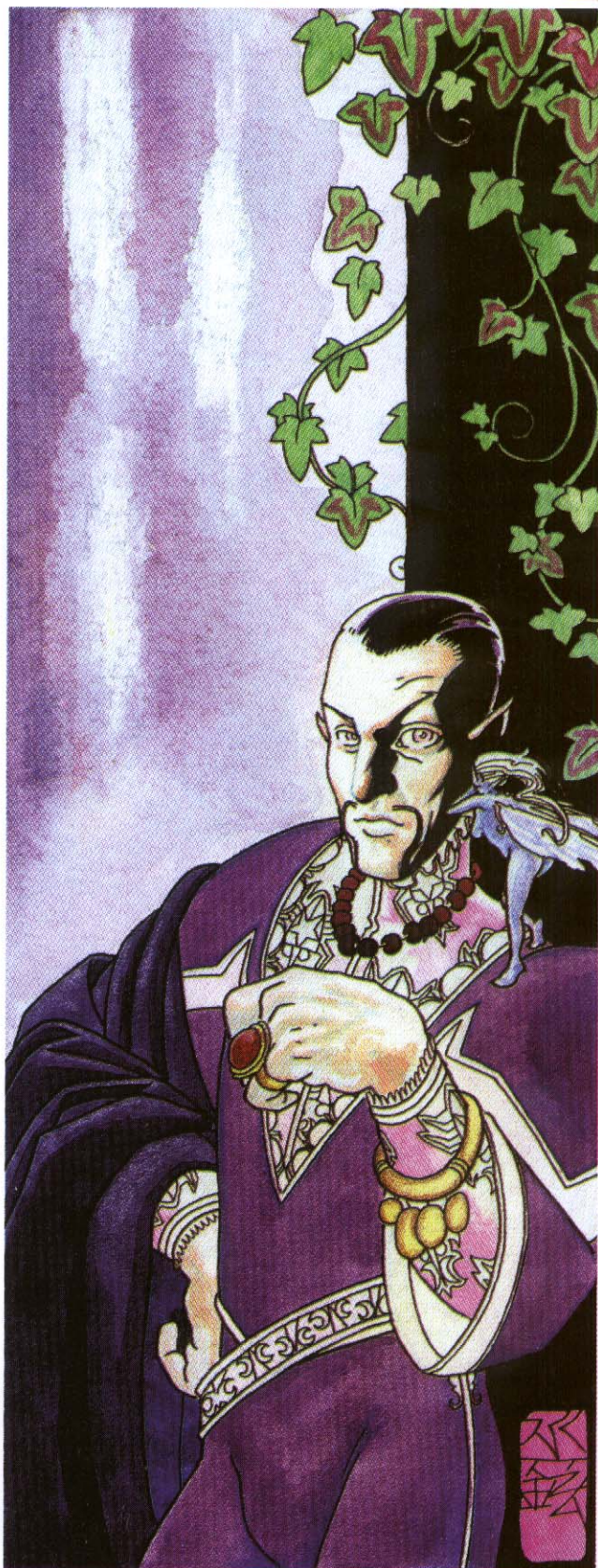
The Blade is ruthless in the extreme and is rumored to have been involved in the Beltaine Night of Iron Knives Massacre. The Blade is, of course, predominantly Traditionalist in makeup. There are a few Modernists within its ranks, but these Modernists are only interested in the utilitarian aspects of modern society, not any of its more egalitarian ideals. The current leader of the Blade is Duke Dyfell's cousin, Duke Dray (see Personalities in Chapter Seven). Despite the fact that there are few full-time Unseelie changelings within the Blade, it is still a blood-thirsty group. The Blade has some contacts among the vampire Ventruue (see **Vampire: The Masquerade**).

The Ranters

The Ranters are a radical circle of changeling commoners who despise royalty. They have existed since the 17th century and may have been behind the human group of the same name. Throughout most of their history, they have done battle with the commoner nobles. They bear this group ill will to this day, though the main target of their animosity has shifted to the sidhe. Politically they are Anarcho-Syndicalist in nature. This obviously hasn't gone over well with the sidhe, who are used to having their own way. The Ranters are organized in small cells. This is so they can't betray the entire organization if one is captured. The Kithain in a given cell are oathbound to each other. The Ranters have contacts in other supernatural communities, including the Garou Monkeywrenchers and the vampire anarchists. Their sidhe enemies also rumor that they are allied with the nunnehi.

They have carried out terrorist actions against particularly despotic nobles. This has made them fairly popular among many commoners. Their leader is a shadowy Kithain known only as Ravachol (see "Personalities" in Chapter Seven). There is a strong Unseelie component to the Ranters. The Beltaine Blade asserts that they are really a front for one of the Unseelie houses, sent to stir up commoner dissatisfaction. The Ranters have been outlawed by King David, despite his commoner sympathies.

The battle cry of the Ranters is: *Down with Concordia! All hail Discordia!*





The Catacomb Club

The Catacomb Club is a semipublic “gentlemen’s club” (there are some female members) of commoner nobles striving to regain their former position in fae society. Most of the members of the Club are also among the most powerful commoner members of the Parliament of Dreams. The membership of the Club cuts easily across the three political Impulses of fae political life, though it is predominantly Reformer in makeup. Despite its egalitarian rhetoric, the Club is ultimately out for the power of its members and is not particularly passionate about the rights of the common changeling. The Club is almost as disliked by the Ranters as it is by the Beltaine Blade.

The Club is primarily a political organization and does not, as a whole, go out of this venue in the acquisition of power. This is not always true of its individual members, who have been known to employ highly illegal methods to advance their personal agendas. The Catacomb Club does enjoy popular support among many commoners, though most of them know little of its true workings. The Club is generally methodical and efficient: a smoke-filled room where much of the Kithain’s policies are made.

The Crystal Circle

Only the most talented of fae conjurers are considered for this powerful cabal of Seelie “sorcerers.” The Crystal Circle consists of both noble and commoner fae who have mastered at least one of the Kithain Arts and are adept at another. (Minimum requirement: 5 in one Art, 4 in another.) The Crystal Circle is known of by the changeling populace, but its goals are generally obscure. It is known that its members travel farther afield in the Dreaming than any other changelings have dared since the Shattering. What they do on those twilight paths is unknown. Some say they search for Arcadia, while others maintain that they guard the borders against incursions from the Nightmare Realms. It is even rumored by some that they make their way into the realms of the Umbra and the dead.

In general, the Crystal Circle is perceived as benign by most Seelie changelings. Many ballads feature a Crystal Circle conjurer showing up and saving the day at the last moment. Its members are also closely allied with the Red Branch. Although they are generally good natured, they do not suffer fools lightly. It is rare that they take outsiders into their confidence. Sidhe of the Crystal Circle do not acquire Banality as quickly as other sidhe. They are particularly adept at the Arts of *Chronos* and *Dream-Craft*.

Storyteller’s Note: Beginning player characters should not belong to the Crystal Circle.



The Cat's Cradle

The Cat's Cradle is perhaps the most subtle of the secret societies. Its existence is not even whispered of beyond a small circle. The Cradle is made up entirely of faerie noblewomen (both Seelie and Unseelie) who work tirelessly to ensure the long-term survival of the fae at large. To this end they have secretly broken many of the laws of the fae, including various terms of the Escheat. All of them are women of power, however. It is unlikely that they would be harshly punished, even if this fact was revealed. It is possible that they work with the approval of the High King. Their two most consistent opponents are the Shadow Court and the Beltaine Blade.

In order to assure the fae's long-term survival, the Cat's Cradle weaves a complex and arcane network of subtle alliances throughout the fae, so that it may pull together in the event of a major crisis (e.g., the onset of Winter). In addition, the Cradle has made alliances outside the fae altogether. Tentative contacts have been made among the Gallain. Even certain, carefully researched Prodigals (i.e. vampires, werewolves, mages, etc.) are approached. Prominent members of the Cat's Cradle include Queen Mab, Queen Laurel, Countess Anne and the Lady Sierra.

The Monkey's Paw

The Monkey's Paw is a secret cabal of Kithain assassins dating back to the early days of the Shattering. These changelings are known to hire themselves out to the highest bidder, but they also have their own agenda. Unlike the other groups listed here, the Monkey's Paw is predominantly made up of commoner kith. Its leadership is rumored to be made up of sidhe who stayed on Earth throughout the Interregnum, including renegade members of House Scathach. The Monkey's Paw is almost exclusively Unseelie in nature, but occasionally serves such "respectable" Seelie masters as the Beltaine Blade.

The Golden Sickle

The Golden Sickle is an organization of Modernist nobles (commoner and sidhe) interested in the acquisition of earthly wealth and power. Nobles of this cabal often live in penthouse apartments on the tops of skyscrapers, use cellular phones and play the stock market (very well). They are unafraid of modern technology, but because of their flirtations with it, tend to be more Banality-laden than other fae. Like the Cat's Cradle, they make alliances where they wish, and have contacts amongst the Prodigals. They are especially known to deal with the

Glass Walkers (see **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**) and the Virtual Adepts (see **Mage: The Ascension**). They also have many contacts within the business world and government.

The Golden Sickle is a loosely knit fraternity at best. Its members trade information and make individual pacts with each other, but they do not speak with one voice. Members may be of any kith, court or political impulse. Recently the Sickle seems to be working with more deliberation. Whether this is a long-term pattern or merely a temporary aberration is unknown. Members of this organization are typically heavily guarded by both fae and human (kinain) operatives.

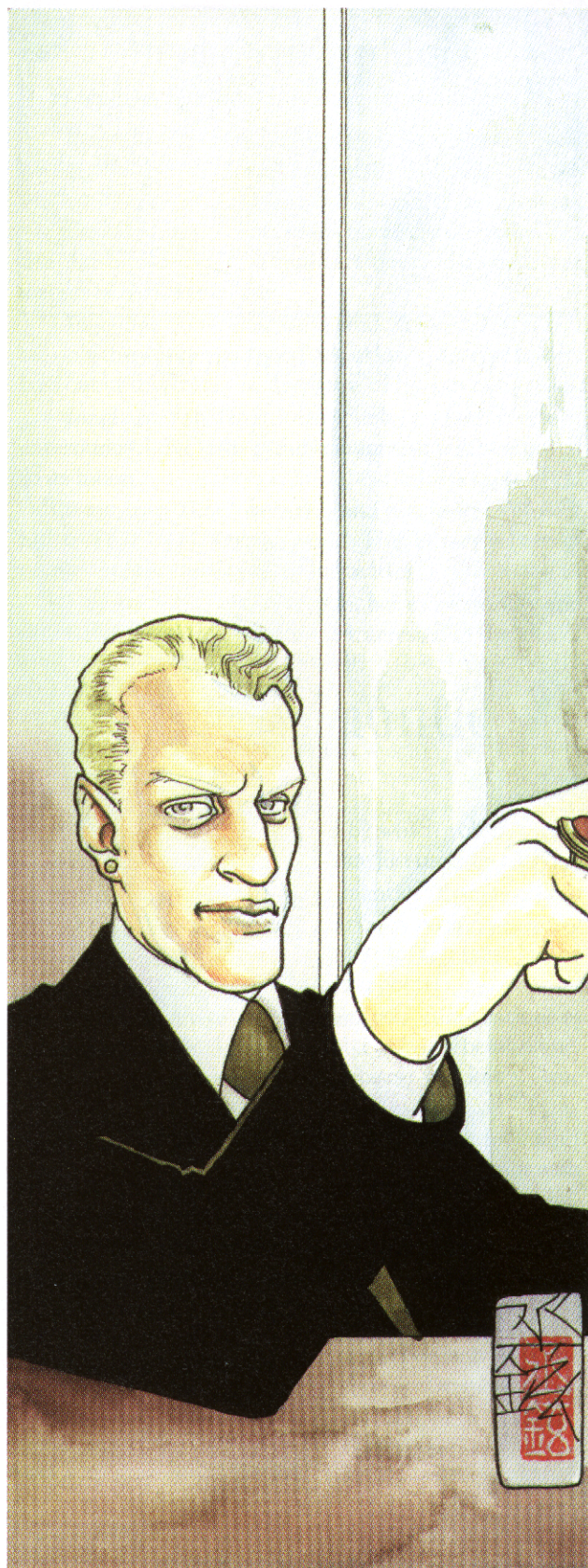
Court Intrigue

Intrigue is an everyday fact of life in most noble courts. Gossip, secret treaties and treacherous backstabbing are commonplace; even the most ordered courts have some intrigue. Intrigue is not necessarily a bad thing, if it doesn't get out of hand. A little of it keeps a noble on her toes and helps to maintain a high interest in the doings of the court. When intrigue gets out of hand, however, it can tear even the strongest of courts apart. A wise ruler keeps a tight watch against the excesses of court intrigue.

In some courts, intrigue occurs on every level. Even the jester and the scullery maid are in on the action. An intelligent noble must learn to play the game at every level at once. Spies and secret alliances must be skillfully woven throughout the court, allies cultivated among even the lowest of the palace's retainers. Indeed, allies of this sort are especially important, since they can go places without drawing the attention that other nobles always attract. Nobles who choose to play the game of court intrigue only at the highest levels (i.e., only among their fellow nobles) rarely succeeded.

The Art of the Game

Intrigue, as with so many other aspects of noble life, is considered a high art form. The sidhe, in particular, view every minute of their lives in the Dreaming as being part of a living story. They savor every breath they take. A sidhe lord, in search of an angle can bring far more imagination and perseverance to solving it than almost any other creature in the World of Darkness. (This is less true in the mundane world, where sidhe tend to become groggy and lethargic.) The sidhe are forced to be particularly innovative in lieu of their lost memories and lack of experience in the earthly sphere.



Goblin Parchment

Goblin parchment is the favored medium of nobles sending secret messages. This enchanted parchment is fashioned from the skin of an unknown, chimerical beast, by nocker artisans. The writing on the parchment is only visible to the intended recipient and burns immediately after it is read. The parchment resists *all* attempts to copy it.

Sidhe versus Commoner Nobles

For many centuries, during the Interregnum, the commoner nobles held a monopoly on political power. The few sidhe remaining during that time were either hunted down or forced (like House Scathach) to live underground. The recently returned sidhe do not forgive the treachery of these commoner nobles. To some sidhe, the Beltaine Massacre was justified on this account alone. For their part, the commoner nobles feel that they have more right to rule by virtue of having "earned" their title and by having stuck out the long, hard years of the Interregnum. They, of course, bear a grudge because of the Beltaine Massacre.

The relationship between the two groups, since the Resurgence, can be politely described as "strained." Bickering between the two is constant, and occasionally flares into violence. The sidhe usually fare better in these skirmishes. Both sides have advantages against the other and try to utilize them, without exposing their weaknesses. The commoners have a home turf advantage, because of their familiarity with the modern world. They are also more resistant to Banality and have slightly more popular support from the people. The sidhe, on the other hand, are simply more adept at wielding power. They are better organized and not divided along lines of kith, like the commoners. The sidhe also enjoy more popular support among the commoners than one might, at first, suppose.

Despite their differences, there are also some areas of agreement. Common ground includes the need to cope with the Unseelie Court, the Ranters (who dislike all nobles), and the plots of the Gallain. Nobles, whether they are common or sidhe, are still nobles, after all. On many occasions they have more in common with each other than with the vast majority of commoners. They also realize the virtue of cooperation amid an increasingly hostile and Banality-filled world. Something of a rapprochement has been reached in recent years.

Courtly Love in Court Politics

When commoners mumble about "government by reune" they often mean the royal pillow talk of nobles in love. It is little secret that nobles of either sex enjoy political counsel from spouses, lovers or even royal concubines. The sidhe, in particular, are highly vulnerable to the swaying voice of amour. A love interest may either be a great and strengthening factor in a noble's life, or may drag her down to her doom (read almost any Shakespeare tragedy).

At its best, courtly love provides a noble with a steady keel, a good wind and a safe harbor on the choppy water of Kithain politics. At its worst, a noble's lover may be a power-mad sociopath (a la Lady Macbeth), or even be an agent of a competing noble, sent to destroy her. While some nobles (especially those of House Gwydion) are difficult to fool in most matters, love blinds even the wisest of Kithain.

Wars are waged to avenge even the slightest of insults against an aggrieved lover. Even though most commoners may resent fighting in such a cause, they still recognize and share the emotions involved as common to all changelings. Even the most dour of nockers and brutish of redcaps have some inkling of what power love holds over the Kithain heart.

Mortal Life

Most changelings lead two lives, split between their faerie seemings and their lives as human beings. To many, the concept of going on a grand adventure and then "returning in time for supper" is a reality. Many nobles, however, do not have this luxury. Running a court, especially at higher levels, is a full-time job. Few nobles willingly leave their duties for any length of time to live a second life. The sidhe, in particular, spend as little time in their mortal seemings as possible. This leads to some problems.

A noble who lives wholly in the Dreaming may be puissant in that sphere, but even the most unearthly of nobles must occasionally come out and address the "real world." Changelings who live in the Dreaming full-time are almost completely unable to resist the ravages of the real world. While most higher nobles (counts and up) can afford to have many of their earthly needs (housing, money, food) taken care of for them, many lower Kithain must fend for themselves. It is not uncommon to find a sidhe knight living on the street, and great noble houses in the Dreaming may hide a dilapidated shack in the mundane world.

Kingdoms

Concordia

The Kingdom of Concordia consists of seven major kingdoms, a powerful dukedom and numerous, semiautonomous fiefdoms. Concordia consists of the entire North American continent. The kingdom is highly diverse along geographical, cultural and political lines. King David's influence on the Dreaming throughout the kingdom is both beneficent and pronounced. Under his benign and energetic rule, the Dreaming throughout Concordia has in large measure regained much of its old luster. This is not consistently true, however. Local phenomena, such as unjust rulers, Unseelie freeholds, certain Gallain activity and Lost One freeholds scar Concordia in many places.

Kingdom of Apples

The Grandame, Queen Mab, is a woman of strong passions and convictions, but also of great maturity. She is the oldest of the monarchs of Concordia and her lands are solid, pleasant and stable. The Kithain of this kingdom are also generally a solid and practical folk, though this changes considerably near such urban centers as New York. Much of the Dreaming in this kingdom consists of green rolling hills, rocky coastlines and verdant groves. Of all the kingdoms of Concordia, the Kingdom of Apples is the most like the old country (Ireland).

Kingdom of Northern Ice

Wild, stormy and unpredictable, the Kingdom of Northern Ice is much like its regent, Queen Laurel of House Fiona. This is the largest of the kingdoms in Concordia and spreads out over all of Canada and Alaska. The Dreaming here is a constant turmoil of great storms and continuous snowfall. Much of the Dreaming here is covered in ice. The sky is usually the same slate blue and gray as the eyes of the queen. The fae of this kingdom tend to be a hardy, independent and unpredictable breed. This unpredictability is increased by the queen's imminent wedding to Duke Rococo of the Shadow Court.

Kingdom of Willows

Sullen, moody and stifling best describe this kingdom and its cursed ruler, King Meilge of House Eiluned. The air here seldom moves, except when is a great storm punctuates the king's mad outbursts. Geographically the Willow Kingdom extends over most of the American Southeast. Much of the Dreaming here consists of rolling, bluegrass





hills, rich farmland, placid lakes and dismal swamps. There are other forces at work here of late, however, and beneath the stagnant air a great movement, sometimes imperceptible, is boiling to the surface.

Kingdom of the White Sands

The air that envelopes this land has a sultry, almost sensuous air to it. This strongly resembles the nature of its ruler, Queen Morganna of House Gwydion. Morganna runs one of the most romantic, some would say decadent, houses in Concordia. She is also generally even tempered and sunny in disposition. She is one of the best loved of Concordia's monarchs and there are few rebellions in this Kingdom, though it has a lot of trouble with pirates and nunnehi attacks.

Kingdom of Pacifica

Ruled by Queen Aeron of House Fiona, the Kingdom of Pacifica is a vibrant, energetic land finding its way toward a dynamic maturity. Pacifica stretches over the entire length of the West Coast of Concordia and varies widely in temperament — from the Desert of Flame in the south to the eternally mist-shrouded Forest of Sighs in the north. The people of Pacifica also vary greatly in temperament. It is rumored that Queen Aeron is leaning toward the Unseelie Court.

Kingdom of Grass

Like its ruler, Queen Mary Elizabeth of House Dougal, the Kingdom of Grass is sensible, solid and deliberative. The Dreaming here is in many ways like the geography of the American Midwest: large open spaces and weather patterns which vary from sunny and mild days to harsh winters and sudden chimerical tornadoes. The fae of this region consider themselves to be much like the human inhabitants of this region: solid, sensible and dependable. This is, of course, not always true. The Kingdom of Grass covers the midwestern portion of Concordia.

Kingdom of the Burning Sun

Harsh and unforgiving one minute, serene and full of ancient beauty and wisdom the next, the Kingdom of the Burning Sun is a perfect match for its ruler, sad-eyed Chief Greyhawk of House Gwydion. In the Dreaming, the Kingdom of the Burning Sun shares much of the Desert of Flame with the Kingdom of Pacifica and the Kingdom of the Feathered Snake. Also here may be found the Desert of Perpetual Night, a barren and cold place filled with hostile chimera of every description. Chief Greyhawk is alone among the Concordian monarchs in his good relations with the nunnehi. His contacts with them are all in

the form of private reunions, however. They are attended by only his most trusted advisors.

Kingdom of the Feathered Snake

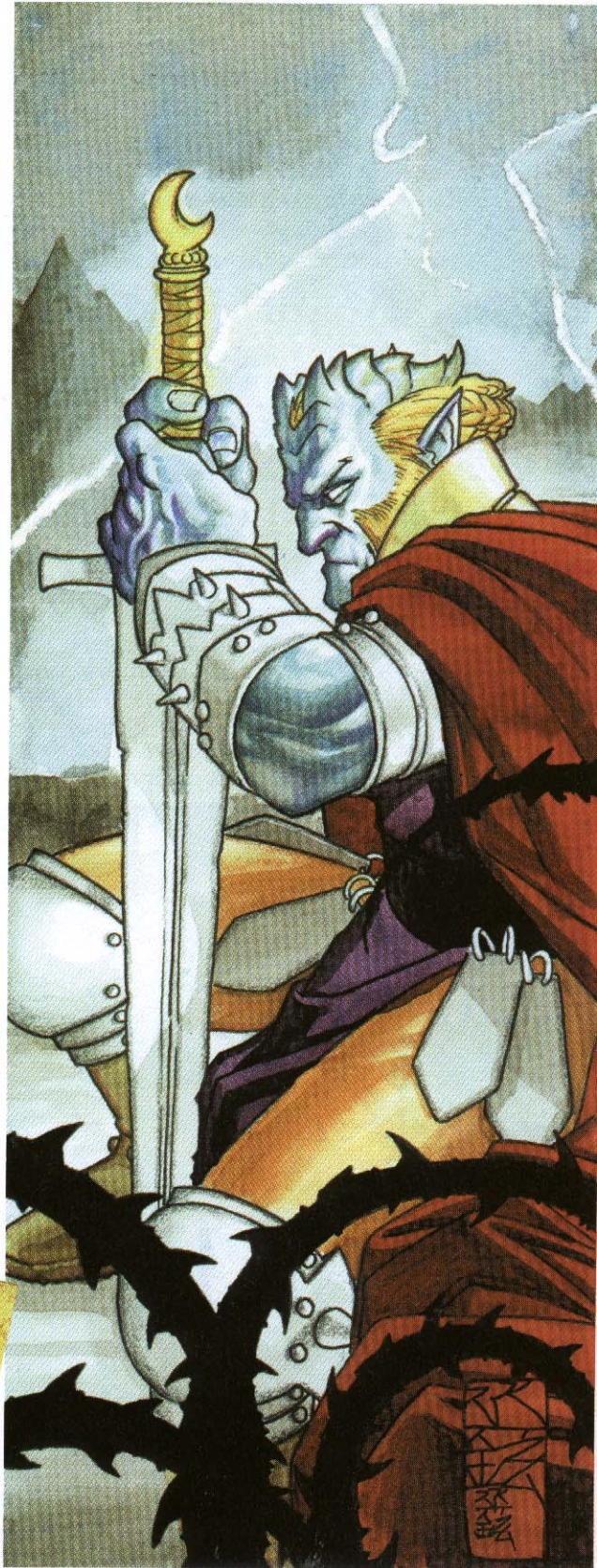
This kingdom is often mentioned with something of a shudder by changelings from the rest of Concordia. While nominally ruled by the troll warlord, Duke Topaz, it is a zone of constant battle with the oldest and most powerful nunnehi in Concordia. The lands here are wild and untamed by the influence of Lord Topaz; many feel that control of this region will soon be lost forever. The terrain and the weather of this kingdom vary greatly: from desert to steamy jungle to high mountains and rich farmlands. The dukedom officially covers all of Mexico, but in reality controls only a thin section of territory along the nation's northern and western borders.

