

The Shadowbox Court



For Changeling: The Dreaming

The Shadow Court™



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From Jackie: Thanks to Chris Howard for his encouragement and help with consistency.

From Nicky: Grateful Thanks to Heather K. Williams and Carla Hollar for acquainting us with Irish heraldic designs.

Thanks to Ian Lemke for his continued guidance and help.

Many, many hugs and thanks to James Crabtree for sharing his art with me and for his understanding and patience while I fell before the onslaught of the Unseelie.

And Very Special Thanks to Brian Campbell for including us in his project and giving us so much to work with.

Playtesters: Mike "More Meat!" Berg, Dave "MacGyvering" Birdhead, John "Flying Elephant Pooka" First, Sean "Carmina Burana" McLachlan, and Chris "Mommy Doesn't Like You Anymore" Mohnney. Additional thanks to Jeff Brimhall for letting us all crash in San Francisco.

Author's Dedication: Dedicated to Baron Munchausen, for being impossible, and Elizabeth McClean, for being generally wonderful.



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PRINTED IN CANADA.

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Introduction: An End to Innocence

Any dream holds the promise of a nightmare. Indeed, it is often in our darkest hours that we find the greatest truths. Those who are troubled by nightmares eagerly await the dawn. The morning light drives shadows back into temporary submission. Sometimes we remember our nightmares and learn from them. Sometimes we are foolish and forget.

The **Shadow Court** is an alternative approach to playing **Changeling**; it is a version of the game for people who tire of sweetness and light — a saga for those who crave the night. Just as beautiful dreams have been known to fade and die, any changeling can — through circumstance, intrigue, or even free will — succumb to the nightmare that awaits within the Dreaming. Those destined to find greatness awaken and learn from what they have seen, but those who never awaken descend to meet their Unseelie destiny.

Shadows are longest when winter is at its coldest, and the world has become cold. Trust and honor are hard to find, and survival often depends on deception and betrayal. Seelie faeries shelter themselves from the evil in the world, but the Unseelie revel in it. They live in a dark world, and they survive by instinct and impulse.

When surrounded by despair and suffering, the Unseelie are at their best. The ruination of others brings

them power. For the darkest of fae, the Winter Solstice and its ritual of Samhain reflect the nature of the world around them. On Samhain, as a taint of malevolence is carried on the wind, Seelie Kithain give in to their Unseelie Legacies for one glorious night, and the Unseelie choose between rebellion and redemption. When the ritual fires of Samhain burn brightest, Unseelie cliques revel in the chaos and madness.

The most contemptuous of the fae, the members of the Shadow Court, are at their strongest on this night. For one evening, they no longer need to hide or deceive. Whispered secrets, unspeakable acts and glorious anarchy are celebrated openly as stories are told around blazing bonfires... until dawn returns and the Samhain Mists force memories from the minds of those who yearn to forget.

We cannot, however, speak openly yet. It is still a time for whispering and measured secrets. Sit by the fireside with us, as the nobles pose and posture in their elegant throne rooms far away. Drain a flagon of bitter ale, sample a charred piece of meat, and stare into the fire. Soon, you will come to terms with what troubles you. By understanding what you feel in the darkest part of your heart, you will conquer the nightmares that torment you.

How to Use This Book

The Shadow Court is an alliance that hides behind the Unseelie Court. They believe that the Seelie Court has corrupted the society of the Kithain, where changelings masquerade in human forms and revere antiquated morality. They strive to protect the past, but the Shadow Court prepares for a new age. Overthrowing the nobility and destroying the Seelie Court is just the beginning.

Most of its members are recruited from the Unseelie Court, although Seelie have also been known to betray their compatriots and join their sinister brethren. You will find within this book all that you require to bring the Unseelie to life, whether you join the Shadow Court or struggle against it. Understanding and representing the Unseelie requires you to commune with the night, to join the legions of the wicked.

Politics, culture, religion, romance, honor — every aspect of their lives deviates from the norm. The higher ideals valued as humane are only a diversion from the true self, the darker self. Fae who spiral into the intrigues of the Shadow Court are drawn further into madness as they risk spiritual corruption. Fortunately, the journey does not have to end with annihilation. Heroes overcome this test and escape, while antiheroes and villains find perverse bliss in the midst of their nightmares.

The world itself reflects the fates of these fae. Either the balance will be restored, or the world will descend into the beauty and majesty of eternal night.

Contents

Chapter One offers the bleak origins of the Shadow Court and reveals their ideal of Endless Winter. Their goals are best summarized by the Manifesto, which guides them toward their Unseelie destiny.

Chapter Two expands on what is to be Unseelie. Many aspects of Unseelie culture are presented, including the importance of the Pageant, Factions of the Unseelie Court, secret societies allied with the Shadow Court, and the three Unseelie noble houses are also detailed.

Chapter Three explores Unseelie spirituality and gives more details on their calendar. This culminates with the events of Samhain, as shown in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Four provides more detail on Unseelie characters, including more information on Unseelie seemings

and kith. The Thallain, the not-too-distant cousins of the Kithain, are revealed at last.

In **Chapter Five**, the Dark Arts practiced within the Shadow Court are revealed, as well as new horizons for Ravaging.

Chapter Six renders assistance to Storytellers who are preparing Shadow Court adventures. You'll find expanded rules for Ravaging, a slightly different approach to Bunks, and ideas for incorporating the Shadow Court into chronicle structures.

Chapter Seven explores the full importance of Samhain. All of the aspects of this most important holiday are revealed in this chapter.

Chapter Eight presents a rogue's gallery of fallen fae, including sample characters and historical Shadow Courtiers, ranging from childling assassins to the Forsworn Prince.

Theme

The world is out of balance, even though changelings struggle to maintain harmony. Each changeling struggles to determine her own destiny, balancing the noble ideals of his Seelie Legacy against the treacherous path of her Unseelie nature. Every hero holds the potential to become a horrible monster; every villain has a chance at redemption. Your hero may only briefly experience her bleaker nature, or she may decide to turn away from the lies of honor and chivalry forever. Those who descend further and faster seek out the courtiers of the shadows. Victims who are trapped forever in the depths of the Shadow Court are never able to recapture what they have lost. Without the balance between light and darkness, order and chaos, the world is lost. The Shadow Court works to destroy that balance.

Mood

The mood of a Shadow Court adventure should reflect the moods of the Unseelie. They live in a world of deception and intrigue, passion and deceit. There's humor, but it's black. There's hope, but it always has a price. There's always the chance to conquer, but it never comes without struggle or sacrifice. And just as the Unseelie destroy their adversaries to bring about change, the world around them is constantly changing. Allied with your clique and armed with your instincts, you are opposed by a world of darkness. Let the games begin!



Rebirth

by Jackie Cassada

"I demand the right to trial by Fiori!" Darkain's voice echoed across the audience chamber of his brother's freehold. The young sidhe lord stood easily, a languid half-smile transforming his finely etched features into a study in desiccated beauty. Surrounded by a half-dozen of his brother's knights, Darkain waited for a reply. Beyond the circle of guards which separated him from the other courtiers, a round of whispers began as the lords and ladies of the court of Baron Aubergin tried to anticipate their liege's response to his brother's challenge.

From his throne of carved cedar surmounted by the blazon of House Erluned, Aubergin regarded his prisoner with studied calculation. It had been a year and a day since Darkain had been banished from his brother's freehold, the result of a quarrel that was only the last in a long string of instances of sibling rivalry. Aubergin had expected his brother to return, as he had in the past after other periods of exile, but this time Darkain's method of returning had surprised him.

The baron raised a hand, motioning his guards to stand aside.

"Let my brother approach," he said. The whispers of the court subsided, replaced by a silence in which the rustling of silk garments and the tinkle of silver bangles sounded like cracks of thunder.

With the grace of a cat on the prowl, Darkain closed the few steps to stand before his brother's throne.

"You have changed," Aubergin said simply, but those few words encompassed his assessment of his brother's mien. Though still comely in the unearthly way of the sidhe, Darkain's appearance had taken on an air of wildness.

His long, raven hair hung in a series of braids that did not conceal his shaven temples. Both brothers favored dark clothing, but Darkain now wore unadulterated black, from his loose-fitting silk shirt and leather jacket to his black, tight-fitting jeans and ebony-studded, knee-high boots. Everything about him pointed to a transformation that went beyond the physical, that had infused his personality with the darkness from the shadows that lurk on the fringes of the Dreaming.

"If you mean that I have chosen to walk the Unseelie path, then you are correct," Darkain spread his arms wide, palms outward, and executed a mock bow.

"You cannot deny that you have entered my demesne in an unseemly fashion and with harmful intent," Aubergin

stated. "You brought an instrument of Banality into the heart of my freehold, endangering its sanctity and putting my subjects at great risk."

"I rode my motorcycle up the mountain path to this forsaken spot," Darkain replied, looking around him at the spacious hall in which he stood. In the mortal world, Baron Aubergin's freehold consisted of an abandoned ski lodge in the Catskill Mountains. Concealed by Glamour from the eyes of disbelievers, the building and its grounds were shaped into a chimerical blend of elegant simplicity and rustic charm.

"And what of the bag of iron filings you carried in your saddlebags?" The baron's voice was colder for its lack of malice. "You could not think that I would allow such a breach of my hospitality to go unpunished."

"A gift to you," Darkain said, "a reminder of the world you have so long denied and which is as much a part of your nature as anything your precious Glamour can construct."

Aubergin shook his head. "You cannot have expected me to accept such a gift as anything more than a challenge. Your very presence here is a mockery of everything we hold dear."

Darkain's laughter rang through the halls of the court. "You see the right of it after all, then," he said. "I meant to challenge you and all who hold themselves so close to the light that they cannot see the darkness which surrounds it and gives it meaning." The Unseelie noble's expression suddenly grew serious.

"Set me a challenge whereby I can prove to you that there is more to our existence here than just clutching at the straws of a way of life that is doomed to slow erosion."

The urgency in Darkain's voice brought a look of genuine concern to his brother's face.

"I do not believe that you can convince me that your way has any special merit," Aubergin said, "and I cannot excuse your methods in bringing yourself once more to my attention. But this I can do, since your demand for trial by ordeal is an honored custom among our kind."

Darkain waited in silence for his brother to pronounce his judgment.

Aubergin stood before the assembly of nobles and commoners that had gathered together to celebrate the coming festival of Samhain.

"As the dark of night settles upon the land, the Samhain fires will be lit and we will for one evening cast

aside our Seelie natures and explore the darkness that dwells within us. Tonight's revels will honor the Court of Shadows, which has chosen to send a representative to us in the person of my brother, Lord Darkain."

The baron stepped down from his throne and, removing the silver circlet from his brow, placed the symbol of his rule into his brother's hand.

Darkain looked at the circlet, then at his brother. "Is this a joke?" he asked.

Aubergin answered his brother's question with a smile that ended at his mouth. His eyes bore the predatory look of a chess master declaring his opening gambit in a game he does not intend to lose.

"This is no joke," Aubergin said quietly. "You wanted an ordeal and tonight I shall give you one the like of which you have never seen before. Tonight, you will rule in my place as lord of this freehold. As part of your duty toward your subjects, you will instruct us in the fine points of the Unseelie way of life. That is what you had intended to do, after all, is it not?"

Darkain felt the stares of the assembled Kithain and heard the muffled whispers that indicated that his brother's court — now his court for the evening — were as unsure as he was of what Aubergin had in mind.

"I had expected something more onerous," he confessed, speaking in a voice he hoped would carry only as far as his brother's ears.

It was Aubergin's turn to laugh as he escorted his brother to the cedar throne and stood, waiting expectantly for Darkain to take his seat.

Within the audience hall, a subtle change was taking place, as pages bearing flaming torches moved around the walls, lighting candelabras of black, brown and orange candles. Wreaths of twisted elder branches wound through with rue, rosemary and elderberries hung on every wall. The front doors of the hall had been opened to the courtyard, where masses of logs and twigs awaited kindling as the Samhain fires. The last sunset of October bathed the sky above the freehold in splashes of hot crimson and gold as the sun came to rest against the mountains.

In small groups, the courtiers were leaving the chamber, only to return later wearing the outrageous masks and costumes of the seasonal rite of transfiguration. A cluster of musicians stood waiting for the signal to play.

Darkain surveyed the room he had so suddenly come to rule. Placing his brother's circlet on his own head, he turned to Aubergin, who stood below the throne in the place Darkain had occupied only moments before.

"So when are you going to drop the other shoe?" he asked suspiciously.



Aubergin bowed in mock humility before Darkain. When he raised his head, his blue eyes sparkled with canny delight.

"You know me far too well," the Seelie lord replied. "Here it is, then. I have accepted your claim to trial by ordeal and have given you the first part of your task — to rule this night as the Lord of Samhain and to instruct us in the Unseelie path. The second part, the other shoe of which you speak, is to delve deeper than you might wish into the details of what it is to seek the darkness. I would have you reveal to me — and to any who might turn their ears to our conversation — the innermost secrets of the Shadow Court."

Before Darkain could reply, Aubergin produced a slender, jeweled dagger from his belt and drew its sharpened edge across his palm, opening a shallow cut in his flesh. Turning his back on his brother, he held his bleeding palm outward to catch the last rays of the sun's fast-disappearing light. Continuing to pivot until he once more faced Darkain, Aubergin jammed the dagger into the polished oak floor boards between his brother's feet.

Even as he heard Aubergin's words, Darkain felt the Glamour gather about the two brothers, forging an unbreakable link between them.

"By oak and light and blood," Aubergin began, "I charge you to speak those things which before now have been spoken only among those who dwell in the shadows of the Dreaming. This trial I set upon you, this challenge I lay before you, this *geis* I pronounce in your presence. Let the fires of Samhain illuminate the darkest corners of your mind, that we may benefit from your knowledge and learn the truth about those who so adamantly seek to undermine what we have worked so hard to build. Fail in your task, and all that you may chance to do hereafter will come to naught."

Aubergin's face bore a look of triumph as he wrapped his wounded hand in a silken handkerchief and bowed once more before the Samhain Lord.

Darkain glowered at his brother.

"You know there are secrets that cannot be safely told to any not of the Court of Shadows," he said. "You have set me a task that, when I have accomplished it — as it seems I must — places me at the mercy of those not noted for that quality."

"You asked for trial by *Fíor*, not I," Aubergin said. "I but give to you your heart's desire on this night ruled by our inner passions."

Darkain slumped in his seat, hooking one leg over the arm of the throne and shrugging wearily. He allowed himself a sardonic smile as he inclined his head toward his brother in acknowledgment of Aubergin's opening sally.

"Round One goes to you," he said. "I asked for a chance to justify the changes that have come over me, and

you have given me that chance — and more. So where do you want me to start?"

"You might begin by pronouncing the beginning of the evening's revels," Aubergin said, gesturing toward the door and the darkness which had finally fallen.

Darkain looked around him, at the musicians standing ready with their instruments, at the gathered Kithain resplendent in their Samhain finery, and at the torchbearers who hovered near the throne awaiting the signal to light the fires in the courtyard beyond the throne room. Raising one arm, he waved his hand in a lazy gesture that encompassed all his subjects.

"Let the fires be lit, let the music sound, and let the Samhain Revels begin! All hail Discordia!"

At the sound of his voice, the hall erupted in a cacophony of pounding music and raucous cries as nobles and commoners alike shed the boundaries of etiquette and civility and succumbed to the lure of a night without limitations. A few seconds later, the courtyard blossomed into a garden of flaming bonfires which filled the air with sparks and punctuated the sounds of merriment with hisses and pops. Many revelers rushed from the chamber, drawn by the open flames and the promise of more pleasures in the darkness beyond the firelight.

Aubergin sat at his brother's feet, looking like a student awaiting his teacher's lessons. Darkain seemed lost in thought, his face transfixed by the spectacle of writhing dancers. Finally, he pointed toward one of the dancers, a slender woman with fawn-colored hair. Amid the crowd of thrashing bodies, she moved to her own music with an animal grace that singled her out from those around her.

"Who's that?" Darkain asked.

Aubergin saw who had captured his brother's attention and smiled a little.

"If the mask she is wearing has not deceived me," he replied, "that's Monica. Her theater company has its winter home not far from here and she usually attends most of my winter courts."

By the time Aubergin finished speaking, Darkain had risen from the throne and was making his way toward the throng of dancing courtiers.

"Where are you going?" Aubergin called to his brother.

Darkain looked over his shoulder. "This is the introductory lesson in Unseelie behavior," he replied. "Follow your instincts. Mine are telling me to join the dance." A few minutes later, Aubergin stood up and followed his brother's lead. Eager hands drew him into a circle of masked revelers and he soon lost himself in the seductive rhythms of the music.





The Samhain fires created pockets of warmth against the chilly October night. Darkain watched as Monica fed a handful of branches, one by one, to the voracious bonfire, a look of rapt fascination on her face. Dancing led to touching and from there to more intimacies in one of the many bedrooms on the second floor of Aubergin's palatial lodge. Now, their passions temporarily sated, Darkain and Monica were content to stand in the courtyard outside the freehold, watching the comings and goings of the other members of the court.

"Is there a second lesson?" Aubergin's voice startled Darkain from his contemplation. He turned and smiled at his Seelie brother's disheveled appearance. His smile broadened into a full grin when he saw Aubergin's companion, a willowy, dusky-skinned eshu whose expression of complacent contentment told Darkain all he needed to know about how his brother had been passing the time.

"There's always something more to be learned," Darkain said. "Especially by as quick a study as you seem to be."

"Shall we go back inside, where it's warmer?" Aubergin asked.

Darkain shook his head. "This is as good a place as any to talk about the coming winter," he said. "We've become far too attached to light and warmth. The slightest chill drives us to seek shelter when we would be better served by insuring ourselves against the cold and teaching our eyes to see through the shadows."

"I take it you're speaking in metaphors," Aubergin said. "This is Lucas," he added, indicating the eshu. "He came here from Pacifica last year and decided to stay."

"For the time being," Lucas said. "I've heard stories about the baron's reckless younger brother, but you were gone from the court when I first arrived. I admired your entrance earlier this evening."

Darkain nodded. "I'm afraid that's the most reckless thing I've done tonight," he said.

"I don't know about that," Monica mumbled, tossing a handful of pine boughs onto the bonfire and drawing back as they popped and sparked in the flame.

Darkain laughed. "That wasn't reckless," he replied, "that was fun and games. This is reckless." He backed away from the fire until he was standing at the outermost edge of its radiance. Taking a deep breath and tensing his body, he sprinted toward the flames.

"What are you doing?" Aubergin cried as Darkain charged the bonfire. At the last minute he hurled his body up and over the crackling flames. Monica screamed, and Aubergin felt a cry escape his mouth as well. Lucas disappeared suddenly. A second later, his voice called out from the other side of the fire.

"He's all right!"

Immediately after Lucas' pronouncement, Darkain confirmed his success with his own cry of victory, running around the fire to join his brother and Monica. Lucas followed him, a bemused look on his face.

Aubergin rushed toward Darkain and grabbed him by the shoulders, half-shaking and half-embracing his brother.

"You could have been killed trying a stunt like that!" he remonstrated, his voice trembling with barely suppressed anger.

Darkain threw off his brother's grip, shoving Aubergin backward.

"If I pissed you off, why don't you do something about it?" he challenged. "You're angry enough to fight. Let's do it."

Aubergin felt something inside him give way. He launched himself at Darkain, who braced for the impact. Monica and Lucas watched as the brothers fought. Aubergin, marginally stronger and heavier than his brother, wrestled Darkain to the ground. A small crowd of spectators gathered, some cheering for their baron and others for the scrappy lord of the evening. The battle ended inconclusively, when Aubergin lost his balance and fell atop Darkain, sending the pair rolling perilously close to the fire. They broke apart suddenly and struggled to their feet. A smattering of applause greeted the combatants.

Darkain brushed the dirt and gravel from his clothes as he looked at his brother.

"Lesson Two: If it scares you, do it," he gasped between breaths.

Aubergin shook his head, running his hands through his auburn hair and pulling out clumps of pine needles.

"I shouldn't have lost it like that," he said.

Darkain threw up his hands in mock disgust. "This is Samhain!" he proclaimed, speaking to the crowd that had been drawn by the sounds of the fight as well as to his brother. "You're supposed to lose it. That's the whole point of the evening. Lose all, risk all, hold nothing back!"

"Where did you learn to do that?" Aubergin asked, gesturing toward the bonfire. "I was expecting some last minute display of Glamour to transport you beyond the flames. Instead, you just... jumped."

Darkain shrugged. "I spent a year and a day in exile. I used that time to explore the darkness and the creatures who know it more intimately than we ever will. We are so insulated in our chimerical shelters, congratulating one another on the fact that we can protect ourselves at least part of the time from the outside world, that we don't learn the lessons that world can teach us. I have been spending time with the Prodigals, the Thalluin, the witches and the wolves and they have taught me how to revel in the inner

darkness, how to live without shame, and how to prepare for the inevitable, Endless Winter."

"You speak as if you're looking forward to it," Aubergin said.

"Only because it's better than dreading it," Darkain replied.

"Some of us are doing our best to prevent its approach by preserving the little Glamour that is left to us," Aubergin started to walk away from the fire back toward the lodge. Darkain held out a hand to Monica and, as an afterthought, offered his other hand to Lucas. The trio followed Aubergin back inside, where tables of food had been laid out for a midnight banquet.

Darkain helped himself to mulled cider and a handful of Samhain cakes and joined his brother once more near the throne.

"About the Shadow Court," Aubergin began as Darkain seated himself on the throne.

Darkain lifted one arm in a sweeping gesture. "Tonight, this is the Shadow Court," he said. "For one night, Seelie and Unseelie are brought together to celebrate the other side of brightness. Tomorrow, you'll go back to being baron and Monica will forget the pleasure we shared and Lucas will look upon you as just the lord of this freehold, but tonight, we are all part of the Court of Shadows."

Aubergin shook his head. "Even I know better than that," he said. "This is the shadow of the Shadow Court. I want to know about the real one."

"Your words indicate that you already know more than most," Darkain said. "Admitting it on any other night to someone you suspected of being part of the Shadow Court could be dangerous."

Aubergin's face registered sudden realization.

"The Samhain Mists," he whispered. "You're banking on the fact that the Mists that come with the morning will wipe tonight's conversation from our minds."

Darkain lifted an eyebrow and inclined his head a fraction of an inch. "It's the only hope either of us have," he said. "Before this night is over, you will know more than is good for you and I will be branded a traitor to my cause. Only the Mists can save either of us."

"If we forget," Aubergin said. "Sometimes memories persist, or so I've heard."

"Risk all, lose all," Darkain replied. "Listen carefully, because I'll say this only once. Yes there is a Shadow Court, and it — we — are all around you, planning in secret to ensure that we survive the end of the Dreaming."



Another cry of mixed terror and exultation, followed by a chorus of cheers and hoots sounded from the courtyard. Inside the lodge, the crowd had thinned out as most of the courtiers had taken their celebrations outside, despite the evening's chill. Midnight had come and gone, and the night was making its inexorable progress toward the coming dawn.

"You've started something," Aubergin observed as he rose from his seat near the throne and walked toward the open doorway. Leaning one hand on the lintel, he watched as the more daring members of his court took their turn at leaping the bonfire. Scornful boos greeted those who, losing their courage as the flames suddenly loomed in front of them like an impenetrable barrier, balked and turned aside. Those who persisted received the screaming accolades of the spectators, some of whom had already braved the fires. Now and then, a genuine howl of pain testified to someone's partial success in clearing the burning hurdle.

"I certainly hope so," Darkain replied. "That's the whole point — or one of the whole points — of letting loose the darkness inside us. Even the ones who turn aside have learned something about their inner selves."

"Some of them are only learning that fire is hot," Aubergin replied.

"No one's been seriously hurt so far," his brother responded casually. "I'm sure we'd be notified if someone had died from immolation."

Aubergin shook his head angrily. "It seems so pointless," he said. Yet Darkain noticed the uncertainty in his brother's voice.

"Have you done it?" he asked. "How can you pass judgment on something you yourself haven't experienced?"

"That's unfair," Aubergin replied. "That's like saying that I can't judge an oathbreaker unless I, myself, know what it's like to break an—" He stopped abruptly, his eyes suddenly hard as he wheeled around to face his brother.

Darkain was smiling. "Exactly," he whispered, although Aubergin could hear him above the other noises as if he were speaking directly into his ear. "You called me oathbreaker and banished me from your presence one year and one day ago tonight. And you didn't know what drove me to do what I did, nor could I speak of it until now."

Aubergin left his post by the door and crossed the room to stand in front of his brother.

"So, tell me now what you couldn't or wouldn't tell me before," he said quietly. "Why did you fail in your oath to me?"

"That's what you never understood," Darkain said, sounding suddenly tired. "I broke my oath precisely in order to remain loyal to the vow I made to you."

Aubergin looked at his brother, confusion in his eyes. "I still don't understand," he replied. "There was a conspiracy among some of my supposedly loyal retainers and instead of exposing them, you joined with them and became their ringleader. How was that keeping your oath? You were lucky that I hold ties of blood as strongly as I do. I banished the others from my freehold permanently."

Darkain smiled. "You noticed them because of my association with them, didn't you?" he asked. Without waiting for a response, he continued. "It was the only way I could think of to make certain that you became aware that your 'best friends' were plotting to seize control of your domain. When the plot was uncovered, I didn't dare admit that I had deliberately sought to bring them down. It would have weakened the case against them. They could have claimed that I entrapped them."

Aubergin did not reply at once. He lowered his head and stared for a few long moments at the floor. When he finally looked up again to meet Darkain's gaze, his own eyes were shining with suppressed moisture.

"So you kept silent and let me condemn you along with the others," he said.

Darkain shrugged. "I suppose I deserved it as much as they did," he answered. "In order to convince them I was serious, I had to become one of them. I had to change. They would have recognized any guile on my part." An impish smile softened the craggy features of his face. "I worked my ass off to overthrow you. I just wasn't very subtle about it," he said.

"Why didn't you come to me later?" Aubergin asked. "You could have met privately with me and explained your actions. I would have revoked your punishment and not branded you an oathbreaker."

Darkain shook his head. "You missed the importance of what I said. I had to change in order to do what I did. It wasn't that easy to revert to the person I was before."

"You mean you became Unseelie in order to oppose me," Aubergin said slowly, as he tried to follow his brother's reasoning.

"Yes," Darkain said. "And once I had launched myself upon that path, I have had to follow it to its conclusion."

"Is that why you came here tonight?" Aubergin asked. "Have you found the end of the road you've been traveling?"

"Maybe." Darkain's answer lacked certainty. "I returned because my time of exile was over, and because I knew that what I have discovered is a truth that I cannot keep to myself."

"What truth is that?" Aubergin asked.

"I realized that had I known then what I know now, I might have worked in earnest to overthrow you," Darkain

said. "Only I would have made certain that you would not have realized what was going on until it was too late."

Aubergin's face grew hard. "So have you come here tonight to announce to me that you have, in truth, broken your oath? Was I right to call you forsworn?"

"I came here to tell you that you are wrong," Darkain replied. "You and all your subjects who struggle so hard to hold on to a way of life that has no meaning in the world today. None of you understands more than the barest glimmer of what is happening all around you. Winter is coming, and it will be an endless one. We have only one option — to adapt to it or to find ourselves ripped away from everything that makes us what we are."

"We can prevent the arrival of Winter," Aubergin insisted. "By conserving the Glamour that is left among mortals, by carefully encouraging their dreams to produce more Glamour, and by steadfastly refusing to give way to the assaults of Banality, we can keep hold of what remains."

"That is the argument advanced by the Seelie Court to justify its retention of power throughout the year," Darkain said, his voice heavy with scorn. "Sure, you can hold the line for a time by hoarding your precious stores of Glamour, by not wasting it and by rationing yourselves to what you can glean from the droppings of mortals. But the power of winter is growing, while yours stays the same. Eventually, that line will give way and you will have to retreat and draw another line to hold until it, too, gives way. Sooner or later, you will have nowhere to go."

"And you think the solution lies with the Unseelie Court, or, more specifically, with the Shadow Court?" Aubergin asked.

Darkain arched an eyebrow and gave his brother a mocking smile. "At least you have learned one thing," he said. "You have finally latched onto the fact that there are two different courts out there, and that they are not quite the same."

"I'm not entirely dim," Aubergin said, trying not to sound petulant or allow Darkain's patronization to provoke him. "My geasa this evening enjoined you to reveal to me what you know of the Shadow Court. I have not been deaf to the rumors of its existence as a force behind the Unseelie Court."

"Forgive me if I misjudged you," Darkain said. "You have always been the forthright brother, the one who took things at face value."

"Which was why, of course, you had to throw conspiracy in my face before I could see it," Aubergin muttered.

Darkain's smile was genuine as he answered his brother. "More or less," he said. "I, on the other hand, have never been content with appearances and have made it a habit to question everything before I accepted anything as true. That was how I found the Shadow Court. Or how it found me."

"So you have given your allegiance to the enemies of the Seelie Court?" Aubergin asked.

"I wouldn't call us enemies," Darkain began.

"The Shadow Court stands for everything we oppose!" Aubergin said. "How can you call yourselves anything but our enemies?"

"I can't claim to speak for everyone who serves the Shadow Court," Darkain said, "but I believe that the existence of opposed forces is necessary to the survival of the *faerie* race. We exist to reassert our right to rule as equals with the Seelie. We believe that the only way to assure that spring will come is to welcome the winter and deal with the changes it will inevitably bring. It is called the Endless Winter because we have delayed its coming for so long that it will, perhaps, be longer than many other winters that have come and gone." Darkain rose from his seat and embraced his brother.

"I am not your enemy," he whispered. "I am your adversary. There's a difference."

Aubergin held his brother close for a moment, remembering other quarrels and reconciliations. Then he pulled away from Darkain.

"What can you tell me, then, about the opposition?" he asked.

Darkain shook his head. "You are also the persistent brother," he said. He slumped to the floor in front of the throne and patted the polished wood, inviting Aubergin to join him.

"Let us talk as equals," he said. "I'll tell you all I know about the Shadow Court, but I have to say that I am nowhere near the center of its power. For all I know, I'm only one of its pawns, and what I know may all be an elaborate lie made up for those of us who need to believe that we are part of something greater than ourselves."

"I'll take that into account," Aubergin said.

As the revelers both within the lodge and outside, around the fires, discovered their second wind, Darkain began to speak of things dark and secret. Aubergin listened, eagerly absorbing his brother's words in the hopes that at least some of what he was hearing would remain in his memory despite the Samhain Mists that would herald the end of the festival.



Aubergin opened his eyes and winced at the odd pain in his side. Feeling around, he realized that he lay slumped against the throne, an overturned candelabra jammed between his hip and the floor.