Fiefs of Bright Paradise

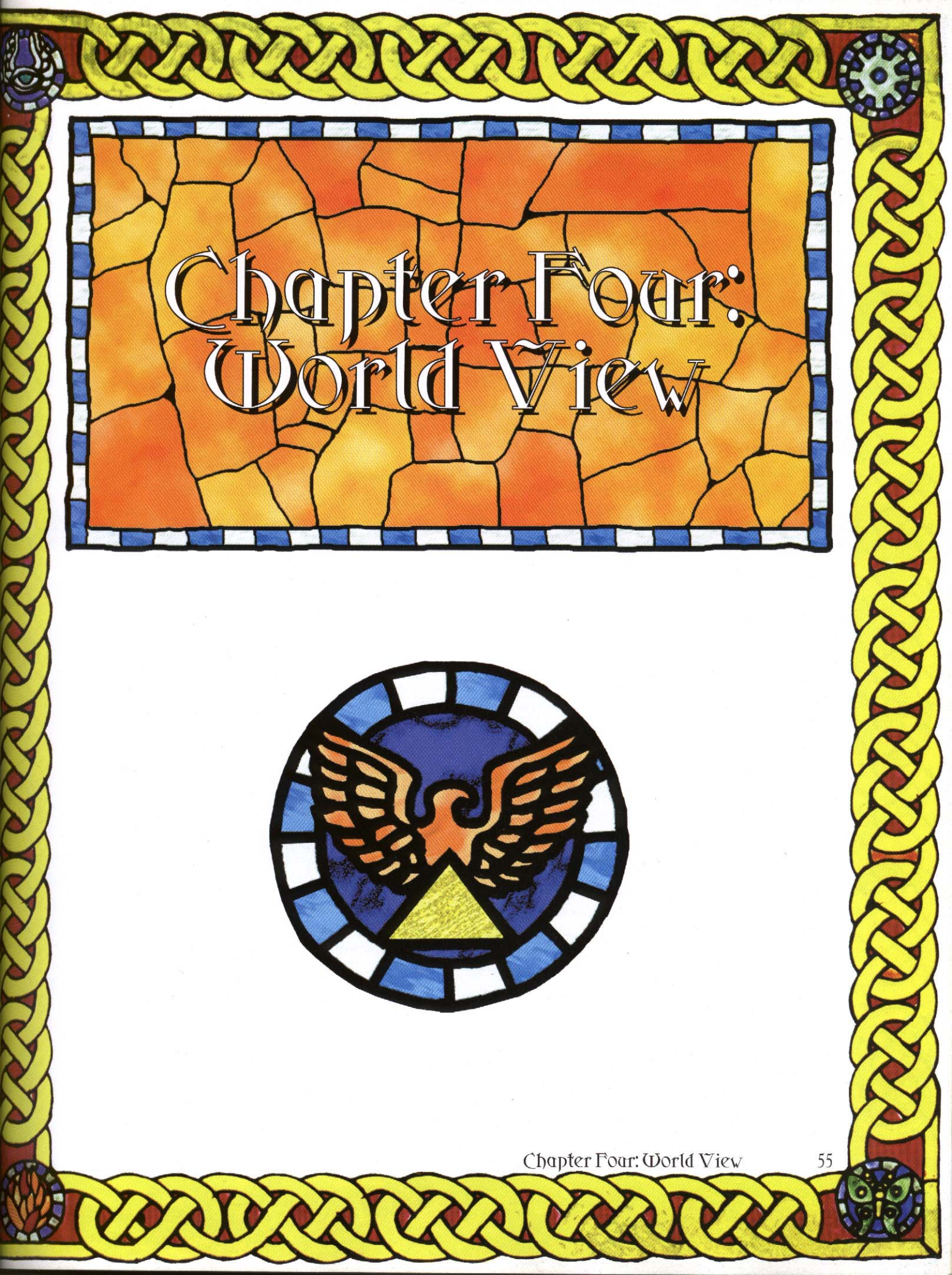
The Fiefs of Bright Paradise consist of all the Caribbean islands (Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Cuba, the Bahamas, the Florida Keys, Puerto Rico and many islands not recorded on human maps). The Bright Fiefs live up to their name in many ways fae. While much of the human populace here lives in abject poverty, the fae live lives of high adventure and stormy romance. The laws of Concordia hold little sway here, and this is reflected in the Dreaming, which is wild and unpredictable.

Sunny seas, tropical hurricanes and chimerical maelstroms come and go with great frequency. Chimerical sea serpents and other monstrous creatures swim the seas of the Dreaming here. Great whirlpools expose the ocean floor, offering opportunities for adventure and treasure to the intrepid changeling. The Dreaming here is highly balkanized, divided among many local leaders. Such leaders include several powerful nunnehi chiefs, an Unseelie count who steals dreams from the unwary, and an eshu pirate queen.

Dray
Youbastard. I got your damned
letter. Believe me you will pay for
Orda's murder and all your other
black deeds. For the final time I am
not playing chess with you. This is
not a game.
I am coming for Courtney and
she'd better not be harmed in any
way-or next time I'm coming for
you. Watch your back.
Ravachol







Chapter Four: World View



To Her Gracious Majesty, Queen Mab of the Kingdom of Apples,

I write this letter in haste, for I am beset by enemies. Please forgive me for dispensing with our usual pleasantries. This letter and its attendant notes will speak plainly and to the point.

First, on the subject of my disappearance over the last six weeks. As you obviously guessed, I was captured by the Unseelie count, Lord Vogon. I heard of your attempts to negotiate my release through Queen Aeron. I guess I have little choice but to accept her explanations for letting me rot there. Pacifican political pressures, I suppose. Forgive me, but I am tired and tact eludes me. In any event, I escaped Lord Vogon with the aid of a Red Branch Knight. We burned Vogon's keep to the ground in our escape. I fear that Vogon survived the destruction of his freehold. No doubt his allies in the Shadow Court are increasing their activities.

I am taking sanctuary in the Sivallov's Nest, a satyr freehold and artist's colony in Northern Pacifica. I cannot stay long, however, for fear of bringing the wrath of my pursuers down upon my most gracious satyr hosts. By the time you receive this letter, I will be long gone.

A brief note on my pursuers is in order and then I will continue with the main portion of my letter, which consists of my research of the last two years. I first became aware of my pursuers almost two years ago. I ran into them first near the border between the Kingdoms of Sun and Serpent. They gather in highly banal places, the most poisoned of burgess environments. They seem to feed off negative forces and exhibit a bizarre array of abilities. I barely managed to escape. During my imprisonment by Vogon, I spied two of these creatures meeting with him. I do not know what passed between them.

After my escape from Vogon, I returned to the Flaming Desert, in order to recover my notes, which were lost there. These creatures found me there and have pursued me since. I believe them to be banal creatures of fae ancestry. (Perhaps some form of Prodigal?) I am hard pressed to counter their powers with my Arts. Physically they are grotesque, malformed beings. They remind me somewhat of the Fomorians of antiquity, but they were not harmed by my invocation of the Moytura. I suggest further interest be taken in these creatures.

The rest of this letter consists of notes gathered during my travels. They include a mixture of fact, conjecture and flights of fancy about the creatures who share this Kingdom of Concordia with us. Please forgive me if I cover some familiar ground, but I penned these notes as I traveled. I have not had the luxury of editing them.

I place this letter, and as many of my notes as I could recover, in the hands of Sir Athelred. He is the Red Branch Knight who aided me in my escape from Vogon. I trust him implicitly to bring these notes safely to you. He will leave moments from now, when I finish this letter. I am leaving the Sivallov's Nest with the dawn. I have one last task to perform here in Pacifica, then I will travel to a trod I know of. It leads first to Queen Laurel's lands and then home. With luck I will beat this letter back to you.

The time before dawn grows short and I must sleep. If I do not return, please convey my loyalty to the High King and my love to my daughter.

Your Loyal Subject and Friend,
Lady Sierra



Your Majesty,

As you know, the above letter was discovered in the dying hand of Sir Athelred, two weeks ago. Lady Sierra is still missing and may be dead. The Shadow Court is on the move. These are the facts before the Cat's Cradle.

Some of Lady Sierra's notes were evidently destroyed in transit. I have taken the liberty of filling in the missing places in her text with annotated passages by other authorities on the subjects. I have also, as usual, embroidered it with observations of my own.

Your Loyal Servant,
Countess Anne

The Letters of the Duchess Sierra

On Boggrans (From the letters of Lady Sierra)

If there is any kith that we may depend on in these dangerous times, it is these gentle and trustworthy fae. I spent over three weeks among them. They still observe all the old traditions of hospitality. They extended me a welcome worthy of any noble house. Their lodgings and fare are plain and wholesome. They are a curious, industrious people; eager to please, if you meet their (usually) reasonable price.

Most of those I talked to support the king. They are strongly traditional and their trade guilds thrive under sidhe rule. The only outburst I encountered during my stay with them was when I became overly inquisitive about their craft methods. They do not part easily with their secrets. Fair treatment, respect and a kind word go farther with this kith (even the Unseelie) than anything else.

On the Esha (From the letters of Lady Sierra)

The eshu are more widely traveled than any other fae people. They know secrets denied to even the sluagh. They also travel farther into the Dreaming than most other commoners, though not so far as we. Still, if there is any kith that could aid us in finding Arcadia, it is they. They are admirable in many ways. They are fiery, passionate and wise — but they are also dangerous. Their travels make them too independent and they often simply ignore any royal edict that they find inconvenient.

Those I met were respectful of my rank, but I feel it was only a matter of form. Many of them consider themselves to be “nobles of the road,” answerable to only their own strange codes. Their greatest strength and weakness is their addiction to experience. They prize knowledge for the experience gained in gathering it, not for its more utilitarian purposes. They use it well, nonetheless. The best way to befriend the eshu seems to be by sharing a dangerous experience with them. This is their way of bonding.

Lady Sierra's antipathy toward the nockers and their alleged part in Dyfell's death is well-known. In the interest of balance I am including an excerpt on them from Baron Edgewick's history, Kith of Concordia.

On Nockers (From Professor Edgewick's notes)

Except for, perhaps, the redcaps, the nockers are the least popular of the changeling kith. I would argue that this is predominantly because of their outward demeanor, which is admittedly brusque. I believe that in the case of Seelie nockers, this reputation is largely undeserved. Seelie nockers are studiously honest in matters of their craft, which is, after all, their main venue for dealing with other kith.

Few other kith are as divided between their Seelie and Unseelie natures as are the nockers. While Seelie nockers are dour but honest, Unseelie ones are a horror. I can think of few things more dangerous than an Unseelie nocker's craft. I am particularly disturbed by the nobility's recent interest in these Unseelie artisans. I advise great care in any such transactions. Ultimately, the best way to approach a nocker is through her art.

On the Pooka (From the letters of Lady Sierra)

Despite their reputation for pranks and deception, I find the pooka to be, at heart, an open and honest kith. It is a common misconception, however, that we sidhe are immune to their pranks. Certainly any cantrips employed by them toward the ends of making us look foolish are bound to fail. They know this and rarely use their Arts against us, instead employing more mundane trickery. I can attest to their ingenuity in devising such pranks through firsthand experience.

We sidhe are a tempting target for pooka trickery. This is partially because of the challenge we represent to them and partly because they feel we need to be “knocked down a peg or two.” If they get you dead to rights with one of their minor pranks, the best thing to do is to laugh along

with them. It's not so hard and even monarchs do it. Do not hesitate to punish their more churlish or damaging pranks, however. Despite their protestations to the contrary, the pooka are well aware of the risks implicit in playing their games with the nobility. The most effective punishments against the pooka are not too draconian and involve an ironic twist on the original prank.

On Redcaps (From the letters of Lady Sierra)

Despite a recent cry to "exterminate the brutes," I maintain that the redcaps are useful if properly approached. They respect only one thing: strength. If we remain true to our nature and command (rather than appease) them, they will not become a major problem for us. Beware treachery, however. Most of them have little honor. Even the Red Branch Knights have special conditions governing the sparing of surrendering redcaps. Their "Hell Night" festivities, every Samhain Eve, are despicable orgies of violence and must be stopped.

On Satyrs (From the letters of Lady Sierra)

Lovely creatures, misunderstood as worthless hedonists by the fae at large. Satyrs are far more complex than they are given credit for being. Their carnal excesses are, to be sure, a major portion of their character, but they also have a scholarly, introspective side, which is often overlooked. Although they deny it, they are far more fascinated by the sidhe than by any other kith. This fascination can be very useful to us, though it is admittedly not without its risks. Satyrs can be very possessive. Satyrs are also highly sentimental and usually have good intentions, though their passions often override all other considerations. Meetings of their tragos are glorious, frenzied affairs, capable of temporarily lifting the pall of Banality from the fae heart. They are worth knowing for far more many reasons than the usual "tryst or two" cited by many sidhe.

On Slaagh (From the letters of Lady Sierra)

They appeared from nowhere and could have slit my throat, if such was their intention. They are jealous in guarding their subterranean layers and have many allies there. I believe they have far more contacts among the Gallain Prodigals than they admit. Perhaps the most deadly thing about them are their divided loyalties. The line between the two courts is blurred for them. I fear that even they do not always know which court they serve. They are far more dangerous to us than anyone realizes.



Treat them with guarded respect and take nothing for granted when dealing with them. Despite the secrets that they keep from us, we have just as many from them, especially in our knowledge of the Dreaming. They have shown an indecent interest in our secrets — we must sell them dearly when dealing with this kith.

Lady Sierra makes little mention of trolls in her text. It is possible that they were in the portion destroyed on the road. Baron Edgewick gave an interesting speech concerning them in a closed sidhe court last night. Enclosed is an excerpt. Pretty bold talk from our timid scholar friend, no?

On Trolls (From Professor Edgewick's notes)

Whether as our foe (as during the Resurgence) or more recently as our allies, the trolls have proved themselves the most honorable of Kithain. They are more like us than even they realize and our fate is more tied to theirs than with any other kith. They show great loyalty in council and in battle. I would remind many of my sidhe colleagues in the Parliament that their aid was particularly needed in the Greens Rebellion of the late 1980s.

I am dismayed by the recent attempts of the "traditionalists" among us, who have recently worked to undercut the trolls' traditional system of chieftains. If we persist in our arrogant disrespect of their sacred customs, I fear that we will drive them straight into the service of the Shadow Court. I am sure they will be very welcome there.

It is time for the sidhe to forget the long shadow of the 4th Troll Commons Infantry and Dyfell's death. The recent "Troll Assimilation Proclamation" (an obvious euphemism for the theft of troll fiefs), made by Dray and his ilk, is a stain on the honor of all sidhe. I will fight it in Parliament with my last dying breath.

It looks like the Beltaine Blade has been busy. I suggest we support any moves the Parliamentary moderates make to stop Dray. With luck, some troll will sit on him. This finishes the Kithain portion of our tour, but as you know, Lady Sierra was investigating other groups during her taking of the Concordian pulse.

The Gallain

On the Nunnehi (From the letters of Lady Sierra)

I lost two of my retainers during my attempt to speak with the nunnehi. Perhaps some of their kind are less unfriendly toward us, but obviously I advise caution. The only consolation in the whole affair is that the Shadow Court ambassador was found dead. Their luck with the

Nunnehi was obviously even worse than ours. If we are to have any luck dealing with them, I suggest continued negotiations with Chief Greyhawk.

On the Inanimae (From the letters of Lady Sierra)

The inanimae were Kithain once, but no longer. Each inanimus must be dealt with on an individual basis. Use caution, but try to communicate with them whenever possible. Some are dangerous, while others are friendly. Many of them are far more afraid of us than we are of them. Some clearly have fallen under the sway of the Shadow Court, while others are friendly toward our overtures. Most, however, showed little interest in the growing conflict between the two courts. The Mannequin People have ceremonies that match ours for depth and complexity. The golems are slow to anger, but fearsome warriors when roused. The most difficult of the inanimae to communicate with are the Ignis Fatuus (known more commonly as will o' the wisps, or vulgarly as "foobars"). These creatures of foolish fire (also called electricity) are sometimes allied with the nockers. There are doubtless many other types of inanimae yet to be discovered.

I agree. There are rumors that the boys in the Glass Circle have information on several inanimae races. I'll see what I can find out.

On the Nymphs (From the letters of Lady Sierra)

These female spirits of river, glade and breeze are strong potential allies to either side in the coming conflict. They seem to be divided in their sympathies to the two courts, though most of them seem to be allied with the Seelie Court. When dealing with them, always remember to invoke the ancient pacts made between them and the sidhe.

The Prodigals

On the Children of Lilith (From the letters of Lady Sierra)

It is nice to see that some things don't change. The vampires continue their games of old, as though we never left. I suppose I shouldn't jest, but they are our only "living" link to the time before the Shattering. Blood, both good and bad, passed between us in days of yore. We passed out of time and memory for 600 of their years. Their games have become, if anything, all the more bloody in that time.

Vampires whom we knew as neonates are now ancient and so weighted with Banality that it is painful to stand near them. There are a few, however, who remember our old alliances. To the Malkavians we might as well have never left. The Toreador Prince of Paris, Villon, is also friendly to the fae, though he takes no side in the conflict between our two camps. While we still know these elders, there is a younger generation of vampires who do not remember us. Perhaps the common kith know more about them. There is a commoner myth that the Kindred are somehow descendants of a blood-mad redcap. This assertion is so ridiculous on the face of it, I normally would not mention it, except that it has somehow gained great currency among the common kith.

On the Garou (From the Letters of Lady Sierra)

If the Kindred are virtually unchanged since the Shattering, the opposite is true of the shapeshifters called the Garou. In many ways they degenerated during our absence. While always ferocious, there is a desperation to their actions today that was not there in centuries past. Some are friendly toward the common kith, but few, if any, know of us. Yet in many ways, their fears are our fears. The same forces that spread Banality through the world and make it so inhospitable to us are also behind the Garou's decline.

At least the Garou are not inherently hostile toward us as they are toward the Kindred. Despite the initial problems involved in reestablishing contact with them, I highly recommend that the effort be made. I fully support the recent contacts made with the Fianna tribe. We have many old pacts with them and I am optimistic at our chance for success.

On Wizards (From the letters of Lady Sierra)

Human wizards battle each other to reshape this world in their image. Some are our allies of old, but many others manipulate the human masses, filling the world with cold, gray Banality. It is asserted that there is a hidden enclave of sorcerers whose sole trade is in Banality. If true, they are more dangerous to all fae than any other source. It is further maintained that they are hostile to several of the common kith. If this is indeed the case, we of the nobility have a sacred responsibility to put an end to their perfidy. I urge a cautious, but thorough investigation into these merchants of Banality.

Our closest allies among the wizards of old were the Verbena and the Dreamspeakers. With the aid of the satyrs, we have reestablished many of our old ties with them both since the Resurgence. It is vitally important that we continue to reweave the fabric of these historically important alliances.

Not surprisingly, there was nothing by Lady Sierra on ghosts. Enclosed is the most germane passage I could find on them. It is from the notes of the Crystal Circle conjurer, Duke Guile. From the tone of this passage, I can not be sure whether this treatise on spirits is serious or meant as a red herring. Still, if any of our kind have concourse with ghosts, it is the Crystal Circle. I got this letter by chance and include it for its intellectual curiosity more than anything else. I suggest we continue our efforts to ally ourselves with the Crystal Circle.

On Ghosts (From the memoirs of Lord Gaile)

Humans experience the termination of their physical existence in a very different manner than the fae. It is generally well accepted that the commoner kith are "reincarnated," shunted up the karmic wheel, so to speak. I know what happens to the sidhe when they die, but nobody's offered me enough stuff to spill the beans. Some humans, however, turn into ghosts. Forget the traditional image of solitary wraiths haunting a single location. While this image may have some validity, the majority of ghosts are every bit as militant and hierarchical as they were when alive. There's a lot of politicking going on among the dead. These affairs are their own and best steered clear of by our kind. The borders between Earth and the Shadowlands are not as thin as they were before the Sundering, but they are thinning. The barriers are demonstrably at their thinnest on Samhain Eve.

Although the Cat's Cradle currently finds itself at odds with the Shadow Court, we must remain cognizant of our original quest: the unification of all fae, regardless of court, kith or seeming. While Lady Sierra makes some good points about them, she is also militantly Seelie in her outlook. Bear in mind that she just escaped imprisonment by an Unseelie noble. Her comments are clearly colored by that encounter, as well as by her relationship with the late Lord Dyfell. We must retain a sense of balance when dealing with the Shadow Court. Remember, there are contributing members of the Unseelie Court (including yours truly) in the Cat's Cradle.

On the Shadow Court (From the letters of Lady Sierra)

While technically at peace with the Shadow Court, I have noticed a recent, disturbing pattern of treachery by "parties unknown" against Seelie interests. This pattern includes such now-infamous incidents as the Hell Night Riots, the assassination attempt against Queen Laurel and the highly embarrassing Impetigo Incident. While nothing is proved, these incidents and many more have the markings of the Shadow Court all over them. We of the Seelie Court never made peace with the Shadow Court as the common kith were forced to do during the Interregnum. I fear that they may be trying to influence the commoners against us. There is also evidence that they have an unwholesome alliance with the vampire clique known as the Sabbat.

It must be remembered that the Shadow Court probably encounters many of the same problems reestablishing their ties with the Unseelie commoners that we have to the Seelie. (Unseelie commoners are a willful and antiauthoritarian breed.) Ultimately, if the fae are to survive, we must end this internecine struggle between the courts, but it must be on Seelie terms. I only fear that the Shadow Court feels much the same way.

On the Lost Ones (From the letters of Lady Sierra)

Are they poor, pitiful changelings, sundered from the main body of the Dreaming? Or are they mad gods of their own, private universes? My only personal experience with a Lost One was disturbing in the extreme. It still haunts my dreams. The Lost Ones lie in wait to ensnare our kind: feeding upon our Glamour, our dreams and ultimately our lives. They are masters of guile and trickery. Although they are powerless beyond the borders of their private freeholds, they are known to employ agents.

The Lost One I encountered first appeared as a lost, human girl-child. She contrived to keep me in her realm until night, the time of their greatest power. A profound ennui fell over me and I felt my life ebbing away. When she at last revealed her true nature, I was powerless to resist her. Only the timely intervention of Count Chronos saved my life. Perhaps some Lost Ones are benign, but I have heard no account of them to support this hope. Beware.





On the Sons of Adam and Daughters of Eve (From the letters of Lady Sierra)

I have traveled much of Concordia, that which the humans call North America. I am consistently, and often pleasantly, surprised by the nature of humanity. Perhaps humanity has changed fundamentally in the years since the Sundering, or perhaps I have at last acquired the common touch. (I must confess that I had little intercourse with humanity before the Twilight Time.) True, they are often childish, brutish and cruel, but they also carry within them the seeds of greatness. Their beliefs, *en masse*, are responsible for the horrific state of Banality in this world, but this is not their natural state. Cast your mind back to the time before the Sundering if you can, back to when there was great love between our peoples. It has long been my position that the great bulk of humanity is manipulated by hidden forces. These Hidden Ones are bent on making the world as inhospitable for our kind as possible.

When encountered individually, I find most humans to be honest, loving and decent: the virtues that we of the Seelie Court find most virtuous in ourselves. There is a hardness to them, however, for the world they live in is harsh. They kill each other in greater numbers every year. If the Cat's Cradle accomplishes nothing else, it should strive to aid humanity in finding its way back to its true nature.

Your Majesty, I hope you will permit me a brief diatribe on this subject.

I find many of Lady Sierra's references to humanity to be overly romantic. Lady Sierra is known to be something of a humanophile. We must deal with humans realistically, as opposed to seeing them in the ideal terms that Lady Sierra does. Unlike Lady Sierra, few of us remember the Age of Legends.

On the Fomorians (From the letters of Lady Sierra)

As instructed, I have been searching for any sign, no matter how faint, of Fomorian activity. I believe I have found some. The creatures, that I discovered at the border 'twixt Sun and Serpent greatly resemble the Fomorians of old. They are hideous beasts, worse than any chimera.

They seem to congregate in the worst places in human society: places where the ground is poisoned and the air lies black. I am not sure that they are responsible for the destruction of those three freeholds, but it seems likely. Although their powers are fantastic, they are heavily laden with Banality. My Arts were greatly reduced in effectiveness against them. Fortunately, many of them seemed to be dull-minded. If these are the Fomorians of past ages, they have lost much of themselves in recent times. They seemed to be allied with Count Vogon, as well as a pack of dark-hearted Garou and some human "corporations." I theorize that they are also weaving an alliance with the Shadow Court.

I agree with almost everything that Lady Sierra says on the Fomorians, except the last items. The Shadow Court is as afraid of these guys as we are.

Sidhe Perceptions

There are two major factors which distinguish the sidhe from all the other fae. These are their impaired memories and their strange sense of time.

Memory

Although they seem confident, serene and even arrogant to the common fae, the sidhe bear a great and injurious scar. The period between the Shattering's apex (approximately AD 1349, the height of the Black Plague) and the Resurgence (1969), 620 years, are erased from the sidhe's collective memory. In comparison they have had only a few decades to reconstruct their entire lives in a world that is changed and hostile. Some of them adapt remarkably well, while others are emotional cripples in some respects. As a rule childlings and wilders adapt better than grumps, however, often have a serenity (see Time, below) that allows them to transcend this lack of memory. Graybeards and Grandams form the bedrock of sidhe society on Earth.

When Magellan burned his ships behind him to urge his men onward, he unknowingly mirrored what the Twilight Times did to the sidhe. The sidhe are in many ways a tabula rasa. Since they cannot go back, they must go forward. In many ways their lost memories have brought out the best in them. Some even consider their exile from Arcadia as a good thing. There are many other, less benign, effects as well. First among them is their glaring unfamiliarity with the modern world. The alien nature of the earthscape is a constant and often frightening chal-

lenge to them. It is greatly to their credit that they have succeeded in so many ways.

Almost all sidhe have a deep, abiding desire to return to Arcadia, which they consider their rightful place. Yet none can remember it in any detail. Arcadia is like a fond, but rapidly fading dream. This desire obsesses some sidhe to the point of madness. There is some real anger felt by these imperious nobles. Their anger is primarily directed toward the remaining houses in Arcadia (whom they blame for their exile).