"Good morning, my lord," someone said in a voice that, although barely more than a whisper, echoed inside his head like the report of a gun. Aubergin looked up, his eyes still glassy with sleep, and saw the familiar form of Otho, his troll

bodyguard. Otho held out a heavily muscled arm. Aubergin reached for the arm and used it to pull himself onto his feet.

"Thank you and good morning to you, Otho," Aubergin replied belatedly. He released his grip on the troll and stretched his arms and legs, trying to ease the stiffness that had settled in from sleeping on the hard wooden floor. He looked around at the shambles of overturned chairs and tables, spilled food, pools of sticky wine and mulled cider, the torn tapestries and wilted flowers that bore testimony to last night's revels.

"It was some party," Aubergin said, his voice thick and scratchy. He shook his head in hopes of clearing his mind and finding his usual eloquence.

Otho nodded, a slight grin on his broad-featured face. Aubergin noticed a bandage on the troll's other arm.

"What happened?" he asked.

The troll shrugged. "I got burned," he confessed, looking down at his feet.

Aubergin raised an eyebrow, but decided not to pursue the matter. Other courtiers were beginning to rouse themselves from similar positions on the floor of the audience chamber.

"Didn't anyone make it to the bedrooms last night?" Aubergin remarked.

"Those are the ones who didn't," Otho replied. "The bedrooms are full, I believe."

Aubergin smiled. He wondered who would be waking up with whom and how much any of them would remember.

"Darkain," he said suddenly, glancing quickly about the room for his brother and failing to find him. "Where did he go?"

"He left an hour or so ago," another voice replied. Aubergin turned and saw Lucas standing behind Otho. "He said not to disturb you, but to wish you a fruitful journey." The eshu's handsome face bore an enigmatic smile. "I thought that was a little odd, considering the fact that he seems to be the journeyer."

Aubergin felt a wave of sadness wash through him. "I'm sorry he left without saying good-bye," he said. "Or maybe he did, and I just don't remember it." He closed his eyes and tried to recall the events of the previous evening, finding instead only a jumble of indecipherable images that eluded his attempt to bring any of them into focus.

"Damn the Samhain Mists," he muttered. "Something important happened last night."

"Maybe if you stop trying so hard you'll remember it, my lord." Lucas' voice was a soothing balm to Aubergin's aching senses. He nodded.

"I'm surprised to see that you're still here," Aubergin said to the eshu.

"Have I overstayed my welcome?" Lucas asked. "If so—"

Aubergin shook his head. "No," he said quickly. "It's only that your kith are not known for remaining in one place for extended periods and you have been a member of my freehold for almost a year. I thought you might be getting tired of the same faces."

"It is the morning after Samhain," Lucas said. "Nothing is the same."

Aubergin frowned. The eshu's words had triggered a partial memory, and he tried to follow it before it escaped him entirely.

"Darkain spoke of change," he said aloud. Lucas nodded and moved to stand closer to him. "He told me about shadows and the coming winter and—" Aubergin's voice broke off and he sighed in disgust. "It's no use," he said. "I can't remember anything except that we spoke at great length."

"Perhaps you should put a sprig of rosemary under your pillow tonight," Lucas suggested. Aubergin looked at him quizzically for a moment, then his eyes registered sudden comprehension.

"For remembrance," he said. "Maybe I'll do that." Aubergin eyed Lucas appraisingly. "Since you seem intent on staying, at least for a while," he said, "it seems that I should put you to work in my freehold. I am always in need of good counsel, and yours seems better than many I've heard in the past. Will you stay and serve me as one of my advisors?"

Lucas stared at Aubergin for a moment before answering.

"I am a commoner, my lord," he said. "I am only too willing to serve you however I can, but the other nobles in your counsel may not approve of having one in their midst who is less than their equal."

"That's easily taken care of," Aubergin said, waving his hand dismissively as he spoke. "What's a title anyway, but something attached to the beginning of a name? I'll make it official at court this evening, Sir Lucas." Even as he spoke, Aubergin realized that something within him had changed. Yesterday, he would not have taken the matter of titles so casually. Today, the idea that with a word, he could make a commoner into a noble struck him as amusing.

"Shall I organize a contingent to clean up the mess, my lord?" Otho asked, his voice a low rumble that made Aubergin wince. The baron shook his head.

"Let it be for awhile," he said, nudging a ruined tapestry with the tip of his boot. "I've half a mind to redecorate, anyway." He looked at the throne and noticed his baronial circlet resting in its seat. He started to retrieve it, then decided to leave it where it was. He crossed the room and opened the door to the lodge.

Outside, the sky was overcast, promising a storm later in the day.



"I feel like going for a walk," he said.

"It's cold, my lord," Otho remarked. "There's a strong wind blowing."

Aubergin laughed. "Of course it's cold," he replied. "It's nearly winter." He turned to Lucas. "Do you want to come with me?" he asked. "There are some paths through the woods that I haven't walked in many years, and I can always use a guide in case I lose my way."

The eshu nodded, and followed Aubergin out into the chill November morning.



A few miles from Aubergin's freehold, Darkain drove his motorcycle off the road and came to a stop. He turned to the woman who sat behind him.

"Are you sure you want to come with me?" he asked.

Monica gave Darkain a lazy smile and brushed her wind-blown hair into some semblance of order.

"As sure as I am of anything," she said.

"It won't be like anything you have ever known," he warned her. "We're heading down a road that only leads to darkness."

"I'm not afraid of the dark," Monica said. She tightened her hold on Darkain's waist.

"You will be," Darkain replied. "It's not too late for you to turn back, you know."

Monica shook her head stubbornly.

"You're not turning back, are you?" she asked.

"I thought about it," Darkain said. "It was so tempting to slip back into my brother's life. We would have been arguing about something inconsequential before the day was over."

"Why didn't you stay?" Monica wanted to know.

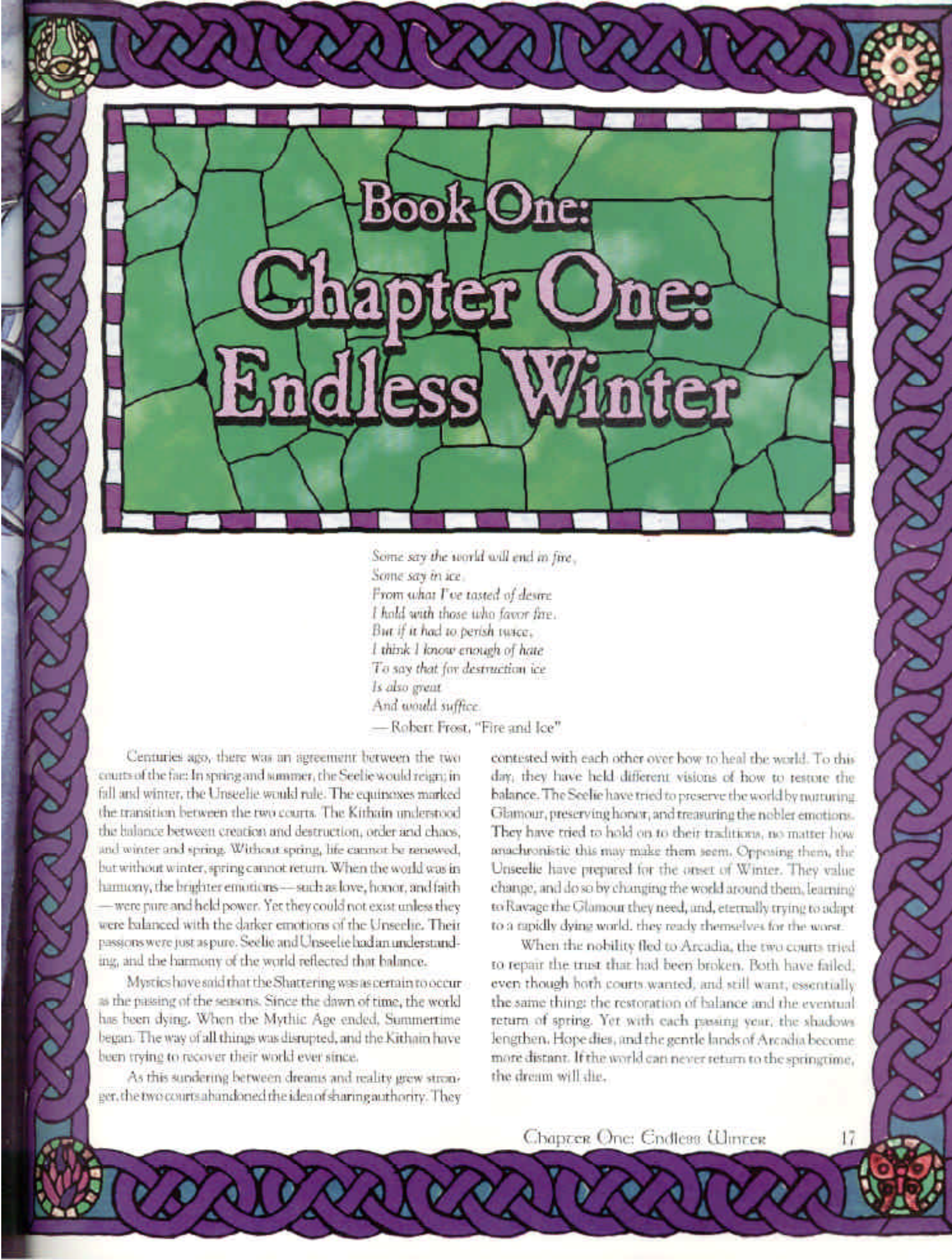
"Part of me did stay," Darkain replied. "I left Aubergin with a gift that will take him some little time to recognize. I planted a seed in his soul and left a gardener there to make sure it grows."

"What sort of seed?"

"Rosemary," Darkain said. "For remembrance."

Monica laughed at his response and Darkain joined her. Soon their voices were lost in the roar of the motorcycle as it sped down the mountain road toward the darkening winter sky.





Book One: Chapter One: Endless Winter

*Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.*

—Robert Frost, "Fire and Ice"

Centuries ago, there was an agreement between the two courts of the fae: In spring and summer, the Seelie would reign; in fall and winter, the Unseelie would rule. The equinoxes marked the transition between the two courts. The Kithain understood the balance between creation and destruction, order and chaos, and winter and spring. Without spring, life cannot be renewed, but without winter, spring cannot return. When the world was in harmony, the brighter emotions—such as love, honor, and faith—were pure and held power. Yet they could not exist unless they were balanced with the darker emotions of the Unseelie. Their passions were just as pure. Seelie and Unseelie had an understanding, and the harmony of the world reflected that balance.

Mystics have said that the Shattering was as certain to occur as the passing of the seasons. Since the dawn of time, the world has been dying. When the Mythic Age ended, Summertime began. The way of all things was disrupted, and the Kithain have been trying to recover their world ever since.

As this sundering between dreams and reality grew stronger, the two courts abandoned the idea of sharing authority. They

contested with each other over how to heal the world. To this day, they have held different visions of how to restore the balance. The Seelie have tried to preserve the world by nurturing Glamour, preserving honor, and treasuring the nobler emotions. They have tried to hold on to their traditions, no matter how anachronistic this may make them seem. Opposing them, the Unseelie have prepared for the onset of Winter. They value change, and do so by changing the world around them, learning to Ravage the Glamour they need, and, eternally trying to adapt to a rapidly dying world, they ready themselves for the worst.

When the nobility fled to Arcadia, the two courts tried to repair the trust that had been broken. Both have failed, even though both courts wanted, and still want, essentially the same thing: the restoration of balance and the eventual return of spring. Yet with each passing year, the shadows lengthen. Hope dies, and the gentle lands of Arcadia become more distant. If the world can never return to the springtime, the dream will die.

Despite the conflict between the Seelie and the Unseelie, there is a third group that has prepared for this tragic fate. They are waiting for the world to die, and they hide in the shadows until the time of their triumph is at hand. For them, there is no end to the world — only a chance for a dark new beginning. Their story begins before the Shattering, before the nobles left the world in the 15th century.

The Earliest Shadow Court

Before the Shattering, relations were not as strained between the Seelie Court and the Unseelie Court. Just as the Unseelie would relinquish power and welcome the return of the Seelie at Beltaine each year, the Seelie Court was prepared to step down and make way for Unseelie rulers when Samhain arrived. The festivals of the autumnal equinox were more than simple celebrations — they were dangerous demonstrations of who the Unseelie really were.

On the glorious night of Samhain, the order of Kithain society was tossed to the winds. Nobles dressed as commoners and begged for food, wandering in disguise to free themselves of their identities. By the light of blazing bonfires, commoners would then elect a "mock court" to act as their nobles. No one believed that the simple folk had the nobility to rule, but the election of this Shadow Court recognized the nobles among them. The humble were proud, and the starving feasted. On that one night, Seelie would try to understand their Unseelie natures, and the Unseelie would be generous to them. Everywhere, the Kithain would revel, giving in to temptation. Samhain was a night without sin, without blame, and without recrimination. At dawn, the Samhain Mists would erase the memories of all that had transpired, and all would be forgiven.

On that night, away from the mock courts, nobles revered their ancestors. The veil between the lands of the living and the lands of the dead was thin. Just as the flowers that died in winter could be reborn in spring, so could the fae renew themselves. Death held little meaning for them, for they aged slowly in those days. Those who met with death could be born again. Fae who passed beyond this physical world began a long spiritual journey through the lands of the dead, following an ancient trod known as the "Bright Road." When a Kithain soul completed this quest, he would be reborn, and in his reincarnated form, he would await his Saining and new identity.

The quest was always hardest for the sidhe. When the world was young, the only way for a Seelie sidhe to become Unseelie, or for an Unseelie sidhe to become Seelie, was to walk the Bright Road and return to the world forever changed. Only the knowledge hidden in the Gremayre would reveal the truth of a sidhe's origins. For commoners and sidhe alike, the journey was a lengthy one, but each year, the rituals of Samhain renewed the courage of both the living and the dead. When the veil between the two worlds was thin, those who were forgotten were

remembered, and those who were lost could glimpse the world they had left behind. The brave few who dared to speak into the void would have their messages carried on the wings of eidolons, and pilgrims who traveled the Bright Road would respond.

Yet the spirits of the Earth could never fully tolerate communion between the two worlds. When the living and the dead conversed, the strength of the Mists grew. Every year, on the morning following the autumnal equinox, the Samhain Mists were perilously strong. Foul deeds were forgotten, revelry was forgotten, and communion between the living and the dead was forgotten as well. The balance would be restored, the Unseelie would rule, and the Seelie Court would wait for the return of spring.

Then the Shattering came, the balance was lost, and everything changed.

The Dying Times and the Long Night

In the madness of the Shattering, the nobles left the world. Many commoners believed that the nobles had earned a place in Arcadia, and they wished them good fortune, while others cursed their names for abandoning them in a world full of Banality. The Unseelie, filled with anger, accused the aristocracy of cowardice, believing them to have fled. Some commoners believed that the nobles perished outright. They whispered that gatherings of sidhe walked the Bright Road again.

Each year, with the passing of Samhain, the world fell further from the state of grace it once knew. The two courts no longer trusted each other, and the practice of sharing leadership became unthinkable. Political factions fiercely debated how to handle their affairs, but the two courts could never agree. The strife between the Seelie and Unseelie grew, creating a perpetual schism between the two.

Masquerading as humans in a world of men, the Kithain began to turn away from the old traditions. Just as the Mists obscured the trods to Arcadia, the chimerical world of the Dreaming became more distant with each passing year. Commoners realized that their world would never again be the same. Some waited faithfully for the nobles to return as shadows lengthened, but as the situation worsened, they began to realize that it was a world that they had to rule. Each year, the ritual of Samhain was held with greater reverence, and its meaning became more important. The impossible became necessary.

Seelie and Unseelie came to realize that they could no longer war with one another if they were to survive. Any commoner could rise to the prestige of ruling a kingdom. Seelie fought to preserve what the Unseelie would disdain, and freeholds and kingdoms changed hands in these disputes. As a result of this conflict, changelings could choose their Legacies more freely. Even more disturbing was the fact that those few sidhe who remained behind could choose their Legacies without passing through the Bright Road. This became a more

common practice, as many of those who set out on that spiritual journey never returned.

Just as falsehoods became truths by the light of day, truths were revealed in the shadows. Cliques of Kithain who returned from the rituals of Samhain with their memories intact learned to use the Miats to their benefit on that night, and they treasured the memories they retained. Ritualists guarded this knowledge and allied with those who respected the choices made during the mock court. Soothsayers witnessed dark prophecies of the future, and the future of the world looked bleak. Their visions were of an Endless Winter, a world of unrelenting darkness and horror. In the shadow of the two courts, as preparation for this revelation, a secret conspiracy was born.

Conspirators, who knew of the prophecies and remembered the black secrets they learned on the night of Samhain, believed that Spring would never return. Their silent and forgotten activities were only ephemeral shadows compared to the politics known to the Kithain. While changelings who lived by the light of day were preoccupied with the Seelie and Unseelie Courts, those who adored the night communed with the Shadow Court.

For six centuries, the shadows lengthened, and with the death of magic came the death of hope. Slowly, monsters who waited in the shadows returned. While Arcadia seemed more and more distant, horrid things, long forgotten, crawled from the regions that hid them to slither and crawl across the Earth again. Magical creatures always need magic to sustain them, so they consumed raw Glamour as they Ravaged the world, bringing the onset of Winter. With them came the neglected cousins of the fae. An innocent changeling would find a Gancorer seducing a lovely young lass or a bogie sucking the breath from an infant child. These creatures were known as "the Forgotten"—the Thallain.

Despite the slow invasion of these horrors, the rituals of the autumnal equinox were never neglected. They were a reminder of the pure strength that slept within each fae. Their taint—the Unseelie Legacies that slept within their souls—gave them the strength they needed to survive. Each year, Kithain still waited to hear the whispered voices of long-lost nobles to give them guidance. Unseelie raved in the night, Seelie were tempted by their abandoned legacies, and the commoners revered the noblest among their people with their mock courts.

The disappearance of the nobles had brought about a certain fatalism in the Unseelie Court. The myth of Endless Winter spread far and wide among their kind, but stories of its endless night rarely bolstered the courage of loyal Unseelie. Every Unseelie on Earth knows that there is a Seelie Legacy within, and that if circumstances are favorable, any Unseelie can become Seelie again. The world is bleak, but there is hope for redemption and the restoration of balance. Despite this, if the Shadow Court grows strong enough to take the world, Endless Winter will forever destroy all Seelie Legacies everywhere.



The Dead of Night

Today, few would speak openly of the six centuries of the Long Night. The Resurgence was a chance to escape from that world and allow wayward sidhe back into positions of power. While most commoners were pleased with the compromise of the Resurgence, not all fae were as forgiving. Today, some are still old enough to remember the bloodshed from a scant 25 years ago, and some still whisper tales about the Long Night. Commoners have learned to survive without their masters.

Memories about the Resurgence vary, as one would expect under the influence of the Dreaming. Some of those who remember the opening of the gates of Arcadia remember the Shining Host ("the Fallen Ones") returning to the world they abandoned. And a few remember what came behind them: foul clouds of darkness, hideous monstrosities—True Unseelie, the foulest of the fae, and their armies of Thallain. Right out in front, the Shining Host charged into the world again. Seelie remember it as an attack on a dying Earth; Unseelie recall it as a retreat from a lost cause—it all depends on your point of view. The rumors of a war in Arcadia are not dead.

Today, in this world, the nobles fight a different war. The casualties are victims of a banal world. There is a saying among the nobles: *When the land is crownless, it lacks a soul.* The return of the nobles has not purified the land, however. Even the greatest of the nobles feel their Unseelie destinies calling them, and that taint is reflected in the kingdoms around them. The political games and courtly romances they use to amuse themselves are only diversions from the state of the world, and they cannot hide the growing states of Banality in their souls. Yet there are also commoners who commune with the world fully, desperately trying to understand the horrors that surround them. Perhaps they are the true heroes in these dark times.

Commoners and nobles still have their differences, and ancient grudges are hard to ignore. Many nobles fear the Shadow Court because they fear the threat of assassination. In truth, most recruits of the shadows would not dare resort to such extremes. Some who join do so merely to overthrow a Seelie rival or exact revenge against a member of the nobility. When their goals are achieved, they return to their former lives. They get what they desire, and the Shadow Court gains their temporary support. Untroubled by conscience, these lesser subjects scoff at the stories of a world without light. After all, Endless Winter is only a myth, a fairy tale told to Unseelie childlings. Yet those who join the Shadow Court permanently do so to reaffirm this dark prophecy. The threat of Endless Winter is worse than the threat of death.

Adventurers who do not hide themselves from the world confirm the legends of Winter's approach. Wilder cliques who have listened to the tales of the Kindred and the Garou have heard of the onset of the final days. The vampires speak of Gehenna, when the Ancient Ones will arise to devour their young. Werewolves prepare for the Apocalypse, when the force of ultimate corruption, the Wyrn, will destroy all

that is held dear. The most avaricious Unseelie are not troubled by either of these legends. For them, these portents herald the beginning of a new dark age. That bold age has already begun.

Secretive cliques watch the final days carefully, for they confirm the tragic destiny of the world. If the finest of nobles can be cast out from the world, the nightmare of Endless Winter can also become a reality. The Shadow Court blames the fate of the world on the failure of the Seelie Court, the compromise of the Unseelie Court, and the cowardice of the nobility. Courtiers who have abandoned the politics of the Seelie, members of the Unseelie Court who tire of Kithain life, and nobles who have fallen from grace have descended into the intrigues of the shadows.

The Manifesto

As part of the secretive alliances of the Shadow Court, generations of courtiers have detailed and redefined the goals they would need to realize the prophecies they had witnessed. The seven tenets of their desiderata are described in an agreement known as the Manifesto of Endless Winter. Not all courtiers agree on these goals or how to enact them. The only way to fully understand how these goals are enacted is to ask the members of the Shadow Court themselves.

The First Tenet: Understand the mortal world, and shelter those who cannot live in it.

We have an obligation to our neglected cousins, the forgotten Thallain. They have no place in the mortal world, and so we must help them adapt. The Seelie would destroy our brothers, but only we understand them. They want to preserve all that is magical, yet the persecute our ogres and goblins when they find them. After all, they're not Kithain, are they? To me, they're more than that. They're always welcome within my freehold.

— Troll Guardian

Sure, I understand the mortals. I've seen poverty and tragedy, crime, violence and despair. I've seen the fear in the eyes of a chump cashier right before I put a bullet in his head, and I've seen the righteous anger of a police officer who thinks he upholds the law. Humans are at their best when they take to the streets, so if you want to understand the mortal world, root up and take down!

— Redcap Ravager

The Second Tenet: Understand the supernatural world, and make and break alliances as necessary.

You really think vampires are a Prodigal race? Everything you think you know about them is wrong. You say they're tragic and humane, but I've seen them for what they truly are. I have had the honor of leaping through the flames of a Fire Dance, and I have witnessed the glory of Monomancy in action. They are beasts, without humanity or decency. Yet they are free, just as all changelings should be free. They are alien, and yet they are all the Unseelie should aspire to be. We have so much to learn from them.

— Eshu Emissary

It was a simple matter. We knew what the Shadow Lords wanted, and we stayed out of their way. The Seelie didn't. Now there's 10 less changelings in this freehold because a certain impudent childling ruler wouldn't listen to advice from a werewolf. I wash my hands of the matter.

— Sidhe Advisor

The Third Tenet: Harvest Glamour and prepare for the approaching of Endless Winter.

Mortals come and go. If they're going to survive, their false ideals are going to have to go. There is no room in the world for false hope or romantic love. The only race that has a chance in hell of making it through the next millennia are the workers of true magic. Admit the truth: We're at the top of the food chain, and if we're going to survive, we have to feast on the weak.

— Nocker Weaponsmith

See that girl on my harp? She had a pretty little life in a backwater town. Picket fence, 2.5 children, the whole cliché, and all before the age of 20. After a few hits of angel dust and a few shotgun shells, I think she saw the light. Now she lives for Glamour, and now she rides with me.

— Sidhe Ravager

The Fourth Tenet: Overthrow the Seelie Court and the nobility.

Endless Winter is a myth. The only reason the Shadow Court exists is because the Unseelie Court is too cowardly to overthrow the Seelie Court and the nobles once and for all. What we should really want is a world without Seelie interference and noble arrogance. In a world as bleak as this, only the Unseelie should rule. The solution is simple. Death to the Seelie. Victory to the masses.

— Boggan Crusader

I have served my freehold faithfully for centuries, but for a sidhe to bow his head to a fae of another lich is a disgrace. No longer. That Seelie bastard, that troll of House Gwydion, Aric of the Seven Thorns, who sits upon my rightful throne will feel the taste of my cold steel, and I will bathe in his blood.

— Unseelie Noble

The Fifth Tenet: Fulfill the ritual obligations of the year, culminating in the rituals of Samhain.

I lost my love a decade ago. Each year, I prepare a shrine in her honor, yet for ages, she was lost to me. Now I can see clearly. I have seen the truth, and in compensation for my sacrifice and servitude, the Shadow Court has carried my messages of comfort to my one true love.

— Satyr Romantic

Each year, the gathered courtiers speak of their deeds. By the light of the bonfires, we praise those who have found glory. Those who have done the most for our alliance receive the honor of leading our cliques for the next year.

— Eshu Ritualist

The Sixth Tenet: Spread chaos, revolution and anarchy.

The most important goal of the Shadow Court is really the revolution of the commoners. The nobles have always used us for their dirty work, yet they were quick to slaughter those who would stand up for their rights. The Accordance War isn't over, not by a long shot, not until we find vengeance and watch the blood of the nobles flow.

— Troll Assassin

And then all the animals were singing to us, asking us to let them out of the zoo! I've got a big bucket of paint, and the lions told us they wanted the trees to be red. I'm a lion, too! Hear me roar!

— Pooka Childling

The Seventh Tenet: There is no tenet number seven. All hail Discordia!

The only way to keep your enemies off guard is to keep them confused. One moment, they suspect their loyal commoners are about to revolt; the next, they think mortals are trying to steal from them. There's only one effective strategy against the Seelie nobility: Divide, confuse, and conquer.

— Pooka Mastermind

Why bother with a Manifesto? How can you achieve chaos with rules? Follow your instincts, and let the pieces fall where they may. You will know when you are right if you feel the passion in your heart. You will know you are there when the world is in flames.

— Redcap Anarchist

Revelry

If the world is to be conquered by the Shadow Court, they must seize their opportunity now. The world of Seelie ideals is gone: Chivalry, true love and honor are relics of the past. The spread of Banality is a portent of the future, and when the world at last descends into Endless Winter, the masses will revolt and the structure of Kithain society will be forever broken. The Earth will bask in darkness, and the foulest of the fae will revel in perpetual anarchy, chaos and discord. The Endless Winter will begin soon. The revolution begins now.



Chapter Two: The Way of Shadow

Introduction: The Pageant

*The Eagle soars in the summit of Heaven,
The Hunter with his dogs pursues his circuit,
O perpetual revolution of configured stars,
O perpetual recurrence of determined seasons,
O world of spring and autumn, birth and dying!*
— T. S. Eliot, "Choruses from 'The Rock'"

More than their Seelie counterparts, the Unseelie, particularly members of the Shadow Court, view fae life as a Pageant, a formal drama in which everyone is an actor. The play has been written, and it needs only to unfold. This imbues the actions of the Unseelie with a certain distance, since they are merely fulfilling their destined roles in the Pageant, and need not take anything they do or say too seriously. At the same time, the Pageant itself is extremely serious, since it tells the story of the continuous rise and fall of the Dreaming itself.

Some claim that mortals, in the old times, having seen the elaborately choreographed interplay between light and dark, winter and summer, Seelie and Unseelie, created their own version of the Pageant—giving birth to drama as a creative expression of their own rituals of the spirit. Whether or not this is the case, the Pageant of the

Fae once incorporated all of the children of the Dreaming into its grandeur and from it arose the cyclic structure of faerie existence.

At the heart of the Pageant lies the seasonal passage, the journey of the faerie soul through all its arcane twistings and turnings—both Seelie and Unseelie. As the two courts stepped their way through the year, weaving their Glamour into every facet of their lives, they re-created the spectacle of birth and rebirth, of constant renewal through constant, progressive change.

All this ended with the Shattering. Although the faeries, who were left behind when the sidhe fled the mortal realm, tried to maintain the Pageant, the necessities of survival in a world suddenly bereft of most of its Glamour and subject to the ravages of Banality and disbelief, forced them to abandon all but the bare bones of their life-dramas. In particular, the Seelie changelings were hardest hit by the drastic changes that were taking place around them. Little by little, the memories of the Pageant—and what it meant—disappeared.

The Unseelie fae were able to harden themselves to the worst effects of the Shattering, possibly because their dark Legacies adapted more easily to the corresponding darkness of the world. Thus, they remembered what others had forgotten. They kept at least part of the Pageant alive as they preserved the rituals familiar to them—the autumn and winter rites and ceremonies that marked the Unseelie half of the yearly cycle.

When the sidhe returned, they found that the world had undergone cataclysmic changes since their departure. While the Seelie concentrated on reestablishing a social system which afforded them some security and restored to them their roles as leaders of the fae, the Unseelie began to salvage what was left of the Pageant. As the Seelie began to dominate the realm of fae politics, the Unseelie drove straight to the heart of faerie spirituality, resurrecting the Pageant as the best way to put the changing world into perspective.

The Pageant, therefore, comprises all the social interactions of the Unseelie fae, whether they are consciously aware of it or not. Romance, honor, politics and relations with other creatures are all contained within the scope of the Pageant. It is Unseelie life itself. The Shadow Court, of course, sees itself as the directors of the Pageant, with the ability to change the script if necessary.

Romance

*But Love has pitched his mansion in
The place of excrement;
For nothing can be sole or whole
That has not been rent.*

— William Butler Yeats, "Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop"

For the Unseelie, love is a powerful emotion, but it has a different meaning from the usual connotations of affection, gentleness and fidelity. The concept of romance, particularly as espoused through the artifices and rules of courtly love, has little or no meaning. Instead, the Unseelie fae embrace love's darker side, recognizing it more as a cry of defiance against oblivion than an affirmation of life.

In matters of the heart, the Unseelie are far more prone to giving in to their instincts and lusts, surrendering to the impulses of the moment, without regard to the consequences or wisdom of some of their dalliances. Although the fae, in general, are less bound by the morality of the mortal world, the Unseelie excel in pursuing alternative avenues of sexual pleasures — sometimes for the shock value alone, sometimes for the total experience. For the Unseelie, there are no taboos.