Time

The sidhe's relationship to time is unique in the World of Darkness. Time, as a quantifiable, linear phenomenon eludes the sidhe as a concept. The sidhe are more aware of every moment of their existence than any human, yet at the same time they relive the past. The sidhe have an unfocused air about them and are sometimes hard pressed to address imminent issues in the "real world." Past events crash in upon their psyche. They often cannot distinguish these memories (far more real and immediate than any human memory) from the present. This is especially true of sidhe who do not have the Ability: Temporal Sense (see Chapter Five). Sidhe without this Ability have a difficult time distinguishing past from present. While this disadvantage doesn't cause any penalties in game terms, it should be roleplayed.

The sidhe's unique perception of time is of great aid to them in rebuilding their lost history. Without a past, the sidhe are forced to reconstruct their history, legends and traditions whole cloth. Since the Resurgence the sidhe have lived through several distinct eras, each lasting no more than a few years. Often, when the sidhe talk about a relatively recent event, they speak of it with the reverent tones usually reserved for ancient history. An occurrence like Duke Asterlan's disappearance in 1976, for example, is already a part of sidhe mythology. This telescoping of time allows the sidhe a sense of history where there was none before. Tradition is hugely important to the sidhe, who would be greatly diminished in spirit without it.

As a rule, time for humans accelerates as they grow older. The sidhe are the exact opposite in this regard. More than anything, they have the time sense of a child, yet they are immortal. A sidhe often sees the morning, noon and night of the same day as different eras. Commoners often remark that the sidhe's greatest nostalgia is for breakfast. This truism is, in many ways, accurate. As night falls a sidhe may be painfully nostalgic about a just lived glorious midafternoon. They feel this more deeply than any human or common kith, because they live in all moments, past and present, at once.

The time discrepancies experienced by the sidhe are not measurable by any science known to humanity. The mage Sphere of Time may allow the mage some insights into the sidhe condition, but even it encounters great obstacles in discerning this time paradox. (The mage Time Sphere operates in a completely different paradigm than the sidhe's.) Most commoners consider the sidhe's temporal nature to be a psychological condition more than anything else. Often they read it as aloofness or aristocratic boredom. Some know better, however. The Chronos Art was lost to all but a handful of commoners during the Interregnum. Even now, any commoner who wishes to learn this Art is usually compelled to seek out a sidhe teacher. Many sluagh have an obsession with obtaining this Art.

The sidhe's perception of time colors their every action. If a sidhe acts, or doesn't act, in a certain manner, it is in large measure because of their relationship with it. Although many sidhe are disinterested in humanity, there is great curiosity about humanity's theories and perception of time. Some sidhe have greatly expanded their knowledge of time's doings by reading treatises on the subject written by human scientists and philosophers. Some of these have practical applications to wielding the Art of Chronos.

As a culture, the sidhe are also affected by their time sense. Many have learned to make time their servant, hence their spectacular successes in reasserting their authority since the Resurgence. Their ability to manipulate time gives them a great advantage over the other kith. It is a jealously guarded secret by most sidhe and there are laws regulating under what circumstances it may be taught. Sidhe of the Shadow Court also possess these secrets and are every bit as wary of teaching them to commoners.

Imagine a hodgepodge between the ancient Egyptian and Indian concepts of time, add a sprinkling of Relativity and you have a rough idea of the sidhe's philosophy of time. The turning of the eternally reoccurring Seasons (also observed by the commoners) is analogous to the Indian concept (and the Entropic Big Bang model) of the universe as something which destroys and recreates itself. Like the ancient Egyptians, however, most sidhe have a very serene, unhurried view of time.

Unfortunately, not all sidhe can readily control their relationship to time. Unless the sidhe has at least one level in Temporal Sense, she is buffeted about by her natural state, unable to manage time effectively in any but the most limited fashion. Only sidhe with the Chronos Art are able to manipulate it actively.

Courtly (and not-so-courtly) Love

The sidhe, like all fae, are an inherently romantic people. They feel love (or its absence) far more profoundly than most humans ever do. It is at once their crowning glory and their greatest weakness. It is the foundation of all that is good in them, yet it can also drive them to madness and perdition. Love among the fae nobility is highly ritualized, with a thousand years' tradition behind it, yet it is no less passionate for all of that.

Much of the sidhe's time and energy is spent in the contemplation of love. The formalized structure of sidhe courtship, with its hundreds of prohibitions and bylaws, is often criticized as "passionless" by outsiders. What they fail to realize is that sidhe passion is so powerful and elemental that a romantic framework is required, lest the sidhe lose all their moorings in a maelstrom of passion. (Some sidhe reject all structure. See Cerenais, below.) The formalized element of noble romance also adds considerably to the experience of love, building a sense of suspense and desire before more physical encounters take place. Certain romantic taboos also guard against the darker aspects of fae love.

A review of sidhe literature, poetry and song reveals a preoccupation with romance unmatched by any kith, except for the satyrs (and perhaps the eshu). Noble freeholds are extremely conducive to romance. The court of a romantic sidhe is filled with delicate melodies, warm amber light, and smells and tastes to tempt and excite the sensual pallet. House Fiona is especially romantic in character. With its natural predilections for the common kith, Fiona courts are multikith affairs, brimming over with life and love (and court intrigue). In the game of love, those of House Fiona are unparalleled.

Romantic Legacies

In addition to their court Legacies, many fae possess strong romantic personalities. These are also divided among the fae's Seelie and Unseelie predilections. As is the case with court Legacies, Romantic Legacies predominate with the changeling's court affiliation. Characters have both a Primary and a Secondary Romantic Legacy. Not all fae have Romantic Legacies, just ones who allow romance to play an active roll in their lives. Romantic Legacies are complementary to court Legacies, though in some cases they may override them.



Seelie Romantic Legacies

Empath: You are highly sensitive to the moods, wishes and desires of your paramour. If she isn't happy, neither are you.

Friend: Love is not just a romantic emotion. If a relationship doesn't have mutual respect and friendship at its core, it is not true love.

Ingenue: Somewhat naive and wide-eyed, you still see only the wonder and good side of love. Most fae usually pass out of this legacy as they grow older, but not always.

Jongleur: You like to keep your lovers (and yourself) entertained. Love is the greatest joy and should be enjoyed to its fullest.

Protector: Your love is true and you desire to protect him from all the ills of the world. This Legacy is born of noble intentions, but can be suffocating.

Romantic: Like the Ingenue, but more worldly and experienced. You are often more interested in the idea of being in love than with love itself.

Unseelie Romantic Legacies

Climber: Love is a method by which you may gain power and status. Potential lovers are just rungs on a ladder.

Competitor: You are a romantic Olympian. You judge others by the quality of their consorts and you know they judge you by the same standards. You must be the world's greatest lover, or what's the point?

Cynic: Jaded and world-weary, you often continue in your romantic overtures out of habit or fear of being alone. You have lowered your sights because you know "true love" can only be found in fairy tales.

Deceiver: Inherently selfish and callous, love must suit your whims. You realize that most people do not wish for love on these terms, so you disguise your true nature.

Martyr: I work so hard to make this relationship work and what do I get in return? Heartache! I didn't expect you to understand.

Gamester: Love is a grand game, full of danger and excitement. You may have one partner or many, but the affair must be constantly challenging and in motion.

Spy: Court gossip and intrigue are your meat and drink. Part Climber and part Deceiver, you are interested only in being the best informed about who is doing what to whom.

The Romanticists

*Steer your life by these stars
On the unconditional chance
'Tis here where Hell and Heaven dance
This is the constellation of the heart*
— Kate Bush, "Constellation of the Heart"

Orders of the Heart

Romance is a major part of Kithain life. Indeed, several romantic orders exist to further the cause of love and romance in a world that is, in many ways, devoid of these qualities. The methods and agendas of these Romanticist organizations (some are more philosophies than actual organizations) vary wildly. Adherents of these groups often have highly specialized cantrips that allow them to further their desires. (There are even rumors of secret Arts possessed solely by these groups.) Below is a brief description of three such cliques, though there are others.

Order of Shallot

Embodying many of the noblest aspects of pure love, this philosophy is, nonetheless, the most tragic of the Romanticist orders. The Order of Shallot (a poetic rather than a practical creation) personifies love unobtained. The Order of Shallot is something of a cruel joke among some fae (especially commoners) who often ridicule them as lugubrious sad sacks. (Sad-eyed knights and weepy poets are favorite stereotypes of this order.) Indeed, it often seems that those of this order are doomed to forever search, yet never obtain, that which they are looking for. This is because they pursue the most elusive state of all — true love. Despite the caustic humor aimed at this order, many fae are secretly jealous of the depth of their emotion. Many of this philosophy never find what they are searching for. Some become cynical or end up as Cerenais (see below). Others even pine away completely, becoming Bean sidhe (or Banshee, see Chapter Six). Those who do ultimately obtain their worthy goal, however, are like shining stars in a world grown dark and cold. Red Branch Knights are often of this bent.

Cerenais

Sensualists of the highest order, Cerenais are hungry for any type of stimulus. A large percentage of these fae (but by no means all) are Unseelie. Cerenais are widely varied in their predilections. Some are delightful, maddeningly creative individuals, while others are debauched or even sadistic. The darker side of fae love is often embodied in these Kithain and some of them are extraordinarily dangerous. Most

Cerenais are sidhe or satyrs but there are others. (A Cerenais redcap is a truly disgusting proposition.) Noble Cerenais (especially Unseelie ones) are known to abuse their power on occasion. Cerenais are also highly prone to seeking romantic encounters outside of the Kithain. Many of the prohibitions in Courtly Love are aimed at curbing the excesses of this philosophy. Queen Morganna, of the Kingdom of White Sands, is an example of a benign Cerenais.

Ascetics

The polar opposite of the Cerenais, fae of this bent are overbrimming with the emotion of love, yet this love is rarely aimed at any one target for long. Ascetic love is not necessarily romantic in nature, but more universal in its calling. Indeed, many of this philosophy never physically consummate the act of love. (Though abstinence is not necessarily total.) Ascetics can be spotted by their firm optimism, powerful energy and good works. Energy that may be dissipated in other pursuits is instead aimed at improving the world. Although most Ascetics are very disciplined in their own comportment, few of them moralize or criticize the habits of other fae. While Ascetics are generally well liked, some wags infer that their celibate lifestyle has driven them insane. (Some are tightly wound.) These detractors generally try to liken them to the Inquisition, though this charge has little validity. Lady Sierra is the quintessential Ascetic.

Sex

The act of making love among the fae is a varied and pleasurable pursuit. The nobility, untethered from human prohibitions for over 600 years, are especially free of human sexual taboos. Lovemaking between fae may be traditional or experimental. Some sexual encounters amongst the sidhe are comparatively chaste in appearance (though appearances can be deceiving), while others are truly alien and bizarre to most human eyes.

Due to their relationship with time, sidhe lovers are usually very much "in sync" with each other. Fae of all kith may use their Arts to heighten both the emotional and the physical act of love. The act of love may be carried on at many levels at once. Two changelings who seem (to outside eyes) to be merely facing each other, perhaps holding hands or stroking each other's cheek, may in reality be exploring unbounded realms of pleasure. Partners in the act of love making combine cantrips to weave dream tapestries of sensation. The level of pleasure enjoyed in these encounters is undreamed of by humans (or by most Prodigals).



On Satyrs

Moth to the flame.

Who is to blame?

— Rustin Quaide, “Brother Life and Sister Death”

Of all the commoner kith, the sidhe have the most romantic encounters with the satyrs (and vice versa). Despite their many readily apparent differences, the two kith have a unique (and sometimes overpowering) attraction for each other. Most sidhe find satyrs to be both strangely repelling and compelling. Many satyrs, on the other hand, are both aesthetically and emotionally attracted to the sidhe. Both kiths often deny this dangerous, star-crossed attraction. There is a strong “moth to the flame” element in this love affair and many of these two kith end up burnt by it.

Satyrs are widely considered to be the only kith more romantic in outlook than the sidhe.

Morpheus Sabinis

Despite their open minds regarding romance, certain acts are still taboo amongst the fae. First and foremost among these is the crime of Morpheus Sabinis (commonly known as Dream-Rape). Although this act is abhorrent to most fae, it is, at times, still practiced. Through a combination of Arts (most notably Chicanery, Chronos and Dream-Craft) an unscrupulous faerie can obfuscate a victim’s sense of reality, making it conform to his (or her) own wishes. The malignant fae can then manipulate the victim for his own gratification. Victims of this crime rarely recover completely. This horror is rarely practiced by Seelie fae and even much of the Unseelie Court frowns upon it. The Seelie Court has several strict laws against this crime. These prohibitions also include its use against humans.

Arranged Marriages

Arranged marriages are relatively common among the five noble houses of the sidhe. These marriages are usually arranged to cement treaties between the houses. Many commoners look askance at this “archaic” tradition, but even they must admit that it is successful at promoting

stability among the nobility. The practice is slowly gaining popularity among certain common kith. The vast majority of arranged marriages take place among Seelie houses. There are, however, several strategic marriages between the Seelie and Unseelie Courts (see entry on Queen Laurel in Chapter Seven). It is an interesting footnote that, unlike arranged marriages in human history, many fae marriages of this nature are quite successful from both a political and marital standpoint.

Cross-Cultural Romances

The vast majority of noble romances take place within the noble power structure. Occasionally, however, a noble leaves the carefully drawn borders set by tradition and loves an outsider. This is often frowned upon, not just for proprietary considerations (sidhe are very class-conscious), but because of the great dangers inherent in such affairs. Still, sometimes a noble will risk societal censure, danger and even death for the sake of love.

Common Kith

Aside from sporadic, torrid affairs with the satyrs (see above), the sidhe very rarely engage in love affairs with the common kith. The reasons for this are many, and sometimes not too pretty. Many sidhe, in their heart of hearts, consider themselves to be superior to the common kith. An affair with a commoner will often (though not always) reduce a sidhe's standing in the noble community. This prejudice is also shared by many commoners, who distrust sidhe motives. Commoners who "marry upward" are often ridiculed as social climbers, or worse. (There is some jealousy involved here.) Despite this, sometimes a love of epic proportions may blossom between the classes. Ironically, it is often easier for the sidhe to violate noble strictures than it is for commoners to break this taboo. Commoner stories are filled with examples of commoners who fall in love with a sidhe, only to meet a horrible (and well deserved) end. This mythology is particularly enforced by female grump commoners.

As individuals, many commoners are hard pressed to resist the advances of a sidhe suitor. The beauty and glamour of such suitors are often overwhelming to most commoners, who are often swept off their feet. While many such advances are genuine, some are merely flings for the sidhe suitor. Some sidhe (especially Cernaics) consider it a thrill to go romantically "slumming" among the commoners. Many a commoner heart is broken in these trysts. Only the satyrs have a greater record at this. Sometimes the reverse situation occurs and a sidhe noble is crushed by the callousness of a commoner love. Next to

the satyrs, the eshu are the most usual recipients of sidhe attraction (followed distantly by trolls and pooka).

Humans

Both human and fae lore are filled with tragic examples of love affairs between humans and the fae. From the Lady of Shallot's unfulfilled love for Sir Lancelot, to the dangers of the Ganconer (see below) and the Melusines, the dangers of such dalliances are told in great detail. The dangers inherent in such affairs affect both Kithain and burgess alike. For the fae (especially sidhe) the danger of acquiring unwanted Banality through immersion in the human world is great. There are tales of changelings visiting their in-laws' house, never to return. For the human, the risk is even greater. Humans are comparatively fragile creatures. A love affair with a supernatural creature, such as a changeling, is dangerous in many ways. Enemies of a changeling may attempt to harm or manipulate her human lover to get at her. Far more dangerous to most humans is the danger to their psyche posed by exposure to the Dreaming. Many humans are driven mad by its revelation. On rare occasions, however, a love between fae and human works, to the betterment of both parties.

Prodigals

Of all sidhe affairs, the rarest are those with the Prodigals. There are strict laws forbidding such contacts in both the Seelie and the Unseelie Courts, due to the dangers posed by such encounters. The risk involved in these love affairs is not exaggerated and they rarely end up in anything besides complete disaster for both parties.

Kindred: Vampires (especially older ones) are heavily laden with Banality. Their very presence can be painful to the fae, especially to the sidhe, who are so vulnerable to it. The sidhe nobility still has old contacts with some elder vampires (from before the Interregnum), but has little contact with the younger generation. A love affair between a sidhe noble and a vampire would be a tempting target for political manipulation by both sides.

Garou: Although rare, changeling affairs with the Garou are still more common than affairs with any other kind of prodigal. The sidhe nobility is attempting to reinvigorate their ancient pacts with the Garou. Sidhe attendance at Garou moots is slowly increasing, thus leading to some interesting dalliances. Encounters between such lovers often tend to be whirlwind affairs: powerful, but short lived. The majority of sidhe contacts with the Garou are through the Fianna tribe. Most Garou are devoid of Banality.

Mages: Affairs with human mages are perhaps the most dangerous of all, because of the threat posed by the Technocracy. Commoner fae long ago learned the dangers implicit in such affairs, but the sidhe have yet to learn any hard lessons. The mages most commonly approached romantically by the fae are the Verbena and the Dreamspeakers. There are also several legendary affairs between Cerenais and Cult of Ecstasy mages. Unfortunately, even brief encounters with such mages increases the likelihood of Technocracy involvement.

Wraiths: From a purely logistical standpoint, romantic liaisons between fae and wraith are highly unlikely. There are several unconfirmed stories of such affairs, but they are exceedingly rare. Such stories usually end up with the fae pining away to oblivion, to join her dead love. Some say that Banshees are created in such a fashion.

Creatures of Love

Several dangerous creatures are created by (or prey upon) the emotions of fae love. Two of the better known creatures of this nature are the Ganconer (a.k.a. the Geancannah, or Love-Talker) and the Bean Sidhe (Banshee). Both are covered at greater length in the Storyteller section.

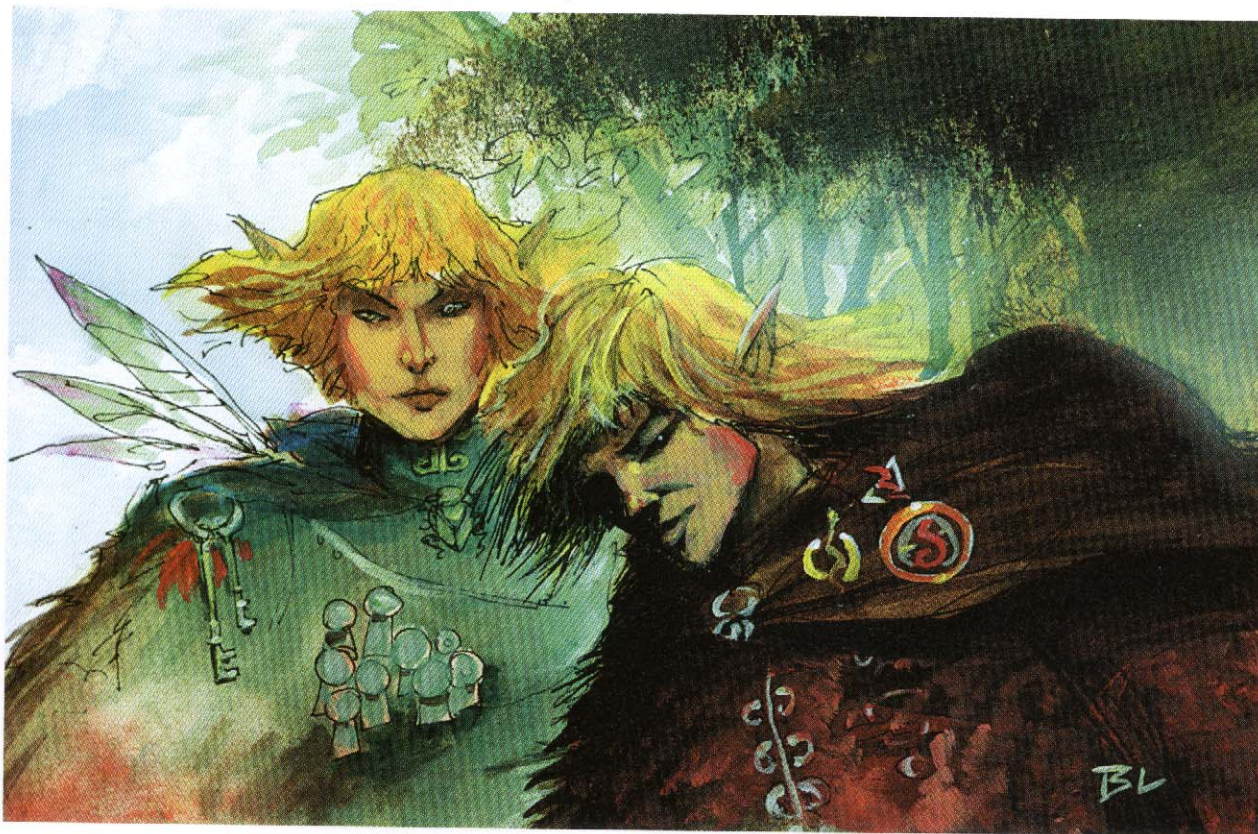
Ganconer: The Ganconer is a malignant creature of the Dreaming. It is chimerical in aspect, but is adept at

clothing itself in fair faerie (often sidhe or satyr) form. The Ganconer preys sexually on humans and fae alike. It is said that their caress brings death.

Bean Sidhe: The Bean Sidhe are mournful creatures who were once sidhe. Not all of them are malignant, but affairs with them are dangerous nevertheless. It is said that they exist somewhere between the Dreaming and the realms of the dead. The appearance of a Banshee is usually considered an ill omen.

Preternatural Beauty

The sidhe are perhaps the most beautiful creatures in the World of Darkness. In game terms, they receive an additional two points of Appearance, even if this raises their total above the human maximum of 5. Few people appreciate what this really means. Imagine the most beautiful person you have ever seen. Now imagine what it would be like if their beauty insinuated itself into your heart and soul every time they were around. That is how most humans react to an Appearance of 6 or more. Even the most numb of humans become elevated in the presence of such beauty. It is a beauty that can raise the soul to great heights, inspiring works of poetry, honor and love—or it can kill.



A sidhe character with an appearance of 6 or 7 (some have even more — see entry on Queen Laurel in Chapter Seven) is not “merely” breath takingly beautiful. Few individuals, human or fae, are able to grasp an attribute above the allowed human maximum of 5. A person with a 5 Intelligence is as hard pressed to fathom the mind of a person with 6 as a person with an Intelligence of 1 would be to fathom the person with 5. (This is why vampire elders are so dangerous.) The sidhe are well aware of how useful their beauty can be, and often use it as a powerful weapon. There is also a downside, however. An appearance of 6 or more can also inspire powerful negative emotions (possessiveness, jealousy, etc.).

Few creatures in the World of Darkness can compare with the sidhe in beauty. Several vampire elders and, perhaps, the fomor Enticers (see the **Werewolf** books: **Book of the Wyrms** and **Project Twilight**) are among the few who can. Creatures with such legendary beauty often become, slowly, aware of each other. They often circle each other like sharks. Beauty comes more easily to the sidhe than to any of the above groups. Numerically the sidhe have far more collective beauty than all of the above groups put together. Some Prodigals view this rapturously.

The vampire Prince of Paris, Villon, and his daughter are strong allies of the sidhe. Other Prodigals consider the sidhe a threat. This list includes Madame Paris, the CEO of Siren cosmetics.

Romantic Theater (or: What are the beautiful people doing this season?)

To the sidhe, love is often a high-risk game, filled with danger, passion and high theater. Nobody does pageantry like the sidhe nobility. Their chimerical freeholds are enchanted wonderlands. To get a general idea of what they're like, watch Kenneth Branagh's version of *Much Ado about Nothing* (in peace time), or Akira Kurasawa's *Ran* (at war). The sidhe have a high sense of fashion and theater. Romantic trysts often reach near-epic proportions amongst them. Games, both dangerous and comedic, are played out regularly in sidhe society. These games are many-tiered, highly complex affairs that may involve everyone from the king to the downstairs maid. Most commoners know to





get out of the way when these games start, but sometimes they join in.

This high Romantic Theater is not planned by the sidhe, but generates spontaneously. There are always low-level games going on among them, but occasionally a high-level drama explodes in their midst. While dazzling in their scope and glamour (Glamour), these episodes can be highly dangerous. Kingdoms can fall in these legendary dramas.

If the Storyteller wishes to run one, she should plan it well in advance. They should be sweeping dramas (or comedies, or tragedies) that cut across many levels of fae society. These pageants should have recognizable theatrical types. Heroes and villains, both high and petty, should play out their roles with swagger and bravado. High lords and ladies play out their roles with wit and nobility. Greater dramas also drag in most of the commoner kith in the area.



Painted 95

Chapter Five: Those Who Rule

This chapter includes a brief description of how to build a noble character, as well as new Abilities, Backgrounds, Arts and Bunks. There is also an entry on House Scathach, the "lost" house of the sidhe.

Character Creation Choices

There are many questions a player must ask about her character: Who is she? What does she look like? Does she exemplify all the good qualities of the Seelie Court, or is she a backstabbing schemer? A general mental picture should suffice at this point. Most people find that the character grows more real as the character creation process progresses. As with the other Storyteller games, the character creation process involves applying points to define a character's basic capabilities. Is the character strong or weak? Is he intelligent? Handsome? What does he do? Is he a fearless knight, a political plotter, or a Modernist revolutionary? All of the details needed to create a fully fleshed-out character are listed in the Character Creation Chart.

Character Creation Chart

- **Step One: Character Concept**

Choose concept, court, Legacy, house (if applicable), Political Impulse (if any), seeming, kith, Romantic Legacy (optional) and secret or romanticist society (if applicable)

- **Step Two: Select Attributes**

Prioritize the three categories: Physical, Social, Mental (7/5/3)

Choose Physical Traits: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina

Choose Social Traits: Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance

Choose Mental Traits: Perception, Intelligence, Wits

- **Step Three: Select Abilities**

Prioritize the three categories: Talents, Skills, Knowledges (13/9/5)

Choose Talents, Skills, Knowledges

- **Step Four: Select Advantages**

Choose Backgrounds (5), Arts (3), Realms (5)

- **Step Five: Finishing Touches**

Record Beginning Glamour, Willpower and Banality as determined by your seeming

Record kith birthrights and frailties

Spend Freebie Points (15)

New Skill Ability

Temporal Sense

You have a natural affinity for the quirky, timeless existence of the sidhe. Time may flow backward, speed up or slow down, but you are able to maintain your equilibrium. This is a predominantly passive Skill, allowing coexistence with, but not control over, the various idiosyncrasies of fae time. This Skill is especially important to the sidhe and to fae who wield the Chronos Art.

- Novice: You usually keep appointments.
- Practiced: You can keep time to music.
- Competent: You don't need a watch.
- Expert: You have an internal chronometer.
- Master: Time is your slave.

Possessed by: Crystal Circle Members, Chronologists, Sidhe

Specialties: Conversational Timing, Melee, Chronos, Trod Time

New Knowledge Ability

Dream Lore

Dream Lore is the study of the Dreaming and the creatures that reside within. It is a study mastered by none, because the Dreaming is vast and ever-changing. Some, however, dare its dangers in order to map it (insofar as that is possible) and learn its secrets.

- Student: You know to stay on the Silver Path.
- College: You feel at home in the Near Dreaming.
- Masters: You are beginning to understand the laws that govern the Dreaming.
- Doctorate: The Dreaming holds few secrets from you.
- Scholar: You think you know where Arcadia is. (Getting there is another matter.)

Possessed by: Crystal Circle Members, Wandering Knights, The Insane

Specialties: Near Dreaming, Far Dreaming, Chimerical Denizens, Legends, Arcadia

New Backgrounds

Political Connections

This Background is not the same as the Title Background. It is, instead, power within the Kithain's body

politic. The majority of it is through the Parliament of Dreams, though it may be in other venues (at the Storyteller's discretion). Characters with this Background wield the power to build coalitions, move Parliamentary policy and shape the laws that govern Concordia. This power is not as great as that wielded by many nobles, since the Parliament is only a moderately powerful, deliberative institution. It is a democratic institution, though, and enjoys a good deal of popular support. Characters with this Background represent a well established and officially recognized freehold. Motley freeholds (called "mews") are also permitted in the Parliament, but they carry considerably less weight.

- You represent a very small freehold (or a medium-sized mew).
- You represent a small freehold (or a large mew).
- You represent a medium-sized freehold (or a huge mew).
- You represent a large freehold.
- You represent a huge freehold (or group of freeholds).

Patron

You have a noble patron, who may aid you in times of need. In return you are expected to render him service. This is more than the usual vassal/liege relationship, however, because your patron favors you above most of his other vassals. (You may be a friend or a relative.)

- knight/lady
- baron/baroness
- count/countess
- duke/duchess
- king/queen

Trod

You possess access to a trod that leads to other earthly destinations, or even to destinations within the Dreaming. Trods are usually situated within freeholds, but not all freeholds have trods. Your trod may be situated in your freehold (if you have the Holdings Background), or it may stand on its own. Trods do not necessarily correspond in power to the freehold in which they are situated. It is possible to have an immensely powerful trod within a minor freehold (or vice versa). Trods are tied to the cycles of nature (seasons, movement of the planets, etc.) and are only accessible at certain times. The player and the Storyteller should decide at which times the character's trod may be opened.

A trod that is open one half of the total time in a year may be only accessible at night, on even numbered days, or from Beltaine to Samhain. Several very powerful trods, such as the one at Tara-Nar, exceed the scale listed below.



The legendary Silvers Gate trod was rumored to lead everywhere. Any trod purchased with this Background is assumed to be relatively safe for the changeling at both ends (it doesn't lead to the Nightmare Realms, etc.). The only exception are trods which lead to the Deep Dreaming, which cannot be predicted.

Please note that mere ownership of a trod does not necessarily grant the ability to open it.

- 1 local destination, accessible one fourth of the time
- 1 local destination, accessible half of the time; or 2-3 local destinations, accessible one fourth of the time; or 1 local destination, accessible all the time
- 2-3 local destinations and one regional destination, accessible half of the time; or 2-3 local destinations, one regional destination and one Near Dreaming destination, accessible one fourth of the time; or 2-3 local destinations, accessible all the time.
- 4-5 local destinations, two regional, one national (e.g. Concordia) and two Near Dreaming destinations, accessible half of the time; or 4-5 local destinations, two regional, one national, one Near Dreaming, one Far Dreaming, accessible one fourth of the time; or 2-3 local destinations and one regional destination, accessible all the time; or 2-3 local destinations, one regional destination and one Near Dreaming destination, accessible half of the time.
- 4-5 local destinations, 3-4 regional, two national, two Near Dreaming, one Deep Dreaming, accessible half of the time; or 4-5 local destinations, 4-5 regional, four national, two Near Dreaming, two Far Dreaming, one Deep Dreaming (maybe as far as Arcadia Gate), accessible one fourth of the time; or 2-3 local destinations, one regional destination and one Near Dreaming destination, accessible all the time.

New Arts

Dream-Craft

Dream-Craft is fundamental to any changeling who wishes to explore the Dreaming. This Art allows the fae both understanding of and power over the Dreaming. Although the sidhe are particularly puissant in this area, many commoners wield it with considerable facility.

Attribute: Wits

Find Silver Path

The Silver Path is visible to all fae — most of the time. If a changeling leaves the path while traveling through a trod, however, she is as good as lost. From even 25 feet away the path (and any companions on it) simply melt away from view. This cantrip is vital to finding the path again. It is also useful for divining the difference between the true path and a false one created by mischievous chimera. (Difficulty and number of successes needed vary depending on the skill of the illusion.) Finally it may be employed in a limited fashion to tell who or what else may be using the trod. This ability is usually somewhat ambiguous in its results, however. Chimera are particularly adept at hiding their presence from this cantrip.

Realms:

Actor — You can tell who else is walking the Silver Path.

Fae — You can tell who else is walking the Silver Path.

Nature — You can tell what kind of terrain the path travels through.

Prop — You can tell what kind of structures may lie along it.

Scene — You can find the Silver Path.

Successes: The effects of successes gained vary depending upon the use being applied. If being used to detect a false path, the difficulty varies depending upon how well

the path is hidden. If being used to locate or detect objects on the path, use the chart below.

1 success — Can detect objects very close by (within a few yards).

2 successes — Can detect objects out of sight (within 100 yards).

3 successes — Can detect objects within a mile or so.

4 successes — Can detect objects within several leagues.

5 successes — Can detect objects anywhere on the path.

Determinism

With this power the changeling may determine what is on the other end of a trod. Information gathered in this matter is usually accurate, but may be somewhat cryptic. The changeling will often see only a small portion of the picture. This ability is based on sight only and may be thwarted on the other end by such Arts as Legerdemain. Unless the changeling uses all five Realms in the casting of this cantrip, she will only get a partial picture. (i.e., If she only uses the Scene Realm, she will be able to see the area on the other end of a trod, but not the Unseelie redcap with the machine gun.)

Realms:

Actor — You can tell who is at the other end of the trod.

Fae — You can tell who is at the other end of the trod.

Nature — You can tell what is at the other end of the trod.



Prop — You can tell what is at the other end of the trod.

Scene — You can tell what is at the other end of the trod.

Successes: The number of successes gained determines the clarity of the vision.

Homestead

The Dreaming is a place of constantly shifting paradigms. The “laws” of reality that exist one day in the Dreaming may be canceled the next. The use of this cantrip allows the changeling to create a semipermanent area of stability within the Dreaming. This works best in the Near Dreaming, but can be accomplished farther afield. Freeholds usually have the effects of this cantrip incorporated into them. Structures built in the Dreaming without the benefit of this cantrip are often washed away like sand castles in the rising tide. This cantrip freezes the area in its current state, allowing only minor “natural” changes.

Realms:

Actor — Allows a mortal to resist the chaotic nature of the Dreaming.

Fae — Allows a fae creature to resist the chaotic nature of the Dreaming.

Nature — Allows a natural object to resist the chaotic nature of the Dreaming.

Prop — Allows an artifact to resist the chaotic nature of the Dreaming.

Scene — Allows an area to resist the chaotic nature of the Dreaming.

Successes: Each success grants a degree of protection against the chaotic forces of the Dreaming, whether chimerical or banal. When cast on a person or object, add one Health Level for each success gained as long as that person (or object) remains in the Near Dreaming. When cast on a freehold, reduce any attacks on the freehold by one for each success gained.

Attunement

The Kithain are creatures of the Dreaming, yet in many ways they are sundered from it. Even the sidhe no longer enjoy the connection with it that they did in the Age of Legends. Attunement reforges these ties, to a degree—allowing the changeling to make herself (or other things) a stronger part of the local Dreaming. When cast, this cantrip attunes the changeling to one person, place or thing in the area. The number of successes rolled determines the duration of the Attunement. This powerful cantrip has several practical uses. First, the changeling can determine the general physical characteristics of a locality. This cantrip can do much of what the Silver Path and Determinism cantrips (see above) can, and more. When cast with the Realms of

Actor or Fae, this cantrip allows the changeling to determine the target's general characteristics (though some fae are adept at dodging this). Many nobles use this to keep tabs on their freeholds. Nobles attuned to a certain object have reduced difficulties (minus 1-3 levels) in all Perception rolls. Additionally, they have -2 difficulty to all Arts used on the attuned object. This is not an offensive cantrip, however, since you cannot Attune an unwilling subject.

Only one subject may be Attuned to a changeling at a time. If a changeling stays Attuned to an object for a long time, he becomes very aware of it. Changeling lovers sometimes Attune themselves to each other. A king Attuned to his castle has a decided advantage over any competitors. No two fae may claim the same area, or person, at the same time. If one fae tries to “claim jump,” the two competitors must make an immediate Glamour roll (difficulty 6). The one with the most successes becomes Attuned. This cantrip only works in the Dreaming.

Realms:

Actor — Describes whom you are becoming Attuned to.

Fae — Describes whom you are becoming Attuned to.

Nature — Describes what you are becoming Attuned to.

Prop — Describes what you are becoming Attuned to.

Scene — Describes where you are becoming Attuned to.

Successes:

1 Success: Subject is Attuned for one minute.

2 Successes: Subject is Attuned for one hour.

3 Successes: Subject is Attuned for one day.

4 Successes: Subject is Attuned for one week.

5 Successes: Subject is Attuned for one month.

Dream Weaving

This cantrip is somewhat similar to the Legerdemain cantrip, Phantom Shadows. It is somewhat more versatile, but it can only be used in the Dreaming. This is sometimes referred to by commoners as the “instant castle” cantrip, because it is commonly employed for just this purpose. This is the cantrip of pure, chimerical creation: some say of life itself. Objects created through this cantrip are essentially permanent, as long as they are in the Dreaming. (Banality destroys them very quickly.) This cantrip costs two permanent points of Glamour to cast (more in the case of truly grand projects). The Storyteller has the final say over what this cantrip can create. The Realm of this cantrip determines the maximum size of an object.

Realms:

Actor — Who is created. (Maximum size: Large human)

Fae — Who is created. (Maximum size: Large horse)

Nature — What is created. (Maximum size: Large tree)

Prop — What is created. (Maximum size: Medium-sized palace)

Scene — What is created. (Maximum size: Small woods)

Note: Sizes may be increased by spending more Glamour. (Storyteller's discretion.)

Successes: The number of successes rolled dictates how "perfect" the object is. A palace built with only one success will be cold, drafty and badly in need of repair. A knight created with five successes may become a legend (as long as he doesn't leave the Dreaming).

Chronos

Perhaps the most bizarre element about the sidhe is their strange relationship to the timestream. They literally live in an entirely different time paradigm. Even mages with the Time Sphere (see **Mage: the Ascension**) are hard pressed to understand this relationship. The sidhe are very "slippery" to the mage's Time Sphere. (All uses of this Sphere against sidhe are at +2 difficulty. The sidhe have no such difficulty in affecting mages.) While the sidhe are not nearly as versatile in their manipulations of time as are some mages, they can do a few things that the mages can't (at least not without being torn apart by Paradox). Most notably, they can perceive and affect the near past. This Art affords the sidhe a strong advantage over other fae and is one of their most jealously guarded secrets. Very few commoners know it, and those who do cast it at plus one difficulty.

Attribute: Perception

Wyrd

When cast, this cantrip confuses the time sense of those it is cast on. The recipient must make an Intelligence + Temporal Sense roll (difficulty 7, two successes needed) or become confused as to the order in which things happen. She may see a person dropping dead, and then hear the gunshot that killed him. All Mental Attributes are rolled with an additional one point of difficulty.

Realms:

Actor — Describes who becomes confused. (Duration: One minute per success.)

Fae — Describes who becomes confused. (Duration: One minute per success.)

Nature — Describes what natural object people become confused about. (Duration: One hour per success.)

Prop — Describes what object people become confused about. (Duration: One hour per success.)

Scene — Describes what area people become confused in, or about. (Duration: One round per success.)

Backward Glance

This cantrip allows the changeling to look into the past. It has two main advantages. The first is to grant her total recall of any event that she has experienced. The second is to "read" what has happened to a person, place or thing in the past. Use of this cantrip is obvious, and widely recognized (even by commoners). Use of this cantrip on another changeling is considered to be in poor taste, if the caster doesn't ask first. This cantrip is useless when directed against the Mists, or anything touched by it. The number of successes rolled determines how far back this cantrip may read. Use of this cantrip requires one point of Glamour.

Realms:

Actor — Describes who is being read.

Fae — Describe who is being read. (May be used on self.)

Nature — Describes what is being read.

Prop — Describes what is being read.

Scene — Describes where is being read.

Successes:

1 Success: 10 minutes

2 Successes: One hour

3 Successes: One day

4 Successes: One month

5 Successes: One year

Dream Time

Sometimes called the "Rip van Winkle" spell, this cantrip affects the speed of the forward progression of time. It can speed time up or slow it down. This cantrip allows the fae to age an object prematurely or to retard aging (though not against the onset of Banality). This cantrip may not be combined with the cantrip Permanence, below. Speeding up an individual, using the Actor or Fae realms, allows extra actions to be taken in a turn. Slowing down someone in this fashion may reduce their target's ability to act. Unwilling targets of this cantrip may roll their Intelligence + Alertness (+ Temporal Sense, if applicable) versus the caster's Intelligence + Realm, to "outthink" this cantrip. Some changelings believe that this cantrip doesn't really alter time, but instead gives that illusion through other means. (Though no one knows how.) This cantrip may not be cast on the same object more than once in a scene.

Actor — Describes who is being affected. (**Speed up:** ages person 1 year per success **or** one extra action per turn, maximum five/**Slow down:** retards aging one month per success **or** slows down actions by half)

Fae — Describes who is being affected. (**Speed up:** ages person one year per success **or** one extra action per

turn, maximum five/**Slow down:** retards aging one month per success or slows down actions by half)

Nature — Describes what is being affected. (**Speed up:** ages object one year per success/**Slow down:** Retards aging one year per success)

Prop — Describes what is being affected. (**Speed up:** ages object 10 years per success/**Slow down:** Retards aging one year per success)

Scene — Describes where is being affected. (**Speed up:** ages area 100 years per success/**Slow down:** Retards aging 100 years per success)

Permanence

This cantrip affects the duration that another Art lasts. When applied to most Arts, this cantrip extends their durations by one unit of time (variable) per success. The Storyteller has absolutely the last word over how it affects a given cantrip. The amount of time (units of time) may be counted in rounds, minutes, or even centuries, depending on the spirit of the cantrip being affected. (i.e., The duration of the Chicanery cantrip Fuddle is counted in minutes, while the Dream-Craft cantrip Attunement may be measured in months. Cantrips with no duration to speak of (e.g. the Primal cantrip Holly-Strike) are not affected by this cantrip at all.

Realms:

Actor — Describes who is being affected.

Fae — Describes who is being affected.

Nature — Describes what is being affected.

Prop — Describes what is being affected.

Scene — Describes where is being affected.

Successes:

1 Success: (x2) duration.

2 Successes: (x3) duration.

3 Successes: (x4) duration.

4 Successes: (x5) duration.

5 Successes: (x10) duration.

Reversal of Fortune

This cantrip can turn back the veils of time and actually “undo” a recent occurrence. How far back in time this cantrip reaches is determined by the number of successes rolled. In combat situations the time is measured in rounds, while in less stressful situations (peace) it is measured in minutes. Casting this cantrip is very draining and costs a permanent point of Glamour. This cantrip may have an effect on the balance of power in a game. The Storyteller has the final say over whether a player character may take this Art.

Realms:

Actor — Describes who is being affected.



Fae — Describes who is being affected.
Nature — Describes what is being affected.
Prop — Describes what is being affected.
Scene — Describes where is being affected.

Successes:

- 1 Success: One round ago (combat), one minute ago (peace)
- 2 Successes: Two rounds ago (combat), two minutes ago (peace)
- 3 Successes: Three rounds ago (combat), three minutes ago (peace)
- 4 Successes: Four rounds ago (combat), four minutes ago (peace)
- 5 Successes: Five rounds ago (combat), five minutes ago (peace)

Noble Banks

Bunks employed by the nobility are usually more “dignified” than those employed by most commoners. This allows a noble to cast his cantrips without having to lose composure while doing so. The following Bunks may be used with any Art, but are listed according to Art, in case the Storyteller wishes to use the advanced cantrip rules (see **Changeling: The Dreaming**).

Chronos

- **Clock Stop:** Destroy a time piece.
- **Dust in the Wind:** Toss some hourglass sand into the air.
- **A Stitch in Time:** Tear a piece of your clothing.
- **Möebius Loop:** Make a Möebius strip out of paper, then destroy it.
- **Palindrome:** Pick another Bunk card and perform it, then do it backward to the best of your ability.

Dream-Craft

- **Masque:** Put on a fancy party mask.
- **Silver Wire:** Wrap a piece of silver wire around a piece of wood. Unwrap it when you wish to cast the cantrip.
- **Verbal Glyph:** Intone one of the ancient sidhe words of power. (All nobles know a few and they’re very impressive to commoners.)
- **Stolen Kiss:** Steal a passionate kiss with another changeling.
- **Recite Lineage:** Recite your family tree. Due to the impressively long lineage of most sidhe, this is not a combat bunk.

New House House Scathach

The most mysterious sidhe on Earth are those of the enigmatic House Scathach. The house is named after its founder, the famous Scathach n Uanaind. Scathach was the most famous of Ireland’s female warriors. Born of a union between human and fae, her house continues this tradition. Unlike all other sidhe, the nobility of this house chose to introduce themselves into human bloodlines, much like the common kith. As a result of this, they fared better during the Shattering. Many other sidhe (especially Traditionalists), however, consider them impure and question whether they are true sidhe at all. Whatever their heritage, they are considered to have the best Soothsayers among the sidhe. Most of their actions are in accordance with the advice of their *Morphean Oracles*.

Fierce, silent and deadly, members of this warrior house are adept at all forms of combat. They neither possess nor desire political power in noble society. Theories about their true agenda run rampant (though they are obviously Seelie). Most of the members of this house dress achromatically (blacks, whites and grays). They have garnered the nickname “Gray Walkers” because of this practice. Their eyes are usually gray or icy blue. They are usually reserved in their demeanor. The sidhe of this house are more widely traveled than the other houses (even House Liam) and are, as a result, more ethnically diverse. During the Interregnum they spread as far as the Middle East, where they still maintain a strong presence.

This house has a near-legendary reputation among the commoners. They are, however, rarely seen. Despite their strange ways, they are generally well regarded by the commoners, who learned to trust them during the Interregnum. House Scathach patrols the fringes of fae society. Many believe that it protects the fae (noble and commoner) from powerful enemies of old. Certainly, it forges strange alliances. Among the fae they are closest to the eshu, who also share their love of the road. They are also rumored to have contacts among the Prodigals, most notably the vampire Gangrel (see **Vampire: The Masquerade**), the Silent Striders (see **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**) and even the Ahl-i-Batin (see **The Book of Shadows**). Few, if any, outsiders know what their blazon is.

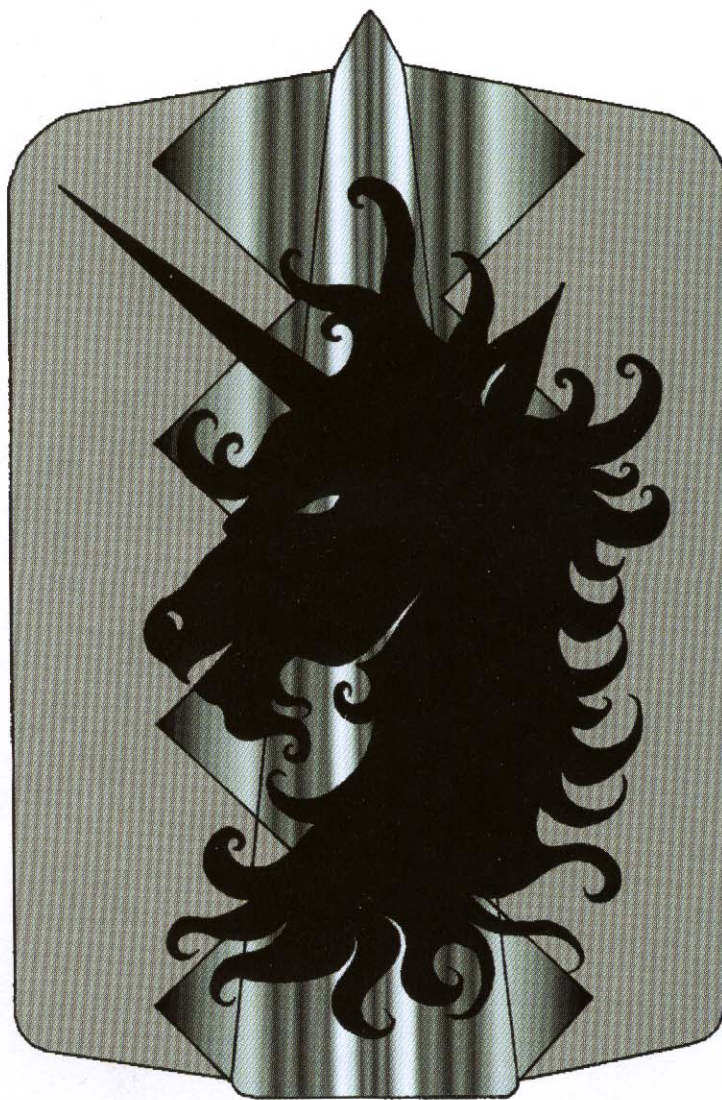
Affinity: Nature

Boon: Those of House Scathach are silent and efficient warriors. They rarely make any sound, even while fighting. (This causes great consternation in their foes.) They receive an extra die on all Brawl and Melee rolls. Additionally, they make all Stealth rolls at a -1 difficulty.