This does not mean that all Unseelie are faithless or fickle lovers (although many of them are). Fidelity is present in the moment, but usually has little to do with long-term promises. Members of the Shadow Court are so aware of the impending Endless Winter that they are reluctant to commit themselves to relationships that might not weather the "end of the world." Today's passions are savored for what they are, without the delusion that they

will last beyond the morrow. An Unseelie Kithain may be utterly devoted and maniacally faithful to her current lover while realizing that at any moment her passions may change.

Displays of love are less tender among Unseelie, but often just as extravagant as those of the Seelie fae. It is not uncommon for Unseelie lovers to display their "affection" for one another through acts of violence, emotional and mental cruelty, or extreme displays of jealousy and possessiveness. Political correctness has no place in the Unseelie bedroom.

Doomed love confers a certain prestige among some of the Unseelie, particularly when the lovers expose themselves to great risks by their passion for one another. Tales of lovers who have broken vows or ignored traditional enmities to be together and whose love has ended in tragedy for both of them are told and retold among the Unseelie.

Shadow Courtly Love

Where many Seelie, particularly the nobles, devote themselves to the ideals of courtly love, the Unseelie of the Shadow Court tend either to ridicule the elaborate structure of romantic involvements or else to take the already highly formalized patterns and stages of courtly love far beyond the boundaries set by their Seelie counterparts. Most of the younger Unseelie ignore courtly love altogether. It is seen as a symbol of Seelie decadence.

Shadow Court Romantic Societies

A few Romantic Orders exist within the Shadow Court, and, while they do not enjoy the same obsessive attention as Seelie Orders of the Heart, they provide an outlet for expression for many Unseelie Kithain. (See *Nobles: The Shining Host* for an explanation of Orders of the Heart.)

Mockers

These self-appointed satirists turn the idea of courtly love into a grotesque parody, aping the postures and poses of the Pageant of love, while at the same time holding its tenets up for ridicule. It is not uncommon for a Mocker to assume the stance and fervor of a lovesick courtier while serenading the object of his affections with a bawdy song or an insulting limerick. Unseelie redcaps and pooka are masters of the art of mockery, although some of the more cynical sidhe manage to give a creditable accounting in this form of courtship.



Masquers

The utter devotion of these Unseelie romantics makes them almost indistinguishable from their Seelie counterparts. Masquers enjoy the elaborate structure of courtly love, but take it one step further. They see in it a reenactment of the doomed, yet ultimately triumphant, love between Winter and Summer. Many Ritualists channel their emotions and structure their love affairs according to the seasonal rites, using the calendar as their guide for beginning a courtship (in spring), consummating a relationship (in summer), savoring its slow decay (in autumn) and, finally, mourning its absence while celebrating its imminent return (in winter). For them, courtly love is one of the highest expressions of the Pageant, since it personalizes the yearly cycle of alternating darkness and light.

Most Masquers, unfortunately, become so caught up in the pattern of their love that they fail to take into account the real emotions involved. Their display too often devolves into an empty ritual, full of exacting details but devoid of passion and divorced from the emotions that would give it meaning.

Danseurs

Followers of this Unseelie order of romantics see themselves as the primary object of their affections, but use their involvements with others as a background against which they can display themselves to best advantage. They use the trappings of courtly love to focus on themselves. The "beloved" is almost an afterthought, a necessary prop that allows them to fulfill their role as lover. They play the game of courtly love to the hilt, but care less for making their consorts happy than for enhancing their own image as unrequited lover, doomed romantic, noble martyr, or whatever role they choose to assume.

Romantic Legacies of the Shadow Court

Unseelie fae who belong to one of the Romantic Societies adopt a pair of Romantic Legacies in addition to their court Legacies. Nobles: *The Shining Host* lists a number of Seelie and Unseelie Romantic Legacies, but there are a few additional Legacies known only to members of the Shadow Court.

Analyst: You analyze everything that happens during your love affairs. To you, having a lover is not so important as understanding the processes of love. How it works, why two people are attracted to one another, what causes them to fall out of love — these are what interest you. On the one hand, this makes you something of a cold fish, someone with no true passions; on the other hand, your lover can expect some unique situations and experimental lovemaking as you use her for your ongoing research.

Heartbreaker: You are completely faithful to your one true love — until you find your next one a week or a month later. The classic romantic, you sweep your lovers off their feet, taking them to undreamed-of heights of ecstasy. Then you get bored and move on to greener pastures. You have no understanding of why former lovers should try to cling to you once the magic is gone. How boring!

Obsessive: You control every aspect of your relationship. No one else is allowed to take your love's attention away from you; nor will you tolerate flirtations with others. Your lover must be utterly consumed with you, obeying your every wish, working to please you at all times, and forfeiting his own desires in order to fulfill yours. In return, you focus every waking thought on your loved one.

Tormentor: You constantly test your lover, seeing how much he will suffer for you. You delight in pushing your partner to new thresholds of emotional and physical anguish. Not content with just whips and chains, you excel in mental cruelty as well. If he stays with you through it all, you know it's for real.

Trader: Love is a matter of trade-offs. You total up each expression of it, making certain that you get at least as much as you give (preferably more). Expensive presents, calls to one another, support during crises, paying for entertainment, number of orgasms — all these measures of your love affair must match up or the whole thing just isn't worth your time. You can't be bothered with those who are too self-centered to see to your needs.

Honor

*I live near the abyss. I hope to stay
Until my eyes look at a brighter sun
As the thick shade of the long night comes on.*
— Theodore Roethke, "The Pure Fury"

Most fae consider the Unseelie to be without honor, since they do not subscribe to the code of chivalry or to any recognizable structure. Indeed, these decriers of Unseelie knavery couldn't be further from the truth.

Unseelie honor is an individual matter, governed by no body of laws or customs. Each Unseelie Kithain usually

develops her own code of conduct, and determines what she has to do to remain true to herself and to her larger goals (if she has any). This code may be a strict adherence to behavior that exactly mirrors what the Seelie think of as "chivalry," or it may incorporate lying, theft or even murder (for a justifiable cause). Seelie are continually surprised when they encounter Unseelie knights who seem as honorable (or more honorable) than themselves. They fail to realize that the Unseelie's reason for following the chivalric code (i.e., that it is the part assigned her by the needs of the Pageant) may wildly diverge from any justification the Seelie would understand.

The concept of oaths and geases are just as binding for the Unseelie, but they also recognize the dubious but no less real "honor" of the oathbroken or the forsworn. Those who, for one reason or another, join the ranks of violators of sworn promises have their own myathique and are accorded respect if they can prove or if it is believed that they have gone back on their word for good reason. (Sometimes it is necessary to break the letter of an oath in order to keep its spirit intact.)

Although most Unseelie fae, particularly those operating within the confines of Seelie society, pay lip service to the Escheat, or code of the fae, their private interpretation of that body of laws and customs differs somewhat from that of their Seelie counterparts.

The Escheat — Winter Version

For Unseelie fae, the laws of the Escheat are not written in stone. Although these traditions have a purpose in ensuring the survival of the fae in an essentially hostile environment, the Unseelie (largely through the efforts of the Shadow Court) are preparing themselves for a time of cataclysmic upheaval. For now, they abide by a version of "the rules," but they are in the process of rewriting the script.

The Right of Demesne — Power to rule lands or people belongs in the hands of those who are strong enough or clever enough to take it and keep it. In many cases, this may be a single noble or a house; in others, groups of Kithain — both noble and commoner — may achieve dominance over a freehold or even a kingdom. Being a Seelie noble is hardly sufficient grounds in and of itself for rulership.

Reality: Who holds the power, makes the rules.

The Right to Dream — Mortals have the right to dream. Any way in which we can encourage them to dream for our benefit is good. That includes both inspiring through Musing, or Ravaging for what we need. Some among us practice direct infusion of creativity to incite

Rhapsody. Who can argue with genius and the masterpieces it creates?

Reality: Mortals have the right to dream; we have the right to the fruits of their dreaming.

The Right of Ignorance — The fact that mortals don't know of our existence is vital to our protection and survival, but paranoia has its limits. Sooner or later, as Endless Winter draws nearer, we will have to come out of our freeholds and hidden places and brave the shock of the world. When that happens, we will need to surround ourselves with mortal armies willing to serve our purposes. This means that we will have to risk revealing ourselves to the world at large. As for making ourselves known to Prodigals and certain mortals already sensitive to our presence, individual judgment has to take precedence over hard-and-fast rules.

Reality: Nobody believes in faeries anyway, so why bother?

The Right of Rescue — Any Kithain who falls into the clutches of Dauntain, the Inquisition, or mortal institutions which threaten to destroy their faerie natures, needs to be removed from danger. Period. New changelings — whether they are commoners fresh from their Chrysalis or nobles just booted out of Arcadia — need succor and protection until they can make their own way in the world. This is not a duty, it is just common sense.

Reality: Rescuing a Seelie noble from Banality puts her in our power — where she belongs. Garnering favors never hurt anyone.

The Right of Safe Haven — We need to protect our freeholds from Banality and violence to ensure that we, as well as the Seelie, survive. All Kithain in need of shelter are welcome in our places of power, so long as they behave like the guests they are. What better way to win friends to our cause than to provide safety in times of trouble?

Reality: We need to fight tooth and nail (iron nails, if necessary) to keep what we have. Let supplicants and petitioners come to us. We'll take them in — for a price.

The Right of Life — Destroying the soul of one of the Kithain destroys all of us in some small measure. While we should avoid killing those of faerie blood if possible, there are times when extreme measures are called for. Those who betray us forfeit their part in the Pageant.

Reality: Death is the greatest risk of all. Any takers?

Crime and Punishment: The Shadow "Courts"

Most Unseelie fae do not recognize the Seelie system of Commoner and High Courts, preferring to adhere to their own methods of dealing out justice whenever pos-



able. Needless to say, the Unseelie rarely bring suits or claims before the courts of Seelie justice. Unseelie fae who dwell within the domain of a Seelie ruler, however, leave themselves vulnerable to Seelie authority.

In freeholds governed by the Unseelie, the ruler usually dispenses justice, sometimes along with a council of advisors (usually members of the ruler's clique). Because of their generally unlawful (according to Seelie definitions of the word) attitudes, what constitutes "criminal" or punishable behavior in Unseelie eyes is open to interpretation.

The Unseelie are much more prone to settle individual matters of dispute or alleged wrongdoings on the spot, through duels, brawls, or sometimes, complex bargaining between offender and offended. The Right of Fior (or trial by ordeal) enjoys great popularity among Unseelie nobles. Some commoners even prefer this method of settling quarrels. Often an Instigator will oversee one of these trials to bind the combatants or competitors with Glamour, thus ensuring a "fair" judgment.

The Midnight Court

Even among the Unseelie there are some crimes that merit special attention. Unseelie fae charged with murder or treason, in particular, often find themselves summoned to appear before a panel of Instigators to defend their actions. This panel, called the Midnight Court because of its favored meeting time, acts as the judicial arm of the Shadow Court, that it serves.

The judgments of the Midnight Court are usually severe, and those they censure have no right of appeal. In rare instances, a defender who throws herself on the mercy of the Midnight Court will be "recruited" on the spot for membership in the Shadow Court, subject to strong gears and other bindings to ensure her loyalty. In these cases, punishment is usually deferred, with the understanding that failure to serve the cause of the Shadow Court will bring swift retribution. Some of the most zealous agents of the Shadow Court joined in this fashion.

Many Unseelie believe that the Shadow Court seeks to bring all matters of Unseelie justice before the Midnight Court. The Shadow Court, of course, denies this, maintaining that its only desire is to intervene in cases where normal lines of justice fail or where the goals of the Shadow Court are threatened.

Membership in the Midnight Court is a closely guarded secret. Any Instigator encountered might be a member of this clandestine group of judges and enforcers. Since the Samhain Mists tend to erase the knowledge of the identities of the Instigators until they reveal themselves, it has been a matter of speculation that the Midnight Court is

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actually comprised of a separate group, who do not otherwise appear to have any official function. Thus, their identities are deeply hidden beneath a veil of complete anonymity.

Punishments meted out by the Midnight Court range from chimerical torture to, in the case of the most heinous (even to the Unseelie) crimes, death by cold iron. One of the most frequent punishments consists of stripping the guilty party of all Glamour, and turning him loose in a high-risk area of a city or the surrounding countryside. If these individuals run into a pack of hungry redeaps or enraged trolls (who are often conveniently nearby), the misfortune that results is not the concern of the Midnight Court. They believe that their judgments are backed by the Dreaming and that those who deserve to escape with no more than the loss of their Glamour will, in fact, do so.

The Honor of the Forsworn

Among the fae in general, the swearing of oaths ranks as a solemn undertaking, enforced by Glamour and the Dreaming. The Unseelie and the Shadow Court often bind themselves with oaths or find themselves forced into giving their solemn word to Seelie. Their ideas about oaths are entirely different from those prevalent among the Seelie Court, however. Many Unseelie believe that the oaths they freely make and those made to fellow Unseelie are inviolate, while those sworn under duress or to the Seelie are just so many words which may be kept or broken as they see fit.

The Unseelie believe that if a changeling changes her court, all oaths sworn while of the old court are considered null. Further, if an Unseelie find it necessary to ally with others whom she eventually means to betray, she holds, within her heart, reservations which are not stated at the time the oath is sworn. Since her intention was to eventually break their oath, she sees no harm in doing so. Many even believe that such "cheating" can be done with impunity, so long as their original intention was never to keep to the agreement. Unfortunately, the Dreaming itself rarely agrees with these interpretations.

In other cases, keeping the intent of an oath sometimes involves violating the actual words of the oath. In these cases, the penalties for breaking an oath may or may not befall the oathbreaker. (This is usually a matter for the Storyteller to decide on a case-by-case basis.)

Those who break their oaths are often branded "Forsworn" by both Unseelie and Seelie. Among the Unseelie, however, the word often bears with it a certain amount of respect and adulation, marking those who bear the title as "set apart" from their peers. Some members of the Shadow Court belong to the ranks of the Forsworn, and seem to

suffer little loss of respect because of it. In fact, those with an understanding of the demands of the Pageant believe that these oathbreakers are merely fulfilling their destined roles in a drama which demands that betrayal and loyalty exist side by side. The Pageant needs villains as well as heroes.

The Midnight Court considers it one of their duties to recognize the Forsworn, holding special ceremonies in which the oathbreaker is simultaneously damned and delivered by the conference upon them of the title. In some cases, the Forsworn are bound by geas, further setting them apart from other fae and guaranteeing their future loyalty to the Shadow Court.

Politics

*Throw away the flowers,
they are no use;
the faery bowers
of the former truce;
fancy quickly dies
under fear's dark skies.*

— Elizabeth Daryush, "Throw Away the Flowers"

Like their Seelie counterparts, much of the Shadow Court's maneuverings revolve around the various members' political beliefs. The Seelie content themselves with three major political impulses, and believe that these are echoed by corresponding Unseelie versions. While there are some similarities, the Seelie have no understanding of or appreciation for the subtleties inherent in the Unseelie viewpoint: subtleties that lead the Shadow Court to embrace five political forces rather than three. Each political impulse is associated with one or more of the seven goals (or tenets) of the Shadow Court, though none of them agree to all of them. Further confusing the political scene are the cliques who band together along political lines. Regardless of whatever else they believe, however, all the factions have one goal in common which allows them to act in concert and provides a common ground for the Shadow Court's meetings: the overthrow of the Seelie Court.

Political Impulses

PURIST

Purists are usually misnamed Traditionalists. These Unseelie want things to return to the original way in which Seelie and Unseelie divided up rulership through the year. While they do not advocate bringing it on, Purists prepare for the Endless Winter. They are most concerned with gaining power and influence in the mortal

and supernatural worlds and with harvesting Glamour, which they believe will be needed to see them through the hard times ahead. They are not above Ravaging when quick Glamour is needed, but many Purists believe that Glamour is a vanishing commodity, and seek to preserve their Dreamers rather than waste their potential. While the Purists are led by Unseelie sidhe, there are a large number of commoners who agree with their philosophies.

Repudiator

Once called Reformists, the Repudiators wanted to completely divorce themselves from the constitutional monarchist Seelie Reformers. To make clear their disgust with the Seelie in general, they took the name Repudiators. These fae desire a complete takeover by the Unseelie sidhe, who will then rule. They argue that 600 years of Seelie governance have led to ruin, and that only a total reversal can save changelings now. They work to bring on the Endless Winter. Some among them believe that the Winter is coming regardless of what they do. They think those who are strong and ruthless must be in control when it does.

Others fear that the Winter is already upon us and the Seelie are just too blind to see it. They foresee that Spring will only come again once control has returned to the Unseelie for the centuries-long Winter. Repudiators seek power and influence among mortals and supernaturals, harvest and hoard Glamour for themselves, work toward the total overthrow of the Seelie, and closely follow the yearly rituals, especially those pertaining to Samhain. Commoners are welcome to their ranks, but definitely take a back seat to the Unseelie sidhe.

Anarchist

Those who do not believe there should be any rulers belong to the Anarchist impulse (if the idea of a group of Anarchists isn't a contradiction in terms). In actuality, this catch-all category throws together both those who believe the system of fae government is outmoded and should be torn down for something better (but have no idea what that "something better" is), and those who just want destruction for its own sake. The former might better be called the Rebuilders and the latter the Destructionists. The Destructionists see no future for themselves, for other changelings or for the world. They don't believe in the promises of an Arcadia Never-Neverland.

Neither group particularly cares about the Endless Winter — the Rebuilders because they see enough problems with things as they are now, the Destructionists because in a future in which there is no future, such things as annihilation just don't matter. Most of them cheerfully

Ravage for all the Glamour they can get, try to overthrow the entrenched Seelie nobility, and spread anarchy and chaos however they can. There are as many commoners as sidhe among the Anarchists.

Ritualists

Many see the Ritualists as offshoots of the Purists, but their interests are more spiritual than political. Where they verge on politics, it is because they believe political systems should be subservient to the spiritual life. They fully subscribe to the ancient ways, believing that the king is the land, and that sacrifices are necessary for the good of the land and to preserve its connection to the Dreaming. They see the Endless Winter as a necessary part of moving through the cycles and on into a new Spring. The Unseelie calendar is a creation of the Ritualists and they are the ones who pay most attention to it.

Most Unseelie have great need for a major spiritual presence in their lives. Thus, anyone may become a Ritualist in addition to whatever other party she espouses (except Anarchists). Rituals can be used to legitimize just about any political impulse. Since the Unseelie are the ones who acknowledge the Endless Winter and feel they are to play a large part in it, they are far more given to spiritual shows and celebrations than their Seelie brethren. Ritualists are concerned with attaining influence and alliances with the supernatural world, in taking and storing Glamour for the Winter ahead, and in performing all their ritual obligations correctly and meaningfully. They are the most likely to create treasures and store Glamour as dross. Many commoners like the Pageantry of the Ritualists, but the sidhe are the group's backbone.

Modernist

Though Unseelie, the Modernists have no problem with sharing a name with a Seelie political impulse, for their views are somewhat similar. Often confused with the Repudiators, Unseelie Modernists believe the class distinction between commoners and nobles is ludicrous. They acknowledge that the world is not the same anymore, and that no one (not even the oh-so-genteel sidhe) can cram a 14th-century government into the modern world and make it work. Nor can changelings go back to the old ways; therefore, the only thing to do is to make up new ones. If changelings throw off their outmoded ideas and learn to live fully in the modern world, Banality and all, they may be able to prevent the Endless Winter or ride through it with very little damage.

Modernists believe that the reason the Endless Winter is creeping up on the fae is to shake them out of their old ways and force them into the vanguard of a new era



where they belong. Fae are supposed to be bright new dreams, not the outmoded, discarded ideas from yesterday. These changelings are the most likely to court knowledge of Banality in order to survive its effects as the world becomes ever more inhospitable to the fae. They seek knowledge of the modern world and alliances within it, both with mortals and supernaturals. They harvest Glamour, but are more experimental with it than other changelings, and they see that the old Seelie rulership has got to go if modern ideas are to be given serious consideration. There are far more commoners than nobles among the Modernists.

The Parliament of Dreams

A few Unseelie nobles belong to the Parliament of Dreams. Some among them believe that they can best make their views known and lobby for support by acting within the Seelie system. Others are there to act as goads, subtly disrupt the proceedings, make deals and spy on the opposition. Some are not known as Unseelie at all. These, of course, are of greatest value to the Shadow Court.

Secret Societies

Membership in secret societies is almost *de rigueur* within the Shadow Court, the very nature of which encourages individuals to cluster together in like-minded groups, devising secret agendas and jockeying for position within the greater organization. An exhaustive list of all these esoteric groups is impossible, particularly since many societies change their names and, occasionally their goals. Although some secret societies, notably the Monkey's Paw and the Ranters, contain both Seelie and Unseelie members (see **Nobles: The Shining Host** for details), a few groups are unique to the Shadow Court.

Knights of the Cold Watch

When the gateways to Arcadia burst open, the sidhe were not the only beings to cross the Mists and enter the mortal world. Other creatures, born from dark imaginings and possessed of hideous mien, made the passage as well, dispersing themselves to the four winds while the newly arrived sidhe were still reeling from the shock of their journey. The Mists have blinded the eyes and clouded the memories of most returnees, so that these corrupters are seldom recalled except in nightmares, which are then soon forgotten. Some few individuals, most of them Unseelie, retain stronger memories of these monsters. These haunted sidhe have gathered into a self-appointed group of sentinels known as the Knights of the Cold Watch.

Their purpose is to scour the world for evidence of the dark things that invaded the mortal realm from Arcadia's dark borderlands. Many sidhe (both Seelie and Unseelie) consider the "Watchers" to be deluded fanatics and false harbingers of doom. The Knights of the Cold Watch believe the Seelie sidhe are naive in their pursuit of temporal power while the world is besieged by unknown assailants of inestimable might. Most members of this group belong to the Purists, although they have put their political aspirations on hold until the creatures they search for are identified and dealt with. There are a few secret Anarchists who have infiltrated this society and who are interested in allying with the monsters once they have been tracked down, for one glorious orgy of destruction.

The Glowing Eye

This group of Unseelie knights and nobles is controlled by a triumvirate of sidhe from House Balor. Consisting of those nobles who believe they are best suited to lead all fae into and through the Endless Winter, members of the Glowing Eye think of themselves as a secret "inner council" of the Shadow Court. Just as the real Shadow Court hides behind a facade of powerless poseurs, these ruthless sidhe believe they use the court for their own ends.

Allied with Black Spiral Dancers, certain fomori and several rogue vampires, the Glowing Eye works to place its members in positions of power both in the mundane world and the courts of the Kithain. The few highly placed members who hold power in Concordia and Hibernia are adept at masquerading as members of other noble houses and are little suspected by the Seelie monarchs they purport to support.

Pilgrims of the Bright Road

Within the Ritualists, a small group of extremists have found a way to go beyond even the fastidious observances of their impulse. Calling themselves the Pilgrims of the Bright Road, they focus their attention on establishing a lasting means of communicating with the dead — both the spirits of fae who have died and those of other creatures who inhabit the Shadowlands. The Pilgrims believe that the dead possess the answers necessary for achieving Unseelie supremacy and survival of the Endless Winter. Some have even revived the practice of the teign, or "sacrifice to hell," a custom said to originate in the earliest times and in which the fae guaranteed their serial immortality by offering a sacrificial victim to the Underworld every seven years. The chosen one would voluntarily accept permanent death as a tithe in return for allowing



other fae to walk the Bright Road and return to the world in a reincarnated form.

The details of this society are closely guarded secrets, even from Ritualist leaders. The Pilgrims are thought to have formed alliances with certain groups of Heretic wraiths, Euthanatos mages, Shadow Lords and vampires of the Giovanni clan.

Children's Crusade

Made up largely of redcaps — most of them childlings or young wilders — the Children's Crusade has only one goal: to assassinate as many of the Seelie nobility as possible. The Crusade is popular among Anarchists and Repudiators, though some Modernists also support this ultra-radical group as a means of increasing the power of the commoners. The actual assassins are almost always childlings, as they are able to flirt more easily with the Banality engendered by their killing other fae. Further, they are less prone to feel guilt over their deeds. Some indeed seem to behave as if it is all a cartoon in which the victim will climb back to his feet after being squashed by the steamroller. Others get away with it by crying crocodile tears of regret for what happened while voicing that universally recognized childish cry of "Oops."

Cat's Cradle

Made up of both Unseelie and Seelie noblewomen, this society attempts to breach the gap between the two

courts. Although their primary goal — ensuring the long term survival of the fae — often puts them at odds with one or another of the political impulses of the Shadow Court (particularly the Repudiators and the Anarchists), they are often the best sources for information and contacts within both Unseelie and Seelie factions. Because many Seelie members would balk at associating outright with fellow conspirators who openly espouse Shadow Court sympathies, the society's "official" position toward the Shadow Court is one of opposition.

The women of the Cat's Cradle wield great power and influence (either directly or indirectly) within fae political society, and those who suspect their existence credit them with preventing outright war between the Shadow Court and the Seelie power structure. Indeed, there are some who believe that without the subtle manipulations of this group, the Accordance War might have had a very different, and much bloodier, outcome. Perhaps the most important aspect of the Cat's Cradle lies in the connections it has established between Concordia and the other kingdoms of the fae.

Most Unseelie members of this group belong to either the Purist or Ritualist impulses. Purists see the Cat's Cradle as providing the necessary links that enable smooth transferences of seasonal power, while Ritualists hark back to the matriarchal customs that underpin many of the traditions associated with the year-long round of festivals. (See *Nobles: The Shining Host* for another view of this pivotal secret society.)

Alliances

So, what are we going to do tonight, Brain?

"The same as we do every night, Pinkie. Try to take over the world."

— Pinky and the Brain

Dear Cathrin,

My stay in your household has been a pleasant waystop on my greater journey, but the time has come for me to move on. Since you are one of the few who know my true mission for these we serve, I wish to leave you the latest volume of my journal, which contains a record of my observations on various groups I have encountered in the course of my wanderings. The necessity of appraising and evaluating others as potential allies and adversaries has led me to hope that you, and through you the Court of Shadows, will find some use in the pages that follow. Believe them or not as your fancy strikes you. Add them to your archives or deliver them to the Samhain fires. By the time you read this, I will be on my way to the household of Aubergin ap Eiluned, somewhere in the Kingdom of Apples.

Till next we meet,

Lucas the Wanderer

Kithain The Seelie Court

Remaining objective about these usurpers poses an almost insurmountable challenge. By all the demands of the Pageant, they should be not only allies but willing abettors of our goals. They remain locked in the delusion that they can postpone Endless Winter indefinitely. Some few of them may eventually come around to the realization that the halcyon days of summer and the slow decay of autumn must surrender to the revitalizing changes possible only during the winter. Those, we can use. We must coexist with the Seelie until we are ready to make our move. After that, all bets are off. The strong will survive.

Seelie Commoners

Although many of these Kithain have a genuine loyalty to their Seelie rulers, others only pay lip service to the conquering host from Arcadia. Where there is discontent, we must sow more. Where there is unhappiness and resentment, we must foster anger. Inside every Seelie changeling, there lurks one of us, waiting for the key to unlock the chains that keep it confined. Here is where our real task lies.

Lost Ones

Finding the enchanted places, where these remnants of the ancient times linger in solitude, should be one of our highest priorities. The amount of Glamour these Lost Ones keep to themselves could turn the tide in our struggle. We may even find allies among some of these ancient fae, if we can but convince them to step out from behind the wings and enter the Pageant in all their glory. They may burn but briefly before Banality consumes their unshielded spirits, but what a bonfire of Glamour their presence will provide!

Gallain and Thallain

Nunnehi

These fae have little understanding of the subtleties of Seelie versus Unseelie politics. All they know is that many lands they once held have since been claimed by others who have tried to impose their rule on everyone and everything within their grasp. They should be our natural allies. If we can channel their anger and resentment at having their sacred places usurped and turned into palatial freeholds, we will have an army of guerrilla warriors ready to strike when the time is right.

Menehune

My information on these Hawaiian natives comes from others. Like the Nunnehi, they have been driven out of their natural places and now hide themselves from the eyes of mortals and Kithain alike. It is said that they possess an intuitive understanding of the power of shadows, and that when they are under the influence of their War aspect, they exhibit a savagery we would do well to mimic. Whether we can make use of them or whether our concerns have any meaning for them requires more observation to ascertain.

Inanimae

Many of these races are far too weird to bother with. It is difficult to conceive of any of these useless Kithain by-products as potential allies or adversaries. Possibly they can provide us with sources of Glamour if we can discover how to extract it from them. Let the scholars among us study them, if they wish. Perhaps something useful may come of their endeavors.

Beasties, Boggarts, Goblins, Ogres and Things That Go Bump in the Night

Our forgotten cousins are dangerous, uncontrollable, treacherous and bizarre. That makes them of inestimable value to us and we should protect them, encourage them, and aid them whenever possible — preferably from a safe distance.

Fomori

Their ability to thrive in the midst of Banality and sheer corruption may hold the key to our survival during the coming hard times. If they have some skills or Arts that enable them to feed on Glamour's antithesis, we need to discover their secrets. The sidhe of House Balor claim to have formed alliances with individuals among the Fomorians. We need to know more about who (or what) these misshapen creatures serve (or if they serve anyone at all). Let Balor continue acting as emissaries to the Fomorians, but watch for signs of treachery.

Prodigals

Children of Lilith (Vampires)

The vampires understand the game of politics all too well. Some of them even look forward to a time of future upheaval, called Gehenna, which sounds suspiciously like the onset of Endless Winter. The older ones remember us,

and it is possible that we may still have allies among those who formerly held connections among the Unseelie and Shadow Courts. The younger ones, however, must be courted with care, since they are so caught up in the politics of survival that their first instincts often lead them to "hire first and ask questions later." They have as many clans and factions as the Kithain, and each of them must be dealt with differently. Here are my own impressions of the types that I have encountered:

- **Malkavians** — These vampires resemble fae in the throes of Bedlam. Some of them display an uncanny insight into the realms of time and space, as if they were somehow connected to the Dreaming, though their dreams are more like nightmares. If we can ever begin to understand what makes them tick (or ticks them off), we may be able to use their unique viewpoints on reality to lay the background for universal change and discord.

- **Ravnos** — Undead Gypsies are Gypsies all the same. They, at least, retain some knowledge of old customs (now called superstitions) from before the Shattering. They are dangerous to us because we fall into the category of outsiders (non-Gypsies) and are, therefore, fair game for any of their pranks and other deceptions. Their powers, like ours, are based on illusion and some maintain that they invented the Art of Chicanery. Playing with them is like playing with fire: risky but rewarding.