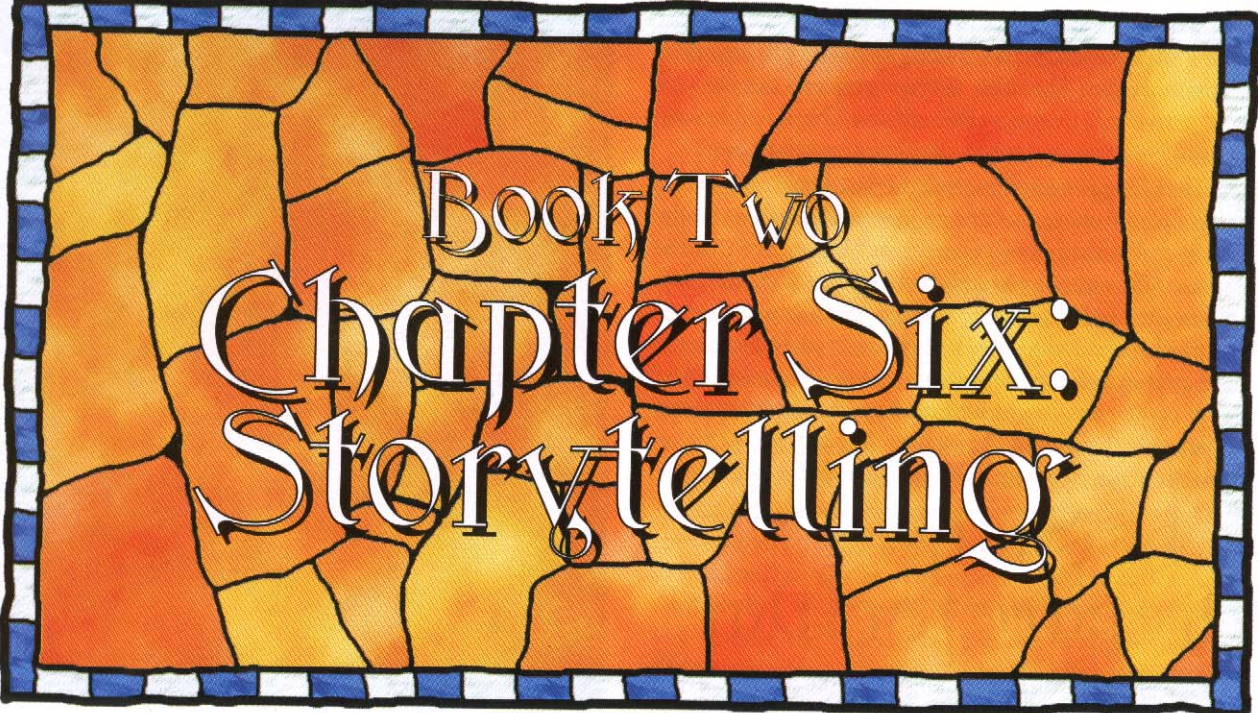
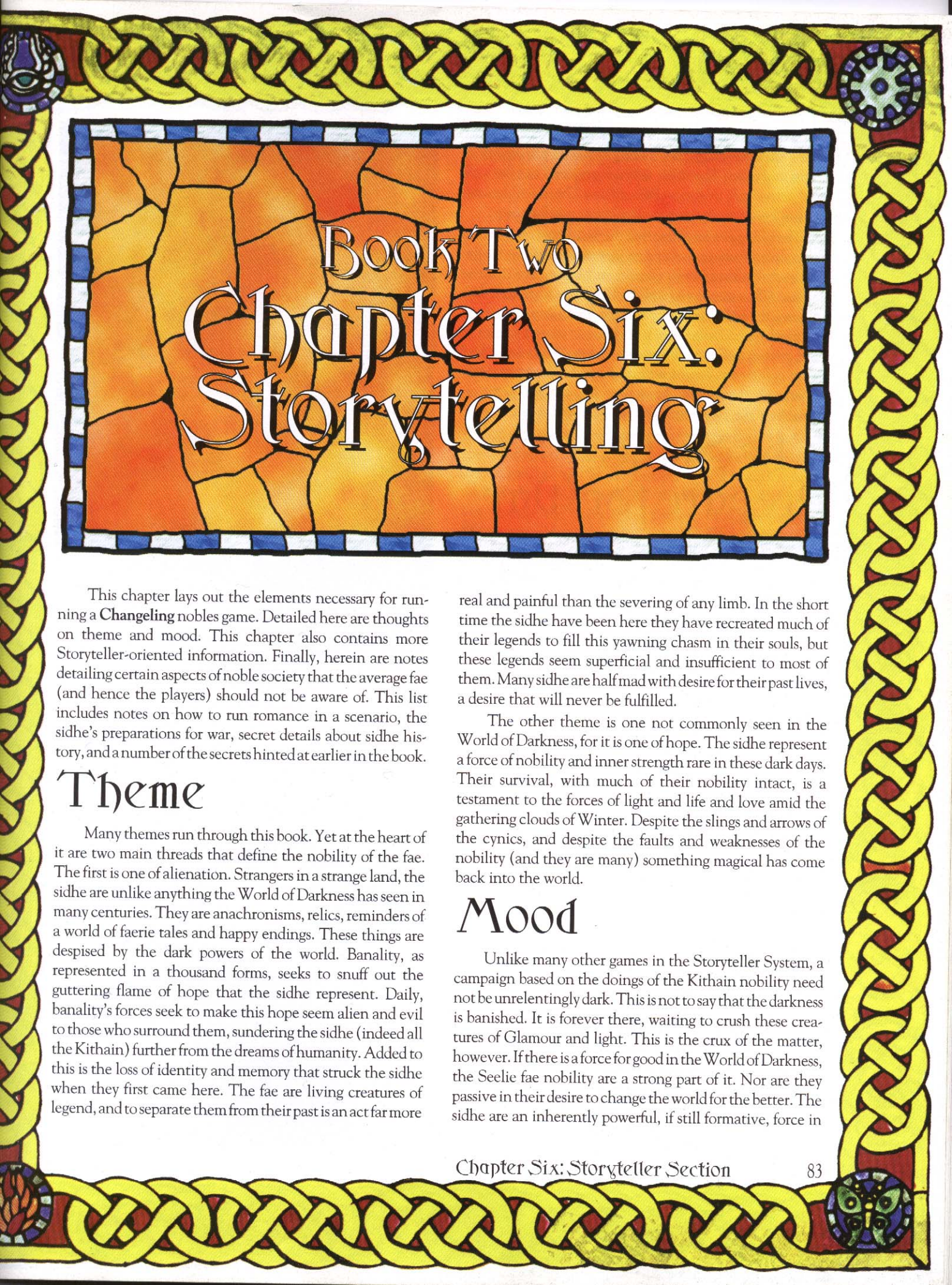
Flaw: Because of their human heritage, sidhe of this house do not have Banality's Curse (see **Changeling: The Dreaming**). They do, however, exhibit a strange madness in combat. Once entering a fight, they lose sight of almost everything else. Although a member of this house will not

attack friends (or even bystanders), she has great difficulty leaving a battle until either she, or all her enemies, are defeated. (Willpower roll: difficulty 7, three successes needed to retreat.)

Special Note: House Scathach is looked down upon by most nobles. All Social rolls with other sidhe (except Houses Fiona and Liam) are at +2 difficulty. Furthermore, because of an ancient blood pact, they are forbidden to use the Art of Sovereign. This ban is enforced by the full weight of the Dreaming.







Book Two

Chapter Six: Storytelling

This chapter lays out the elements necessary for running a **Changeling** nobles game. Detailed here are thoughts on theme and mood. This chapter also contains more Storyteller-oriented information. Finally, herein are notes detailing certain aspects of noble society that the average fae (and hence the players) should not be aware of. This list includes notes on how to run romance in a scenario, the sidhe's preparations for war, secret details about sidhe history, and a number of the secrets hinted at earlier in the book.

Theme

Many themes run through this book. Yet at the heart of it are two main threads that define the nobility of the fae. The first is one of alienation. Strangers in a strange land, the sidhe are unlike anything the World of Darkness has seen in many centuries. They are anachronisms, relics, reminders of a world of faerie tales and happy endings. These things are despised by the dark powers of the world. Banality, as represented in a thousand forms, seeks to snuff out the guttering flame of hope that the sidhe represent. Daily, banality's forces seek to make this hope seem alien and evil to those who surround them, sundering the sidhe (indeed all the Kithain) further from the dreams of humanity. Added to this is the loss of identity and memory that struck the sidhe when they first came here. The fae are living creatures of legend, and to separate them from their past is an act far more

real and painful than the severing of any limb. In the short time the sidhe have been here they have recreated much of their legends to fill this yawning chasm in their souls, but these legends seem superficial and insufficient to most of them. Many sidhe are half mad with desire for their past lives, a desire that will never be fulfilled.

The other theme is one not commonly seen in the World of Darkness, for it is one of hope. The sidhe represent a force of nobility and inner strength rare in these dark days. Their survival, with much of their nobility intact, is a testament to the forces of light and life and love amid the gathering clouds of Winter. Despite the slings and arrows of the cynics, and despite the faults and weaknesses of the nobility (and they are many) something magical has come back into the world.

Mood

Unlike many other games in the Storyteller System, a campaign based on the doings of the Kithain nobility need not be unrelentingly dark. This is not to say that the darkness is banished. It is forever there, waiting to crush these creatures of Glamour and light. This is the crux of the matter, however. If there is a force for good in the World of Darkness, the Seelie fae nobility are a strong part of it. Nor are they passive in their desire to change the world for the better. The sidhe are an inherently powerful, if still formative, force in

the modern world. The last few decades have been spent getting their bearings and "taking stock." This process is almost at a close. The sidhe are now prepared to take a far more active roll in the world's affairs. The mood among many nobles is an optimistic clarion cry: a call to arms.

The sidhe are everything that the dark forces of the world wish people to believe they can no longer be. They are, for the most part, kindly, honest, genteel and brave. Even in the absence of their memories (and much of their old power), they still have the will, the power and the leadership abilities to blast much of the darkness back to whence it came. Nor are the sidhe creatures of unremitting seriousness. Whimsical, "fay" aspects of their nature are readily apparent for those who look. Underneath their lordly demeanor, they are not so far removed from the commoner kith as one would at first believe.

The Sidhe Prepare for War

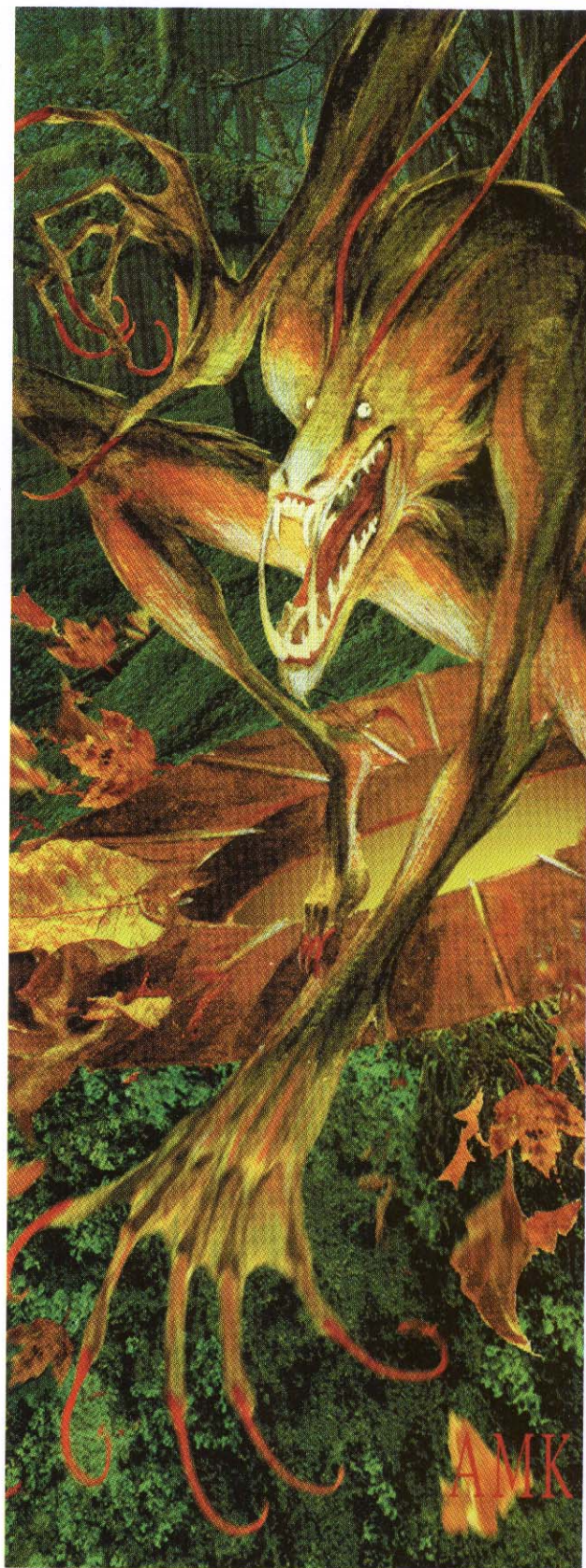
The modern world is a far more hostile place than any the sidhe can remember. Even the Shattering pales in comparison to the many threats facing the newly returned nobility. The sidhe are aware of this and have prepared accordingly. The Seelie nobility has many agents throughout the world. From these, they have a fairly good idea of who the greatest threats are. They divide these threats into the two categories listed below.

Major Threats

These are the threats that the sidhe consider closest to home. While not formally at war with any of these, watching them is of tantamount importance.

The Shadow Court: Not much has been heard from the Shadow Court since the Resurgence. Some see this as a sign that the Unseelie Court is weak, but the Seelie nobility is not fooled. It is readily apparent that the Shadow Court is gathering its strength, biding its time until it can make a full and violent comeback.

The Fomorians: Hideous, powerful and evil beyond description, the Fomorians are the most ancient and hated foes of the sidhe. They are a race of monsters, thought long extinct — but now the sidhe are not so sure. In form and action, they bear a startling resemblance to the creatures known as fomori (see *Werewolf: The Apocalypse*). The fomori are often seen with other dark creatures and the name of their primary employer, a company called *Pentex*, is now on the lips of some well-placed nobles. Most fomori do not seem to have the Fomorians' inhuman intelligence or their ability to traverse the Dreaming, but the similarities of name



and appearance are too close to be coincidental. Three powerful changeling freeholds were recently destroyed in attacks that strongly resembles Fomorian tactics.

The Hidden Ones: Although very few nobles know about the Technocracy by name, they are well aware that there is a powerful cabal of mages who shape the world's consensus and trade in Banality. The sidhe consider gathering information about this group to be extremely important. While they do not have the power to stop such an insidious organization on their own, they are masters at building alliances. The Technocracy knows far less about the sidhe than the sidhe know about it.

Peripheral Threats

These are the groups watched with some concern by the nobility. No final decision as to their status has been made, however.

The Nunnehi: Despite the sidhe's leadership of the Kithain, they are not the primary targets of the nunnehi. The nunnehi have far more distaste for the commoner kith, who, after all, were the ones who stole their land. Many nunnehi consider the sidhe to be little more than interesting newcomers, though still obviously European. The sidhe, unfortunately, do not have the luxury of returning this favor. Frequent complaints come in from common freeholds about nunnehi attacks. Sidhe attempts at mediation between the two groups has come to little. Unless something happens to intervene, a showdown between the sidhe and the nunnehi is in the offing.

The Prodigals: The sidhe remember the Prodigals from distant days. They remember both alliances and dark treachery. Most of all, they remember the power of these lost fae. Few sidhe consider all Prodigals to be *a priori* their enemies, but they are highly conscious of them as a threat. Constant vigilance is the watchword concerning the Prodigals.

The Sluagh: Even at the best of times there is antipathy between the sluagh and the sidhe. The two groups are diametrically opposed in almost every way. Even Seelie sluagh are considered a threat by many nobles. While it is no doubt true that there is some reason for this, it is also undeniable that the sluagh are often unjustly persecuted by the sidhe.

Storyteller's History

Although Chapter Two covered much of the history of the sidhe, there are certain elements that should be known only by the Storyteller.

The Age of Legends: Some scholars of this era insinuate that the sidhe killed their predecessors, the Tuatha de Danaan. Bringing up this theory of sidhe fratricide is enough to send some sidhe into a rage.

The Sundering: This period represents sidhe power at its zenith. At this time, the sidhe wielded unquestioned rulership over the fae and great influence over human society as well. It was also during this period, however, that the fae split into its Seelie and Unseelie components. Theories on the reasons behind this division are many. A startling number of these theories implicate the faerie Lilith, who later spawned the Kindred (according to fae legends). Some sidhe insist that she still walks the earth.

The Shattering: The Shattering was a period of upheaval for the fae. Next to the sidhe's retreat to Arcadia, perhaps the greatest occurrence during this period involved the treachery of High King Falchion. Falchion (when he is mentioned at all) is remembered as a traitor and an oathbreaker, who betrayed an entire kith to its destruction. Few dispute the truth of his betrayal of the Lords of the Mound (a noble kith, related to trolls). His name is synonymous, to some, with sidhe treachery.

The Twilight Times (a.k.a. The Interregnum): Few realize just how close the few sidhe who remained during this time came to extinction. In the period immediately following the departure of the sidhe, commoner hunts for their former lords were rampant. While by no means did all commoners participate in this outrage, enough did that the continued existence of the sidhe was in doubt. Only by retreating into their freeholds, or by joining House Scathach, did many western sidhe survive. Kithain historians (commoner and noble) avoid this topic, in the hopes of fostering better relations in the present. The holocaust of the early Interregnum is still a sore point for some sidhe, however.

The Resurgence: Few nobles, and fewer still commoners, are aware of one aspect of the Resurgence. During the initial rush of Glamour, following the moon landing, the doors to the Dreaming were flung wide open. The sidhe were not the only ones who used these portals to reach the Waking Lands. Chimerical intelligences, vast and malevolent, also forded the Mists from their home in the Nightmare Realms. Unlike the sidhe, however, they retain their memory. Although they do not remember it, the sidhe of both courts battled side by side to prevent these nightmares from reaching the human world. They lost.

The Accordance War: It is generally accepted that the sidhe were winning this war when it came to a close. What is not generally accepted is just how close to total victory they came. Many commoners underestimate the power of the nobility, but the commoner leadership has a clearer picture of sidhe power. Despite occasional talk of revolution,

there are few commoner leaders who wish to repeat the near-disaster of the Accordance War. (For the real truth behind High King Dyfell's death, see the *Goblin Town* entry in the book *Freeholds and Hidden Glens*.)

The Present: Winter is closer at hand than even the most pessimistic of doomsayers predict. Some sidhe are aware of this fact and realize that the fae, in general, are not ready to face this time of tribulation. Perhaps one of the greatest current weaknesses of the sidhe is the growing schism between them and the trolls. Both the sluagh and the Beltaine Blade are encouraging this growing enmity, for their own disparate reasons.

Arcadia

While Arcadia remains an inviolate paradise in the minds of the vast majority of fae, a growing number of them fear that it is in dire peril. Some hint that the recent expulsion of the five Seelie and one Unseelie House from Arcadia (only the most naive believe they returned voluntarily) is a grave sign of trouble there. Many theorize that all out war has finally broken out between the two courts, a war that will soon draw in the fae of Earth. As some commoners might put it: *The nobles muxed it up, real good!* Even more horrifying to some is the thought that the great walls of Arcadia are under attack by outside forces. Then, perhaps, some say, the newly arrived nobility are here because of a grand retreat — or perhaps they are here to prepare a counterattack. This is a hopeful sign to some, for it means the eventual reconciliation of the two courts. Whether this is true or not, not even the sidhe can say.

Some more "sensitive" changelings (those with a Greymare 4 or 5) have occasional dreams of Arcadia. Although these dreams are infuriatingly hazy and contradictory, they seem to indicate that the heart of the Dreaming is close to ruins. Most Kithain do not believe this, of course. Arcadia is eternal in their minds. Any suggestion to the contrary is a heresy. Arcadia fallen? Impossible.

Assassination

Assassination as a means of attrition is all too common among the sidhe nobility since the Resurgence. The first and greatest assassination since their return was that of the Warlord Dyfell. Some say that it was his murder that paved the way for the three high-profile assassinations (and a fourth attempt) since that time. The first regicide to rock Concordia since Dyfell was that of Queen Andalura of the Kingdom of Grass. Queen Andalura was a steady-handed monarch of House Dougal. She was cut down in 1985 while defending her realm against an incursion of particularly malign chimera. She is succeeded by her cousin, Queen

Mary Elizabeth. Although there are rumors that her assassination was planned by those within her own house, most discount this. (House Dougal is not known for backstabbing.)

The same year as Queen Andalura's death, King Sean of the Kingdom of Pacifica was murdered by commoner revolutionaries of the Radical People's Front (an ally of the Ranters). Sean was succeeded to the throne by his niece, Queen Aeron. Aeron ascended the throne at age 16. She directly led a raid that avenged her uncle's death, which reportedly resulted in the death of all of his assassins. Few, if any, suspect Queen Aeron of complicity in Sean's death, though her recent decadence and flirtations with her Unseelie nature are creating grist for some ugly rumors.

Far more suspicious is the death of King Barabas, of House Eiluned. Barabas was the wildly unpopular despot of the Kingdom of Willows. He took the region by force during the Accordance War, ruling it in a capricious and unjust manner until his death during a commoner revolt in 1990. The revolt ended in a direct assault on Barabas' freehold. The assault finished in stalemate and a flag of truce was raised. It is unclear which side violated the parley, but at the end Barabas lay dead. Barabas' former general and distant cousin, Duke Meilge, was proclaimed king by royal lottery. Although many suspect that Meilge somehow instigated the fight that led to Barabas' death, few object to the act. High King David evidently turned a blind eye to the assassination, since Barabas was a political enemy and an unjust ruler. Many consider Meilge to be only nominally better.

The most recent assassination attempt was against Queen Laurel, of the Kingdom of Northern Ice. While considered unassailable in her wintry stronghold, the queen was less guarded as she traveled to meet with King David at his court of Tara-Nar. Kithain assassins, aided by powerful Arts, descended upon her caravan. She barely survived the episode and her assailants disappeared without a trace. The identity of these assassins is a subject for wild speculation by all changelings. Everyone has a theory. Some Modernists in the Parliament of Dreams accuse the Beltaine Blade, though many write their accusations off as Ranter propaganda. Most of the blame for this attempt is cast against the Shadow Court.

Mortality

Although long lived, most fae are not immortal in the sense that vampires are. While in their freeholds, Kithain are shielded from the ravages of both Banality and old age. Some fae spend most of their time within their freehold retreats, thus aging little. This is particularly true of the sidhe, who fear Banality above all other things. Most commoners are more "of the world" than their rulers. Many live their lives, traveling between their human and faerie seemings, with little thought of denying their mortality. To most common-

ers, life, death and rebirth are a natural cycle. To most sidhe, however, death is an unnatural and frightening thing. In Arcadia, if the stories are to be believed, natural death is almost nonexistent.

The sidhe fear death like no other kith. Yet, it is natural death that they fear more than any other. A sudden, violent death while in the prime of their life is sometimes an unavoidable reality of existence. It is a reality that they accept. Death by the slow diminution of what they are, however, is horrifying to them. Unlike the common kith, the sidhe do not know what awaits them beyond death. Tradition has it, that in Arcadia they went to a place called Spring as they finished their autumn years. This is not thought to be possible from earth. It is only the sidhe's inherent courage in most other aspects of life that allows them to face death with their accustomed, imperious stare. They'll be damned if they let the commoners know that anything rattles them.

Although there are some extremely old commoners, few compare in age to the oldest sidhe. In one respect, the apparent ancientness of the sidhe is illusory. Sidhe who lived before the Shattering may remember the Crusades, but they don't remember the intervening years between then and the present. Although most commoners understand this intellectually, there is still a strong aura of age around the sidhe that is hard to ignore. Even though the sidhe who lived through the Interregnum may not clearly remember those years spent in Arcadia, they still, presumably, lived them. There is something of a generation gap between sidhe who remember the Sundering and those born since the Resurgence. Some sidhe (like Lady Sierra) are truly ancient.

The Chrysalis

The Chrysalis is, perhaps, the most dangerous time for newly arriving sidhe. Unlike the commoners, who, through their blood ties to humanity, have something of a cushion during the emergence of their fae seeming, the sidhe have no such protection. During the early years of the Resurgence, sidhe were forced to "possess" adult humans in order to protect themselves. (The human is taken to Arcadia, hence the name *changeling*.) Many liken the experience to that of being born. Thrust without preparation into the cold, Banality-saturated realities of the modern world is a painful and disorienting experience, one not softened by years of life as a mortal (like most commoners). The experience drives some sidhe slightly mad, though this madness is almost always temporary.

As the sidhe psyche emerges, it often experiences flashes from the human's receding memory. These "psychic jolts" can be both painful and disorienting. In the end, however, the human memory becomes faint and distant. Just enough remains to allow the sidhe to begin exploring her

new world. Often the sidhe will meet the friends and family of the person she changes places with. This can be an excruciating experience for both parties. The loss of this second set of mortal memories just after losing their Arcadian identity is a devastating blow to the sidhe. It is a credit to them, as a people, that they are able to bear this burden.

It is generally believed that most sidhe do not know where (or as whom) they are going to "splash down" when they arrive on earth. Despite this, it has been observed (somewhat snidely) by many commoners that they always manage to "take over good-looking people." Whether this is by design or just an example of "sympathetic magic" is unknown. It is obvious, however, that the sidhe's psyche exerts some influence over the body that it assumes. (Human imperfections often fade away as the possession takes place.) This might be one reason why the Technocracy considers the sidhe to be alien invaders. During the early years of the Resurgence many sidhe also found wounds on their human bodies when they came through. It is believed that these injuries are caused by wounds inflicted on the sidhe as they battled their way from Arcadia.

Now that the sidhe are somewhat better established in the Waking Lands, they usually start their lives as children. Adult sidhe protect their newfound childlings (many of whom were probably adults in Arcadia) with a passion. As a rule, the transition is much easier for childlings, who retain most of the memories of their mortal seemings. In general, the younger a sidhe changeling is, the more she remembers of her human life. At earlier ages, the area where the Kithain persona begins and the human persona ends is nearly indistinguishable. Some believe that very young sidhe are not true changelings at all, but symbiotes. Sidhe childlings regain their pre-Interregnum memories very slowly, often not until adulthood. The sidhe (presumably) don't believe they are doing anything wrong when they assume a human body. The human's soul is taken to Arcadia, where it is well treated, even pampered. Most sidhe consider the switch to be tantamount to sponsoring an exchange student.

Ancient Pacts

One potential advantage that the sidhe have is in a series of ancient pacts, alliances and blood oaths from before the Shattering. The sidhe know many of the *old secrets*, long lost to the common kith. Some of these alliances have atrophied from lack of use. Others may still work, but the sidhe have not managed to find all of their old allies since the Resurgence. Some of these ancient pacts are merely prescriptions for etiquette when dealing with other creatures, while others may be devastating words of power. The Storyteller should be inventive, but prudent in allowing these old pacts to play a roll in his campaign.

On the Dreaming

*When you think you're swimming to the surface,
you're swimming straight down.*

Down to the bottom.

There is another world spinning inside of this one.

— Laurie Anderson, "Freefall"

The Dreaming is a universe unto its own. It is said that any and all things may be found there, if one knows how to look. Given this infinite tableau, many of the commoner kith fear to return to this place that was once most natural to them. Others, however, are now rediscovering their lost legacy. Most of these fae do not travel beyond the Near Dreaming. The only way for most changelings to enter the Dreaming is by entering a trod. Although the Dreaming is a place of infinite expanse and diversity, it is generally agreed that it can be divided into three major realms.

The Near Dreaming

The Near Dreaming is that which most conforms to the mundane, "real," world. It often (though not always) mimics it in such major aspects as geography. Human-made constructs (such as buildings) may also have their Near Dreaming counterparts, but more likely not. As a rule, human artifacts that are imbued with a great deal of imagination are more real in the Near Dreaming (i.e., a cathedral would leave more of an impression than an O'Tolley's restaurant). In the Dreaming a creative work, such as a book or painting, may even be alive. Most freeholds are situated in the Near Dreaming. It is also here that the nature of a kingdom's ruler has the most effect on the land. The Silver Path begins to fail at the far edges of this realm.

The Far Dreaming

The Far Dreaming is mostly beyond the authority of the sidhe nobility. Some fae occasionally come here to escape the nobility. This is dangerous, however, because the sidhe know the Far Dreaming better than any other kith. The Far Dreaming can be tumultuous, even cataclysmic; or it can be placid and benign. Fae Arts work well here, but the chaotic nature of the Far Dreaming makes permanent residence here almost impossible for all but the most powerful of Kithain or chimera. The Silver Path exists in the Far Dreaming, but is far less reliable — only the most powerful trods extend this far into the Dreaming.

The Deep Dreaming

The Deep Dreaming is poorly understood by earth-bound fae (including the sidhe) for good reason. The Deep Dreaming may contain such paradises as Arcadia, but these exist side by side with nightmare realms of unimaginable

cruelty. To explore the Deep Dreaming as Duke Asterlan did (see the short story, "Asterlan") is to be lost forever. Even members of the Crystal Circle travel here but rarely. The Deep Dreaming is said to connect to other realms (such as the Umbra). In the Deep Dreaming the Silver Path is something of a joke among local chimera. There are only a handful of trods that extend this far — and even then one must know the arcane secrets which allow their doors to be opened.

On Trods

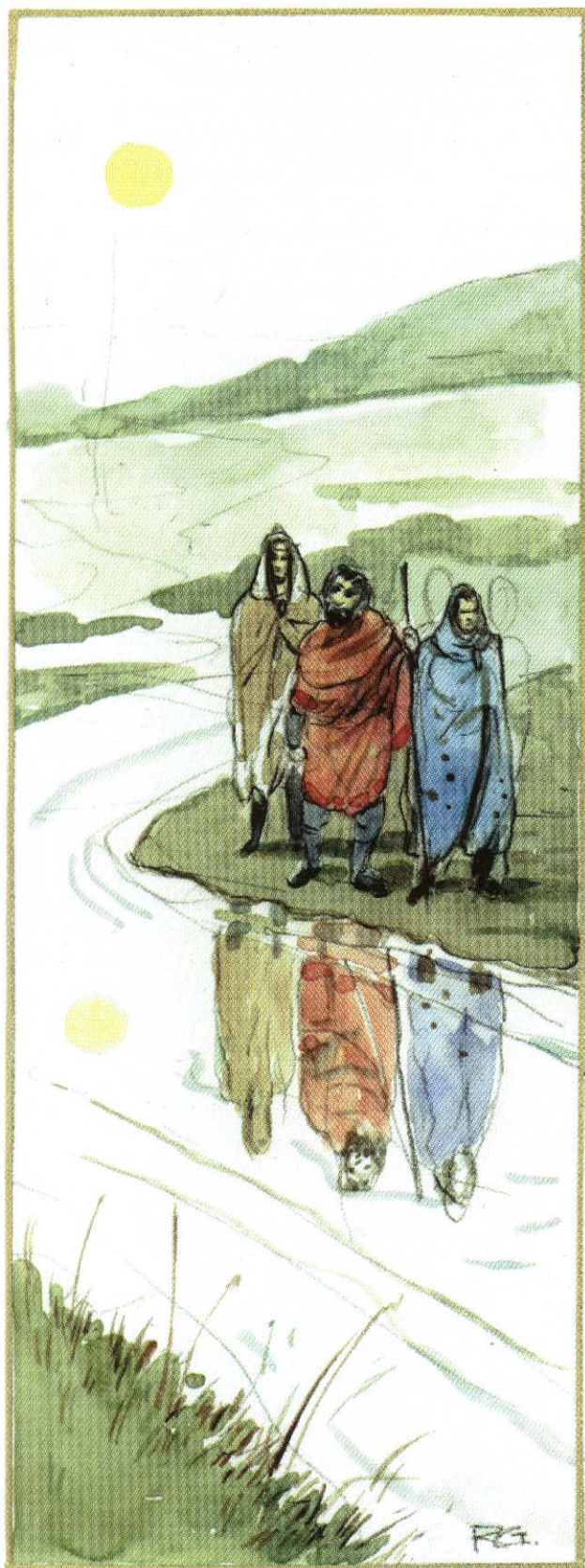
If Glamour is the life's blood of the fae, then trods are the arteries through which it flows. Trods are the fae's nearest connection to the Dreaming and Arcadia beyond. They are also power. The sidhe realized this fact during the Resurgence and acted quickly to claim the lion's share of the recently reopened trods. Those who control the trods wield great control over fae society. Troops and secret missives may be moved quickly and secretly through them in times of war, while they are ideal trade routes and vital connections to the Dreaming in times of peace. The sidhe know more about trods than any other changeling kith. (There are some nonfae who know more than the sidhe).

Trods may lead to a number of places. Most follow a path leading from one earthly location, through the Near Dreaming, to another earthly destination. Other trods end at specific locations within the Dreaming. The Dreaming is a place of constantly shifting time and location. After over 600 years of being severed from the Dreaming, most commoners are not adept at traveling through it. Few changelings live directly in the Dreaming, due to its hostility and restless nature. The risks of chimerical threats and the dangers of Bedlam cannot be overlooked. Those who leave the safety of the trod's Silver Path risk becoming lost forever in a constantly shifting wilderness, with only monstrous chimera for companionship.

Some changelings, however, set up homesteads within the Dreaming, sometimes along trods, but more often at points where they terminate. The Dream-Craft cantrip *Homestead* is vital for those who wish to set up shop in the Dreaming. (See the book, *Freeholds and Hidden Glens* for more information on trods.)

The Silver Path

The Silver Path is literally that: a path which leads from one end of a trod to the other. If the travelers along the path do not deviate from it, they greatly increase their chances of reaching their destination unharmed. The Silver Path not only acts as a guide, but as a protector as well. Chimerical monsters must expend Glamour to attack those on the path. More intelligent chimera realize this and devise many deceptions to trick unwary changelings from the path.



Menaces

Although the creatures listed below may stalk others, they prefer sidhe.

*Running ever through my head is an old-time rune —
'Who meets the Love-Talker must weave her shroud soon.'*

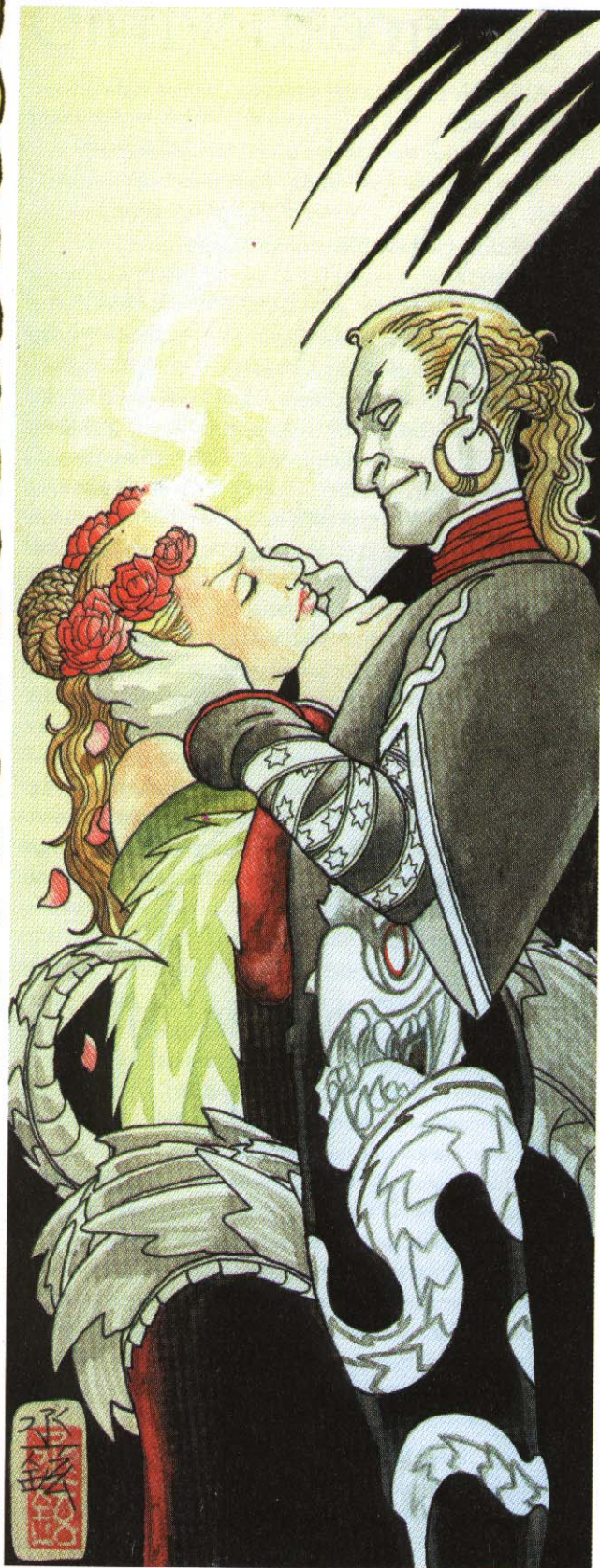
— Ethna Carbery, "The Love-Talker"

Ganconer ('The Love-Talker')

All intelligent creatures who know love are the prey of the Ganconer. These chimera use their wiles to seduce, corrupt and destroy such people. The Ganconer is a cold, methodical and murderous creature with a gray and alien mind. It stalks its prey, sometimes for years, before attempting an approach. In that time it learns much about its target and knows just how to approach him or her. It is masterful in its seduction, bending even the strongest wills to its whims. Contrary to popular belief, the Ganconer does not often participate in brief trysts that drain and kill in a short time. The Ganconer is in it for the long haul. The Ganconer is unlike most of the other romantic predators in the World of Darkness. Most of these feed off lust or sexual violence; the Ganconer, however, is interested in love. The Ganconer becomes the perfect paramour (lover, friend, advisor). Before such an assault, even the most recalcitrant hearts usually fail. Although more outwardly romantic people are more easily seduced, most Ganconers prefer to target the innocent. This initial seduction may be instantaneous or it may take decades. Usually the Ganconer is in control the whole time.

Stage One (Seduction): Most Ganconers prefer to work "honestly," earning their target's love rather than forcing it. If its intended victim remains recalcitrant, however, the Ganconer attempts a possession (its Manipulation + Subterfuge versus its target's Willpower). If it fails, the Ganconer starts whirling and shrieking, losing limbs on the way. It then dissolves in a lavender cloud of sickly, sweet vapor. If it succeeds, however, the victim is now deeply in love with the Love-Talker and suspects nothing. Once its victim is ensorcelled, the Ganconer may then make a second possession attempt. (Same rolls as above.) If it fails, the target is none the wiser and the Ganconer may try again in another year. Some Ganconers become frustrated if they fail their first attempt and their validity as lovers may begin to fray. If successful, however, the Ganconer's lover is now also its slave.

Stage Two (Corruption): The lover's will is completely turned to that of the Ganconer. The Love-Talker now begins the desecration of the soul. This process involves turning the victim into a mirror image of itself. Victims may



discover that they are “having more fun,” while acting out forbidden urges. The victim becomes a “cohort in crime,” aiding and abetting the Love-Talker in atrocious deeds and, then, in covering them up. Often they will joke together about all the losers and suckers out there (e.g., former friends and family). The two become each other’s world, sliding into an ever increasing maelstrom of mad love. This is a dangerous time for the Ganconer. Some Ganconers are murdered by their deranged “soulmates” before they can initiate stage three. (A just punishment for their crimes.)

Stage Three (Destruction): Once the lover is thoroughly corrupted, the Ganconer initiates its victim’s final fall. The victim’s world becomes a mad and mocking place. Reality warps and crumbles into the void. This stage may last anywhere between hours and decades. The victim may realize all that he has lost by loving the Ganconer, but it is far too late for regrets. There is nothing left but the Ganconer — and then it disappears. The need to seek it out consumes the victim. Eventually the lost lover is found and the world suddenly comes to life again. It is at that moment that the Ganconer strikes. It attempts a third possession (See above. The victim is aware of the third attempt and may regain control if it fails.) If successful this time, it drains the victim, body and soul. The victim’s consciousness is devoured, and the Ganconer moves on, clothed in its loved one’s skin.

The most terrifying thing about the Love-Talker is that although it masters the image of love, it hasn’t the faintest idea of what it is. (Other than a rare delicacy.) Although powerful, it also has several weaknesses. Fae lore indicates that the Ganconer must have one of its victim’s possessions (preferably a cherished one) lodged in a human heart (also, preferably, a cherished one’s) in a jar, and nearby, at all times. The victim’s friends or family may discover it. If the heart is destroyed, so too is the Ganconer’s spell. Friends and family are the greatest enemy of the Ganconer. If they sense something “wrong” about the Ganconer, they may move to intervene. Although the victim will try to shield the Ganconer from such intervention, persistent attempts by true loved ones may weaken the Ganconer’s hold. It will be hard pressed to get rid of all of them without losing composure. Ganconers will often speed up their timetable in the event of especially persistent loved ones.

There are rumors of Ganconers who fall in love with their intended victims. Clever Ganconers will use this obvious piece of hogwash to their advantage, if discovered.

Attributes: The Ganconer possesses all the Attributes, Abilities, Arts, Disciplines, etc. of its most recent victim. All Ganconers have, at least, Chicanery 1 and Sovereign 3.

Glamour: 5-8, Willpower: Variable

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5

Powers: (Possession. See above.)

Bean Sidhe (Banshee)

Though not nearly as calculating or as malignant as the Ganconer, the Bean Sidhe is no less dangerous. Most fae consider banshees to be tragic and, perhaps, even sympathetic creatures. This assessment is correct. They are also desperate.

Locked in a hellish nothingness between the Dreaming and the Shadowlands (The restless realms of the dead. See **Wraith: The Oblivion**.), the Bean Sidhe is a guttering spark of what was once Kithain. The blackness of the void devours them, but only slowly. The only way to stave off this hideous mutilation of mind and soul is by stealing the essences of others. Legend has it that banshees are often seen shortly before a misfortune, though it is vague as to whether the Bean Sidhe causes the happening or merely observes. In truth, they do both. By some cruel twist of fate, it is believed that only the good may become Bean Sidhe. Only those Kithain who live lives of justice, kindness and honor are “deserving” of this Dán. Banshees rail against their fate. They battle it with every ounce of will, but in the end (it is believed) all succumb to the madness of the void.

Banshees occasionally appear to wraiths as well. The Restless also have good reason to fear them. While banshees covet the energies of the living to salve their agonies, so too do they desire Oblivion. Each changeling encountered by the banshee delivers a moment’s solace, while each wraith draws it closer to the peace that final dissolution offers. The agonies of the Bean Sidhe are less acute in areas of low Banality; thus they are highly attracted to freeholds and other faerie magics. They are especially drawn to the freeholds of the Lost Ones (see below). All changelings know of banshees, though that hardly prepares them for the experience of meeting one. No matter how kindly a banshee may attempt to be in her approach, a wave of horror pours through her target. (The “banshee’s wail.”) This Shroud of Nightmares, surrounding the Bean Sidhe, is not under her control, but a natural part of her condition. The Shroud further isolates the banshee from all possible kindness from others, for her very presence is anathema.

Some changelings have made attempts to communicate with the Bean Sidhe, but the distortion to reality caused by the Shroud makes meaningful communication impossible. (Some posit that a cooperative venture by fae and wraiths might render some fruit, but such an alliance is unlikely.) The cause for their condition is a mystery. Some advance the theory that they are fae who pined away from some great sorrow, while others insist that they are souls of Kithain ripped from their bodies by the Ganconer (see above). Although nightmarish, an assault from a banshee is not necessarily fatal. Most banshees manage to maintain some semblance of morality, even after all their suffering.

Most (though not all) seek only enough sustenance for their needs, without killing. This is a difficult task for the Bean Sidhe, however.

While draining the substances of others, the Shroud of Nightmares turns on the banshee, making it difficult for her to judge the reality of her actions. The Shroud of Nightmares is sentient (though alien) and tries everything it can to trick the banshee into draining her victim until dead. The banshee may resist this impulse by rolling her Willpower roll versus the Shroud’s. Success means she may break off the attack after her first wail. Another roll may be made after each additional attack. The Shroud gains something during these exchanges, but nobody knows what.

Attributes: Possesses no Physical Attributes except for Dexterity. All Social Attributes are distorted by the Shroud of Nightmares. It is assumed that all Attributes conform to the norm for a changeling.

Glamour: 7, Willpower: Variable, Pathos: 7 (Treat as Glamour, if you don’t have **Wraith**.)

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5

Talents: Vary widely.

Powers:

Shroud of Nightmares (Banshee’s Wail) — The Shroud of Nightmares drains Glamour from Kithain and Pathos from wraiths. The banshee’s wail causes a wave of sheer, vertiginous horror to engulf its victims. The banshee rolls her Glamour (difficulty 6) versus the victim’s Willpower (difficulty 7). For each success over the amount of her opponent’s roll, the banshee drains one point of Glamour (or Pathos). If the changeling loses more than half of his existing stock of that attribute, he may enter a state of Bedlam. (Willpower roll: difficulty 6, two successes needed to resist.) Wraiths go on Harrowings. If the Bean Sidhe continues her attack, she will continue to drain essence. Once the victim reaches zero Glamour or Pathos, the banshee begins to draw Willpower, then finally Health Levels (or Corpus). Each wail costs a point of Glamour (to affect wraiths), or Pathos (to affect changelings). The Bean Sidhe gains a point of essence for every two it steals. (The Shroud gets the rest.) In addition to all this, the wail steals one memory (Storyteller’s choice) from its victim. The Shroud’s Willpower is usually around 7 or 8.

Note: Because the banshee needs Pathos to affect changelings and Glamour to affect wraiths, it becomes more dangerous when confronted by both.

Incorporeal Nature — Banshees have no physical form, whether in the mundane world, the Dreaming or the Shadowlands. They may not be harmed physically, or affected by any known Arts or Arcanos (at least separately).

The Lost Ones

The Shattering was an age of horror and cruelty. Nature itself turned on much of humanity, in the form of a miniature ice age. The Black Death decimated almost one quarter of Europe. In fear and hatred, Europe turned on itself in a paroxysm of religious intolerance. The shadow of the Inquisition loomed black over many places, especially those with a large Kithain or Prodigal presence. While the vampires reached a crucial stage in their Jyhad, Banality threatened to suffocate the changeling populace. Against this backdrop, many changelings fled to Arcadia, while others survived by mingling their blood with humanity's. Some, however, chose a third path. Wrapping themselves in whatever Glamour they could find, these fae walled themselves off in their freeholds, never to reemerge.

Over time, as Banality rose, the power of these former freeholds remained surprisingly constant. Indeed, they increased in power. Now, here or there, there is a place where a flower pushes its way through tarmac, or where beauty is found in the bleakest of conditions. Humanity thrives in these little paradises. They are glimmers of hope in a world turned dark. Kithain, however, must stay well clear of these Shangri-Las. This is the riddle of the Lost Ones. Their legacy is one of hope to humanity, in a time that it desperately needs it, but it also is one of extreme danger to the Kithain.

Lost One freeholds are areas of great creativity for humans: the Glamour here is untainted and plentiful. When these places first appeared (around the mid-17th century) many commoners first believed that it was the sidhe returning. In a sense, it was. Many flocked to these places, in the hopes of easy Glamour. Lost One freeholds are maddeningly creative and heady places for humans; for changelings, however, they are places of unbridled Bedlam. Reality here distorts in fun-house mirror fashion. The changeling is rapidly rendered incoherent as his deliberative functions are torn from him one by one. Sometimes this effect is instant; sometimes it takes hours. Some changelings never return from these places, disappearing off the face of the earth. Others do return, but few are ever the same.

Some changelings risk entering these freeholds to grab some "easy" Glamour. There are even some thrill seekers (mostly wilders) who make Glamour raids, just for the excitement. This practice is so dangerous that it is sometimes referred to as "running the dragon's tail." These forays are usually hit-and-run affairs, and can be exciting. Most tail runners report that these zones are extremely challenging. Reality is distorted here (especially in the Dreaming), though not always in a bad way. The most insidious aspect of these freeholds is in their seductive nature. Although nightmare experiences occur, most are benign in demeanor (if not in nature). It is generally true that the longer a changeling risks



the freehold, less the chance there is that she will come out again.

Gaining Glamour: Changelings may gain one point of Glamour every hour within these freeholds. The Glamour here is pure and so potent that it even sets off epiphanies. These epiphanies have none of the taint of those caused by Ravaging. Epiphanies set off while in a Lost One freehold are most like those encountered during a Reverie (see **Changeling: The Dreaming**). In order to gain Glamour or set off an epiphany while in a Lost One freehold, a changeling must make a connection with one of the human dreamers who live there. Creative breakthroughs inspired in these inhabitants by the changeling is much faster than that inspired under normal circumstances. The very air seems to spark with creativity and artistic revelations occur like thunderbolts out of the blue. Most humans here are friendly and receptive to artistic overtures on the part of the changeling. To spark a Reverie the changeling must make a Charisma + Kenning roll (difficulty 7); the number of successes determines how long the changeling takes to inspire the Dreamer.

- 1 success — eight hours
- 2 successes — six hours
- 3 successes — three hours
- 4 successes — one hour
- 5 successes — instant connection

After connecting, the changeling must stay with the creator at least one hour, while she starts her masterpiece (finishing it may take years). After an hour the changeling may roll Perception + Empathy (difficulty 6); the number of successes indicates the number of Glamour points gained.

Freehold Effects: The drive to inspire creativity in humans is a race against time in these freeholds. The dangers here are twofold. The first is that while in the freehold, the changeling's psyche is exposed to raw Dreaming in its purest sense. The chances of going into a state of Bedlam here are great. Every hour the changeling must make a Willpower roll (starting difficulty 6). Each hour the difficulty increases by one. Once the difficulty reaches 10, the number of successes needed increases by one per hour. With the first failure, the changeling slips into the first threshold of Bedlam (see **Changeling: The Dreaming**). Failure to make this roll in subsequent hours drives the changeling into the second and third thresholds of Bedlam. Those who reach the third threshold quickly disappear into the local Dreaming, rarely to be seen again. After reaching the first threshold, the

changeling must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 6, two successes needed) in order to leave the freehold. An additional roll to leave may be made every hour, but not after the changeling is in the third stage of Bedlam. The second danger is that the changeling may be noticed by the Lost One itself.

Lost Ones: Lost Ones rarely make direct contact with changelings, instead letting them slip into Bedlam on their own. Most Lost Ones no longer exist in a physical sense on the mundane plane, but reside wholly in the Dreaming. Most Lost Ones are detached from the minutiae of what occurs in their freeholds, instead bathing in the Glamour of their human dreamers. The Lost One makes a Perception + Kenning roll (starting difficulty 10, two successes needed) every hour to detect Kithain presence in its freehold. The number of successes needed, and then the difficulty, decreases by one per subsequent hour.

In the Dreaming, Lost Ones usually manifest as very potent Kithain (usually sidhe). They are extremely potent sorcerers, especially in the Arts of Chicanery, Chronos and Dream-Craft. They, of course, have large reserves of Glamour to draw from. Additionally, they have a strong affinity for their freehold and cast all cantrips at -2 levels of difficulty. Any cantrips cast against them here are at +2 difficulty. Lost Ones typically have all manners of chimerical servants. Lost Ones can rarely be found, unless they will it. They can cloak themselves within their freeholds, rendering themselves almost undetectable. Once the Lost One reveals itself, changelings may make a Perception + Kenning roll (difficulty 9, two successes needed) in order to track it.

Lost Ones generally mean no harm to visiting Kithain, but use Bedlam to reinforce the borders of their freeholds against Banality. Since Lost Ones are in a permanent (though highly specialized) state of Bedlam themselves, they do not consider driving others into this state to be much of a crime. Once a changeling disappears into the Dreaming here, she is watched over, and "cared for," by the Lost One. Most Lost Ones consider changelings to be their "children." (They are especially delighted by the sidhe's return.) Rescuing a friend from a Lost One is a major undertaking. Lost Ones are unable to leave their freeholds, though they may employ chimera to extend their reach beyond these borders. Due to their positive effects against Banality, Lost Ones are protected by both noble and commoner law. In rare cases Lost Ones may make alliances with other changelings.



Chapter Seven: The Nobility of Concordia

The Monarchs

The monarchs of Concordia are a powerful and diverse breed. They meet once a year (alternating between Beltaine and Samhain) at a grand conclave at Tara-Nar.

High King David (Hoose Gwydion – Concordia)

Often known as the “commoners’ king,” David Ardry is still widely popular with both commoners and nobles. He also has some powerful enemies among the sidhe’s feudal nobility. Groups such as the Beltaine Blade view him as far too reform-minded. They publicly back the concept of a high king, while privately working to undercut his authority.