- **Lasombra** — I have heard rumors that some of these vampires have already formed an alliance with us and with some of the changing breeds in Scandinavia, where they have devised a grand scheme to permanently blot out the sun. That would certainly hasten the approach of the Endless Winter. The one I met demonstrated, to my eternal jealousy, his control over shadows. We need to cement an accord with them as quickly as possible. We cannot afford to have them as our enemies.

- **Sabbat** — This group seems to be the Unseelie equivalent in vampiric society. They understand the darkness intimately, and they are not afraid to take extraordinary risks — sometimes for no other reason than to prove they can look annihilation in the face and survive. Like us, they recognize that mortals are their natural prey and treat them as such. Their Samhain celebrations rival ours in licentiousness and abandon. They take the coming of Gehenna seriously, a fact which seems to make them our natural allies. They are obsessed with secrecy, however, so they must be approached very, very cautiously.

Changing Folk

These creatures were once Kithain, but have become so entrapped in their bonds with the animal world that they make pooka look like stuffed animals. Werewolves

(or Garou, as they call themselves) are the most common ones, but there are others we would be loath to ignore. The Unseelie Court and the Garou Nation have never fully understood each other. Alliances made between Unseelie and the werewolves never last long. One of the greatest obstacles to building understanding between us is their concept of the Triat (their name for a tripartite godbeing). We are not fully of that which they call the Wyld or the Weaver. Our ever-changing natures, so I have been told by a talkative werewolf with the unlikely epithet Bone Grawler, result in their "smelling the Wyrm" on us one week and "feeling our Wyld" the next. If the Shadow Court does contact the werewolves, they usually do so under the guise of merely representing the Unseelie Court.

- **Fianna** — Their Celtic origins give them much in common with a number of Kithain, and many individuals have close ties with both Seelie and Unseelie Courts. Their opposition to the coming darkness, however, makes them more likely allies for our enemies, although a few of them understand the necessity of change and the importance of a balance between light and dark. They are excellent companions in revelry, particularly when they have sampled some of our faerie mead. Some few can be provoked to such a rage, particularly when they are reminded of how badly humans have botched things, that they make superior cannon fodder for Shadow Court activities. Just point to something and say "Wyrm creature!" and see what I mean.

- **Shadow Lords** — The Shadow Court and the Shadow Lords have a mutual understanding: Neither one trusts the other. The two have been known to ally briefly, but the chances for one to betray the other are too strong for more permanent alliances to be made. Loremasters who are familiar with the legends of the Society of Nidhogg believe that they may be allied with certain Instigators, but many of these so-called "experts" become either curiously silent or suspiciously absent after they make public declarations to this effect.

- **Black Spiral Dancers** — These werewolves suffer from Balor's taint (if you can call their proclivities "suffering"). They are firmly committed to the advent of the dark times, which they call the Apocalypse, and worship a monstrous "thing" known as the Wyrm — possibly an ancient, powerful chimera conceived from the earliest nightmares of the first Dreamers. The Knights of the Cold Watch have taken a great interest in the Black Spirals, as have a number of Ritualists, hoping to learn some of their secret lore. They are great companions for parties of Ravagers. The Shadow Court is allied to them through the graces of House Balor, whose kin they claim to be.

• **Bastet** — If the changing breeds have a nobility, these are their aristocrats. They have cultivated the arts of license, hedonism, passion and intrigue. Their love of secrets is legendary. We can only envy their languorous decadence. They serve our purposes when and how it suits them. If we treat them right, they make perfect cats' paws for our schemes.

• **Corax** — I have heard that these werescrows are descended from the Morrigan. If that is anywhere near the truth, then they understand both war and its aftermath. They are keen observers, and if we can reach some accord with them, our network of spies can only profit from their reconnoitering.

Mages

The Kithain have a long history of strife with human wizards and witches over their stealing of Glamour to power their own magic. They are especially hungry for dross, which they have an uncanny knack for locating. We have lost many glens and faerie rings to their depredations. In medieval times, some of them hunted faeries for the "Quintessence" in their blood or bones. Like us, however, they have suffered from the waning of magic, and modern mages (as they now call themselves) are more open to alliances with both Seelie and Unseelie Courts. Indeed, they hardly seem to know the difference. They have several different factions; of which I know only a few.

• **Dreamspeakers** — They, like we, have been shunted aside by the modern world. They, like we, are damn tired of it. Many of them have strong ties already with the Nannehi and other changelings indigenous to the lands they inhabit. If they truly work dream magic, then we must exert every effort to win at least some of them to our cause. Perhaps we can convince them that they can win back what has been taken from them by bringing about massive changes in the world as we know it. After all, most dreams happen during the night. Who knows what dreams they may find in the long nights of Endless Winter?

• **Order of Hermes** — It is difficult for me to speak objectively of these mages. They were the wizards who hunted us and who saw us as little more than fuel for their magic and experimental victims for their research. Still, they are the guardians of much knowledge that has been lost to us. While I would urge caution in dealing with them, it might be possible to launch them like arrows at some of our greatest enemies within the Seelie Court.

• **Verbena** — Like the Dreamspeakers, the witches are in tune with the cycles of birth and death, summer and winter, creation and destruction. They understand the power inherent in the shedding of blood and the ongoing spiral of creation, making them our natural allies. We

share several Samhain rituals and celebrate many of the same festivals throughout the year. An exchange of knowledge and pledges of assistance against the Hidden Ones' Banality-laden reality might net us a group dedicated to using their potent magic in our behalf.

• **Cult of Ecstasy** — Passion and creative impulses power their magic. Cool: Ours, too. If any outsiders belong among the members of the Shadow Court it is this group. They indulge in the same excesses, weaving their own sort of Glamour and enhancing their power by pushing themselves beyond the boundaries others fear to cross. We understand and salute that.

• **Hollow Ones** — Like us, these workers of mortal magics seem among the disenfranchised. They see and embrace the darkness as a road to self-discovery. We may find allies among them.

• **Hidden Ones** — On the one hand, these mages who pass themselves off as scientists are directly responsible for bringing about the Shattering through their worship of Banality. On the other hand, their mastery of Banality is a skill which we would do well to learn if we are to survive the Endless Winter. If we learn nothing else from them, their tenacious struggle to remake the world according to their own vision serves to teach us that we can do the same. Dealing with them may be courting disaster, but we have never been too timid to choose dangerous playmates for our games.

Wraiths

In the oldest times, the fae paid homage on Samhain to Annwn, the Lord of the Dead and ruler of that part of the Underworld called Annwn by the Celtic tribes. The Seelie (most of them) have forgotten the bargains made between our kind and the rulers of the world of the dead. The distinction between a Renegade thrillseeker, a Hierarchy stooge and a Spectre corrupter is entirely lost on them.

We remember the deals made for our free passage along the Bright Road, but the Unseelie Court does not have formal relations with any of their factions nowadays. We know that the spirits of the dead inhabit a realm only barely discernible to us, and then only at certain times of the year, making communications difficult, at best. The slugh are said to be familiar with their ways, but are unlikely to disclose anything without significant compensation.

Although I have not had the opportunity to travel the Bright Road (at least not that I can remember), I have spoken to some who have, and a very few of them remember it and offered me their knowledge of the spirits who inhabit the Shadowlands (as the realm just beyond the



living world is called). It is worth repeating, especially as wraiths can witness conversations while remaining unobserved. We would do well to make certain no conspiracies are overheard and repeated to our enemies. The sanest response to meeting a wraith is to take precautions and get weaponry that can fuck them up as soon as possible. Still, there are some factions who believe they may be worth allying with.

- **Renegades** — Even in the lands of the dead, it seems there are factions who support the principles of chaos and change and who fight to overthrow the stagnant power structure of the Underworld. These wraiths are called Renegades. If there were some means of recruiting them across the barrier between life and death, we would have a group of powerful allies.

- **Heretics** — These wraiths seem to have a lot in common with the Ritualists among us. They are obsessed with spirituality in the way that only the dead — creatures of pure spirit — can afford to be. Like all fanatics, they can be manipulated through pushing the right buttons. I have heard that some fae who walk the Bright Road and linger for a time in the Shadowlands become the focal points for some of these Heretics. What an army they would make if we could but open a path for them into some Seelie lord's freehold!

- **The Hierarchy** — Like our entrenched Seelie counterparts, these wraiths represent order and establishment in the Underworld. They are best left alone, although some of them may remember the ancient pacts between the fae and the dead. For now, the danger of becoming embroiled in their political games far outweighs any advantages they would bring to our cause.

- **Spectres** — Dealing with Spectres is like shaving with a sword, and should be entered into just as carefully. Their knowledge of corruption and darkness is legendary, but so is their perfidy. Making deals might be a matter of who betrays whom first.

The Sons of Adam and the Daughters of Eve

Mortals are, simply put, our meat and drink. We need their Glamour, and sometimes, their bodies. They were put on earth for the harvesting. Some few of them may, in fact, understand their roles. Those, we admire and respect. Most of them, however, are like flowers to be picked, savored while their beauty lasts, and discarded when they fade.



Chapter Three: Wheel of the Year

*Seasons they change while cold blood is raining
I have been waiting beyond the years
Now over the skyline I see you're traveling
Brothers from all time gathering here
Come let us build the ship of the future
In an ancient pattern that journeys far
Come let us sail for the always island
Through seas of leaving to the summer stars.*

— The Incredible String Band, "The Circle Is Unbroken"

The fae existed long before the coming of Christianity, and their civilization predates the advent of a calendar created to specify and regularize certain dates for all church celebrations. The modern calendar (and its ancient predecessor) is an imposition of order on the cycles of nature, an invention necessitated because people no longer live close enough to the earth to regulate their lives by the changing of the seasons. This is not so for the fae, especially the sidhe.

The Seelie have succumbed to the ease of using a calendar that may or may not be in sync with nature, but one that is easily understood. They hold their festivals at the times specified and everyone knows when those dates are — for they can look at their calendars and even mark them on the appropriate dates. The Unseelie have fallen into the same trap for the most part, but some among them — especially the Ritualists and members of the Shadow Court — pretend to observe the festivals decreed by the

Seelie, while in actuality holding their own celebrations when they are in accord with the forces of nature.

Since their calendar depends on changes taking place in the natural world, the Shadow Court's celebrations may take place on wildly differing nights depending on their geographic locations. Thus, those who live in gentler climes might celebrate Imbolc when the first crocus appear, while in harsher climates, that day may come two weeks or a month later. Were it not for the sidhe's particular affinity with time, this could cause some problems and misunderstandings; in reality, no Unseelie ever misses the excuse for another party. They accept only a few dates decreed by the calendar, which need to be accounted for because of the Seelie practices that take place on those dates. Among these is Samhain, when power ostensibly passes to the Unseelie, for to do otherwise would so confuse the Seelie that they would stop, even offering the change in mock ceremonies. Additionally, the

actual date of Samhain has become so charged by belief that the veil between the worlds now thins on that date.

Unseelie Spirituality

For the Ritualists among the Shadow Court, the calendar year consists of a series of festivals and celebrations that mark the passing of the seasons and the stages of the fae spirit's journey toward knowledge. As the year turns through its cycles, festivals which mark the progression of the year are seen like the spokes in a wheel. Thus, the Ritualists refer to the circular movement through the seasons as the 'Wheel of the Year.' While most Unseelie participate in the major festivals, the serious followers of the Pageant spend much of their time observing both greater and lesser holidays.

Because of their Celtic heritage, the Unseelie of the Shadow Court reckon time as their Celtic ancestors did — believing that a day starts with the night that comes before it. In the same way, they see the year as starting during the dark months of winter. This represents the spiritual journey that once formed a part of every faerie's life, the cycle from shadow to light, the spiral upward from ignorance and dreams of savagery toward knowledge and redemption. Like the changing cycles of the year, the fae passed through the realm of nightmare, embracing the darkest elements of self, then journeyed toward the light, eventually finding a rebirth in the revelation of their true selves.

The Unseelie Year thus begins and ends with the Samhain Festival, a celebration which embodies the transformations that lie at the heart of Unseelie beliefs.

As human children dress up in scary costumes and move through the darkening streets in search of treats, the Unseelie engage in a similar custom — the donning of costumes — which marks Samhain as special, and sets the stage for the rest of the yearly Pageant. To many Unseelie, and particularly to the Ritualists among the Shadow Court, donning a costume and wearing a mask are not lighthearted matters. It is a serious, conscious attempt to show outwardly the start of an inward journey the Unseelie will make throughout the coming year. While the costume may betoken an actual persona they intend to adopt, it is usually more subtle and symbolic, signaling a "putting on" or adoption of certain ideas, points of view and philosophies as much as a change in personality. They can rarely see the outcome of this leap of faith, which (somewhat ironically in view of Halloween's time-honored request by children) may indeed leave them open to a horrible trick or reward them greatly.

The Journey Home

...to turn, to turn will be our delight

'Til by turning and turning we come round right.

— "Tis A Gift To Be Simple," Shaker song

Though the accepted dates are given for each of the festivals below, all except Samhain, Midwinter, Carnival and Pennons are usually celebrated by the Shadow Court when nature dictates that the time is right. Among mortals, these ritual festivals were once considered vital for the fertility and well-being of the land and the tribe. Considered as sacred times when the whole clan came together, they now serve Kithain as landmarks on the road to self-awareness. Many Unseelie, however, still see them as necessary steps toward preserving the land as well, acknowledging that the cycles of nature have spiraled into discord by those who no longer believe in the old ways.

Not every Unseelie is conscious of this great design. Many forget the actual purpose of their journey, falling into revelry, cruelty, mockery, rebellion and violence for their own sakes. There is a powerful allure in complete freedom and the philosophy of anarchy. No rules means no limits, and faerie passions have ever been prone to excess. Indeed, many argue that Banality first entered the world along with the practice of self-control, putting a damper on instinct and passion. Some Unseelie succumb to the sheer glory of feeling, the celebration of pain and the drinking of dark Glamour. These never delve into those areas that might lead them through to the light which is the other half of every changeling. Thus, though the original intent of many of the festivals was to mark a faerie's passage along the road to revelation, some choose to spray-paint vulgarities on the signs instead.

Samhain (October 31)

Figures of corn stalks bend in the shadows

Held up tall as the flames leap high

The green knight holds the holly bush

To mark where the old year passes by.

— Loreena McKennitt, "All Souls Night"

This ancient fire festival, held when the harvesting season has ended, celebrates the end of summer. As the world turns toward the dark half of the year, the Unseelie begin their journey inward, entering the realms of shadow and nightmare in search of knowledge and enlightenment. On this night, the Mists part, allowing Kithain a glimpse into the otherworlds.

It is believed that the worlds are mirror images, that while it is dark in this world, it is light in the other. Winter here is echoed by a summertime in the otherworld. Thus, the Unseelie rule during the darkness of this world, but

during the enlightened time of the otherworld. This belief shapes the Shadow Court's claim that now is a time when they should rule unopposed, as the Seelie did for 600 years. They believe that Arcadia has nearly fallen — not due to Banality, but because Seelie rule has occasioned centuries of darkness for Arcadia, a time during which no fae has sought new revelations or grown in understanding. They believe that if the Unseelie rule and the darkness of Endless Winter comes upon the world, Arcadia will enter a glorious new era of enlightenment, Endless Summer.

Samhain serves as an in-between time for both beginning and ending. Samhain is a period of purification, a time when the king (who represents both the land and the people) is sacrificed or overthrown. A fool or a new king (an Unseelie king) is set in the old king's place to symbolize both the ending of the old, outmoded path and the beginning of a new journey.

Yule (December 23)

*Deck the halls with boughs of holly,
'Tis the season to be jolly,
Don we now our gay apparel,
Troll the ancient yuletide carol.*

— "Deck the Halls," traditional carol

Yule, also known as the Winter Solstice, is often celebrated on December 21-22. The Solstice occurs on the longest night of the year regardless of the date. Many Unseelie chidlings are born during the Winter Solstice or undergo their Chrysalises at that time. These are thought to be changelings who thoroughly embrace their darkest aspects, and who have greater knowledge of how to conquer and utilize Banality rather than being destroyed by it. The Shadow Court sees these changelings as those who will lead the fae during the time of Endless Winter. Many Unseelie, especially members of the Shadow Court, celebrate Yule in a manner similar to the Christian celebration of Christmas. Greenery is brought into the freehold and presents are exchanged, but the symbolism behind the festival is quite different.

To the Unseelie, evergreens symbolize their endurance. Patiently working behind the scenes, the Unseelie gather Glamour, planning for the coming Winter while their Seelie counterparts fritter away the days of summer, refusing to acknowledge that darkness approaches. Like the evergreen that lasts throughout the winter, the Unseelie plan to still be here when Endless Winter again turns to spring.

The presents which the Shadow Court exchanges at the Solstice are items imbued with Glamour. Many believe that Glamour must be used to create treasures that will survive the dearth of creativity which presages Endless Winter. They give these treasures to one another in the name of disseminating Glamour to all the Shadow Court's adherents.



Yule is a time for glittering parties that mock both the inner and outer darkness as well as welcoming celebrations for the new childlings among the Unseelie Court. Paradoxically, it is also a time of reflection when the Unseelie begins to examine those aspects of herself embraced at Samhain. Thus, the Shadow Court celebrates the night, reveling in its concealment and perversity, while acknowledging that the Solstice, as the longest night of the year, inevitably marks the time when the days begin to lengthen, driving out the darkness in favor of the light.

Midwinter (January 13)

*O Winter, ruler of th' inverted year,
I crown thee king of intimate delights*
— William Cowper, "The Task"

Midwinter is a festival usually celebrated only among the Shadow Court. Called "Midvintersblót" by the Norse, it was also acknowledged as the Festival of Brewing among the Celts. Because of its Norse connection, many Unseelie trolls consider Midwinter to be their own special festival. They meet together in secret rites that they share with no other fae, even others of the Shadow Court.

Midwinter once marked the date by which the human tribes knew if their stocks of grain would last through the winter. If the stores were sufficient, mead and ale were brewed from a portion of the supplies, enlivening the feasting, dancing and storytelling that took place on the longest night. If supplies were low, they were instead conserved and used as food.

Originally celebrated in regions where night covered the land for almost half the year, Midwinter was concerned with measuring how long it would be until the snows melted and spring returned with its lush greenery and light. Lighting the fires at Midwinter thus became a symbolic, magical ritual designed to entice the pale winter sun to reignite in all its summer glory. The warming hearth fire was the heart of every home, and Glamour-fueled balefire the heart of every faerie freehold. On Midwinter Night, kings among the fae sent out firebrands, messengers carrying brands lit from the royal balefire, to each of the freeholds within their demesne. Old balefires were extinguished, and the king's Glamour-endowed balefire became the catalyst for the new fires lit during the festival of Imbolc.

Although High King David has reinstituted this practice in Concordia, the Seelie have failed to recognize that the kings who long ago sent the balefire to the myriad freeholds were not Seelie (for their rulership did not compass this part of the year), but Unseelie. The Shadow Court have not forgotten. Their ancient duties once called for them to rekindle the depleted Glamour within each freehold. Today they gather that Glamour in any way they must, be it through





Musing or Ravaging (or stealing the balefire from the king's appointed messengers), and they hold onto it fiercely, to be used only when the coldest part of Endless Winter signals that the time has come to relight the dying balefires that power the creativity of the world.

Imbolc (February 2)

*Green Rushes then with sweetest Bents and cooler
Oaken boughs*

*Come in with comely ornaments to readorn the house.
Thus times do shift, thus times do shift, each thing his
turn doth hold,*

*New things succeed, new things succeed, as former
things grow old.*

— "Candlemas Eve," traditional carol based on Robert Herrick's "Hesperides"

The name "Imbolc" comes from a Celtic word meaning "butter bug," and refers to the festival's celebration of the return of spring. Held when the ewes lactate just before their lambs are born, Imbolc is associated with the balefire and the goddess Brigid, patroness of fire and poetry. This is during February, when snow still lies on the ground, but tiny, colorful flowers begin to break through. At Imbolc, old worn-out fires are extinguished and revitalized with the king's balefire. Filled with the strength to resist the onslaught of Banality, the fire burns away the old, replacing it with a vibrant, new blaze. The symbolism is not lost on the Unseelie, who view Imbolc as a time to rid themselves of negative influences, to burn out that which denies them the freedom to fully express all aspects of their character and beliefs, thrusting through whatever impedes their spiritual growth just as the flowers break through the snow.

Most of the currently reigning kings are Seelie, who remain caught up in ancient customs without fully realizing what those practices mean. Thus, the modern balefire burns less brightly and holds off the ravages of Banality less fully, reiterating the past rather than replacing it with something strong and new. To that extent, if for no other reason, the Shadow Court views its takeover as not only necessary but vital to the survival of the fae. Only when the generative, chaotic fires of the Unseelie once again form the basis of each freehold's heart can the Kithain survive the law-abiding, deadening chill of Banality.

Known as Bard's Day, Imbolc honors Brigid. The Unseelie hail the festival as a celebration of both the creative spirit and the changes that occur during spring. Although both courts hold bardic competitions, the Unseelie give higher honor to tales of destruction and woe than do the Seelie. They recognize that creation can only arise from destruction. As old patterns are broken down, they provide the raw materials from which new patterns are built. Imbolc



is the culmination of the promise made in the dead of winter that spring would come again and Glamour be replenished as the Earth reawakens. Imbolc's association with both fertility and Brigid demands that females take the lead in the festivities and rites. It is often the women of the freehold who relight the balefires kindled from the firebrands.

Carnival (February 28)

*Met the king and the queen and a company of men
A-walking behind and a-riding before.*

*A stark naked drummer came walking along
With his hands in his bosom a-beating his drum.*

— "Nottamun Town," traditional folk song of reversals

Carnival is a huge party masked by the mortal celebration of Mardi Gras. Among traditional Christians, Mardi Gras marks the last day on which feasting and self-indulgence of all sorts are allowed before the Lenten fast begins. In modern times most of the religious overtones have been lost among the wild, frenzied partying.

Taking their cues from the satyrs' bacchanal, all Kithain cast aside inhibitions and embrace total excess and freedom from consequences for this one night. After the darkness of winter, such a respite from cares is demanded. Seelie and Unseelie engage in massive revels, wild exhibitions of Glamour and in the name of merriment and chaos, the reversal of all that is normal. Like the celebration of Samhain, Carnival fêtes call for the donning of masks and the taking on of newer, wilder personas. Shadow Court celebrations are much like those of the Seelie, except that they fully realize the importance of installing a drunken mortal as king in place of the reigning monarch.

Unseelie rulers of the Shadow Court revel in their roles of fool, seeing in it the freedom to say and do anything without thought for the morrow. Further, they believe that the ramblings and insane commands of the newly elevated mortal hide vital truths within them, which can lead the Unseelie to a greater understanding of the mortal fears behind the growth of Banality in the world.

In such an atmosphere of excess and abandon, the Unseelie Ravage Glamour with both fervor and impunity, for their actions on this night cannot, by law, be punished by the Seelie Court. Some use this time to berate Seelie rulers for their lack of understanding; others plan assassinations utilizing information they gain about their Seelie enemies during Carnival celebrations. Some Unseelie, particularly those of the Shadow Court, believe that the ritual sacrifice of the mortal chosen to be king of Carnival constitutes their offering to the Dreaming of a portion of the world's creative impulses. The sacrifice also stands in lieu of the ritual slaying of the king himself to ensure the fertility of the land (as the mortal's death guarantees the fertility of the landscape of

dreams). Unseelie redcaps rarely miss this part of the celebrations. They indulge in the age-old custom of dipping their caps in the blood of the sacrifice, and enjoy what they consider to be an all-too-infrequent delicacy.

Vernal Equinox (March 21)

*I come, I come! Ye have called me long,
I come o'er the mountains with light and song!
Ye may trace my step o'er the awakening earth,
By the winds which tell of the violet's birth,
By the primrose stars, in the shadowy grass,
By the green leaves opening as I pass.*

— Felicia Hemans, "The Voice of Spring"

The first of the two "days of balance," the Vernal Equinox — or the first day of spring — marks a time when light and darkness stand together as separate but equal powers. When the Seelie and Unseelie once shared rulership among the fae, the Vernal Equinox heralded the beginning of the end of the Unseelie's reign. Unseelie kings and queens began making their preparations for the transfer of power that would occur at Beltaine.

Although the Seelie acknowledge this date, and some individuals even hold private ceremonies to mark its passage, they expend most of their energies preparing for what they consider the "real" coming of spring — the Beltaine celebration.

For the Unseelie, the Vernal Equinox serves as a cold reminder of what they have lost. Many Unseelie pointedly ignore this date, just as their Seelie cousins ignore the concept of alternating courts. Others spend this day in meditation, trying to evoke a sense of balance in their lives.

The Shadow Court commemorates the balance of light and dark by lighting fires from alder branches at dawn and at dusk. Sacred to the Celtic god Bran, the patron of healing and resurrection, the alder tree retains its foliage longer than most other trees, and thus symbolizes the bridge between the seasons. Dawn and dusk, the threshold times of the day, have more significance on the Equinox than on other days. Ritualists of the Shadow Court attempt to see visions in the smoke from the alder fires of the Vernal Equinox. They hope these premonitions will guide their actions during the part of the year when the brightness of spring and summer drives away the shadows so dear to them.

The Greening (April 4)

*I have not yet lived long
Enough to be so young
As the old innocence
Of the eternal spring.*

— Richard Church, "In April"

The origins of this end-of-winter festival remain obscure even to the most knowledgeable of Unseelie Ritualists.

Some believe the festival mimics various early spring festivals among human cultures. In many climes, chill winds and falls of snow still testify to winter's tenacious grip. But in temperate and tropical lands, the last vestiges of winter are in full retreat.

In the southern regions of Concordia, the Greening has gained importance among the Seelie Court. It has become a celebration of childhood and of the treasures new, young Kithain represent. The Festival of Crocuses, replete with woven-grass crowns and Morris dances, reestablishes contact among the fae with the pastoral days before the Shattering.

The Unseelie in southern Concordia celebrate the Greening as well, but in their own way. They, too, realize the importance of their childling population — in particular, those young Kithain who have experienced their Chrysalises since the last Greening. As new grass and colorful crocuses begin to push through the browned stalks of the previous year, so do the Glamour-drenched spirits of newly "born" childlings signal the birth of fresh insights amid the dead remnants of entrenched philosophies. Each Unseelie childling represents the potential for growth and change. While the Seelie fae exalt the innocent purity of young life, the Unseelie revere the amoral, "unless" consciousness found only among the very young and inexperienced. Childlings represent the principle of action without guilt or repercussions — for many, the quintessential example of Unseelie life. By honoring the childlings among them with gifts and reveling along with them in "childish" play, the Unseelie attempt to recapture their own damaged sense of uninhibited freedom and remind themselves that they, too, are just beginning to emerge.

The Shadow Court enacts a special Greening ritual, selecting one new childling to serve as the Green Child. The chosen childling receives massive doses of Glamour along with her Greening presents, and then is set loose to "do her thing." Her words and actions are carefully recorded by assigned watchers as she celebrates the festival, since they may contain portents and omens for the coming year. After the festival is over, the Green Child's memories are selectively restructured so that she retains no clear knowledge of what she said and did during the festival.

Beltaine (May 2)

*Though our songs cannot banish ancient wrongs
Though they follow where the rose goes
And their sounds swooning over hollow ground
Fade and leave the enchanted air bare,
Yet the wise say that not unblest he dies
Who has known a single May Day.*

— anonymous, traditional sampler verse

Beltaine — or May Day — marks the time when the Unseelie surrender their power to the Seelie, relinquish-

ing their rulership of the dark half of the year. As the sun reaches ascendancy in this world, it plunges into darkness in the otherworld. Thus, for the Unseelie, Beltaine — like Samhain — is both a celebration and a wake, a beginning and an end. While the Seelie light bonfires in celebration of the summer's fertile fullness, the Unseelie kindle their fires like lampposts to light the way of those fleeing the darkness that has taken hold in Arcadia.

The Unseelie, especially the satyrs and the sidhe, engage in licentiousness and revelry, but within the Shadow Court, other, more serious concerns take precedence over sexual romps. In the bonfires of Beltaine, the Unseelie cast away all they no longer need, be it outmoded concepts or fading relationships. To them, Beltaine is a time when oaths are sworn that last for a year and a day, when links are forged between two opposed things, when their dark half begins to examine their lighter aspects, and to throw off those parts of their darkness that they have already worked through. Summer's warmth quickens those dormant seeds which house the Seelie portions of their natures. Like the Seelie who embrace their Unseelie natures for one night at Samhain, at Beltaine the Unseelie taste what their opposite selves are like, if only for a brief moment during the turning of the wheel. This taste may be what they seek to recapture during the next year's rites at Samhain.

Some among the Shadow Court merely play along with the giving and taking of power as they learn what the Seelie know of Beltaine. Within the next few years, they plan to usurp power for the duration of each year.

Midsummer (June 23)

*'Twas on the 23rd of June
As I sat weaving upon my loom,
'Twas on the 23rd of June
As I sat weaving upon my loom,
A small bird sang in an ivy bunch
And the song he sang was the Jug of Punch
— "Jug of Punch," traditional Midsummer's ballad*

The date for this celebration of the year's longest day varies, although a number of old ballads commemorate the "23rd of June" as the traditional time to celebrate the year's turning point. While some Seelie Courts hold festivities on the day symbolizing the apex of their rule, among the Unseelie the Midsummer Festival gains its true following.

Midsummer heralds the beginning of the end of the Seelie half of the year. Nights become longer as the sun's might dwindles. Unseelie foe hold Midsummer's Eve parties to celebrate the "shortest night" of the year, using this occasion to reestablish connections with old allies and to make new ones. In many Unseelie freeholds, celebrants toast



the hope that the coming year's Samhain festivities will see the rightful transfer of power from Seelie to Unseelie Courts.

The Shadow Court holds its own Midsummer's Eve celebration, during which they entertain new ideas which affect their dealings with Kithain in the coming pre-Samhain months. At dawn, Ritualist cliques gather on hillsides to greet the sunrise on the day which marks the end of its ascendancy. At parties where members of the Shadow Court are present, the banquet tables often hold bowls of punch laced with concoctions containing liberal amounts of St. John's wort, a healing herb which can, in large quantities, cause an allergic reaction to sunlight. It is the Shadow Court's small reminder to the Unseelie of their commitment to the lightless winter days ahead.

Highsummer (July 17)

*A wise man holds himself in check,
But fools and poets run ahead.
One must be credulous or sit
Forever with the living dead.*

— Scudder Middleton, "Wisdom"

The Highsummer festivities of the Seelie allow them, for one brief day, to use mortals unashamedly as playthings, and indulge in jests and pranks. The Unseelie version of Highsummer, however, contains a hint of desperation that casts a dark shadow upon their outwardly joyous celebrations.