Despite his reputation as a benign ruler, however, David is no pushover. He is a shrewd, and at times Machiavellian, political operator. This does not affect his ultimate goal of a more egalitarian society for all Kithain, but he has made some unpalatable political alliances. David is not only supported by the commoners, but by several of his fellow monarchs. Queen Mab, Duke Topaz,

Queen Mary Elizabeth and Queen Laurel are all strong supporters of David. Queen Aeron and Queen Morganna show deference, but are generally cool toward him. King Meilge shows some antipathy towards him.





Princess Lenore (House Gwydion/Dougal)

Although he is still single, King David has an heir. When Queen Andalura was assassinated in 1985, David took her then-infant daughter, the Princess Lenore, as his ward and heir apparent. The move has further cemented the traditionally strong ties between Houses Dougal and Gwydion. The Princess Lenore is tutored by David's chamberlain, Baron Edgewick. Lenore is a typical sidhe childling. She is intelligent, full of life and somewhat spoiled. She spends most of her time in the palace of Tara-Nar.



Chief Greyhawk (House Gwydion – Kingdom of the Burning Sun)

Chief Greyhawk (formerly King Videll) is something of an aberration by sidhe standards. Although born to one of the finest families in House Gwydion, he draws criticism from many changelings for “going native.” Greyhawk is one of the very few Kithain who enjoys friendship with the native nunnehi. Nunnehi fill some of the most important positions in his court. As a result of this alliance, nunnehi attacks in his kingdom are virtually unknown. Chief Greyhawk and Duke Topaz (see below) are often at odds because nunnehi rebels in the Kingdom of the Feathered Snake use Greyhawk's lands as a staging area for their raids. The border between their kingdoms is one of the major hotspots in Concordia. “Sun and Serpent” is now a part of the changeling lexicon, a variation of “between a rock and a hard place.” Chief Greyhawk is a just ruler, but is known to have a strong temper.



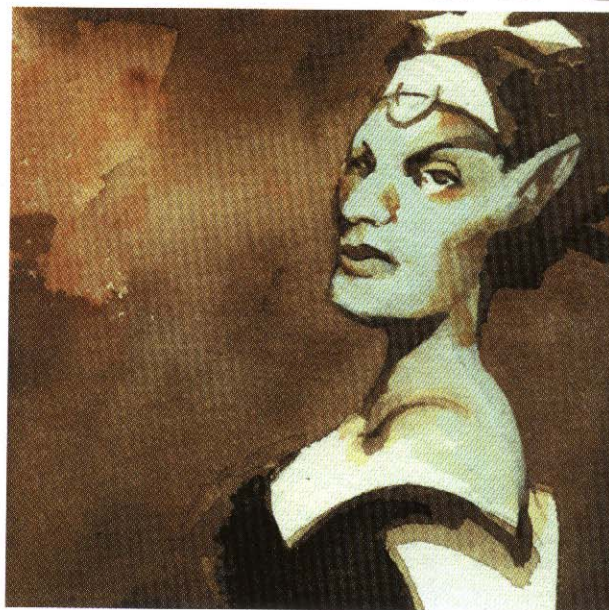
Queen Mab (House Fiona – Kingdom of Apples)

Queen Mab is the oldest (and most feel the wisest) of Concordia's monarchs. She is a strong Reformer and was instrumental in King David's rise to power. She is a stabilizing influence in Concordian politics and a strong counterweight to the excesses of some sidhe Traditionalists. A canny and puissant monarch, she brooks little in the way of court intrigue and is known to have the most

ordered court in Concordia. Despite her public antipathy toward government by reune, she is heavily involved in behind-the-scenes political maneuvering, through her membership in the Cat's Cradle. She is a visionary ruler, who clearly sees (or so she thinks) the converging forces of the coming Winter. She is an inclusive ruler, who believes that the only opportunity for Kithain survival is unity across all lines of kith and court. Queen Mab's court of Caer Palisades has more commoners in positions of power than any other, including Tara-Nar. Queen Mab is a formidable grandame of great, though aging, beauty.

King Meilge (House Eiluned – Kingdom of Willows)

Despite his reputation as a mad and violent despot, King Meilge is one of the most charismatic leaders among the sidhe. He is known for his strong "common touch." Despite his dictatorial tendencies, he still enjoys strong popular support among many commoners. His leadership style has a strong "cult of personality" element to it. He is considered something of an enigma to many changelings, because he straddles the breadth of the political spectrum. He is sometimes a fierce Traditionalist; at other times, a Modernist. Many attribute this duality to his strong Unseelie streak. His kingdom is also known for its corruption. Criminal changelings of all kith use his realm as a base of operations. Meilge is considered to be the "godfather" of this element and is as a consequence extremely wealthy. His freehold palace overlaps an opulent high-rise in the heart of Atlanta's business district. He is the *de facto* leader of the Golden Sickle. King Meilge's face is badly scarred and he wears an ornate half-mask of alabaster and gold.



Queen Laurel (House Fiona – Kingdom of Northern Ice)

Queen Laurel is easily the most passionate and tempestuous of Concordia's monarchs. She is loving and nurturing one moment, then cold and aloof, then fiery and resolute. All these personality changes are made well within the confines of a strong Seelie persona, however.

Laurel is, perhaps, Concordia's most potent monarch. She is both brilliant and inspired in her leadership; she also has the distinction of being the most accomplished of sorceresses among Concordia's first tier leadership. Even King David exercises little control over her. Speculation about her is a favorite pastime among the fae of Concordia. Her roller-coaster love affair/arranged marriage with the Shadow Court lord, Duke Rococo, is of special interest. Any one who believe that this affair presages imminent Shadow Court control of her kingdom is in for a surprise. If anything, Duke Rococo will be the one who converts. Queen Laurel is no one's tool. She is considered a singer of near-legendary talent among the sidhe (a high honor indeed). She is a grand diva and part owner of a major Canadian metropolitan opera company.

Queen Mary Elizabeth (House Dougal – Kingdom of Grass)

In the best of House Dougal tradition, Queen Mary Elizabeth is known as a pragmatic and capable administrator. Her kingdom is inclusive, to a point, but she is a strong



Queen Aeron (House Fiona – Kingdom of Pacifica)

The youngest of Concordia's rulers, Queen Aeron is still early in her wilder years. Initially spoiled, Aeron was forced to grow up quickly in the wake of the assassination of her uncle, King Sean. For a brief period following her coronation, she exhibited strong leadership abilities and a propensity for reform. All this changed, however, when she fell in love with the satyr Hamal. Her court is fast falling into chaos as she lapses into a coma of decadence. None of her old friends or advisors can reach her; she now listens only to Hamal. It is strongly rumored that she is sliding swiftly toward the Shadow Court. For more on Queen Aeron see Chapter Four of *Immortal Eyes: The Toybox*.

Queen Morganna (House Gwydion – Kingdom of White Sands)

Traditionalist. The commoners over whom she rules are also of this mind. Most commoners here strongly support the concept of the monarchy. Commoners of other kingdoms often observe (somewhat sardonically) that the common kith here "know their place." Queen Mary Elizabeth has little patience for corruption or vacillation. Her court is extremely ordered and efficient. Mary Elizabeth is not particularly attractive by sidhe standards. She is unmarried and purposefully projects a "spinster aunt" image. Despite her generally Traditionalist outlook, she is a strong proponent of using all available resources. This includes the use of human technological advances.



No Concordian monarch except, perhaps, King David inspires the love and adoration of the subjects like Queen Morganna. Morganna is the quintessential wise and benevolent sidhe noble. She is also a strong Romanticist (a Cerenaic). The pursuit of pleasure is a major part of her court's function, but she is no idle hedonist. Pleasure in all its forms is a way toward enlightenment among many in her court. Artists, Romanticists, all manners of spiritual seekers (and no few degenerates) visit her court at Caer Flamingo. There are even a few Cult of Ecstasy mages

among the palace's complement. Few stay long, however. The spiritual demands of the court are too rigorous for most hedonists, who prefer their pleasure without strings attached. Morganna uses sensuality as a means of empowerment and is one of Concordia's most energetic and progressive leaders. Her beauty and her political acumen are legendary, even among the sidhe.

Duke Topaz (Moase Gwydion – Kingdom of the Feathered Snake)

Duke Topaz is distrusted by many sidhe, because of his membership in the Brotherhood of Thor (an ancient oathbound motley of trolls). He is also the constant target of nunnehi attack and commoner criticism (for failing to control the nunnehi). All this is unfortunate, because Topaz is both a benign and competent ruler. He just happens to have an impossible task. The nunnehi are more powerful here than anywhere else in Concordia and most of them are in full revolt. Topaz routinely attempts to reach some kind of accord with the nunnehi leadership, but they are mostly unreceptive.

Topaz's job is made all the more difficult by Shadow Court involvement in the rebellion. Additionally, Mexico is a stronghold for both the Sabbat (who have an alleged alliance with the Shadow Court) and the Pentex Corporation. At least one Mexican subsidiary of this company is aware of the fae, and recent attacks by hideous creatures have been recorded. Topaz's knights are a powerful coalition of trolls, sidhe and other kith, but they are increasingly hard pressed to defend the kingdom. Topaz is one of King David's best, most trusted generals. If he can't save the kingdom, no one can.

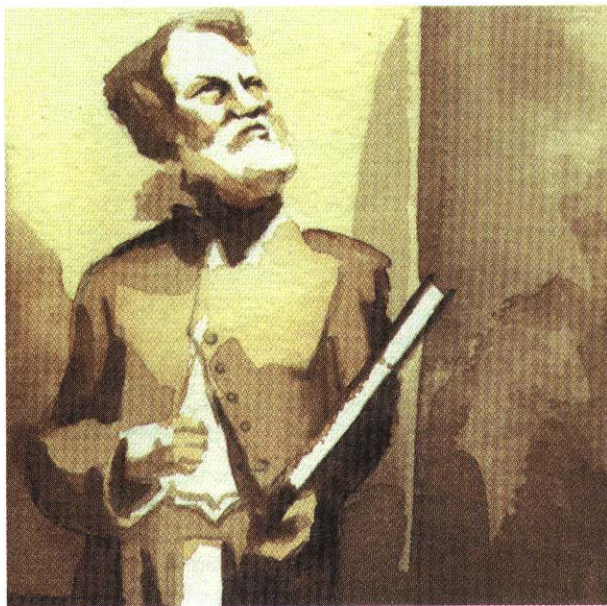


Other Nobles

Concordia's monarchs are a powerful and engaged breed. Their influence on Concordian affairs is considerable, but often dwarfed by the kingdom's "second-tier" nobility. These nobles are a dynamic, crafty and puissant collection. They vary widely in their comportment, goals and methods. Although the list below consists predominantly of Seelie nobles, a few Unseelies have risen to prominence (or, more likely, notoriety).

Baron Edgewick (Moase Gwydion)

Professor Edgewick is a graybeard scholar and reformer, respected among fae of most camps. He is King David's chancellor and was also an advisor to King Dyfell. As such he is privy to many of the upper nobility's secrets, despite his relatively low title. He is also the tutor to the High King's heir, Princess Lenore. Although he often appears absent-minded or even foolish, he is one of Concordia's foremost thinkers and diplomats. His value as an "honest broker" often serves all fae well, as he negotiates difficult disputes between disparate factions. He is especially revered by the



common kith (despite his association with Dyfell). He has earned their trust and friendship and is especially well respected by the trolls. He is even known to negotiate on David's behalf with the Shadow Court. Despite his popularity, he has several powerful enemies. Edgewick is a common fixture in the Parliament of Dreams and often outmaneuvers the machinations of the Beltaine Blade there. Duke Dray is known to be especially perturbed at having his carefully laid schemes defeated by a "mere" baron.

General Lyros (Catacomb Club)

General Lyros is a former general of the 4th Troll Commons Infantry and the current "leader of the opposition" in the Parliament of Dreams. Lyros is a powerful troll of noble heritage and father to Duke Topaz. Although he is now a strong Traditionalist, he is also a political enemy of the Beltaine Blade and Duke Dray. These credentials, pared with his reputation for "telling things like they are," earn him the occasionally fanatical adoration of many commoners (especially his fellow trolls). Prior to the Resurgence, Lyros was one of the most powerful commoner nobles. As such, he is seen as something of a symbol by many commoners who resent sidhe rule. Lyros, however, has made his peace with the sidhe victors. He now seeks to build a better society for all kith, under King David's rule. Lyros spends most of his time out of freeholds, traveling the country. He is thus fairly advanced in years.



Duke Pwyffelt (Golden Sickle)

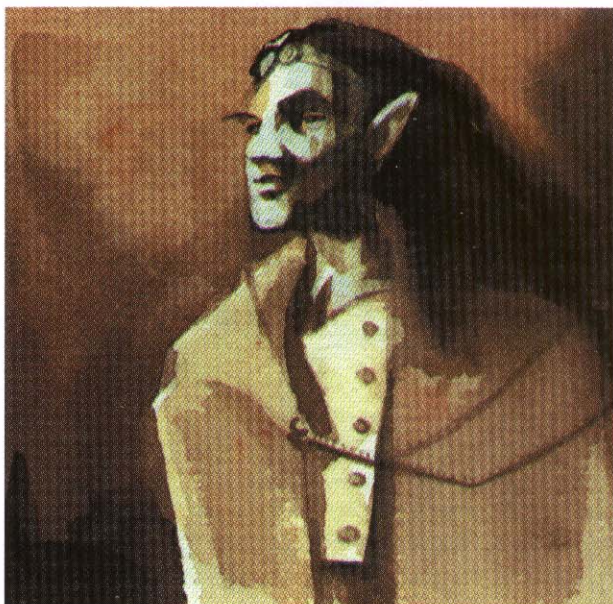
Many commoners pin their best hopes for equality on this slick, young, up-and-coming pooka. Pwyffelt is a wilder hellion. Many sidhe consider him vulgar, but he just laughs and invites more of his commoner friends to crash their noble soirees. He has the respect of some sidhe, however, because of his ability to fence their verbal jabs stroke for stroke. Some consider him to be all image and short on substance. This impression, while understandable, is incorrect. Pwyffelt is a committed Modernist, in both a cultural and political sense. He does more than anyone to advance Modernist ideals in the Parliament of



Dreams. His style and his ideals often land him in some jam or other. He often extricates himself from these through pooka trickery, though on more than one occasion he has been forced into a duel. He is one of the best shots with a pistol (real or chimerical) in Concordia.

Count Vogon (House Ailil - Shadow Court)

Count Vogon is one of the few openly Unseelie nobles to hold power among the Seelie nobility. A potent sidhe sorcerer, Vogon is feared by many of the fae who live in his Pacifica dukedom. Some believe that he may be responsible for Queen Aeron's descent into decadence and her flirtations with the Shadow Court. He is a frequent fixture at her



freehold. Vogon is also a member of the Parliament of Dreams and often attempts to play the commoners against the sidhe. He is also suspected by some to have unsavory contacts among the Prodigals and even, some whisper, the Fomorians. Lady Sierra was recently held prisoner in his freehold. She was not released, despite several personal requests from Queen Mab. Although she escaped, he is blamed by some for her subsequent disappearance.

Countess Anne (Mouse Eilaned – Cat's Cradle)

Unabashedly Unseelie and unrepentantly undisciplined, Countess Anne nevertheless has the respect of some of Concordia's greatest monarchs. She is a close advisor to Queen Mab and one of the most active forces behind the Cat's Cradle. She is a sidhe wilder, born since the Resurgence. She is known to have little patience for the "old fogies," especially Lady Sierra, whom she considers to be too cautious and deliberate. Countess Anne is a constantly whirling center of constructive (and destructive) energy. She attends a prestigious New England prep school (her sorority will never recover), while at the same time performing her responsibilities in the Cat's Cradle. Although Unseelie, she considers much of the Shadow Court to be as stodgy and hidebound as the Seelie Court. She is also known to have a number of contacts among the Children of Lilith known as Malkavians.



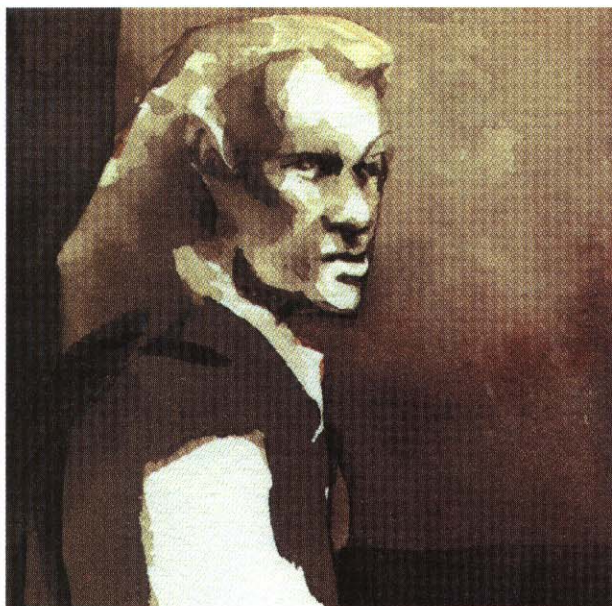
Duke Dray (Mouse Gwydion – Beltaine Blade)

To most Kithain (commoners and noble), Duke Dray is a twopenny joke; a comic-opera villain who twirls his



mustache and curses vainly as yet another scheme is foiled. In short, he is considered a laughingstock, despite his political power. Duke Dray would not have it any other way. The duke is his own lightning rod, a past master of political sleight-of-hand and ten-times-removed intrigue. For every minor, though well-publicized, setback encountered at the hands of the Cat's Cradle, the Red Branch (or that intrepid band of player characters), Dray's plans move forward two steps. Dray is widely thought to be Unseelie, perhaps a member of the Shadow Court. This perception is one of the greatest misconceptions in Concordian politics. The duke is fanatically Seelie, so much so that he has little in common with any other Seelie fae.

Dray is one of the Harbingers of Spring (see **Changing: The Dreaming**). He seeks to precipitate the coming Winter through the unbalanced imposition of Seelie power over all fae. To this end, his founding of and membership in the Beltaine Blade are just further diversions. The blood of high kings runs in Dray's veins (he was King Dyfell's cousin) and he is old, even by sidhe standards. In addition to his political mastery, Dray is a supremely powerful sorcerer. He possesses Arts lost even to the greatest of fae scholars. He is particularly potent in the Arts of Sovereign, Chronos and Dream-Craft. He possesses a freehold in the Far Dreaming. To Dray, any means justify his ends. He, thus, has allies of many persuasions, including Unseelie fae. One of his most recent and potent allies is Lady Alexandria, a powerful sorcerer in her own right, and one of Lord Dyfell's assassins. (See Goblin-Town in **Freeholds and Hidden Glens**.) Dray takes a particular delight in matching wits with the Ranter leader, Ravachol.



Ravachol (The Ranters)

Ravachol is a shadowy figure at best. Many believe that he is a former sidhe noble, perhaps of House Dougal. No one knows for sure. He is an ardent and violent revolutionary who deplores sidhe rulership in all its forms. The Ranters despise the more moderate forces among the sidhe almost as much as they hate the Traditionalists. Many nobles feel that there really isn't a Ravachol, that he is a fictional figure akin to General Ludd (the fictional leader of the Luddites). He is often depicted as a black cat trickster, in the commoner folklore of his supporters.

The Ranters are not faint-hearted, armchair revolutionaries. They are the real thing. Despite their occasionally just accusations of the sidhe nobility, the Ranters often go far beyond the pale. The Ranters are responsible for numerous atrocities, though they never harm commoners. Ravachol is personally charged with over 40 terrorist actions, including kidnapping and murder. The authorities have yet to catch him, however, and with each narrow escape, his popularity among the disaffected Kithain of Concordia grows. Many believe that despite his violent activities, Ravachol subscribes to a strong internal code of honor.

Duke Gaile (Mouse Eilaned – Crystal Circle)

Duke Guile is sometimes referred to as the "Scarlet Sorcerer." He is the opposite of the scholarly graybeards that most associate with the Crystal Circle. He is dramatic, flamboyant and a master of Chicanery and Dream-Craft. He has a tendency to show up at the most unexpected times and

places. He often disappears for long stretches of time in the Dreaming and returns with wondrous tales and iteks. To those who only know him casually, he seems to perpetually zigzag between the two courts. In fact, he dances a tightrope between the two, never falling completely into either camp. Guile's greatest strength, and weakness, is that he is a hopeless romantic. His affairs are eclectic, to say the least. He is highly experimental in his choice of romantic liaisons, wooing first a sidhe duchess and then her satyr stable boy. Most figure him to be a Cerenaic, but he is really a Shallotian romantic. Guile knows even more about the Dreaming than most of his Crystal Circle compatriots, but he rarely answers questions about it completely.



Count Chronos (Mouse Liam – Former Red Branch)

Many fae, gallow, humans and others have good reasons for thanking this stalwart, mendicant street knight. Count Chronos was once one of the Red Branch's greatest knights, until his forced expulsion. None but the Red Branch know the circumstances of his ouster, but there is not a single Red Brancher who speaks ill of him. Now he wanders the world, righting wrongs, aiding those in need and fighting for a better world for all. Although essentially a loner, Chronos has unsolicited allies throughout Concordia and beyond. These supporters are fae of all kith and camps, as well as many humans, though few suspect his faerie nature. (It is rumored that he has a mortal lover.) Although he may turn up anywhere, he shows a special propensity for protecting the homeless. He is a trusted confidant and occasional traveling partner of Lady Sierra. Count Chronos is one of the



best swordsmen in Concordia. He is also a master of the Wayfare and Chronos (of course) Arts. Count Chronos appears as a tall, imposing sidhe wilder, approaching grumpdom. He has long red hair, going white, and usually wears a dirty trenchcoat.

Lady Alexandria (House Fiona)

A river couldn't wash away all the blood on Alexandria's hands. Her taste for murder led her to drown her baby sister when she was four years old. Her parents were led into an ambush outside Lord Dafyll's estate. Only she survived (by "hiding"). She was adopted by Lord



Dyfell. After Dafyll's untimely death her crimes grew further apart to avoid suspicion. She has the common touch and is loved by the commoners, who have decided to forgive and forget that she was the daughter of the hated Lord Dafyll. Her long-time, redcap companion, Rat Breath, is both her bodyguard and most consistent lover. Although all these affairs have been on her terms, it is possible that she may come to a bad end eventually. She secretly despises Lady Sierra, who has been like a mother to her. She is also an extremely potent magician.

Lady Alexandria has skin like polished mahogany, eyes like bronze in firelight and the form of a goddess. She has long, straight black hair and dresses in ornate silks of red and gold. She doesn't walk; she glides. In court she carries a redwood staff with a carved serpent twined around it. In all things she radiates the beauty, the strength and the dignity of the sidhe. Too bad she's such a rotter. (For more on Lady Alexandria, see the *Goblin-Town* entry in *Freeholds and Hidden Glens*.)



Lady Sierra (House Gwydion – Cat's Cradle)

Lady Sierra is a warrior sidhe of House Gwydion and a well-respected figure at Tara-Nar. Lady Sierra's aid and counsel is sought out by all of Concordia's Seelie monarchs, and she has the High King's ear. She is also one of the oldest known fae in Concordia. It is rumored that she remembers the Time of Legends, though she neither confirms nor denies this. Although she is unremittably Seelie in outlook (*Reely-Seelie*, according to Countess Anne), she is known to tolerate those who aren't. Like Count Chronos, Lady Sierra is a wandering protector of the innocent and has a high reputation among

the commoners of Concordia. Although powerful, with a force and wisdom gathered over centuries, her power seems to be on the wane. Those who notice this fact mourn it more than they would the demise of any king. Her slow deterioration is seen by some as a metaphor for the diminishing power of the Dreaming: a foreshadow of the onset of Winter.

Her life since the Resurgence has been marred by tragedy. She was the long-time oathmate and lover of Lord Dafyll. When he died a spark seemed to pass from her. Much of her love since that time has focused on her adopted daughter, the Lady Alexandria. It is a bitter irony, known to none, that Lady Alexandria was the force behind Dyfell's assassination. Lady Sierra is, perhaps, the prime mover behind the Cat's Cradle. She routinely undertakes many arduous tasks on behalf of Kithain unity and is known to have many contacts among the commoners and the Prodigals. Her recent disappearance has caused great consternation among Concordia's monarchs, particularly because those at the highest centers of power have uncovered evidence of Fomorian involvement.

Count Flavias

Count Flavius is not very well respected by his fellow nobles, but in the human world he is considered something of a god. Handsome in the extreme, he is a phenomenal success in the cheesy romantic novella market. His glamorous features grace the covers of hundreds of florid paperbacks. His fans are mostly bored housewives. He has even "tried his hand at writing." (He has no talent whatsoever.) Most sidhe admit (albeit reluctantly) that he is a decent fellow, just tiresome. He is strongly Seelie, but some rumor that is because his Unseelie side was torn away in some sort of chimerical accident. "Evil-twin" rumors about him run wild. (Something about a magic mirror.)

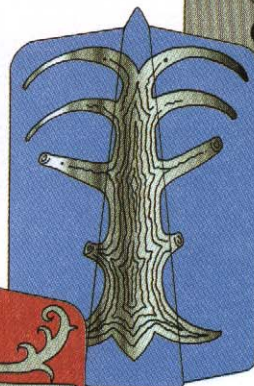
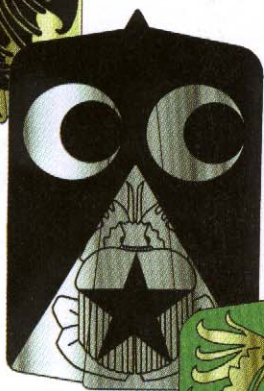


Duke Asterlan (Hoase Fiona)

When Duke Asterlan disappeared in 1976 (see *Asterlan*), it was a cause of great sorrow among the fae. Although some of his more dazzling accomplishments are somewhat exaggerated, he was a man of uncommon merit nonetheless. A minor cult of personality devoted to his memory now stretches throughout Concordia. Mostly made up of wilders (noble and commoner), these fae strive to honor his memory by emulating his heroic deeds. Some malcontents scorn this movement and even imply that Asterlan was no hero, but a despot. They delight in pointing out logical and historical inconsistencies in the accounts of his exploits. The story of his quest for Arcadia is a special target for their derision. Few Kithain are fooled by this historical revisionism, though. If anything, Asterlan's legend continues to grow.