The hot days of summer mask the swift approach of cold weather, and the Unseelie realize that the year turns inexorably from one season to the next. Glamour is the most important "crop" under constant cultivation, and Highsummer represents an early harvest of the dreams of mortals to fuel the enchantments of the fae. Unseelie Kithain immerse themselves in an orgy of Glamour-gathering, holding special Ravaging parties disguised as street dances and block parties, inviting all mortals in the area. The most intense of these celebrations are hosted by House Leanhaun, who see in Highsummer a license to seize as much Glamour from unsuspecting mortals as they can through their House's brand of direct inspiration.

Unseelie pooka consider "Franksiving" their special time of year, pulling out all the stops on their prankish natures. Unlike their Seelie counterparts, Unseelie pookas couldn't care less about the consequences of their tricks, and the resulting mayhem and violence only spur them to greater heights of malicious behavior. Many join with local heastie packs, reverting entirely to their animalistic natures and rampaging throughout the land on their version of the Wild Hunt.

Lughnasa (August 1)

*There were three men come from the West
Their fortunes for to tell
And the life of John Barleycorn, as well,
They have laid him in three furrows deep
Laid clods upon his head*

*Then these three men made a solemn vow
John Barleycorn was dead...*

*And little Sir John's in the nut-brown bowl
And he's brandy in the glass
Little Sir John in the nut-brown bowl
Proved the strongest man at last.*

—"John Barleycorn Must Die," traditional

Not even acknowledged by the Seelie, the festival of Lughnasa (which some pronounce as "lunacy") is of great import to the Shadow Court, especially those of House Balor, who see it as their own special holiday. Commemorating Lugh, High King of the Tuatha de Danaan, this fire feast celebrates both of his sides: that of the quintessential sidhe, and that inherited from his mother, Balor's daughter, a queen of the feared Fomorians. Thus, it celebrates both aspects of fire: the shining, creative impulse, and the ravaging, uncontrollable destroyer.

Ostensibly a festival partaking of the first fruits of the harvest, Lughnasa also celebrates the cutting down of the king. After a golden summer of growth and nurturing, corn and grain are cut down, bundled up, or ground into meal for the winter, and the remnants plowed under to provide fertile soil for the next year's harvest. At this time, the sun's strength is decaying as the year turns toward dark days ahead. The king, as the embodiment of the land, has given of his strength and now becomes a sacrifice to increase the land's fertility, and prepares it to withstand the ravages of a long cold winter. Sometimes a queen assumes this office, taking on the role of the mother who sacrifices herself so that her children might live. Thus a gloomy ritual of death instead becomes a time of joyous celebration of the sacrifice which allows others to continue and blossom forth anew.

The Shadow Court, seeing the coming of Endless Winter, realize the importance of such rituals to winnow out those who have made their contributions and now need to move on, and have taken it upon themselves to enact these sacrifices wherever they are able. In the past, some Unseelie grumps, fearing their waning strength would be a burden in the hard times ahead, willingly assumed the role of sacrifice. More often nowadays, the Shadow Court captures and ritually slays a Seelie monarch or overlord. To them, this is only just. This is the Seelie time of rulership and taking on the burdens of the harvest sacrifice is their responsibility. Additionally, the lighter-hearted Seelie disposition is needed to enrich and warm the soil (or spark the fires of creativity)



throughout the dreary cold of winter. Though the Seelie have yet to discover exactly what is going on, some among them have noticed an increase in the disappearance of Seelie rulers around this time of year.

Autumnal Equinox (September 21)

Behold, with loaded apple trees the farmer is befriended,

*They will fill up his casks that have long laid dry,
All nature seems to weary now, her task is nearly ended,*

And more of the seasons will come by and by.

—“The Seasons,” traditional 19th-century English carol

The second of the two “days of balance,” the Autumnal Equinox marks the true beginning of the Unseelie half of the year. As on the first day of spring, day and night stand in equal measure to one another, but this time, darkness predominates. Nights will become longer, and the sun’s radiance diminishes as autumn heralds the coming of winter.

The Unseelie consider the Autumnal Equinox a time of anticipation. Before the Shattering, Unseelie rulers

would prepare for their imminent assumption of power at Samhain. Since this no longer takes place, Unseelie Kithain use this festival to assess their resources for the remainder of the year. This is a time of reflection and reevaluation.

The Shadow Court holds a special ceremony which involves the ritual destruction of minor treasures or dross. This release of Glamour signifies a return to the world of some of the branded Glamour gathered against the coming of Endless Winter. It is at once an act of defiance and faith — defiance against the Seelie Court which refuses to acknowledge that Glamour’s value lies in its use, and faith in the belief that Glamour is a renewable resource. As human societies once gave back part of their harvest to the earth, the Shadow Court ritually gives back some of the Glamour it has taken.

Pennons (October 4)

*I have been ready at your hand
To grant whatever thou would’st crave
I have waged both life and land
Your love and goodwill for to have.*

—“Greensleeves,” traditional, lyrics written by King Henry VIII

Held during the halcyon days that hark back to the warmth of summer, Pennons was created by the Seelie to

toast the prowess of their knights. Filled with jousts, mock combats and other martial displays, Pennons is like an old-fashioned tournament. Surrounding the excitement of the mock warfare are artisans and craftspeople who flock to Pennons to display their wares and receive royal patronage. Storytellers and bards wage their own battles to see who can best capture the glory and power of the day's heroes in tale or song. Thus, Pennons is an eshu's paradise.

Among the Unseelie, Pennons provides an excuse for them to mock the chivalry of the Seelie. Many enter the lists as black knights to challenge the might and honor of the Seelie knights. Some small prize is usually wagered on the affair, anything from a fair lady's scarf to a knight's minor treasure. Unseelie losers are notorious for quitting the field in huffs and refusing to pay their parts of the wagers; the Seelie who does the same, arguing that the Unseelie don't abide by the rules, is fair game for Unseelie minstrels, who make short work of his reputation.

The Shadow Court goes one step further; their knights practice under the very eyes of the Seelie Court, noting the peculiarities and fighting styles of their Seelie challengers. These idiosyncrasies are chronicled in warriors' books for all members of the Shadow Court to study. Also noted are the strength and types of guards the Seelie nobles have, and how they tend to place themselves. Anything that seems to annoy Seelie nobles is noted as well, and brought out at the next festival to see if it rattles their composure. From such small intelligences have come many ways for the Shadow Court to exploit the Seelies' weaknesses, hoping to gain eventual victory in their war for rulership.

Pennons also presents an opportunity for Unseelie to integrate their physical sides with the spiritual and mental changes that have taken place over the previous year. Though the Unseelie flex their muscles, they take care never to allow enough participation to seem a serious threat to the Seelie. They wait and watch, building in secret, hiding their true strength until the wheel of the year speaks in unmistakable terms, telling them that this year the time is finally right.

Samhain (October 31)

*Or is it too late
To change the way we're bound to go?
Is it too late?
Then surely one of us must know.*

—Fairport Convention, "One More Chance"

And so the world gyres, the wheel of the year turns once again to Samhain. It is the end of the year, but also the beginning. The Unseelie has traveled upon his journey of self discovery. He may have found what he sought, discovered the Seelie side of his nature or slipped further away from understanding. Whatever has happened, though he has come round again to the place where he began, he is not the same. The world has moved on and the dancing spiral of time leaves nothing in its wake completely untouched.

(For more information on Samhain, see Chapter Seven.)





Chapter Four: Shadow Courtiers and Other Unseelie

*And now at last it comes. You would give me the Ring
freely! In place of the Dark Lord you will set up a Queen.
And I shall not be dark, but beautiful and terrible as the
Morning and the Night... All shall love me and despair!*

— J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*

Shadow Court antagonists and characters designed for Shadow Court chronicles come from a variety of backgrounds. Cliques of Ravaging Unseelie revel in the chaos, while alliances of sinister graybeards orchestrate campaigns against (or covert dealings with) the creatures of the night. Regardless of whether they prefer reckless mayhem or political maneuvering, all Shadow Court changelings have two things in common: disdain for the courts of the nobility, and contempt for the outlook the Seelie have on life.

Seemings

While radically different cliques of the Shadow Court have been known to work together to enact their schemes, getting the three different seemings of kith to cooperate on common goals can be difficult. Changelings of each seeming have different outlooks on the court, and so any plot that involves all three should hold something of interest to each of them.

Graybeards

*Synthetic chiefs with frozen smiles
Holding unsteady courses
Grip the reins of history
High on their battle horses.
And meeting as good statesmen do
Before the TV eyes of millions
Hand to hand, exchange the lie —
Afraid to make the Clasp.*

— Jethro Tull, "The Clasp"

The oldest changelings have been known to suffer a considerable amount of prejudice. In Kithain society, which values youth and beauty, this minority forms less than 10% of the population. "Grumps" tend to have a certain elitism, which often prevents them from giving in to the whims of younger leaders, and sometimes drives them to the Shadow Court. Much of this is in response to the bigotry wilders and childlings extend toward them. Ageist views, including the idea that only the young can be creative, are an integral part of Kithain life. In truth,

graybeards also have creativity—they just have a different style. The Seelie Court glorifies youth and beauty, but Unseelie grumps and the Shadow Court know the value of guile and treachery.

While Unseelie graybeards still value passion, their passion is like slow-burning embers, not the passing flames that wilders know. Banality halts them from trusting too quickly, but their deep understanding of it gives them an advantage over their brethren. Elders know that this force is a weapon that can be used to corrupt others who cannot weather it as easily. Once their curse has been inflicted on others, they can either win them to the Unseelie way of thinking, or destroy them, removing their opposition.

Graybeards also have a more thorough understanding of the "mundane" world and are more likely to balance a mundane life with their secretive activities. Skilled at negotiating with mortals, they often have contacts that can help a struggling clique. The most politically astute of the changelings have cronies in ever-mutating secter societies who can provide information and assistance. While many largely live in the past, they see their activities as progressive. Although their political impulses are often extreme, they have a vision of the world that's more realistic than the dared and escapist views of the Kithain who deign to rule them.

Kithain society has rewritten the history of the Accordance War, but many graybeards remember a different version of history. They're not as quick to forget the 600 years of madness that followed the disappearance of the nobility. When their fathers and grandfathers opposed the return of the aristocracy, nobles who slaughtered "upstart commoners" forever stained their hands with blood. Since outright warfare has failed them, the most insidious revolutionaries faded into the background after the so-called "Resurgence." They have watched and waited ever since. The time to strike is now.

Wilders

*I'm riding on the edge
while darkness licks my naked skin.
I want to dream again.
I want to dream, and it's no sin,
they won't stop until you tame your soul.
Don't tame your soul...*

— Laether Strip, "Don't Tame Your Soul"

While graybeards are consumed by the hatred they've learned from the past, wilders desperately try to survive in the present. Unseelie wilders have little use for Seelie-dominated courts. The Parliament of Dreams is far more concerned with the traditions of the 15th century than the issues of the 20th. It's an "old boys' club" for the elderly few

who have already been fully accepted by the aristocracy, and their policies reflect their isolation from the real world. They fail to understand the world outside their ivory and crystalline towers. There's a world outside for the taking, and only the boldest can take it. For fae who seek adventure, the world exists now, and the attitudes of Unseelie wilders reflect that dying world.

Fae of this seeming consider Ravaging a sacred mission, not a Machiavellian amusement. Their immersion in the world makes them far more aware of the problems in the streets, and Ravaging increases that knowledge. In fact, many of them would prefer the world to be cold. Wilders in the Shadow Court are typically antiheroes who ravage and despoil the world around them to save themselves. Often fatalistic, they have little hope for the future. Nonetheless, wilders revel in passion and rage freely in a world filled with apathy and lacking in empathy.

Shadow Court wilders hold few illusions about "Prodigal races." They seek to understand those who dwell in their world of darkness for what they are. Many of them disagree with the idea that the other races are merely lost fae. In fact, they are often eager to mix with the other races. This enthusiasm for "seizing the night" gives them insights that could benefit their older and more political brethren.

Childlings

*Kidnap the Sandy Claws,
Beat him with a stick
lock him up for 90 years,
see what makes him tick*

— Danny Elfman, "Kidnap the Sandy Claws"

The youngest changelings don't understand the past, and only dimly understand the present. For childlings, the future is everything. Chaos is the promise the future holds, and they delight in it. Whenever there is chaos, there's a chance to change things for the better—however you might define it at the time.

In Kithain society, childlings are rarely held responsible for their misdoings, and Unseelie childlings push this to the limit. They are a curious mixture of innocence and amorality, and Unseelie elders are inspired by their innovative ways, even while they try to trick and exploit them. Childlings can be very perceptive, and thus understand that the world their Unseelie family can offer them is much more fun than the stentorian and sterile world the Seelie nobles want to rule.

Childlings value freedom above all else, and the Shadow Court welcomes this philosophy. Their Ravaging resembles impish delight rather than communion with the world, but they are still the most open-minded of the fae.

Cliques

When a Shadow Court clique is formed, it is usually for a particular purpose. Like-minded Unseelie band together. Their goals may change over time, but if a clique is going to defy a world that rejects them and a court that reviles them, they had best get their objectives straight when they first get together.

A drastic shift in the Shadow Court occurs once a year in the ritual of Samhain. Titles are meaningless for more than a year or two, since they are redefined from one year to the next. Anyone hoping to "break up" a clique had best move fast when the leaves start to fall, and even then, the remaining fae can always start another one. Cliques have been known to swear fealty to one another, but they define it by means other than honor. Instead of living under duress, fearful to gain Banality for abandoning a clique, Shadow Courtiers comfort themselves with the thought that if they betray their clique mates, Kithain society, Thallain alliances and betrayed comrades will all exact revenge.

Graybeard Cliques

Graybeards love political manipulation. The contacts they have, and the backgrounds they draw upon, determine which pieces are kept on their "side of the chessboard." They rarely gather in the same place, however, as this would implicate their associates.

Many graybeards deal with the problems of balancing their mundane lives against their obligations to the Kithain. Only a few manage to attain wealth and privilege through political manipulation or supernatural talents. (After all, trying to Soothsay the stock market doesn't always work as you might expect.) The most fortunate reside in freeholds, and Shadow Court freeholds require masterminds to keep them hidden. Their webs of communication have to suffice for keeping them informed, but they also are rarely surprised when cliques of wilders or childlings stop by to crash for awhile.

The first goal of the Shadow Court is to understand the world of mortals and shelter those who cannot live in it. Graybeard cliques excel at achieving this goal.

Ravaging Cliques

Survival isn't the only goal of this type of clique. Ravaging cliques travel freely with little regard for who the ruler of a particular faerie kingdom may be. There's more important information to gather, such as the activities of the so-called "Prodigals." They may have one or two grumps on whom they depend, and may even take them along as advisors. Most of the clique will typically stay

away from the intrigues of courts, but only because their anonymity increases their chances of succeeding with guerrilla tactics.

Ravaging cliques also prepare for the onset of Endless Winter. Some have developed rituals for obtaining Glamour from unusual places as a way to speed up the process. The Ravaging Art is vital to them (see "Dark Arts"). These changelings have a profound knowledge of the world that most of their brethren lack, and often undertake a wider variety of adventures.

The Shadow Court's second and third goals are gaining an understanding of the supernatural world and preparing for the onset of Winter. Ravaging cliques specialize in these activities.

Pretender Cliques

Pretenders are social climbers who pursue a long-term goal of overthrowing a freehold and taking the place of those who rule it. Some of these cliques are created to protect commoner nobles who have been exiled or forced to flee their freeholds. As the name suggests, there are also cliques that fabricate such evidence just for the sake of taking power and strengthening the presence of the Unseelie in a kingdom.

Overthrowing the Seelie nobility is the fourth goal of the Shadow Court. Pretender cliques usually have their own unique ideas about how to achieve this.

Obeisance Cliques

There are Unseelie sidhe who labor under the delusion that they should be the rightful rulers of the Kithain, not the Seelie. The most effective ones manage to convince courtiers of the shadows to join them. These fae often promise the fae who support them positions of authority... once they overthrow their rivals, of course. Members of this type of clique will all have the same Unseelie sidhe as a patron or mentor.

Obeisance cliques sometimes conflict with pretender cliques when trying to realize the fourth goal of the court.

Ritualist Cliques

Although quite rare, there are cliques that are formed solely for religious purposes or spiritual exploration. Shadow Court sorcerers and Dauntain Black Magicians may have contact with, or even share, a clique with Tremere vampires, Shadow Lord and Uktena Theurge werewolves and Hollow One mages. More-extreme cliques associate with Tremere *anathema*, Dreamspenker *barabbi*, and even Black Spiral Dancers. Unseelie Ritualists perform ceremonies to maintain the balance of the world and preserve the dark-

ness within it, but Shadow Court Ritualists favor exploitative and destructive rituals.

Sometimes Instigators (see the Contempt Art and the Prestige Background) will build Ritualist cliques around themselves to help them better understand their causes. Since these allies are not bound by traditional boundaries of belief and paradigm, these groups seek a deeper understanding of the world. Unfortunately, it is also a far more dangerous world once these secrets are unveiled.

Ritual cliques gain a deeper understanding of the supernatural world, furthering the court's second goal, yet they also guide the spiritual development of the Shadow Court. The priests of ritual cliques prepare for the revelry of Samhain, the fifth goal of the Shadow Court.

Jamming Cliques

Jammers gather together to make the lives of the Seelie Court hell. Their goal is not to become rulers themselves, but to foster chaos and anarchy. Sometimes this extends to other societies as well, including human ones. Jamming cliques gather extensive information on the activities of a Seelie Court (or another political organization) and work to counter its goals. Such interference helps all of the other factions of the Shadow Court.

While these groups help both pretender and obedience cliques in their agendas, furthering the rebellion of the masses and spreading chaos and anarchy fulfill the sixth goal of the Shadow Court.

Chaos Cliques

One step below the jamming clique (or above it, depending on your point of view) are the chaos cliques. Even anarchy is too political a concept for them. Whether driven by insanity, delusion, or simply a joy of life (and death), their goal is to raise as much hell as possible. Unseelie pooka love this type of clique; most trolls hate them.

Who cares what the Shadow Court really wants? All hail Discordia.

Unseelie Kithain

Many of the most talented recruits within the Shadow Court come from within the Unseelie Court. In fact, it's not unusual for an Unseelie to try to exist within both courts at once. A changeling can acquiesce to the whims of the Unseelie Court by day and secretly work for the shadows.

Any Unseelie who descends into the shadows, however, had best get his allegiances straight right away. The Unseelie Court has to compromise with the ideals of the

Seelie Court and the Kithain, including their futile attempts to save a dying world. It entails the belief that maybe someday you too will become Seelie again, ready to reclaim your honor and chivalry — as their society defines it — and the delusion that someday, all the darkness in the world will go away, and magic will flood the world.

Believing in the fae does not require you to have the trust and intelligence of a five-year-old child. The members of the Shadow Court lost their innocence a long time ago. They have no delusions about the way the world is, and they try to understand their "true selves": their instincts and impulses, lusts and desires. Shadow Courtiers don't compromise with a world of humans. When they Ravage, they're more than human. They're creatures as beautiful and horrific as they are amoral. They're Unseelie.

Unseelie Boggans

Why do I work so hard to help others? Why does the lang drink expensive wine while I scrub his floors and eat potatoes? I don't really think being poor is making me any more virtuous. I should get paid more for this shit.

Boggans are always Seelie when they emerge from their Chrysalises, even though each one has an Unseelie taint sleeping within her soul. By continually acting as busybodies and do-gooders, Seelie boggans fanatically try to forget any disturbing self-doubts they might have. Cynical ones who give in to doubt and fall into their Unseelie Legacies are very ashamed of what they have become. Some begin to doubt themselves because they feel like they've been taken for granted. The worst even consider altruism to be a path to self-destruction.

Either way, boggans can become

very secretive, and once their propensity for mischief and avarice increases, they become even more secretive. One of the reasons Seelie boggans develop such extensive networks of information is to ferret out Unseelie in their midst who are masquerading as Seelie. Unseelie boggans in particular are



watched with great scrutiny, and for good reason. These greedy little bastards have big ears and cold hearts, and what they can't get today, they'll scheme for tomorrow.

Regardless of court, all boggans love to help others — Unseelie ones just have a slightly redefined version of what the word "help" means. While Seelie types are motivated by their need for selfless sacrifice, Unseelie remember people they've helped (whether their help was asked for or not), and they expect to get something in return. Economic opportunity is a common motivator, although some allow their assistance to become more of a curse than a benefit. If someone is truly down and out, exploiting their dependence or pretending to help them while actually driving them to ruin can be a particularly artful form of Ravaging.

Of course, Unseelie boggans are still capable of being charitable. No favor extended by one of these fae is ever forgotten. If someone's taken advantage of a boggan, he can carry an epic grudge in return, and if someone who has received help doesn't pay up with his pound of flesh, boggans have been known to extract payment by other means. First-born babies are an excellent choice, although there's still a slave trade in Enchanted young maidens. More traditional thralls perform household drudgery, while contemporary slaves provide their masters with other services.

System: Another reason Unseelie boggans often masquerade as Seelie is to further their talent at gathering information. The most useful service they provide is efficaciously gathering the filthiest of gossip in a household and providing it to the highest bidder. Through the Social Dynamics Birthright, they have a talent for figuring out who's strong and who's weak, who's sleeping with whom, who's hiding a dark secret, and so on. If appropriate, they'll even present this information to the Shadow Court. Boggans are known for their honesty, so on the rare occasion when one is hired to spread misinformation in a freehold ("It's only a rumor, I'm sure..."), he'd best get his Unseelie little ass out of there before the Seelie boggans tar and feather him. If his situation gets too rough, though, he can always find work with the Boggarts, his Thallain relatives (listed below).

Unseelie Eshu

Don't ask me where I've been. Don't ask me who I am. Just clear me a place by the campfire and let me go to work.

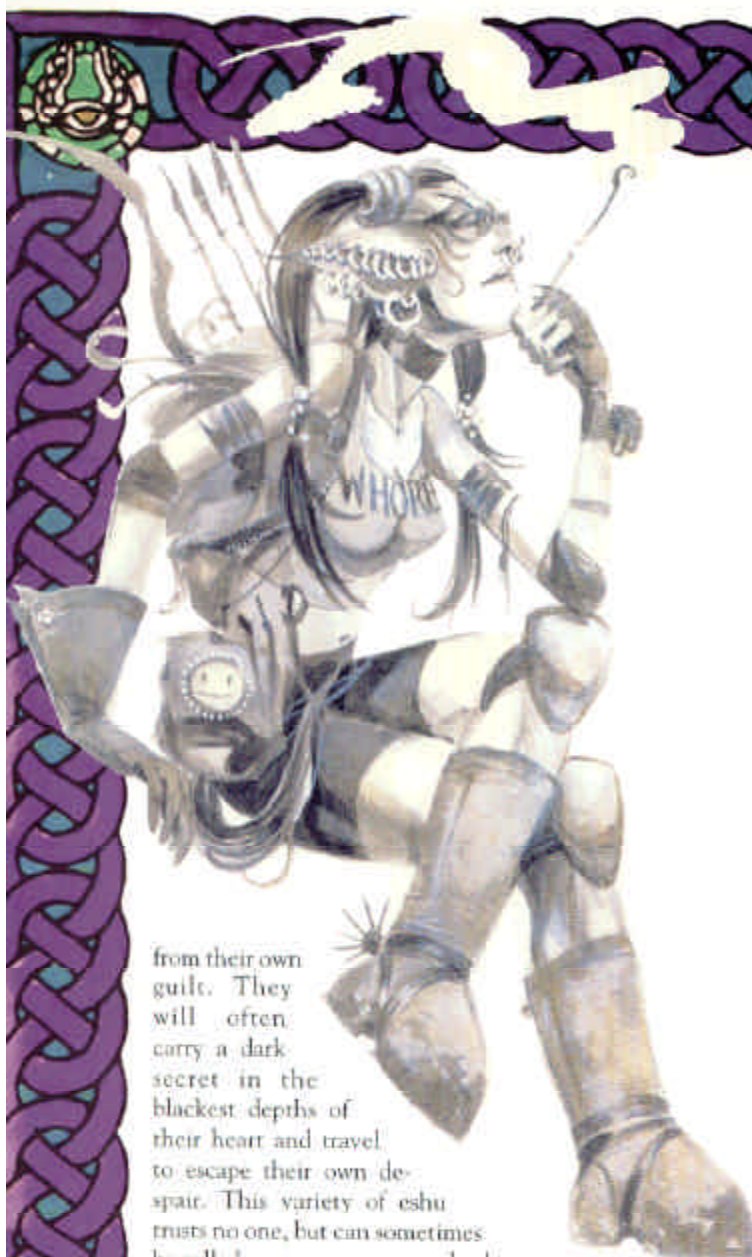
One realm's mysterious visitor is another's renegade criminal. Unseelie eshu not only have an uncanny way of showing up just as the shit is about to hit the fan, but they also have a knack for disappearing right before they're

about to get caught in the rotating blades. They embody the worst stereotypical traits of the Gypsies they're often mistaken for — including their penchant for seams, deception and fraud — and will sometimes blame them for their activities later.

Unseelie eshu are masters of deception and have been known to spread lies and virulent rumors under a variety of false identities. These "lesser Unseelie" will sometimes stay with a clique for an extended period of time, divulging their true identities only to other members of their group.

Their more sinister relatives undertake epic journeys not to escape retribution for their misdoings, but to flee





from their own guilt. They will often carry a dark secret in the blackest depths of their heart and travel to escape their own despair. This variety of eshu trusts no one, but can sometimes be called upon to carry out tasks that even the most suicidal of Unseelie wouldn't want to be around to take the rap for afterward. Then it's off to another kingdom before the pain becomes too great again.

Systems: The Spirit Pathways Birthright allows an eshu to take the most adventurous route while traveling, but Unseelie seem to be drawn to the misadventure of others. Even if they tried to avoid this curse, they'd be blamed for the wake of misfortune behind them, so they might as well participate. If they wind up living out the events of a masterpiece of deception and betrayal, they can also use the Talecraft Birthright to gain an extra point of experience... and a story to introduce themselves with at the next Shadow Court freehold they visit.

Unseelie Nockers

Seems like you're having a little trouble with your security system, Your Highness.

Unseelie nockers pride themselves on their chimerical creations as effusively as their Seelie counterparts. When they interact with physical inventions, they don't like to limit themselves to classical inventions. They have an acute gift for dealing with 20th-century innovations. Indulging in anachronism is less important than keeping up with the state-of-the-art technologies.

When fixing physical machines in the "real" world, nockers have been known to become so attuned to a particular machine or electrical system that their ward will begin to take on a personality of its own. When a nocker is familiar with a device she'll often begin by giving it a name. She'll then create an "imaginary" (read: chimerical) personality and characteristics for it. The "imaginary friend" may then have special requests it may demand in return for specific duties unless the nocker cows it into submission or uses Arts to manipulate it. Shadow Court nockers have thus been able to turn modern inventions against their owners.

Unseelie nockers rarely build physical devices, as their inventions are often so elaborate that they can only be constructed out of chimerical materials. Many of these contraptions are also designed to eventually disrupt the lives of their owners, and nockers who know the Delusion Art (see "Dark Arts") are able to "program" their creations with hidden commands. Unseelie who are jealous of their Seelie cousins have even managed to corrupt the chimerical creations of others.

Systems: The Fix-It-All Birthright has one additional bonus for Unseelie nockers. During character creation, the Unseelie can choose one 20th-century invention as a specialty. She then gets a -1 difficulty on any roll to fix, manipulate, or control that type of device.

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Unseelie Pooka

Here, bunny, bunny, bunny...

Contrary to first impressions, the line of distinction between Seelie and Unseelie pooka can be somewhat blurred. Both types have a love of chaos, simplistic senses of humor and an aversion to truth. The casual observer might also believe that the difference between them is the type of animal the pooka resembles. One can usually be sure of reptilian or arachnid pooka, but such creatures are incredibly rare.



The difference between the two is largely philosophical. As Unseelie, they know the value of following their instincts, and Unseelie pooka have a strong survival instinct. Their animal mien possesses greater cunning than their mortal form, so they'll often carry over animal instincts into their mortal lives. Humans, after all, are less ethical than nature's creatures.

Because they place their own survival first, not even the Shadow Court trusts the pooka completely. As part of their penchant for trickery, pooka have been known to switch sides without a care. Never ask a pooka whether he is Seelie or Unseelie without having a method of proving it. These critters are often considered loose cannons. The best a Shadow Court clique can hope for is that they'll be loyal to their particular clique. That clique will almost always keep their pooka friend ignorant of any politics that come along unless the bond between the pooka and the clique goes back a long way. Keeping him ignorant of temptation helps, too.

There are legends of Unseelie pooka who are so terrible that their pranks always result in death or misfortune. There is no frivolity or joy in the pranks of this deviants, only malice. Tales of nightmare rides that kill abound. Unfortunately, no one is sure whether these stories started with the pooka in the first place.

Systems: Unseelie pooka love hunting for innocents to ravage, and their ability as confidants magnifies their talent at Ravaging. The chosen "prey" will often wind up revealing his darkest secrets to a kindly pooka... only to find them used against him later as his life is destroyed. After drawing out the most troubling and disturbing thoughts within the mind of a human — even if the victim did not realize those thoughts were there — Ravaging magnifies these doubts, feeds Banality, and forces Glamour from the victim's soul.

Unseelie Redcaps

Stand and deliver! Fight or be eaten!

Learned sages have postulated that two redcaps who are truly in love are capable of producing a Seelie redcap as the result of their union, but that invariably, such an abomination will be eaten not long after birth. Sages who are adamant that this faerie tale is true tend to get eaten as well. Redcaps have a way of attracting a host of filthy lies. Some say they're cannibalistic. Some say they eat the weakest of their young. And some don't say anything at all — it might give the redcaps ideas.

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Regardless, Seelie redcaps are exceedingly rare, and the few that exist are despised and hunted by Unseelie redcaps. The mere sight of a chivalrous knight with a red cap jauntily perched upon his head is enough to fill an Unseelie redcap's soul with wrath. Their greatest redcap warriors — Unseelie Black Knights — live for the chance to tarnish their armor and spill their blood. As expected, Unseelie redcaps fight *dirty*, training for the day when they can take down a Seelie redcap. The concept of "too violent" is unknown to them, and many of them take body parts as trophies to commemorate their victories. Their intimidation isn't just talk — in fact, browbeating is a way from them to think up new atrocities to commit upon others.

Systems: The Dark Appetite Birthright provides a few particularly stunning options in combat, as it can also be used on living creatures. Any time a redcap attempts to use the Dark Appetite Birthright in combat the character must spend a point of Glamour, just as if he were trying to eat something not normally edible. The base damage for a redcap bite is Strength + 2 (difficulty 5). Additionally, the character may try to sever an opponent's limb. Severing a



of pleasure, whether they realize this or not. Others find bliss in the ecstasy of drugs and psychic vampirism. Regardless of so-called "preferences," Unseelie satyrs consider despoiling innocence an art form. To hell with wisdom. Passion and pleasure are far dearer.

In romance, not all satyrs limit themselves to human companions. As they have close ties with the natural world, many will indulge in interspecies romances to commune with nature. Tales of satyr bestiality aren't too exaggerated—tragos who have honed and refined their ravaging techniques seduce or carry out courtly romance with animal companions. Animal companions don't have typical objections to commitment, as they have less objection to being leashed

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limb with this ability requires five successes on a Dexterity + Brawl roll (difficulty 8), or three successes if the victim has been grappled

first. This attack inflicts a minimum of three Health Levels of damage if successful, in addition to any damage rolled.

Sometimes redcaps like to spit out what they've chewed, and in epic battles, one can see them wielding the severed arms and legs of their enemies.

Unseelie Satyrs

Straps a little too tight? Don't worry, I won't do anything you wouldn't like, babe.

Boundaries mean little to the Unseelie. Since satyrs have an undying lust deep in their souls, they seek to shatter boundaries of sexuality and pleasure in those who are close to them. The words "perversion" and "deviance" are curiously absent from an Unseelie satyr's vocabulary. Everyone is waiting to be awakened into brave new worlds

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Unseelie Sidhe

And so the Pageant is renewed again, my friend. No matter where you run, I will find you. Wherever night falls, I will wait for you. I am your shadow, and my darkness will envelop you.

Even Shadow Court fae tend to think Unseelie sidhe are a little extreme. They tend to fall within two categories: schizophrenics or epic anti-heroes. The first category is more relevant to Seelie sidhe nobles. Some have been known to shift their court from honorable rulers to Machiavellian tyrants with the merest stirring of the breeze. Perhaps if they were in Arcadia, their fragile psyches would stabilize, but in a world of ethical ambiguities and lost faith, the Shining Host is like a glass menagerie waiting to be smashed.

Antiheroes sink into the dregs of the Shadow Court. A truly Unseelie sidhe will treat his Legacy as an epic journey, not a psychotic aberration. First, he will grow weary of his Seelie life. Next, he will tear himself away from all that he held dear, and then finally he will reject his own nobility as a weakness and come to terms with the taint within his heart. All other acts, no matter how base or ignoble, are merely distractions from the conflict within himself at this point, for nothing else truly matters. Some courtiers of the shadows write this off to typical sidhe arrogance, but it does help to give the Unseelie concept of the Pageant (see Chapter Two) its meaning.

They have a weakness, however. It is almost impossible for them to purge themselves fully of their sense of chivalry. They will deny this, but it has prevented them from fully taking over the Shadow Court. Fortunately for the Unseelie, their nobility can become as tainted as their souls, and their sense of honor often becomes twisted and situational. Unseelie honor is a very personally defined thing, so a villain may very well redefine what he considers chivalrous to accommodate his corrupt morality.

A heartfelt appeal to a sidhe's hidden chivalry may cripple her, as most sidhe are egotistical enough to want to finish off a rival with style rather than with simple butchery. Those who undertake the Quest of the Darkest Heart (see "Dark Arts") may try to hide their sense of personal honor beyond an image of villainy. Hidden chivalry is the most valuable quality any Unseelie sidhe can possess, and some

than most humans — though not, of course, all humans.

Systems: Bestiality isn't for everyone. Some satyrs prefer to get back to nature by studying traditional herbal spirituality, providing their friends with natural blends that over a few hours can lower an individual's Banality. The system is similar to the Gift of Pan, but the roll is Intelligence + Crafts (difficulty 7). Any who choose to resist do so by making a resisted Willpower roll — most of these spiritual meditations are illegal in most states and can be revealed by chemical testing. Anyone under the influence of these natural medications has his Intelligence reduced by two dots during this time, but gifted mortals can see chimerical creations while their vistas are expanded.

have been known to take on Banality if they turn down chivalrous challenges. Then again, some of them would rather be slowly undone by Banality than exhibit chivalry openly.

The circumstances under which one sidhe would kill another outright would still have to be rather extreme. Shadow Court fie have speculated that the only reason why the sixth portion of the Escheat, which prohibits the killing of Kithain, was articulated by the sidhe was because few of them understood what happened to their souls after death. The reason why most sidhe either return as commoners or never return from the Bright Road remains a mystery.

Many Unseelie commoners have little fear of death, as they understand the need for reincarnation and the change it brings into the world. Sidhe have intensified the amount of intrigue the three courts pursue because it destroys enemies slower than cold steel. The ultimate victory over another sidhe lies in turning his Legacy to serve your cause instead of someone else's. Within the Shadow Court, there are often debates of which would be more efficient: killing them quickly with cold steel, or destroying them slowly with Banality. Such debates make cold nights pass quickly.

Systems: Any Unseelie sidhe has a personally defined sense of honor, not a publicly defined one. Storytellers are encouraged to discuss the particulars of an Unseelie sidhe's code in private with the person who portrays her after each session is over. Characters who deviate too far from this secretive agreement should slowly take on Banality.

Unseelie Sluagh

Can we talk freely? Good. Can you pay my price? Excellent.

Sluagh have a natural affinity for the Shadow Court. There are even Seelie sluagh who have an attraction to it. In fact, sluagh typically show more loyalty towards each other than toward either court. Many Shadow Court cliques are used to bargaining with sluagh for information, but they are somewhat hesitant to speak freely when one is about unless he, she, or it has been oathbound to a Shadow Court clique. If a sluagh betrays the Shadow Court, often other sluagh will harry the traitor. While the shadows know a few things this kith practices in secret, Seelie Courts tend to disavow such knowledge.

Sluagh are quite capable of duplicity. After all, they also live in two worlds: the world above and the world below. Regardless of their courtly existence, many hold hidden knowledge about the feeding habits of local Nosferatu vampires, the location of traps set by Rarkin in sewer tunnels, the effluvia created in spawning pools, the possible mating habits of Black Spiral Dancer werewolves, and so on.

However, sluagh don't know everything, and thus, they sometimes need to call on the Shadow Court. Most importantly, a sluagh is reluctant to betray the shadows because of the valuable information she can gain from them. They seek out revelations and dark secrets, and both sluagh and the shadows trade in them freely.

As for the possible sources the sluagh employ, it is said by some Shadow Court sorcerers that sluagh whisper so that only the dead may hear them, but whether there is a connection between the rituals of the sluagh and the dealings of the Restless Dead has yet to be proven. Perhaps they are mistaken.

Systems: Some sluagh are said to be able to use their Squirm Birthright to such effectiveness that they can slither into small cracks under doors or into other small spaces. Doing so causes the sluagh some damage however, (the sluagh suffers one Health Level of damage when attempting this stunt). The difficulty for slipping under cracks is always considered to be 10.



Unseelie Trolls

Where were you when my love died? Where were you when my freehold was in flames? Now back the hell off before I tear you apart.

Some Seelie trolls are so pure of heart that loremasters refer to them as "giants." They are handsome and noble, romantic and generous — and they are the enemies of Unseelie trolls everywhere. Some call Unseelie trolls ogres, though Shadow Courtiers know the true ogres to be Thallain, and more horrible than any Unseelie troll could imagine. Unseelie trolls have been known to become so consumed with their own self-loathing that the foulest of them inflict their suffering on the world. They are, as a rule, either unattractive or hideous, and the worst are deformed morally as well as physically.

Trolls, however, always have a fragment of nobility in them. As opposed to most other Unseelie, Unseelie trolls are loyal to those they support, even if they don't display their loyalties openly. They aren't always immoral — they just dedicate themselves to somewhat disreputable *fae*. A troll who becomes Unseelie will reject his old loyalties, but he can still develop new ones within the Unseelie Court or Shadow Court. No matter how great the suffering a troll endures, he will always retain a remnant of his honor. Unseelie trolls also have a very harsh interpretation of the word "justice."

Even the noblest of trolls has a deep and furious rage sleeping within his breast. Just as the magma of the earth roils beneath the earth's crust, so does gentleness and stoic grandeur sometimes belie a soul in pain. A troll will give trust grudgingly, and follow it fanatically, but if he is betrayed, mayhem and suffering may result. Trolls who become Unseelie after a betrayal of their trust have been

known to embark upon epic killing sprees, leaving a trail of slaughtered victims in their wake. The infamy that results



will leave an Unseelie troll in a state of distrust for a long, long time. Never, ever, move a troll to anger.

Systems: A troll's Titan Strength does not return until he takes a new oath of loyalty. When his oath has been broken by the other concerned party, this is an excellent rationale for fading into the shadows before exacting violent revenge.

The Unseelie Houses

*The burning bow that once could shoot an arrow
Out of the up and down, the wagon-wheel
Of beauty's cruelty and wisdom's chaster —
Out of that raving tide — is drawn betwixt
Deformity of body and of mind.*

— W. B. Yeats, "The Phases of the Moon"

Three Unseelie Houses made the journey back to Earth from Arcadia when the five Seelie houses came through in 1969. One of them, House Ailil, spread its members across Concordia and Hibernia (and possibly other regions as well). The other two (Houses Balor and Leanhaun) initially limited themselves to entering through Hibernia (Ireland). Since that time, many members of both Balor and Leanhaun have left Hibernia and begun infiltrating Seelie holdings in Concordia, sometimes masquerading as members of other houses. Some few let their actual house be known but keep a low profile among the overwhelmingly Seelie kingdoms of Concordia. What they do in secret is another story.

The three Unseelie houses have united with Unseelie from the other five houses and many Unseelie commoners to form the Shadow Court. Although each house has its own agenda, they all have some goals in common — chief among them being the overthrow of Seelie rule.

House Ailil (Ay-LEEL)

Known for their Machiavellian political acumen, House Ailil is the best known of the Unseelie noble houses. The house's founder, King Ailil, was the husband of Maeve, the queen who instigated the Cattle Raid of Cooley, in which the great hero Cuchulainn lost his life. Ailil was an astute politician, a philosopher and a great student of secret knowledge. Both House Ailil and House Eiluned hark back to his line. It is said that Ailil stayed on Earth when the sidhe left in order to preserve its connection to the Dreaming, taking a new name and gathering around himself a group of changelings dedicated to protecting his sanctuary from Banality. Although Ailil himself can hardly



be considered Unseelie, the house which bears his name is firmly entrenched among the Unseelie and are active participants in the Shadow Court.

Members of House Ailil tend to be masters of politics, intrigue and manipulation. They are rarely fully trusted by other Kithain, even those of their own house. They make the most of their talents and have an innate arrogance and supreme confidence in their ability to handle any situation and come out ahead. They love creature comforts, fine clothing and other evidence of their noble standing, taking these as their due, but they love power even more than the trappings that come with it. Ailil often fine tune their Ravaging to evoke as much pain and terror from their victims as possible, claiming that nightmares produce the sweetest and most potent Glamour. They have little regard for those whom they Ravage, believing that there is always more Glamour to be had.

Those of House Ailil often have dark hair and eyes. Regardless of their actual eye color, they are noted for having extremely compelling gates. They prefer dark attire, with their favorite combinations featuring black clothing set off by silver accessories.

Because of their political skills, when they interact with Seelie Courts, they are often found as advisors to kings, leaders of political factions and as the real power behind the thrones of weaker rulers. Fiefs ruled by House Ailil are hotbeds of intrigue and often suspected of Unseelie and Shadow Court activity even when they are not actively involved. Of course, the word "actively" can have so many meanings...

As a house, Ailil wants to overthrow the Seelie nobility and gain influence in the mortal world. They believe the Seelie have become stagnant and that Ailil is most fit to lead (through the Shadow Court) the fae through the Endless Winter and into the coming Spring. They are not trying to bring on the Winter, just preparing to survive it and gain power while doing so. They plan to allow the Winter to demoralize and destroy their opponents and seize power when their foes are weakest.

The more traditional members of the house are members of the Purist faction. They see the need to right the balance: The Seelie ruled for 600 years; now there needs to be an Unseelie time, then a return to alternating rulership. The younger members and the real movers-and-shakers want total Unseelie rule. They control the Reformist party. Many Ailil, particularly those of the Reformist party, masquerade as Modernists, promising equality to the commoners in exchange for their loyalty. These are usually marked as cannon fodder; Ailil has no intention of giving up their noble rights and privileges.

The blazon of House Ailil is sable, a rampant dragon argent, between four stars argent. (A silver dragon rampant between four silver stars on a black background.)

Boon: Sidhe of House Ailil are expert political manipulators. All rolls involving Manipulation are made at -1 difficulty. Members of House Ailil can never Botch on Subterfuge or Politics rolls.

Flaw: Those of House Ailil come from the line of kings. Because of their belief in their own fitness to rule, they are complacent. Members of Ailil take on things others would shy away from, believing that they will succeed just by virtue of their own cunning or talent. They must make a Willpower roll in noncombat situations (difficulty 8) to admit they are wrong, even when it is obvious. If they back down from a situation (such as a battle they know they cannot win), they suffer +1 difficulty to all Social rolls until they can gain some sort of victory that restores their confidence and face. This may take the form of abusing those underlings who cannot fight back.

House Bolor (BAU-lor)

Though it has been forgotten by all but a few of the eldest fae, the Kithain of House Bolor trace their ancestry back to a line of sidhe who mixed their blood with that of the Fomorians. Most changelings believe that the house name is simply an Unseelie joke, a slap in the face to the proud Seelie. The twisted members of House Bolor have no intention of disillusioning them. Because of this, most Seelie believe that members of House Bolor are like bad children, that since they are dissatisfied by their place in fae society, they say and do things merely to shock their Seelie cousins. Few understand the true danger House Bolor poses.

The house reckons their founder as Lugh of the Long Arm, grandson of Bolor of the Evil Eye, king of the Fomorians. Thus, they believe they are doubly royal and laugh at the pretensions of House Gwydion. As Lugh slew his own grandfather, they believe that they are destined to rid themselves of the weak and foolish Seelie, and take their rightful place as the rulers of the fae. They would then demand tribute from all their subjects, and rule the humans as overlords. House Bolor believes that the Endless Winter is almost here.



and that a strong hand needs to guide the helm to steer the fae through it. They actively work to bring on the Winter so they can seize power as soon as possible.

Most sidhe from House Balor belong to the Reformist party. They want power in both the mortal and supernatural world and seek to gather as much Glamour as possible to aid them in their takeover attempt before the Endless Winter. Some among them see no future for the fae at all and these follow the anarchists. They care for nothing but spreading chaos and fulfilling their current desires as completely as possible. Believing they are doomed anyway, they want to spread the wealth.

All members of House Balor are marked by some sort of deformity, a throwback to their Fomorian blood. Such deformities are not always apparent, nor are all of them physical. They might also be mental or emotional. Many changelings of House Balor flirt with disaster by carrying and utilizing iron weapons as a way of thumbing their noses at the other sidhe. They do not suffer from Banality's Curse, the frailty of most sidhe. They are even more likely to fall into fits of depression, however. Unlike Balor's burning eye, their deformities give them no special powers.

Members of House Balor can often be found pretending to be from other houses (especially Eiluned or Dougal). They are highly skilled in both warfare and infiltration. Many hide their time, worming their way into the confidence of Seelie they perceive to be weak and ripe for takeover, acting as knights, confidants or courtiers. While some members of House Balor cooperate with the Shadow Court, the house has its own agenda, which it hopes to eventually implement. For now, they act in concert with Houses Ailil and Leanhaun, content to bask in the prestige of bringing the Black Spiral Dancers and the modern Fomori into an alliance with the Unseelie.

House Balor's blazon is sanguine, a tower, or entwined by a serpent sable barring a door gules (a black wyrm entwined around a golden tower and barring a red door on a field of purple).

Boon: While they are somewhat handicapped by their deformities, the Fomorian blood of those of House Balor shields them from the worst effects of iron. Cold iron still causes members of House Balor some discomfort, but they take no penalty when performing tasks while in contact with the metal, nor do they lose any points of temporary Glamour when struck by iron weapons. This allows them to carry and utilize iron weapons without suffering any penalties. If slain by an iron weapon, however, their faerie souls are destroyed just like any other changeling's.

Flaw: All members of House Balor have some sort of deformity (physical, mental or emotional) that cannot be rectified through prosthetics or psychological help. Changelings of House Balor can never rid themselves of their deformities. As a secondary aspect of their Fomorian blood, no member of House Balor can have a Willpower higher than 6.

House Leanhaun (Lcc-ANN-an)

Members of House Leanhaun are intimately tied to mortal inspiration, and are the most Glamour-hungry of all sidhe. Without Glamour, those of House Leanhaun begin to age rapidly. Cut off for a few months from Glamour, members of House Leanhaun can go from childling to grump almost overnight, suffering all the pain and loss such a change brings in its wake. Though other fae know that this house is so cursed, they are unaware of the cure for it—a forbidden form of Ravaging known as Rhapsody.

The aging effects can be reversed, and aging itself can be held at bay for an unnaturally long period of time through Rhapsody. This is engendered by particularly creative mortals in response to the Leanhaun's direct infusion of Glamour into them. The mortal who is thus inspired burns with enhanced creativity, pouring his



whole life into his art, be it music, poetry, prose, painting, sculpture, dance or any other art form. The Leanhaun feed off the Glamour thus produced, often becoming the lovers of those they Rhapsodize, while the mortals become utterly obsessed with their sidhe lovers. Such a direct channel to the Dreaming, and the creative and emotional outpouring it produces, is very dangerous for the mortals involved. While they fashion artistic masterpieces, they live all too briefly, burning out with one rapturous, incandescent flare.

Like their founder, the graceful, alluring and talented Lady Leanhaun, once hand to the High King of Hibernia, those of House Leanhaun are known for their cultured ways, beauty, grace and seductive natures. Most sidhe recognize the house's ability to locate and cultivate the best human artists and Dreamers. They are seen as great patrons of the arts. Few Seelie are really aware of the Unseelie nature of this house; those who do know of it are puzzled by it as they have no idea what the Leanhaun actually do to gain Glamour. Further, many members of the house are themselves noted artists. For this reason, those who are known to the Seelie usually hold positions such as Masters of Revelry or Court Bard.

Most members of House Leanhaun fear that the Seelie will discover their true natures. Their chief desire is to be free of the threat of persecution should the other houses ever find out the truth. They want complete and unrestricted access to the kind of Glamour they need, and feel justified in taking that which they need to survive. House Leanhaun believes their goals can best be brought about through a takeover from the squeamish Seelie and the empowerment of commoners. They advocate commoner equality, hoping to make allies who will protect them from the other noble houses. Most of them are members of the Reformists and the Modernists. There are a number of Ritualists among the Leanhaun, however, as they feel a great need for the Glamour which pageantry can provide.

House Leanhaun's blazon is vert, a harp, or entwined by a thorny rose sable (a golden harp twined with a black roses on a green field).

Boon: All members of House Leanhaun receive an extra dot in Charisma, even if this raises it above a 5. Additionally, all Seduction rolls made by Leanhaun sidhe are made at -1 difficulty and they cannot botch a Seduction roll.

Flaw: Leanhaun sidhe age unnaturally as a result of an ancient curse cast upon their house. Those who do not engage in Rhapsody (See Chapter Six) at least once a week, age one year for every week they fail to do so.

The Thallain

Is this a fairy tale? This can't be real!

There's fighting all around. They're shooting in the fields.

They say that values change when hunger or ambition

strikes —

Survival is essential, at any cost or any price.

The cartoon animals on Old McDonald's farm

Are nodding off in hotel rooms with needles in their arms.

The seven dwarves? Ha! There's only four alive today,

And Cinderella is working for the C.I.A....

— Oingo Boingo, "Cinderella Undercover"

The Thallain have been forgotten for many centuries, and few of them have been seen on Earth since the Mythic Age. Most of their ancestors have been spawning in Arcadia for centuries, but when the Shining Host fled, an army of darkness harried the sidhe from the world they lost. As Endless Winter approaches, stories of Boggarts, ogres, Gancorner and bean sidhe are on the rise.

Some loremasters claim that the five races listed below are actually Lesser Thallain. They claim that these kith are allegedly working as Earthly shock troops for their Arcadian masters. Although they work well as spies, infiltrators or grunts, they rarely do well in positions of authority, and supposedly play a secondary role in the Shadow Court. Unseelie conspirators proclaim, behind closed doors, that this system of organization is merely paving the way for a further invasion by Arcadia. Other loremasters consider their colleagues to be shifty and deceptive pseudointellectuals who pretend to know more than they actually do, and they are not terribly surprised when one of their academic rivals is said to have been eaten.

This is much as known, though: Thallain do not have Seelie Legacies, and they can never become Seelie. In fact, each one has two Unseelie Legacies. Their only real moral dilemma is deciding which type of feckless exploitative bastard to become: The Thallain character must choose which of the Legacies is dominant at a given time.

They do not owe fealty to the nobles, although some of them impersonate Unseelie kith for the sake of their own survival. The Lesser Thallain races on Earth have been hiding or passing themselves off as other kith largely because they are not protected by the Escheat. That system of law is reserved for the European-based Kithain, who have forsaken their heritage to masquerade as humans. Thallain make no pretense of being human. They are vile, wicked creatures, ready and willing to serve the twisted agenda of the Shadow Court. Whether Arcadia is watching or not, the Lesser Thallain are listening and waiting.

beasties

Wild and wicked Unseelie pooka regress toward their primitive states when their true seemings are revealed. The worst of these are not capable of shapeshifting into animals, but instead transform into hideous monsters. No two beasties are alike, and some exhibit physiological tendencies heretofore unseen in nature by mortals. Like pooka, beasties can only shift into or out of their true forms when no one is watching them.

Not all beasties have the stereotypical "fur and crooked teeth," and not all of them are mammalian in origin. Some are reptilian or alien, while others speak of evolutionary routes that were never meant to be followed by sane sentients. Jagged teeth, matted fur, crooked nails, shining scales and wretched skin become more noticeable when a once-charming Thallain shifts into his beastie form. All of the aspects of the form don't have to be fully functional, though; their main use is for scaring the bejeezus out of their enemies.

The very spirits of the Earth are ashamed of the secretive activities of beasties, and thus the Mists cover their activities within an hour after they are perpetrated. Mortal witnesses are consumed with madness: They succumb to terror and flee. After an hour has passed, they will remember very little. Seelie have an innate hatred of beasties, and will attack them on sight. Their battle lust will subside after an hour, however, and they will forget what has enraged them. Within an hour after sighting, other fae or supernatural creatures remember these monsters as wild animals. Their true forms can only be remembered in nightmares, which often haunt their victims.

Once a month, for the duration of one night, entire packs of beasties will take on their true forms and Ravage. Childlings will refer to this as a Wild Rumpus, while grumps



and wilders refer to it by making inhuman, guttural growling noises. Once enough destruction and suffering has been wrought, they fade back into their banal forms until summoned forth again. Some Ritualist cliques possess methods of directing these packs to enact their wills.

The humor of beasties is of the most vile and depraved variety, and it is almost always deadly. When a beastie Ravages a mortal, her prank will usually culminate in the death of her prey. Pooka find them oafish and gross, but there is, unfortunately, one further complication: When not associated with the Shadow Court, they can still disguise themselves as Unseelie pooka. They will keep the darker part of their natures in check until the time to Ravage comes again.

Appearance:

As mortals, they are wild-eyed and undisciplined. Their primal nature is difficult to mask, even in a mortal seeming. In faerie mien, they are easily mistaken for Kithain pooka, and will even have a few animal characteristics. In beast form, they are the stuff that nightmares are made of. Few outside the Shadow Court have the sanity to elaborate beyond that.

Affinity:

Nature

BIRTHRIGHTS:

- **Beastie Form** — Like pooka, beasties can spend a point of Glamour to shift into their true forms. They must be alone to do so. Shifting back doesn't cost a point of Glamour, but it still must be done alone.

- **Gaia's Mercy** — Within one hour of the perpetration of beastie violence, witnesses will forget what they have seen, remembering only distorted stories of wild animals.

FRAILTIES

- **The Hunt** — Seelie have a innate hatred of beasties, and any who cannot score at least three successes on a Willpower roll (difficulty 9) will attack them on sight — assuming they recognize them for what they are.

Quote:

Grrrr...

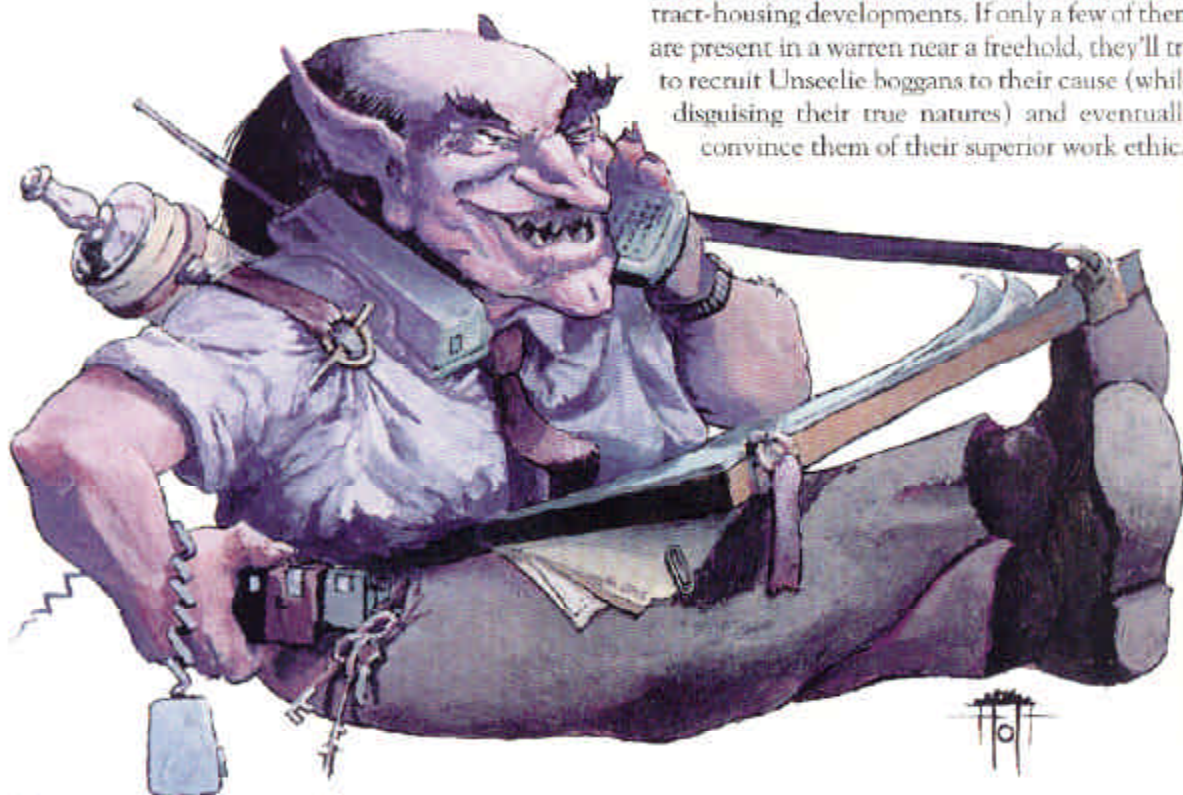
Boggarts

Boggarts place the well-being of their kind above the concerns of all other creatures. With a talent for getting organized, a very industrious spirit and an endless amount of greed, Boggarts can swarm over any opportunity like a horde of rats. Although they are quite willing to help the Shadow Court, they serve themselves first and foremost. They'll tolerate other fae, once they've been properly managed and organized, of course. A warren of Boggarts will only defer to the leadership of a fae of another kith as long as their demands are met and they're compensated—in one way or another.

Although they're no strangers to hard work, they have difficulty understanding the needs and ideals of other fae. Anyone who can't understand productiv-

ity or the acquisition of wealth is in need of a re-education. In particular, they have no sympathy at all toward humans. While Kithain boggans can be quite empathetic to the suffering of others, Thallain Boggarts delight in inflicting pain on mortal victims, either physically or economically. Trapped in a world of men, they see making humans suffer as just revenge. Traditional Boggarts used to make tricking men and enslaving Enchanted women top priorities, but they've learned another way of life over the last decade.

Contemporary Boggarts are inherently collectivist creatures, and they love to create warrens (also known as communes, cultures or communities). These were once burrows below ground, but modern Boggarts now gather in apartment complexes, condos or tract-housing developments. If only a few of them are present in a warren near a freehold, they'll try to recruit Unseelie boggans to their cause (while disguising their true natures) and eventually convince them of their superior work ethic.



They love to create complex shifting hierarchies of politics among their kind, and remember them in great detail. As more Boggarts gather in a warren near an Unseelie freehold, they'll want political power on that level as well, eventually electing a Foreman (or Administration) to watch out for their interests. Profit is the bottom line, and they stash what they can underground out of habit.

Once organized, the commune of Boggarts can hire themselves out to perform acts that are grotesque enough to make any human look twice — hence the name “Boggart.” The kindest of their Administrations can rationalize and justify the most ludicrous of options, and organize the manpower to make it a reality. The worst of them, the Freelancers, hire themselves out to disreputable sorts, and are capable of carrying out the most shocking atrocities without blinking an eyelash. Need a wall painted in human blood? Do you need someone to prick the body of a sleeping beauty with 1000 pins? Send for a few Boggarts. Just make sure they're paid on time.

Appearance:

In human mien, these creatures actually look like normal humans of average height. Away from mortal eyes, they're thieving little dwarves with ruddy skin. As a Boggart gets more desperate for riches, his faerie mien will appear fouler and blacker. Ears get pointer, noses get longer, and bare feet get stealthier. The worst have to hide tails inside their britches.

Affinity:

Actor

Birthrights:

- **Industrious Comrades** — Like Kithain boggans, Thallain Boggarts can perform any physical labor in 1/3 the normal time, although they have learned to diversify their business opportunities. Choose a business specialty during character creation; that character gets a -1 difficulty on any roll

that involves managing her chosen business. Boggarts only have to sleep about two hours a night, so many of them “moonlight” (during the day or night) in human jobs. As more of them gather together, their work will get shoddier and more dangerous. One Boggart might have the best of intentions, but a pack of them will ruin the poor saps they're helping while they maximize short-term gains.

- **Pack Mentality** — These creatures have a way of tracking down others of their kind, and they'll often try to recruit Kithain boggans away from their courts. They can “sniff out” an Unseelie boggan with three successes on a roll of Perception + Kenning (difficulty 5). Any Boggart character will also know how to get in touch with at least a half-dozen of his kind and, once per adventure, can recruit them to alter, “improve” or destroy a location with a successful roll of Intelligence + Politics (difficulty 7). This may not require hard labor. During downtime, it's assumed that the character will perform similar tasks for the rest of his coworkers/comrades.