Some wags call Asterlan the "Elvis Presley of the Kithain," because of the many sightings of him, and his company, in recent years. While the general consensus is that Asterlan died while questing for Arcadia, reports of these sightings persist. Usually these witnesses speak of being delivered from peril by a group of ghostly Kithain, surrounded by a gray mist and accompanied by a screaming wind. A common thread in all of these accounts describes how Banality miraculously lifts in the troop's presence. These stories are gaining great currency among the foolish and the superstitious. Sophisticated Kithain, of course, know better.

Appendix: Character Templates



Knight, Protector of the Realm

Quote: *Halt, in the name of King David!*

Background: Born to a middle class family, in middle America, you always knew what your calling was. A born athlete, you enjoyed running faster, jumping higher and enduring more than anyone else. Everyone always said it wasn't lady-like; that a girl as pretty as you should be on the side lines, cheerleading. Hah! You showed them. The sports you chose weren't very feminine, either. You were able to beat most of the boys on the boxing team. Your favorite was fencing, though. You felt like you were born with a blade in your hand. That turned out to be true, in a way. At age 13 you discovered your true heritage, that you are part of a proud tradition of warrior nobles. The Fior-Reigh was a cake walk. That's been six years. Now you're a well respected knight and one of the newest members of the Red Branch.

Roleplaying Hints: As an athlete, you knew the thrill of winning a victory for yourself. Now, as one of the newest knights of the Red Branch, you are part of something far bigger and finer than that. You are a protector of the fae and humanity, a member of a proud tradition that stretches back to the dawn of time. Born in Arcadia, after the Shattering, your human life is all you remember and you choose not to sever those ties. You deal with humans better than many sidhe. It is up to the fae to lead humanity to a greater destiny. It is up to the sidhe to lead the fae and up to House Gwydion to lead the sidhe. You are eager to live up to your part in this grand destiny with courage, dignity and bravery.

Equipment: Chimeric blade and armor, flak jacket, heavy pistol, Squire Gulliver.



NOBLES: The Shining Host

Concept: *Knight, Protection of the Realm*

Court: *Seelie*

House: *Guydion*

Legacies: *Paladin / Beast*

Romantic Legacies: *Protection / Martyr*

Political Impulse: *Traditionalist*

Seeming: *Wild*

Kith: *Sidhe*

Society: *Red Branch*

Attributes

Physical

Strength ●●●●●
Dexterity ●●●●●
Stamina ●●●●●

Social

Charisma ●●●●●
Manipulation ●●●●●
Appearance ●●●●●

Mental

Perception ●●●●●
Intelligence ●●●●●
Wits ●●●●●

Abilities

Talents

Alertness ●●●●●
Athletics ●●●●●
Brawl ●●●●●
Dodge ●●●●●
Empathy ●●●●●
Expression ●●●●●
Intimidation ●●●●●
Kenning ●●●●●
Streetwise ●●●●●
Subterfuge ●●●●●

Skills

Crafts ●●●●●
Drive ●●●●●
Etiquette ●●●●●
Firearms ●●●●●
Leadership ●●●●●
Melee ●●●●●
Performance ●●●●●
Security ●●●●●
Stealth ●●●●●
Survival ●●●●●

Knowledges

Computer ●●●●●
Enigmas ●●●●●
Investigation ●●●●●
Law ●●●●●
Linguistics ●●●●●
Medicine ●●●●●
Mythlore ●●●●●
Occult ●●●●●
Politics ●●●●●
Science ●●●●●

Advantages

Backgrounds

Resources ●●●●●
Retinue ●●●●●
Title (Knight) ●●●●●
Treasure ●●●●●
●●●●●

Arts

Dream-Craft ●●●●●
Primal ●●●●●
Sovereign ●●●●●
●●●●●
●●●●●

Realms

Fae ●●●●●
Nature ●●●●●
Props ●●●●●
●●●●●
●●●●●

Other Traits

Temporal Sense ●●●●●
Dream Lore ●●●●●

Glamour

●●●●●○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Banality

●●●●●○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Health

Bruised ☐
Hurt -1 ☐
Injured -1 ☐
Wounded -2 ☐
Mauled -2 ☐
Crippled -5 ☐
Incapacitated ☐

Experience

Romanticist Cavalier

Quote: *I'm in trouble? But, I enjoy trouble.*

Background: Born into a life of wealth and privilege, you have never had to work a day in your life. You realized at an early age that you could charm anyone, especially mom and dad. Life is so easy and pleasurable. You attended the most prestigious prep-schools, but dropped out to go traveling through Europe. You discovered your true nature, when you hit Paris. The Fier-Reigh was very enjoyable. Paris is a blast for changelings. You shuttle between there and New York on a regular basis now. The Art of the Game is now your life.

Roleplaying Hints: Beautiful, even by sidhe standards, you find it very easy to get what you want. "Beguiling" doesn't begin to describe you. You realize that you're a pre-Shattering faerie, but you find it very difficult to make contact with those memories. What you do know about, however, is the present and the modern world. It's a blast! You travel very freely between the two worlds, equally at ease in either. You are a Romanticist in the classical sense of the word. You are extremely flamboyant, especially in your fashion sense. You strongly favor classical styles with a modern twist. You attend all the latest social functions. Partying is an art form that you have mastered. Well, sort of. You realize that there are those who do it better, but you're about to break into the big league. You realize that some sidhe "Society Romanticists" are snobs, who look down their nose at you, but you have much more fun than they ever will.

Equipment: Cosmetics, 600 suits of clothing, red sports car, revolver, troll boyfriend, private jet.



NOBLES: The Shining Host

Concept: *Romanticist Cavalier*

Court: *Seelie*

House: *Fiona*

Legacies: *Countien / Peacock*

Romantic Legacies: *Romantic / Gamesman*

Political Impulse: *Modernist / Traditionalist*

Seeming: *Wilden*

Kith: *Sidhe*

Society: *Cerenaic*

Attributes

Physical

Strength ●●○○○
Dexterity ●●●○○
Stamina ●●○○○

Social

Charisma ●●●○○
Manipulation ●●○○○
Appearance ●●●●●

Mental

Perception ●○○○○
Intelligence ●●○○○
Wits ●●●○○

Abilities

Talents

Alertness ○○○○○
Athletics ●○○○○
Brawl ○○○○○
Dodge ●●○○○
Empathy ●●○○○
Expression ●●●○○
Intimidation ○○○○○
Kenning ●●○○○
Streetwise ○○○○○
Subterfuge ●●○○○

Skills

Crafts ○○○○○
Drive ○○○○○
Etiquette ●●●○○
Firearms ○○○○○
Leadership ○○○○○
Melee ●○○○○
Performance ●●○○○
Security ○○○○○
Stealth ●○○○○
Survival ○○○○○

Knowledges

Computer ○○○○○
Enigmas ●●○○○
Investigation ○○○○○
Law ○○○○○
Linguistics *French* ●○○○○
Medicine ○○○○○
Mythlore ○○○○○
Occult ○○○○○
Politics ●○○○○
Science ○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds

Dreamers ●●○○○
Resources ●●●○○
Retinue ●○○○○
Title (Baroness) ●●○○○
○○○○○

Arts

Chicanery ●○○○○
Dream-Craft ●○○○○
Sovereign ●●○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○

Realms

Actor ●●○○○
Fae ●●○○○
Scene ●○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○

Other Traits

Intrigue ●○○○○
Seduction ●●●○○
Temporal Sense ●●○○○
Dream Lore ●●○○○

Glamour

● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Willpower

● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Banality

● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Health

Bruised ☐
Hurt -1 ☐
Injured -1 ☐
Wounded -2 ☐
Mauled -2 ☐
Crippled -5 ☐
Incapacitated ☐

Experience

Street Knight

Quote: *Wake up, idiots!*

Background: Born to House Liam, you got the straight scoop on things right away, from your mortal mom and dad. They taught you about the virtues of humanity and its follies. Unlike most sidhe, your parents were not extraordinarily wealthy, forcing you to make a life for yourself. Although you spent some time in the army and college, most of your life has been on the street. You earned your knighthood. Big deal.

Roleplaying Hints: You are a post-Resurgence rebel. You question whether all the grandeur of the sidhe is not rendered irrelevant by all the suffering of the world. You are told by some that you are too serious about your connections with humanity. Most sidhe, outside of your House, you realize, are blind to the truly desperate plight of humanity, especially to those living on the streets. This world is crumbling, from a billion dark forces. You are frustrated. The sidhe could be such a positive force, but so many of them turn in on each other, with their petty bickering and political games. Well, you do your best. You are on the streets everyday, protecting society's weakest members from the thousand and one indignities they suffer. You've made some interesting friends on the way.

Equipment: Collapsible sword, sawed off shotgun, trench coat, sunglasses.



NOBLES: The Shining Host

Concept: *Street Knight*

Court: *Seelie*

House: *Liam*

Legacies: *Paladin / Outlaw*

Romantic Legacies: *Friend / Cynic*

Political Impulse: *Reformer*

Seeming: *Wilden*

Kith: *Sithe*

Society: *Order of Shallos*

Attributes

Physical

Strength ●●●●●
Dexterity ●●●●●
Stamina ●●●●●

Social

Charisma ●●●●●
Manipulation ●●●●●
Appearance ●●●●●

Mental

Perception ●●●●●
Intelligence ●●●●●
Wits ●●●●●

Abilities

Talents

Alertness ●●●●●
Athletics ●●●●●
Brawl ●●●●●
Dodge ●●●●●
Empathy ○○○○○
Expression ○○○○○
Intimidation ●●●●●
Kenning ●●●●●
Streetwise ●●●●●
Subterfuge ●●●●●

Skills

Crafts ○○○○○
Drive ●●●●●
Etiquette ○○○○○
Firearms ●●●●●
Leadership ●●●●●
Melee ●●●●●
Performance ○○○○○
Security ●●●●●
Stealth ●●●●●
Survival ●●●●●

Knowledges

Computer ○○○○○
Enigmas ○○○○○
Investigation ●●●●●
Law ●●●●●
Linguistics ○○○○○
Medicine ●●●●●
Mythlore ○○○○○
Occult ●●●●●
Politics ○○○○○
Science ○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds

Contacts (Bore Grouns & House Scabbard) ●●●●●
Treasure ●●●●●
Trod ●●●●●
○○○○○
○○○○○

Arts

Legendmain ●●●●●
Primal ●●●●●
Wayfare ●●●●●
○○○○○
○○○○○

Realms

Action ●●●●●
Props ●●●●●
Scene ●●●●●
○○○○○
○○○○○

Other Traits

Temporal Sense ●○○○○

Glamour

●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●○○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Banality

●●●○○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Health

Bruised ☐
Hurt -1 ☐
Injured -1 ☐
Wounded -2 ☐
Mauled -2 ☐
Crippled -5 ☐
Incapacitated ☐

Experience

Paranoid Baron

Quote: *Et tu, darling?*

Background: Dad carved this territory out with sweat and blood. He was a great man, but Mumsy said he was "out to get you." Mumsy is always right. After dad died, you became baron. Since that time you've depleted most of dad's money paying for ever greater numbers of guards to protect you from those damned commoners. These days you hardly ever leave your freehold, preferring its comforts and plentiful Glamour over the harshness of the real world.

Roleplaying Hints: Why do your people despise you so? Why? You only want what's best for them! Law, order, the old ways. All right, you don't remember the old ways, but Mumsy described them to you well enough. People obeyed the sidhe in those days. Now it's nothing but problems. The people are surly and unappreciative, so you've hired some red-cap enforcers. More trouble, more enforcers. Now you're more afraid of your own guards, than you are of the people. Sometimes you don't leave your room for days. The red-caps are trashing the place! And let's not forget your liege, Countess Anne. She hates you for no reason, and is threatening to bring your "abuses" to the queen. Damn! But you're not licked, yet. You hear those sluagh guards are pretty good...

Equipment: Oak staff with iron tip, revolver, flak jacket, Get-a-Way Trod.



NOBLES: The Shining Host

Concept: *Paranoid Baron*

Court: *Unseelie*

House: *Eiluned*

Legacies: *Outlaw / Regent*

Romantic Legacies: *N/A*

Political Impulse: *Traditionalist*

Seeming: *Grump*

Kith: *Sithe*

Society: *Beltaine Blade*

Attributes

Physical

Strength ●●●●●
Dexterity ●●●●●
Stamina ●●●●●

Social

Charisma ●●●●●
Manipulation ●●●●●
Appearance ●●●●●

Mental

Perception ●●●●●
Intelligence ●●●●●
Wits ●●●●●

Abilities

Talents

Alertness 00000
Athletics 00000
Brawl 00000
Dodge ●0000
Empathy 00000
Expression ●●000
Intimidation *Veiled Threat* ●●●●●
Kenning ●●000
Streetwise 00000
Subterfuge ●●000

Skills

Crafts 00000
Drive ●0000
Etiquette 00000
Firearms 00000
Leadership ●●000
Melee 00000
Performance 00000
Security ●0000
Stealth 00000
Survival 00000

Knowledges

Computer 00000
Enigmas 00000
Investigation 00000
Law ●●000
Linguistics 00000
Medicine 00000
Mythlore ●0000
Occult 00000
Politics ●●●●●
Science 00000

Advantages

Backgrounds

Dreamers ●●000
Holdings ●●000
Political Connections ●●000
Resources ●0000
Retinue ●●●●●
Title (Baron) ●●000
Trod ●0000

Arts

Dreamcraft ●0000
Soothsay ●0000
Sovereign ●●000
____ 00000
____ 00000
____ 00000
____ 00000
____ 00000

Realms

Fae ●●●●●
Scene ●●000
____ 00000
____ 00000
____ 00000
____ 00000
____ 00000

Other Traits

Intrigue ●●000
Temporal Sense ●0000
Dream Lore ●●●●●

Glamour

●●●●●○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Banality

●●●●●○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Health

Bruised ☐
Hurt -1 ☐
Injured -1 ☐
Wounded -2 ☐
Mauled -2 ☐
Crippled -5 ☐
Incapacitated ☐

Experience

Techno-Girl

Quote: *Your majesty. Your Majesty. Can me and my friends go out to play?* (Winsome smile.)

Background: You were born at House Dougal and have lived here all your life. You are ten now and know all about this Kithain stuff. You can make toys which are the envy of all your friends — though you have to enchant them first before they can see them. But you don't see anything wrong with that. Of course you have to be careful that no one catches you, for some reason the grumps seem to get angry when you enchant your friends.

Roleplaying Hints: House Dougal's been good to you and Pops. Pops was a loyalist during the Accordance War and got a countship out of it. You and Pops are pookas, and believe me, its not always easy for pookas these days. The Dougals got more cool stuff than anybody, 'cept maybe the nockers. Most of them are jerks, but old Isaac is pretty cool and he shows you stuff. You know trouble's brewing and you want to help. All the wildees and grump-heads tell you to keep out of the way, though. You can do stuff, though. Cool stuff. You and the other "childlings" (sheesh, you're kids) keep an eye on them. Some are not too bright. You know you're cute enough to get away with most things. You look for a chance to prove yourself.

Equipment: Lap top computer, professional grade chemistry lab, firecrackers, slingshot.



NOBLES: The Shining Host

Concept: *Techno-Girl*
Court: *Seelie*
House: *Dougal (Association)*

Legacies: *Crafter / Rogue*
Romantic Legacies: *NA*
Political Impulse: *Modernist*

Seeming: *Childling*
Kith: *Pooka*
Society: *NA*

Attributes

Physical

Strength ●○○○○
Dexterity ●○○○○
Stamina ●○○○○

Social

Charisma ●○○○○
Manipulation ●○○○○
Appearance ●○○○○

Mental

Perception ●○○○○
Intelligence *Brilliant* ●●●●●
Wits ●○○○○

Abilities

Talents

Alertness ●○○○○
Athletics ○○○○○
Brawl ○○○○○
Dodge ●○○○○
Empathy ○○○○○
Expression ○○○○○
Intimidation ○○○○○
Kenning ●●○○○
Streetwise ●○○○○
Subterfuge ●○○○○

Skills

Crafts ●○○○○
Drive ●○○○○
Etiquette ○○○○○
Firearms ○○○○○
Leadership ○○○○○
Melee ○○○○○
Performance ○○○○○
Security ●●○○○
Stealth ●○○○○
Survival ●○○○○

Knowledges

Computer ●●●●●
Enigmas ●○○○○
Investigation ●●○○○
Law ○○○○○
Linguistics ○○○○○
Medicine ●○○○○
Mythlore ○○○○○
Occult ○○○○○
Politics ○○○○○
Science ●●●●○

Advantages

Backgrounds

Contacts ●●●○○
Title (Courtess) ●●●○○
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○

Arts

Legendmain ●●○○○
Primal ●●●○○
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○

Realms

Nature ●○○○○
Prop ●●●○○
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○

Other Traits

Dream Lore ●○○○○

Glamour

●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●○○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Banality

●○○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Health

Bruised ☐
Hurt -1 ☐
Injured -1 ☐
Wounded -2 ☐
Mauled -2 ☐
Crippled -5 ☐
Incapacitated ☐

Experience



Immortal Eyes

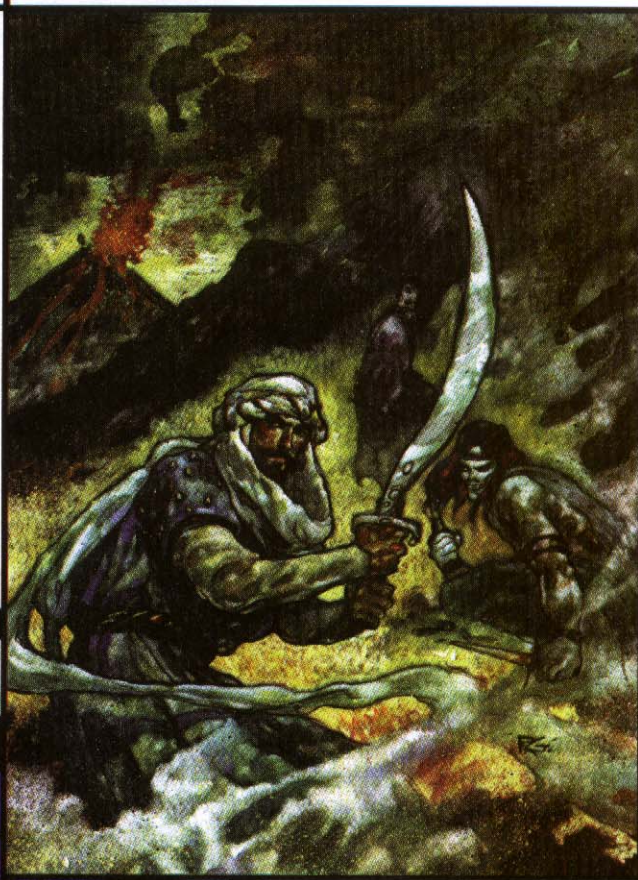
A trilogy of novels.

A series of sourcebooks.

The future of **Changeling: The Dreaming**.

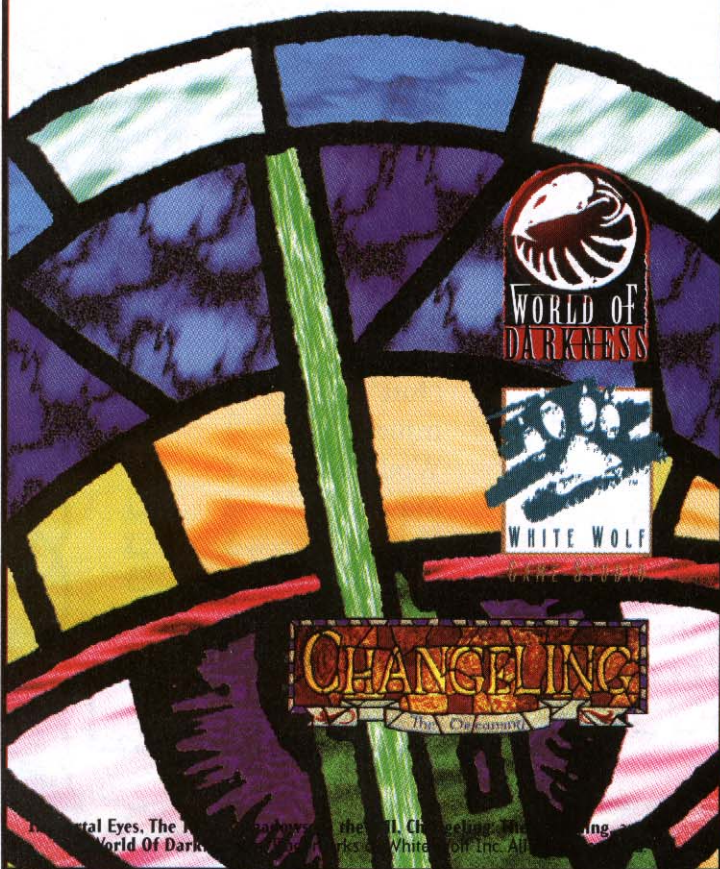
Immortal Eyes is an unprecedented event in the World Of Darkness. Three novels chart a course for the future of the Kithain, and three corresponding sourcebooks detail the people and places of each story.

The second installment in the **Immortal Eyes** game book chronicle details the people and places of the upcoming **Shadows on the Hill** novel. Picking up where **The Toybox** left off, **Immortal Eyes: Shadows on the Hill** takes the characters to Hawaii where they begin to discover the full scope of the Unseelie conspiracy.



Shipping in March

1-800-541-7054
Stock #



NOBLES: The Shining Host

Changeling: The DreamingTM

Name:

Court:

Chronicle:

Legacies:

Romantic Legacies:

Title:

Seeming:

Kith:

House:

Attributes

Physical

Strength ●○○○○
Dexterity ●○○○○
Stamina ●○○○○

Social

Charisma ●○○○○
Manipulation ●○○○○
Appearance ●○○○○

Mental

Perception ●○○○○
Intelligence ●○○○○
Wits ●○○○○

Abilities

Talents

Alertness ○○○○○
Athletics ○○○○○
Brawl ○○○○○
Dodge ○○○○○
Empathy ○○○○○
Expression ○○○○○
Intimidation ○○○○○
Kenning ○○○○○
Streetwise ○○○○○
Subterfuge ○○○○○

Skills

Crafts ○○○○○
Drive ○○○○○
Etiquette ○○○○○
Firearms ○○○○○
Leadership ○○○○○
Melee ○○○○○
Performance ○○○○○
Security ○○○○○
Stealth ○○○○○
Survival ○○○○○

Knowledges

Computer ○○○○○
Enigmas ○○○○○
Investigation ○○○○○
Law ○○○○○
Linguistics ○○○○○
Medicine ○○○○○
Mythlore ○○○○○
Occult ○○○○○
Politics ○○○○○
Science ○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds

○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○

Arts

○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○

Realms

○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○

Other Traits

Glamour

○○○○○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Willpower

○○○○○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Banality

○○○○○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Health

Bruised ☐
Hurt -1 ☐
Injured -1 ☐
Wounded -2 ☐
Mauled -2 ☐
Crippled -5 ☐
Incapacitated ☐

Boon/Flaw

Class: _____ Rating: _____ Penalty: _____ Description: _____

NOBLES: The Shining Host

Changeling: The DreamingTM

Vassals

Mentor

Holdings

Oaths Sworn

Dreamers

Contacts

Badges of Honor

Retinue

Possessions

Gear (Carried)

Chimerical Items

Treasures

Chimerical Companions

Freeholds

Location

Description

NOBLES: The Shining Host

Changeling: The Dreaming™

History

Prologue

Date Ennobled: _____

Secret Societies: _____

Appearance

Chronological Age: _____

Mortal: _____

Apparent Age: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Hair: _____

Eyes: _____

Race: _____

Nationality: _____

Height: _____

Weight: _____

Fae: _____

Visuals

Oath Bonds Chart

Character Sketch

NOBLES: The Shining Host

The Shining Host

From time immemorial the noble sidhe have ruled the fae. Learn their secrets of power: how and why they maintain their chokehold over the commoners. This book covers the history of the nobility, from their return in '69 and the Accordance War which followed, through current politics and events among the sidhe.

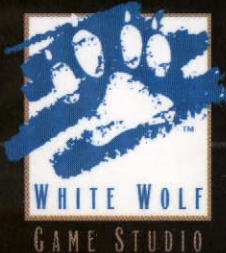


The Weighty Crown

Though many envy their splendid halls and delicate finery, the sidhe pay a high price for their magnificence. They are ill equipped to deal with the ravages of Banality, but are still subject to Bedlam. Here can be learned the secrets of those sidhe who have succeeded in balancing the dichotomy that threatens to tear them apart.

Nobles: The Shining Host features:

- Detailed information on playing noble characters in a Changeling chronicle.
- A new, previously unknown noble house.
- New noble Arts, usable only by noble characters.



ISBN 1-56504-711-7

WW 7006 \$12.00



Printed in Canada