Frailties:

- **Greed** — When presented with an unguarded item of wealth, they must roll versus Willpower (difficulty 9) to avoid stealing it. If they fail this roll, however, their fingers will take on an adhesive texture, lowering their difficulty for the Dexterity + Subterfuge roll that follows by one. In larger warrens, this is called “redistribution of wealth,” or, in some warrens, “new compensation programs.”

- **Callousness** — Boggarts cannot use the Empathy skill to understand humans, although they can use it to harm them. They don't understand the social dynamics of humans or fae who live outside of corporations, although they do have alliances with the occasional opportunistic boggan. It's useful to have scouts and headhunters.

Quote:

Here now, you've only got one woman in charge! And she wasn't elected? Bah! We'll soon sort that out, mate.

BOGIES

Bogies give the sluagh a bad name. They delight in killing and often have a very ritualistic approach to such activities. A bogie usually has a craving for a certain type of fluid or organ in the human (or nonhuman) body. Whether they drain blood, suck bone marrow or eat feces, their victims are usually burned or desiccated afterward. Bogies who are not able to fully indulge have to remain content with snacking. Dissecting and devouring the intestines of a household pet, or licking the wounds from a body that's been whipped into unconsciousness will have to suffice.

Sluagh may shelter these Thallain cousins, and perhaps even make a few trades to keep them well-fed. Bogies will not die if their exotic tastes are not fulfilled, but after a week or two of abstinence, their hunger will increase. Today, a globule of mucus will suffice, but next week, you'll find one perched on a human's chest, sucking away.

Bogies do not have to whisper, but do so to impersonate sluagh. They only speak up in the presence of the Shadow Court, or when impersonating mortals. It is rumored that sluagh hire such abominations to slaughter those who betray them, though there is nothing to substantiate this.

Appearance:

Bogies have no regard for human life, as they consider humans to be an evolutionary mistake. In human mien, they appear as famished or bedraggled mockeries of the mortal physique. They often resemble either flabby and rotund dorks, or skinny and pock-faced losers with tangled hair and body odor. This is largely in mockery of the Kithain innovation of adopting a human form.

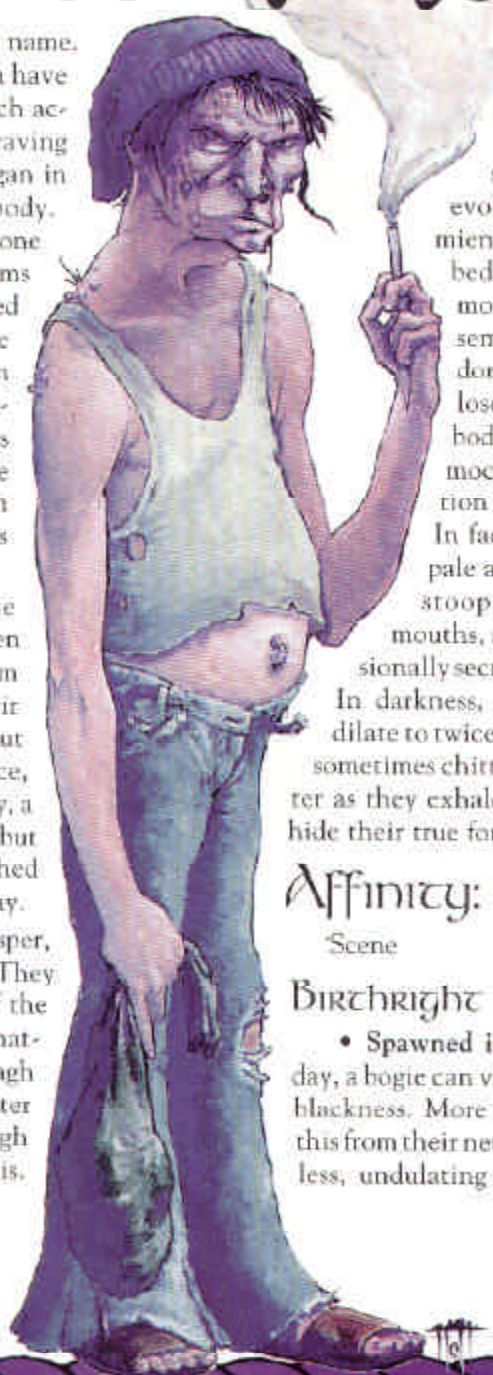
In faerie mien, they are warped, pale and grotesque. In light, they stoop, breathe through their mouths, and make odd sounds, occasionally secreting ooze from their palms. In darkness, their eyes and pupils will dilate to twice normal size, their teeth will sometimes chitter, and rugose gills will flutter as they exhale. No wonder they have to hide their true forms.

Affinity:

Scene

BIRTHRIGHT

- **Spawned in Darkness** — Once each day, a bogie can vomit up a cloud of foul, inky blackness. More talented bogies can exude this from their nethermost regions. This odorless, undulating mass of dark tendrils will



drift slowly, increasing the difficulty of any who try to see through it by 2. This is usually used to cover their more furtive activities, such as climbing along walls and ceilings.

- **Hatred of the Weaver** — By using a point of Glamour, a bogie can become invisible to technology for one hour. Undetected by electronic security systems (which malfunction when they're around), video cameras (which pick up static), and even bright lights (which flicker or shift like the lighting in an old German Expressionist film), the bogie can go about doing whatever it is he's not supposed to do.

Fraillies:

- **Curse of the Weaver** — There is an easy way to distinguish a bogie from a sluagh — bind him. They cannot contort their bodies as sluagh do, and they lose one Health Level each hour they are bound. They cannot stand the thought of being confined, and will screech, writhe and suffer a Health Level each day they are confined. Whenever inside, they will always make sure they have an escape route.

Quote:

Sooo... you wish to know my secrets, do you? Well, be prepared to pay the price.

Goblins

These close cousins of Unseelie nockers are often mistaken for them, but they hide their more artistic talents. While nockers create chimerical devices or personalities, goblins delight in building physical machinery. Nockers are pleased by creation, but goblins are masters of destruction. They are commensurate scavengers when they start to scrounge for materials, and are known for their twisted applications of their skill at artifice. To them, manufacturing mayhem is an art form.

Weaponsmithing is one of their specialties, although goblins will usually have a "fashion" for a current season, just as clothing designers do. One season, the fashion will be destructive toys that capture the hearts of their owners before wounding their owners; the next, "hardware as weaponry" will be all the rage.

As is the case with most Thallain, Seelie have difficulty distinguishing them from their Unseelie Kithain cousins. Goblins are deeply offended

by this, as they consider themselves *artistes*. Unseelie nockers don't really care, as they usually pass off their Thallain cousins as incompetent assistants. Still, goblins take pride in their work, and once one of the grump goblins announce the fashion for the current season in a particular season, they are eager to prove their (obviously misunderstood) brilliance, even if it means destroying part of the local freehold in the process.

Appearance:

In human mien, many goblins resemble science nerds or geeky, collegiate types. They tend to be shorter than is normal for most humans. In faerie mien, they are rarely over three-feet tall, with greenish or brownish skin and pointy ears. Don't trust them.

Affinity:

Prop

BIRTHRIGHTS:

- Mayhem — At the beginning of each story, a



goblin can construct a physical device capable of unleashing mayhem. The Dreaming will mask it as a somewhat improbable device ("What the hell is that?"), but it will actually inflict *real* injury if wielded properly. Before the adventure is over, it will break down catastrophically, hopefully injuring the right people. Additional devices constructed during the chapter will inflict less than three dice of damage.

Creating a goblin device requires a roll of Intelligence + Crafts, with a variable difficulty. Jury-rigging or crafting a weapon that does 3 dice of damage has a difficulty of 6; increase the difficulty by one for each extra damage die the device is supposed to inflict. A number of goblins can pool their dice and use extended rolls to build larger and nastier devices. — as long as no one makes a mistake. (Any group of goblin apprentices worth their salt can change the average Ford Pinto into a war machine.) When the device eventually breaks down, the number of successes on that first roll also reveals the number of additional damage dice that the device will inflict.

- **Gremlin Urge** — Whilenockers have the ability to fix things, goblins have no such talent.

Building insane contraptions from scratch is easy; fixing human inventions is difficult. They are sometimes mistakenly referred to as "gremlins." By spending a point of Glamour a goblin can cause any mechanical device to malfunction, usually in the most dangerous manner possible. The goblin need only touch the device to successfully use this ability.

Frailties:

- **Destructive Flaw** — Just as anything a nocker creates will have a flaw, so will the creations of a goblin. However, this flaw almost always has violent and destructive results. Fools consider this to be typical nocker incompetence, while wise fae mistrust all Unseelienockers to begin with. Goblins have been known to make toys that maim and kill, furniture that injures its owner ("Have a seat, Duke"), and explosives of such cunning and deviance that their victims are stunned more by their ingenuity than by their ability to inflict injury.

Quote:

You will note that the harsh lines and structural rigidity of the explosive chamber is contrasted by the more rococo elements in the wiring of the detonation device. What do you think, apprentice?

Heh, heh, heh, heh! Yeah! Yeah! Boom!

OGRES

Ogres have no hope of redemption, and even worse, many of them are indistinguishable from trolls. They are completely without honor, and exploit the weak. They hunger for flesh, and care little for where they obtain it. Violent and ill-tempered, they are soon cast out from freeholds if their true nature is divulged, even if their identity isn't.

Notorious bullies, ogres only respect one thing: strength. Political strength threatens them even more, mainly because they don't

know how to hit it. They have the social graces of a lecherous, drunken lout 10 minutes before the closing of a local bar, and in the presence of beautiful faeries, they have the drool to prove it. It's still possible for an ogre to be quick-witted, however. Once the punches start flying, they can be absolute geniuses when it comes to smashing things. They actually do have a survival instinct, and can even muster the deviance to impersonate trolls. They're just mistaken by most as being really stupid trolls.



Allowing ogres to organize in their own cliques is also considered to be a Very Bad Thing. Ogre leaders don't stay in command for very long unless they're very light sleepers and exceedingly good with whips and chains. Without more intelligent (read: subtle) fae to lead them, they'll fall into fighting amongst themselves.

Nonetheless, they do have talents that aid the Shadow Court, beside strength and skill in a fight — their heightened senses assist them in finding other Thallain. If a bogie has killed a dozen children over the last month, or if a sidhe noble is being seduced by a Ganconer, an ogre has the best chance of finding it. For this reason, the Shadow Court shields the few ogres in this world.

One other type of ogre is worth mentioning at this point — the Ogre Hag. Double-crossing an ogre lieutenant is fairly easy, but fooling an Ogre Hag is nigh impossible. The closest human equivalent would be a cross between the stereotypical mother-in-law, any given mom on a really bad day, and the worst grade-school teacher you've ever had. Unspeakably hideous, yet preternaturally cunning, Hags demand respect among ogres. They get it.

Appearance:

As mortals, these monsters actually do a fairly good job at impersonating humans, albeit slovenly and crude ones. Childlings act like snot-nosed bullies; wilders are typically thugs who'd find *Beavis and Butthead* intellectually stimulating; graybeards tend toward pot-bellies and shaggy beards hiding raw bits of meat. Once in faerie mien, they actually weigh much heavier and might gain (or lose) six to 12 inches.

Affinity:

Fae

Birthrights:

- **Smells Like Chicken!** — The easiest thing for an ogre to puzzle out is "who's evil and who isn't." They can smell Thallain before they see them and can tell the difference between a Seelie and an Unseelie. With a successful roll of Perception + Kenning (difficulty 6), they also use a sort of "idiot-savant" ability to sense a person's general emotional state. If successful this will give the ogre an advantage in any situation (the ogre receive -1 to the difficulty in any opposed action involving the subject).

- **Strong As Oaks** — Ogres get an additional two dots of Strength during character creation, even if this puts them above a Strength of 5, and they can never botch a Strength roll.

Frailties:

- **Dumb As Rocks** — When creating an ogre, you must pay twice the normal cost to increase the Intelligence Attribute, both when assigning Attribute points and when spending freebie points. (Thus, when assigning Attribute points, you must pay two points for each point of Intelligence you wish to add; and when spending freebies, you must spend 10 points to raise Intelligence a point.) This rule also applies to raising Intelligence with Experience.

Quote:

Now I smash you, little man....

New Background: Prestige

Jacques de Molay, thou art avenged!

— allegedly heard after an execution during the French Revolution

The Shadow Court doesn't recognize titles, but it is possible to gain Prestige within the court. Trying to hold on to power for too long is seen as asking for trouble, but stepping down occasionally is often taken as a gesture of humility. A courtier will probably not know who is more than one or two levels above her station, but she'd be foolish to exploit anyone below her.

Prestige will not last longer than one year; if a changeling doesn't get promoted at Samhain, he'll lose at least one level of Prestige for the next year. In fact, since the court is always changing, there is no guarantee that this Prestige will last beyond the first few sessions. It is, though, the level of expertise you naturally gravitate toward. Consider it your reputation.

☹️ Condemned

You are firmly entrenched in the court. Although you've had your chance to return to your former life, you've forsaken it. You're eligible to learn the Dark Arts, and when dealing with fae who have property or power, they'll usually defer to you as a representative of your clique. If you don't have this background, you're just running with a clique until you're recognized and Condemned by an Instigator or turn Seelie again. If you don't (or can't) take this during character creation, your Storyteller may award your character this first background point after you've been accepted and condemned or after you've (hopefully) survived your first Samhain.

☹️ Guardian

Within your territory, you watch over an important location. This might be a freehold, a city block or a place of economic importance. Perhaps you own a gun store or a basement large enough to cook up some chemicals. No one messes with your turf, and you keep cliques well-equipped.

☹️☹️ Pretender

You hold a title within the Seelie or Unseelie Court, at least that of a knight or squire. This gives you one dot in Title as well, but your position is a tenuous one. If it ever gets out that you're in the shadows, you're done for, but because you're so valuable, jammers and anarchists generally will not mess with you. Your goal, of course, is to use the information you have to bring down those who are "above you" in station within the other courts.

☹️☹️☹️ Mastermind

Not everyone who plots and schemes has this background, but Instigators come to you more often than your compatriots. You belong to a secret society of at least five others (a few samples are in Chapter Five), and you trade favors freely. Through your connections, you also have an automatic three dots in Resources. You also receive regular correspondence from others: at the beginning of each session, the Storyteller will have a few choice bits of dirt for you.

☹️☹️☹️☹️

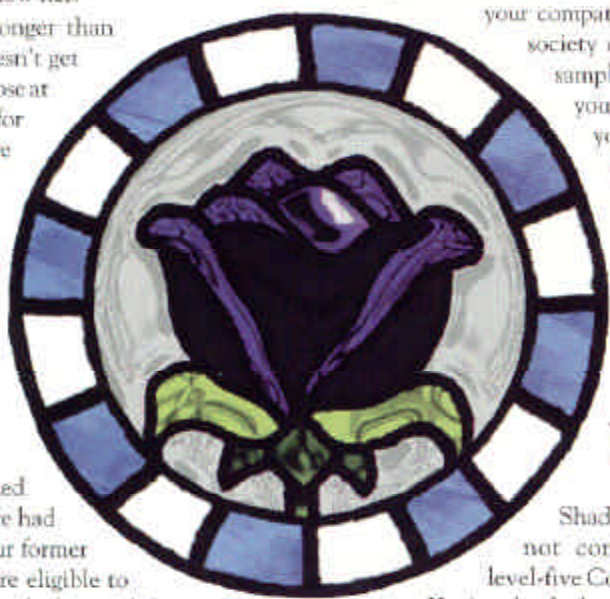
Instigator

You recruit others into the Shadow Court, although you cannot condemn them without the level-five Contempt Art: Condemnation.

You're slowly learning more about the more hidden secrets of the court. Representatives from (at least) two cliques also fill you in regularly on their activities. When you gather at least five Kithain in one place, any Perception-based roll to interpret your ceremonies is at a difficulty of +3. As you get more proficient, your talents will improve. (This Background is used by Storytellers who want to play high-powered political games, not chronicles about newly formed cliques!)

If captured, you'll take your own life to avoid divulging secrets. If you fail to do this, other courtiers will either rescue you or take your life anyway. (Have a nice afterlife.) As an added bonus, you have the assistance of at least two masterminds. Unfortunately, there are always Instigators more powerful than you.

Give the cliques who consult with you a lot of slack. You do not rule them. If, for a moment, you think you do, the backlash is going to get nasty.







Chapter Five: The Dark Arts

*Hunted by men in suits,
You have your reasons to hide,
Slapped by the safety net,
The truth they will provide.
You're guilty... you're guilty... you're guilty...
Of murder in the first degree.
— Klute, "Guilty"*

The Shadow Court has developed Arts that reflect their violent, sinister and devious natures. The two most commonly learned Dark Arts — Contempt and Delusion — are only available to members of the Shadow Court. This knowledge has been jealously guarded, and typically a foe cannot learn these abilities until she has been indoctrinated into the Shadow Court with a ritual involving the level five Contempt cantrip: Condemnation (see below). Anyone can be recruited by the Shadow Court, but only the most deviant and useful stay with them long enough to learn these abilities.

Use this knowledge wisely. It's taken 600 years to acquire it.

Contempt

Attribute: Wits

While Unseelie nobles have been known to use the Sovereign Art, some have chosen instead on countering it with their knowledge of the Art of Contempt. Commoners within jamming and pretender cliques have also found it useful. There has been much debate over whether commoners outside the Shadow Court should learn its intricacies, but for the nonce, only commoners in the shadows practice it.

Nature — An animal will behave in a way that will disturb the proceedings.

Prop — Draconian nobles ban an object present at the ceremonies from being used in what they see as an "inappropriate manner." How dare they! If you're successful, you may use the object as you see fit.

Scene — An aspect of the area where the proceedings are held will create a disturbance (the lights will go out at just the right moment, the fireplace will burst into an inferno, etc.). This is extremely useful when storming a courtroom.

☞☞ Disobedience

An individual affected by this cantrip will show a flagrant disregard for authority for one scene. It will not cause those effected to assault authority figures, but it may result in physical acts of violence. Once-logical arguments will seem shallow, and warnings or dictums against certain courses of action will seem offensive. This can be resisted with an opposed Willpower roll.

If a noble is nearby, this Art can instead be used as a counter to the level two Sovereign cantrip: Dictum. Unseelie nobles have been known to use Dictum, but usually prefer to use it only on so-called "Prodigals," or members of other races. It's opposite, Disobedience, can be used to inspire a commoner, mortal or animal (depending on the realm) to reject the Dictums of nobles. Before this compatriot has an audience (or a conversation) with a noble, the Unseelie can give a few words of wisdom to bolster his or her (or its) confidence. For each success, the user of this cantrip lowers the difficulty of the disobedient one's Willpower to resist Dictum by one. If the user gets four successes, the commoner is immune to commands for the duration of one scene.

Since Shadow Court cliques are more prone to interacting with other supernatural races, this cantrip can also be used to overcome some vampiric Disciplines (such as Presence) and particular werewolf Gifts that affect the mind. This is at the Storyteller's discretion.

Realms:

Of course, the actor and fae realms of this cantrip are the most useful, but an inventive revolutionary can make good use of the other three.

Actor — A mortal becomes disobedient.

Fae — A commoner is immune to pronouncements and will feel disaffected.

Nature — An animal no longer answers the commands of its owner.

Prop — An object (such as the famed "bloody shirt") that can be used as evidence of misdoing can inspire

someone (mortal or fae) to revolt. Alternatively, if a noble is using an object to command Dictums, and you know what it is, you can nullify the effect.

Scene — The setting of a Dictum no longer matters, or an individual will become disobedient once he reaches a specified destination within the next 24 hours.

☞☞☞ Insolence

Insolence can be used to inspire groups of people to riot. It's useful at raves, rock concerts, labor negotiations, lynchings and other such entertaining gatherings. For each success, one individual will be herded by the user into attacking something or someone else. (You can't, unfortunately, choose whom that will be!) Anyone affected by this magic can attempt to resist by using Willpower (difficulty 8).

This cantrip can also be used to negate Grandeur. If a fae can overcome the effect of Grandeur by normal means, she can rally others against it. Only one Shadow Court fae can attempt Insolence; if that individual fails, the others are on their own. For each success, the caster lowers the difficulty for everyone else present to oppose Grandeur by one. If the shadow fae gets four successes, everyone in the area is immune to it — the remark or display was timed well enough to negate the commanding presence of the noble.

Realms:

Again, actor and fae are the most useful, but guessing correctly with one of the other three can have surprising consequences.

Actor — Mortals are no longer intimidated by authority figures.

Fae — Changelings and other enchanted creatures are incited to be insolent.

Nature — A herd of animals can be forced to stampede. Alternatively, if you can guess what a noble must touch in order to use Grandeur, you can overpower it.

Prop — If used against Grandeur, the noble looks like a fool wielding such an obvious crutch. Anyone Kenning is now aware of how dependent the noble is on the prop. It would be a shame if someone stole it later.

Scene — A noble's place of safety or a place associated with authority (e.g., police station, university) is no longer quite as formidable. Let's get 'em.

☞☞☞☞ Devil's Advocate

A Devil's Advocate can use oratory to convince a crowd of just about anything — for one scene. Anyone who listens to a speech made with this cantrip must roll

Nature — An animal will behave in a way that will disturb the proceedings.

Prop — Draconian nobles ban an object present at the ceremonies from being used in what they see as an "inappropriate manner." How dare they! If you're successful, you may use the object as you see fit.

Scene — An aspect of the area where the proceedings are held will create a disturbance (the lights will go out at just the right moment, the fireplace will burst into an inferno, etc.). This is extremely useful when storming a courtroom.

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Of course, the actor and fae realms of this cantrip are the most useful, but an inventive revolutionary can make good use of the other three.

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A Devil's Advocate can use oratory to convince a crowd of just about anything — for one scene. Anyone who listens to a speech made with this cantrip must roll

Willpower against a difficulty of the orator's Wits + Contempt.

The cantrip also has a specific application. If an Unseelie is present as a Geas is being executed, he can use this cantrip to petition for a reexamination of the grievance before the Geas is performed. The Geas cannot be prevented, but the noble enacting it can be asked to reconsider. The Geas will then be postponed until a later trial.

The Bunk is always more or less the same if the second application of this cantrip is used. The advocate must give a speech explaining why the subject should not be affected by the Geas. If the advocate scores more successes than the noble enacting the Geas, the subject is free. Even if it doesn't work, though, the workings of a Geas also allow a Willpower roll later (see the Geas cantrip for more details).

Realms:

Actor and fae are the most direct appeals. The other three only work as counters to a Geas if the noble is using the same realm or if an item of the appropriate realm is the subject of the oratory.

☉☉☉☉☉ Condemnation

This is an unholy ritual of the Shadow Court. It is always used with elaborate ceremony, as it defines an individual's standing within the Shadow Court. At Samhain, only a few individuals, called Instigators, are considered worthy of learning this cantrip.

At Samhain, Condemnation is used to declare new titles of authority within the court, as well as to declare whom the Instigators for the next year will be. Many of these ceremonies are protected by the Samhain Mists. Some will only remember them within their subconscious minds, and others will forget them completely (for more information, see Chapter Seven).

At other times of the year, Instigators can perform various ceremonies, such as recognizing a newly formed clique, casting out a member of the Shadow Court and subjecting his memories of it to the Mists, or recognizing a changeling as worthy of learning the Dark Arts. This "high priest" of sorts always appears in a mystical disguise.

The ceremony of Condemnation is performed with energetic ritual. The fae who wishes to be fully accepted into the court must renounce his former ties of allegiance. An Instigator must gather information about what the fae must condemn. The recruit insults former loved ones or authority figures, and pictures and portraits of rivals are spat upon and burned. Devious Instigators will even uncover a petitioner's former oaths, and, by demanding that

the changeling renounce her former bonds, condemn her to further Banality.

If an Instigator is present at any other ceremony or secret gathering, he can shield the members of a conspiracy. Any who have not been Condemned will have difficulty understanding what is going on. All Perception rolls are at +3 difficulty. If the Instigator can attain five successes on a Condemnation roll, the details of the ceremony will be cloaked in mystery. Witnesses will have mental visions of metaphors of what is transpiring, and later will probably think they were drugged, hallucinating or insane.



Delusion

Attribute: Manipulation

The Mists themselves have been one of the most useful allies the Shadow Court has. Unseelie changelings hide in a fog of doubts and uncertainties, of half-truths and insecurities. Perhaps the world recognizes that there must be a balance to all things, and hides what is necessary. Maybe the world is too tainted with despair and suffering to allow the innocent to witness the horror that is occulted there. True knowledge is often as ephemeral as a dream, as elusive as a nightmare that is forgotten by the light of dawn.

☉ Innocence

Hiding secrets is a valuable ability. This talent is used to obscure them. It will counteract attempts at mindreading, divination, or other abilities used to ascertain the truth about the activities of a now-"Innocent" Unseelie. Remember, Glamour is capricious, so this Art is not entirely foolproof.

Note the number of successes attained when Innocence is cast. Regardless of what Art or talent is being used, anyone who wishes to pry into this secret with magical means must first overcome these successes. The duration is one day, so Shadow Court fae who "live lies" often practice their Bunks for this ability at the same time each day. This ability also interferes with House Gwydion's ability to see through lies.

Realms:

Actor — Knowledge of a mortal is hidden.

Fae — Information about a commoner or member of the Shadow Court is protected.

Nature — Secrets concerning a beast (or beastie) are protected.

Prop — The location of an object is hidden.

Scene — I don't know what you're looking for, but you won't find it here, fool.

☼☼ Facade

This cantrip is used to disguise one's appearance. You must use a mask, veil, cloak, make-up or some other method of obscuring your appearance to enact this cantrip, and the Facade will fade over time. This is overly elaborate if you want to impersonate someone for five minutes, but it's quite useful if you're on the run or infiltrating a court.

Erecting a Facade requires two steps. First, the Kithain must perform a Bunk that disguises her appearance. Manipulation + Subterfuge (difficulty 7) determines the ingenuity of the disguise. Next, the changeling performs a ritual to hide her true identity. This costs three points of Glamour, but it lasts a long time. For each level the character has in Delusion, add an additional success to the disguise. If you attain more than 10 success, the disguise will be impenetrable for one week before it begins to fade. (In other words, attaining more than five successes on your first roll can be most efficacious.)

Even the best Facades slowly erode. This cantrip can be maintained one day for each success; each day, the number of successes is reduced by one. Someone must suspect that you are in disguise before he can see through the Facade. Once he suspects, a simple Perception-based roll (difficulty 7) will suffice (e.g., Perception + Intuition, Perception + Subterfuge — this is the Storyteller's call). One such roll can be attempted each day. If he gets more successes than you do, your cover is blown. Members of House Gwydion get a -1 difficulty to this roll. You cannot enact the same Facade twice.

Realms:

Actor — You can disguise an enchanted mortal.

Fae — You can disguise yourself if you are a commoner or a member of the Shadow Court.

Nature — Helpful if you really need to disguise a plant or animal, otherwise it's pretty damn useless. More than one house thief has found it handy, though.

Prop — You can erect a facade for a noble, but only if you give him an additional, visible prop to help him "get into character." Maybe it's a walking-stick or a distinctive hat. As long as he keeps the prop, the Facade works.

Scene — A noble can use Facade on himself, but only if he stays within a certain area, such as a city block or within the walls of a castle. As long as he doesn't leave the area, it will even work in the bedroom.

Nursemaiding

The Facade cantrip has another useful application, a historical one. In grim fairy tales, changelings have been known to abduct young children or beautiful lovers and place mischievous fae in their place. The legend is based on fact, and the practice is currently called "Nursemaiding." When a clique notices someone who might be useful, entertaining or invigorating, they might find a faerie to take his or her place who looks vaguely like their prey. The Facade cantrip makes this easier.

Once the convert has been abducted and Enchanted, the changeling hiding behind the mortal Facade will have a chance to either raise a little hell or act all angelic before disappearing. Children do disappear, after all, just as beautiful young women run off with absolute assholes, and strapping young lads allegedly run off to "find themselves." Under the care of their Nursemaids, infants suck at the teats of Ogre Hags, lusty maids receive proper education, and young men learn secrets that will haunt them later in their darkest nightmares. If they're lucky, they'll "find their way back" after they've been ravished or Ravaged. If they're unlucky, well, we'll hope that whatever misfortune they found was of their own choosing.

☼☼☼ The Mists of Memory

The Mists do not always carry the moral objectivity that the Seelie would like them, too. A disreputable fae may manipulate them to cloud the minds of others. The roll is always Wits + Realm (difficulty of the subject's Willpower). Some individuals have special talents or abilities to resist this. The depth of this magical effect depends on the number of successes.

One success = what was said during the last scene

Two successes = the events of the last scene

Three successes = the events of the last hour

Four successes = the events of the last day

Five successes = any one memory

There are five things this Dark Art and the following Art cannot overcome: the loyalty of a troll, the chivalry of a sidhe, an oath, a geas, or true love.

Realms:

Actor — This either concerns or affects a mortal, enchanted or otherwise.

Fae — This either concerns or affects a changeling.



Nature—Could have been a puppy, could have been a horse. I'm not sure.

Prop—I think I saw it somewhere. No, I've never seen it.

Scene—Never been there. Never done that.

⦿⦿⦿⦿ The Depths of Will

Although difficult to enact, *fie* with this Art can convince one willing listener to undertake an enterprise that is not directly harmful, and then forget about that activity afterward. ("You must take this to the duke. It's important.") In addition to any other Bunk used, the cantrip must also involve an explanation of why the activity is important. The explanation does not need to be true. This explanation usually takes one scene.

If the listener is willing to obey, he or she will then undertake the activity. If the listener wants to resist, he or she must roll against Willpower (difficulty 7, resisted by the Art + Realm roll for this cantrip) or burn a point of Willpower to do so. Once the activity is performed, the Mists will erase all memory of the enterprise from the participant's mind.

Realms:

The different Realms add a number of intriguing variations.

Actor—This can be used against a mortal, enchanted or otherwise.

Fae—This can be used against a commoner. If you want to affect a noble, you'll need the prop or scene realm.

Nature—This involves an animal used in the mission. Hope someone knows how to handle the animal in question.

Prop—This involves an object a commoner or noble will use in completing the mission.

Scene—This describes the destination of the mission.

⦿⦿⦿⦿⦿ The Darkest Heart

This is an oath as serious as a geas. Powerful courtiers undertake it of their own free will; weak Seelie are recruited, condemned, and sent on this quest by a ritualist or an Instigator. This quest requires a co-conspirator who knows the cantrip of the Darkest Heart. When a changeling has performed an act—willingly, unwillingly or

unwittingly — that she later regrets, she may come to terms with the memory by hiding it in the darkest depths of her heart. She cannot speak of it until her quest is over, and the memory of the act is hidden. This quest lasts for one full year and cannot be lifted at any time other than Samhain.

The fae undergoing this quest will descend further into her Unseelie Legacy, but with one reservation: She will retain her memories and feelings about that one incident, and they can't be taken away from her. Only the sin or transgression that drove her to undertake the quest will compel her. If she repeats that sin, she gains a permanent point of Banality and the quest is over. As long as she doesn't violate that stricture, she can try to perform a penitent act to atone for what she has done. She must then confess the act to an Instigator; until that time, she is under a self-inflicted Ban which corresponds to the Realm involved.

Her true self is hidden away. She may never speak of the sin or transgression until the next Samhain, at which point she will speak of what she has done to atone. At least one Instigator (preferably the one who recruited her) must witness this. If she succeeds, she will lose a permanent point of Banality as her heart is lessened by the burden of guilt. She is forgiven. If she fails, she is condemned to her Unseelie Legacy for another year and must try again.

There is a legend of a Seelie sidhe who felt such great guilt over the last 600 years and the advent of the Accordance War, that he undertook this quest and became Unseelie. The Instigator also directed a clique against this noble over the next year. The sidhe overthrew his tyrannical Seelie brother, traveled into the Realms of the Dead (because he had condemned his darkest rival to undergo a Geas there) and returned, led an assault against a Black Spiral Dancer Hive, and built a freehold in its place. No one knows the end to the story, because it is alleged that the sidhe is still on this quest, and will be until the end of the world.

Realms:

In addition to this, the fae must undertake a Ban that involves an aspect of her quest.

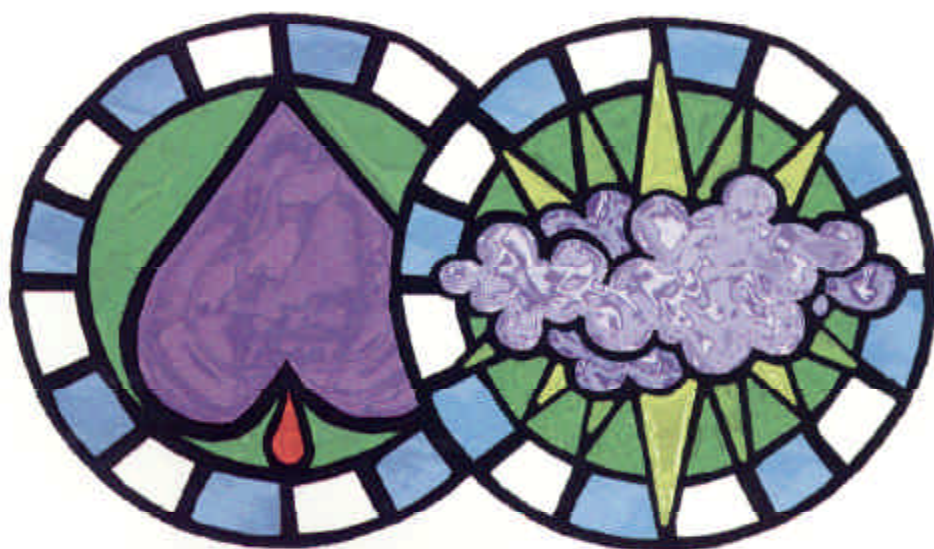
Actor — Harming a mortal involved in the transgression is forbidden.

Fae — Harming a changeling involved in the transgression is forbidden.

Nature — Harming a type of animal involved in the transgression is forbidden.

Prop — The penitent one may not use one of the objects used in the transgression.

Scene — The penitent one exiles herself from the locale where the transgression was committed.





Book Two: Chapter Six: Storytelling

The music says "rise!" It says "lull!" Why blame it on me? I didn't write the music!

— Charles Manson

Building a chronicle for Unseelie characters requires a balance between short-term concerns and long-term goals. In the short term, there are issues involving mechanics and technique. It isn't easy to balance scenes that involve Ravaging and violence against stories fraught with intrigue and adventure. In the long term, the troupe also has to consider where the characters are headed. Is your story an epic about a hero who's fallen from grace, or is it a chance for your otherwise-noble characters to act like absolute bastards for a few sessions?

To assist you with your technique, this chapter includes some rules clarifications and suggestions for "dimming the lights" in your Unseelie chronicles. Epiphanies are particularly difficult to execute in *Changeling*, and fine-tuning them for Unseelie characters takes a bit of practice. Another complication is inherent in customizing Bunks for darker types of stories. Since the types of rules your troupe will use will affect the moods of the stories you tell, developing these two Storytelling skills will expand your repertoire.

Once the short-term concerns are resolved, building the structure of your stories becomes somewhat easier. Shadow Court chronicles, like any other, are as long as you want to make them. For players who want to undertake epics, the

subject of "snapshot" chronicles is addressed. Troupes whose players are focused on long-term character development will also need guidance through the intricacies of the Pageant. And of course, not every troupe will stay Unseelie forever, so some prefer to stick to Shadow Court adventures as "one shots." However you want to play it, from gray to pitch black, the night will remain as dark.

Epiphanies

Revolution and rebellion can be forces of change, but when they run out of control, the result is chaos and suffering. Unseelie fae embody change, and the most rebellious of them unleash it wherever they go. Their world is a world without boundaries, without restraints, without censorship, and without oppression. They are the true anarchists, for wherever order is built up, they will tear it down. Wherever there is a weakness to be exploited, they will find it and use it to their advantage, all in the name of liberating what they hold dear. Even if this brings Banality into the world, it furthers their own power.

Bringing the force of change into the world is part of the Glamour of their lives, and it supplies them with their eminent magical energy. The simple applications of Rav-

aging are rather straightforward, but for Storytellers who prefer more detail in their chronicles, more elaborate mechanisms are included.

Ravaging: The Simple Method

An Unseelie can Ravage successfully once each day without too much risk. The simplest approach for this is to allow each player to make one Ravaging roll for each day of game time. Abstracting this part of the story makes concentrating on the main plot much simpler.

If an Unseelie has "hunted" successfully that day, she shouldn't be allowed to Ravage further without some roleplaying. In addition, flooding a changeling's soul with too much Glamour brings her closer to madness and increases her risk of falling into Bedlam. For each successful Ravaging roll after the first, a character is brought one step closer to Bedlam. The first success will have no effect other than bestowing Glamour. The second success will take the fae immediately to the first stage of Bedlam. If the fae is already in the first stage, she stays there. If the fae successfully Ravages a third time that day, or if she successfully "hunts" within 24 hours of hitting the second stage, the full effects of Bedlam begin.

Unseelie have been known to give in to self-destructive epiphanies, and when they do, they often take innocent mortals down with them. The Shadow Court has little objection to this as long as the fae doesn't reveal her true alliances, but Kithain who Ravage too freely are sometimes accused of belonging to the shadows.

Storytellers who like to build scenes around "hunting" are welcome to use the expanded rules listed below. To begin with, Unseelie will often have a highly developed method of Ravaging known as an Emotional Threshold. Fae don't have to use such methods to successfully stalk their victims, but if they do, their final Ravaging roll is at a -1 difficulty.

Note: An Unseelie can spread chaos and despair as much as he likes, but the player specifies when the character is actually attempting to Ravage. She can limit her die rolls, but doesn't have to limit her fun. Even if the plan succeeds brilliantly, the character may only pick up a few points of Glamour, but acting out the role of a force of chaos is more important.

Psychic Assault

Ravaging works like a dark pact. It gives an Unseelie power, but there must be sacrifice involved. In the crudest of these rituals, this involves destroying a mortal's life. The practice goes back over 600 years — back to when the division between the Seelie and Unseelie Courts was clearer. In those times, Unseelie preyed upon humanity, furthering their own power by bringing about suffering and destruction. After all, such things brought about change.

In modern times, this pact has become somewhat darker. The strength of Banality has grown in the world, and spreading it more rapidly brings the onset of Endless Winter. In these final days, an Unseelie can actually gain Glamour by giving a mortal Banality. After all, most mortals find it easier to deal with winter once they've become acclimated to it. When Endless Winter arrives, all of the Sons of Adam and Daughters of Eve will be prepared, and none of them will know the difference...or care.

The most straightforward Ravaging technique is a simple psychic assault, which is easy to enact once the Unseelie has developed a relationship (of some variety) with the mortal. The actual psychic act is usually performed in private, and it ultimately has a detrimental affect on the individual. Brief social contact between the predator and the prey is all that is required. This can be as tame as an intimate conversation or as involved as an evening of wild sex. Some destructive relationships have been known to become more elaborate. Tragic love affairs, false tutelage, economic exploitation and hostile confrontations are all examples.

Storytelling Ravaging

The Ravaging roll doesn't have to take more than a few minutes of game time, but there are several ways to expand upon these opportunities as parts of a chronicle. The first is to have a cast of mortals who are frequently visited by the Unseelie. Members of the clique have both positive and negative influences on the lives of these people. They pay the most immediate price for the crusade that the Unseelie lead.

If a character has the Dreamer Background, the player may choose to describe a few of these regular victims during character creation. They don't have to be artists; any mortal will do. Visits with these individuals become ongoing subplots. Over the course of a chronicle, particularly sadistic players may watch these mortals' lives degrade. The esteem of the Ravager improves, but her victim pays the price. Squeamish players may prefer, however, to just go off and "hunt" immediately after a session, and consider the details of how they do it irrelevant.

Characters who are on the move don't have the luxury of being able to visit the same mortals repeatedly. If this is the case, the Storyteller may have to weave a few more "Ravaging scenes" into each session. The player and Storyteller briefly describe transactions in which the character interacts with a mortal to the mortal's detriment. If this becomes tedious or tiresome, then this is easily abstracted into a dice roll each session, but the Storyteller always has the prerogative of throwing in a Ravaging scene when she feels the pacing of the story requires it.

Ravaging Thresholds

Psychic assault is the easiest method of Ravaging, but some changelings have more exotic tastes. Storytellers who want to add a bit of detail to these scenes can allow characters to specialize in particular methods. The act itself centers around a certain emotion that relates to Banality. An Unseelie's specialty will often be the result of her own emotional trauma (e.g., lost love, violent punishment or prolonged poverty.) There are two ways to implement this; Emotional Thresholds help either one. A character can still Ravage without the Threshold, but he'll probably get a little more Glamour if he crosses it.

The first approach is the story-driven method. These goals are used as simple plot devices integrated into the main plot. Each changeling chooses her "prey" for that story, and as long as the character succeeds in her goal for that session, she gains Glamour at the end of it. Acting out the Ravaging scenes then becomes incidental. This works more along the lines of a subplot than a dramatic interlude. As long as the story's conditions are met, the Ravaging succeeds.

The second approach is the (somewhat more difficult) dramatic method. The point of the Ravaging scene is to

roleplay an emotional scene based on a particular goal. Remember, if you choose this route, this involves extensive roleplaying. If the Storyteller feels like a Ravaging scene has no emotional strength, she shouldn't ask for the final Ravaging roll. Using this method, for instance, if a character with the Create Anger Threshold attacks a random stranger, and he rolls to hit three times and says, "I'm angry! I'm angry! And he hates me!", the Storyteller has every right to say, "I'm afraid that won't work." Instead, a wilder lover might tell her mortal prey about her latest infidelity, or a graybeard employer might announce the latest company layoffs.

In either case, the ultimate goal is to flood a mortal with Banality. This involves exploring the facets of what this force is and how you and your troupe choose to define it. Although the characters are destructive, the players have a chance to discuss how Banality is recognized and spread. Thus, creation once again comes from destruction.

Players should choose one Ravaging Threshold for their characters during character creation. No character can ever have more than one Ravaging Threshold, though a character who begins the chronicle without one may attain one, or a character's Threshold can change during the course of a chronicle.

Ravaging Thresholds

Exhaust Creativity: The character delights in exploiting others or is contemptuous of the talents of those who are more creative than he is. He employs others to create for him, but ultimately, this art is corrupted, buried or wasted. The dreamer then burns out, wondering why he wasted his time on such frivolity. The emotional version of this Ravaging involves berating someone's creative accomplishments.

Destroy Hope: The character is somewhat fatalistic and Ravages by destroying hope. This might involve watching over someone in a hopeless circumstance who is ready to give up fighting. The predator regularly convinces or talks the mortal out of taking action to improve his or her life. The emotional version of this involves encouraging fatalism and destroying self-esteem.

Destroy Love: The character no longer has illusions of love, and she gains strength from preventing others from finding it or trusting in it. She'll often have a repertoire of techniques for "breaking people up," such as seducing someone's significant other, providing photographic evidence (real or fabricated) of infidelity, sending flowers with a note that only says "good-bye..." and so on. As long as the prey attempts to fall in love fail, the Ravaging works. The emotional version of this might actually involve acting out a romance that's gone awry.

Create Anger: You pride yourself on maintaining your composure, and thus delight in driving others to anger. By wearing down an individual's self-control, you ultimately drive him toward self-destructive acts of violence. The emotional version of this is not recommended unless your players enjoy yelling at each other.

Break Trust: You must break the trust that exists between two people. You've had your trust broken, and now others must suffer as you have. Your prey will ultimately trust no one, becoming isolated from the world. Masterminds and Infiltrators sometimes do this on a grand scale. The emotional version of this would involve acting out a scene in which a violation of trust is revealed.

Exploit Dependence: You pride yourself on your self-sufficiency, and you flout it by making someone else dependent on you. This might be a neglected child, a teenager you supply with a steady supply of cheap video games and bad food, or a kept lover who worries about satisfying your needs. You are slowly destroying someone who is dependent on you, and as she wastes away, you feel more fulfilled. An emotional version of this involves lying to your charge and explaining how she must remain in the safe haven you have created for her.

Destroy Illusions: You're jaded, and the sight of anyone who is still innocent disgusts you. This type of Ravaging is easiest to enact with childlike characters, who have been known to get "good kids" in trouble and discourage the activities of servants of both Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny. The emotional version involves revelation of a harsh truth.

Inventive players and Storytellers are encouraged to come up with additional Thresholds. In the process, the troupe defines Banality more thoroughly.

Ravaging Locations

*I was the third brother of five,
Doing whatever I had to do to survive.
I'm not saying what I did was all right.
Trying to get out of the ghetto was a hell of a fight.*
— Bobby Womack, "Across 110th St."

Sometimes a clique will repeatedly stalk in the same "hunting ground," and the effect on the people who frequent that area will in turn have an effect on the neighborhood in which they live. There are also Ravagers who can drain the Glamour from an urban area itself, increasing its decay and entropy. Regardless of which of these methods is used, either one can have drastic side effects on a location.

Ravaging an urban location involves slowly destroying it. If you do this correctly, you contribute to a number of factors: the crime rate begins to rise, vandalism is more common, destructive drug use and the drug rate escalates, the amount of trash proliferates, the police response rate goes down, and so on. Ravagers who despoil urban locations (that is, those who use the Scene Realm) can try to directly increase the occurrence of such events. They'll make up whatever rationale is necessary to justify vandalism, crime and anarchy.

Ravaging more than three people a week in the same neighborhood will also start to have an effect on that locale. How much the Storyteller wants to play this up is a judgment call, but it will be compounded by Ravagers who are despoiling the area directly.

Insidious Shadow Court cliques will actually Ravage a neighborhood to strike at the influential individuals or occult forces that own or manipulate the area. If a rich fat-cat is making a fortune off the supermarket down the street where he's jacked up all the prices, for instance, he needs a few robberies to force him out of business. Maybe someone else will sell their goods cheaper next time. If a Ventrue vampire is gaining influence by controlling the local businesses, hurting the neighborhood indirectly harms the undead crime lord controlling it.

Even more insidious cliques will encourage supernatural activity this way. If an Unseelie slugh wants to help restore a wraith haunt, spreading a little entropy will encourage the spirits of entropy to come back. The consequences may be a little different from what the group expected, but that's a chance that has to be taken in some circumstances. Unseelie value chaos, but the side effects of such tactics are not easily controlled.

Note that if the Ravaging in a neighborhood is getting out of control, other supernatural races may be able to tell that something magical is going on. Mages with Entropy Sight, wraiths with Death Sight, Malkavians with Auspex, and the Silent Striders with Spirit Sight are all good candidates. None of them, however, will find it terribly obvious that pissed-off Unseelie changelings are the culprits. The easiest way to stop Unseelie is to catch them red-handed raising hell in your part of town.

Rhapsody

The last variety of Unseelie epiphany is strictly forbidden by the Kithain. A changeling can imbue a mortal with so much raw Glamour that she burns out her creativity in one final glorious burst of creation. The artist or dreamer will create one last masterpiece, burning out completely in the process.

This requires the expenditure of one to five points of Glamour. It's easiest if several members of a clique participate. The mortal makes a Manipulation + Expression (or other appropriate roll) and adds one success for each point of Glamour. The end result cannot be more than 10 successes.

The resulting work of art will then have Glamour within it (it is considered a special form of dross). When the work is destroyed, the Glamour will be released. Divide the number of successes attained when the work was created among the changelings participating in the de-

structive ritual. For each success attained in creating the work, a Seelie can gain one point of Glamour or an Unseelie can gain two. Members of House Leanhun are the most entertained by these works of art—they can gain three points of Glamour for each success.

Working Rhapsody to create art, however, is strictly illegal in Kithain society and heavily punished. In the real world, the price is even more costly. For the artist, the end result is a life as a despondent, suicidal wreck. She will never be able to create anything worthy of note ever again. Some artists are driven to self-destruction by this thought. Her works of art are sometimes given to Seelie nobles as gifts. The artists are presented later.

Unseelie Bunks

Although Changeling can be a game of many moods, one of the most difficult aspects of running an adventure with a darker mood and atmosphere—such as a Shadow



Court adventure — is finding appropriate Bunks for your players. For instance, a skillful Storyteller might spend 10 or 15 minutes setting up a tense scene in which a pack of redcaps are stalking the King of Pacifica, but if he has to ask the leader to stuff three Krispy Kreme doughnuts in his mouth right before everyone's combat Bunks go off, the effect of the story can be lost. Unseelie live a little differently:

Bunks will always seem a little silly, but it is possible to compensate for this. Different Storytellers tailor the Bunk rules to their particular troupes. Some Storytellers like to use the lists of Bunks as guidelines, inventing new Bunks on the spot — after all, no list is absolute. More sinister Storytellers prefer to let the *other* players make suggestions of what a particular Bunk might be, particularly if a cantrip is being used in an unusual way. Both of these approaches are recommended for **Shadow Court** games, since they help tailor Bunks to be appropriate for the scenes in which they're used.

Re-creating Bunks in the Real World

Achieving a mood of realism in a dark game is admirable, but some players have been known to get confused over how much of a Bunk the character is

performing and how much the player is re-creating. How, exactly, do you make a bag of chicken bones and burn it in front of someone? Can you use a level five Wayfare Art if you don't have a geode or a broadsword handy? The Bunks listed here add an extra level of difficulty: Some of them are too reckless to be fully re-created in a living room or (God forbid) the open gaming room of a convention. To compensate for this, there are methods for making your sessions safer and saner.

If a Bunk is easy to re-create, both the player and the character can enact it in the same way. For instance, if the character is required to throw rose petals in the air, and the player just happens to be sitting at the gaming table with a rose in her teeth, re-creating the Bunk is quite easy. In the game, the character showers someone in rose petals; in the real world, the player does exactly the same thing.

Unfortunately, such synchronicity between game and life is usually pretty rare. If a player is required to "eat the wax of a candle that has burned for seven days," finding the appropriate "material components" to enact the Bunk can be awkward in the extreme. In this case, the troupe might have props handy to represent the materials required. For instance, if the Pricking of My Thumbs Bunk requires you

to prick your finger and spill blood on the floor, stabbing an orange with a pen or holding a tube of fake blood in your hand would be saner.

The ingenuity here lies in finding clever props and using them in ways that don't seem overly silly. Even if the effect is not quite what you intend, a resourceful alternative is much better than accidentally setting fire to your living room or suffering blood loss. If the props are well chosen, the Storyteller may allow an additional success (just as if the character had used a point of Willpower) for the contrivance.

If you don't have adequate props, or if a Bunk is too dangerous to reenact ("You want me to set fire to *what?*!"), a player may always choose to mime a Bunk instead of actually acting it out. If the enactment of the Bunk is impressive enough to warrant a standing ovation, increase the number of successes by one. Simple, yes? Good. Now put down that broadsword.

Bunks and Combat

One last complication involves the use of Bunks in combat. Some Bunks are just too elaborate to pull off during a fight. To this end, a number of Bunks specifically useful during combat have been included. These are marked with asterisks. A Combat Bunk can be performed during the same turn as another action. If the dice system is used, divide the Dice Pool between the roll for the Bunk and the roll for the attack or dodge. If the card system is used, subtract the number of successes for the Bunk from the Dice Pool. Otherwise, assume that a character can perform a combative version of the Bunk in one turn, and that any attacks will have to wait until the following turn.

Strength of Will: If a character is attacked while using a Bunk, and that character does not have dice available for a dodge, roll Willpower. If the number of successes on that roll exceeds the amount of damage taken, the Bunk still succeeds.

Arts and Bunks

Without further ado, here is a set of Bunks to get you started:



Chicanery

- **Veiled in Darkness:** Draw a black cloth over someone's eyes.

- **Erase:** Draw a picture of the target of your Bunk and erase part of it.
- **Poetic Justice:** Write a short stanza about your victim's misfortune.
- **Condemnation:** Crawl around the room whispering the horrid fate you wish for your enemy.
- **The Stolen Kiss:** Kiss the hand or cheek of the person sitting next to you.



Legerdeman

- **Grasping Hand:** Crush something in your grasp.*
- **Puppet:** Dangle something on a string.
- **Unctuous Habit:** Caress your left hand with your right, twirl your mustache, or carry an animal on your shoulder.
(Alternative: A stuffed animal will suffice.)
- **Sticky Fingers:** Pour honey over your fingers.*
(Alternative: Use soda instead.)
- **By the Pricking of My Thumbs:** Draw blood from your fingertip and leave three drops of it on the ground.*
(Alternative: Squeeze the juice out of something.)



Primal

- **Burn, Baby, Burn:** Set fire to something.
- **Lick It:** Lick something lasciviously.*
- **Primitive Instinct:** Pound on something like a drum and chant.*
- **Leave Me Alone!:** Stare psychotically and growl at another person in the game for 30 seconds.
- **Shatterstorm:** Break a glass bottle.*
- **Defacement:** Change a picture of one thing into a picture of something else.



Soothsay

- **Condescend:** Pat someone on the head. *
- **Shattered Visage:** Draw a picture of someone and tear it up.
(Alternative: Just pace for three minutes. It drives gamers crazy.)
- **Ambient Aroma:** Burn a stick of incense.
- **Tides of Time:** Quaff all of a large drink without taking a breath.
(Alternative: Hold your breath for 30 seconds, or down a 12-ounce soda in one gulp.)
- **Taroticum:** Give a Tarot reading.
(Alternative: Pretend to give a Tarot reading.)



Sovereign

- **Crack the Whip:** Make the sound of a whip cracking. *
- **Attention:** Clap your hands three times and whisper your request.
- **The Bartered Childling:** Mutilate a doll.
- **Entrance Denied:** Seal the door that leads into the room you're occupying.
(Alternative: Use tape or stack chairs.)
- **Soliloquy:** You've got the stage for three entire minutes. Stand before a crowd and explain why you're such a bastard.
(Alternative: Stand on your chair and declaim, or turn out the lights, stand in a spotlight, and give your pitch.)



Wayfare

- **Earthquake:** Jump off your chair onto the floor. *
- **Flash!** Emit a bright burst of light by a method of your choice. *
(Alternative: Use flash paper or gradually dim the lights in the room throughout the course of the story and then suddenly turn them up to their brightest.)
- **Fire, Walk with Me:** Leap through flame.
(Alternatives: Dangle a miniature of your character over a cigarette lighter, or leap over people lying on the floor.)
- **Immolate:** Draw a picture of where you're standing, then burn it.
- **Flashing Blades:** Slash two blades together, as if sharpening them. *
(Alternatives: Use butter knives, chopsticks or pencils.)
- **Paper Chase:** Chase an innocent bystander around the room. (Alternatives: Chase someone who is watching the game, but not participating, around the room.)



Contempt

- **I Know My Rights:** Make a flag and burn it.
- **Prodigious Digit:** Extend your middle finger.
- **Power to the People:** Get at least five people to chant a slogan.
- **Approach the Bench:** Make a mockery of a courtroom scene.
- **Indoctrination:** Lead a procession with chanting and candles.



Declusion

- Poker Face: Beam at someone innocently.
- Grand Masque: Hide behind a mask or veil.
- Tale of Woe: Make up a tragic tale to gain someone's pity and complicity.
- Rationale: Explain why your request is absolutely necessary.
- Confession: Kneel and confess your transgressions before another face.

The Final Option

Of course, if you still think acting out Bunks in your game is inappropriate for your adventure, you can, as always, feel free to drop the reenactments from your game. Your characters can still use Bunks in the story even if your players don't in real life. The real judge of whether a Bunk succeeds, then, is how well the players can incorporate describing a Bunk into a story. If you're too serious for this sort thing, then tell the story well, and leave the games of Simon Says to another troupe.

Shadow Court Chronicle Structures

So what are you going to do with this hefty book, anyway? The Shadow Court gives us quite a few avenues of exploration for **Changeling** chronicles. From their point of view, they're heroes; from the viewpoint of any other campaign in this game, they're potential antagonists. Recruit or oppose — the choice is yours.

If you choose to recruit, the structure of your chronicle depends on how long you want to be. Snapshot chronicles help you develop elaborate ideas, one-shots work for really brief ideas, and adversary troupe chronicles develop more complex ideas. If your players are really attached to their characters and prefer long-term campaigns, the mythic structure of the Hero's Journey is an excellent way to explore character development with greater nuance, as long as you add in a few special touches for Unseelie characters. Plan out your structure now. You'll reap the rewards later.



Antagonism 101

Any fairy tale has a villain. No two Unseelie are exactly the same, but whether you're telling a story about a nine-year-old kid who dips the pigtails of little girls in glue or a mastermind who'd burn down a city block to inconvenience a rival, all adversaries have one thing in common: they have a reason for doing what they do. The better the villain's motivation is, the better the story becomes. Ogres aside, "evil" does not mean "stupid."

In physics, an object in motion will stay in motion until acted upon by another force. The same applies in drama. Regardless of whether you portray a protagonist or antagonist, the character will have goals and pursue them unless someone opposes her. The character requires a motivation for doing this. If it's a good reason, the story makes sense; if the antagonist's actions are just an obstacle for the hero, the story is weak. Make sure you can justify your adversaries.

Snapshots

It's possible to portray the evolution of a character over time without running a game every day for the next few months. Epic adventures often work best if you let a lot of downtime pass between sessions. Staying focused on a long-term structure by using "snapshots" develops the story as a whole, tearing us away from a chronicle structure where we follow the characters from day to day.

For instance, suppose we want to base a chronicle on a Seelie sidhe who has lost his true love and fallen into the Shadow Court. We'd like to see how he grows over the course of a year, and in the end, he'll either fulfill his Unseelie Legacy, find redemption, or be destroyed. Along the way, other Unseelie (that is, other characters) will aid him on his "Villain's Journey." Short of sitting down and writing a five-volume fantasy series, how are we going to pull it off?

First, get a rough idea of how long the chronicle is going to last. Do your players want to leave it open-ended? If so, the same amount of time — say, one week or one month — can pass between each session. The goal for each session would be to tell a full adventure each afternoon, leaving enough time at the end for the players to explain what their characters will do between adventures. The drawback with this structure, however, is that we may never get to a satisfying resolution.

If the chronicle has a finite number of sessions, we can plan out what times of the year the next few chapters will take place. This plays off one of the strengths of *Changeling*: We've got a detailed calendar for Kithain society. In this example, we might set up a session focused on Samhain, a three-session chapter set around New Year's Eve, a political session that takes place during Beltaine, and a very dangerous mission set during Midsummer that will take at least two sessions. That's seven afternoons of gaming so far.

Since we want to have a resolution to test the leader of the clique after all he's been through, let's set the last session during Samhain again. Either the character has learned from his journey (and resumes his Seelie life as he pursues his Seelie Legacy) or he's failed (and is condemned to live out his Unseelie life, shut out from his higher ideals). There are other possibilities, of course; he may decide that being Unseelie is more truthful than being Seelie; he may have messed up so badly that he's sacrificed; the members of his clique become Seelie and he doesn't, and so on. We don't need to describe every detail every step of the way, but by taking snapshots during different times of the year, we can guess where he's headed.

Of course, a snapshot chronicle doesn't have to end once the resolution is complete. We've still got a troupe of characters, and we can shift the focus for the next chronicle. Perhaps two of them fall in love and have their passion tested by the interference of an Instigator. Maybe the rest of the clique decides to set up one of the other fac as a pretender and takes over a freehold. Or maybe they just ally with a Sabbat pack and act as Jammers for the next six months. Keeping a long-term goal, aided by the structure of the Unseelie calendar, makes it possible.

One-Shots

Any troupe needs a change of pace once in a while. A one-shot is a chance to make the most out of your nasty ideas for Unseelie characters. The advantage here is that you can be as vile as you like without having to fully suffer the consequences. How many times have you spent months playing a character until you get to the point where you don't want to risk her future anymore? In Live-Action gaming, there's an old saying: "Win big or lose big." This is part of the fun of a one-shot. Who says surviving means "winning," anyway? Go for a blaze of glory in a one-shot and risk everything!

A one-shot doesn't need to be just one session, and it can still fit within the structure of your overall chronicle. Since Shadow Court characters are often antagonists for nobles and Seelie, the hell your players raise in one week with a group of previously generated characters in a one-



shot can set up the problems their regular characters will fix for the next three or four sessions. Maybe you've been hearing stories about a riot that broke out in Los Angeles while you were resting up in your freehold in San Francisco. Who says your troupe can't take a closer look and tell the story of the riot for an evening? The background of your chronicle grows, and everyone gets a vacation in the process.

One word of caution: This type of adventure can have a very high body count. If you set it in the same location as your regular chronicle, you may lose a few high-level background characters in the process (unless they're either tipped off or really clever). If it's set in another related location, however, it sends out the message that the Shadow Court is lethal without destroying the politics in your ongoing chronicle.

A great advantage to this type of adventure is that it can challenge your roleplayers. For anyone who's afraid of getting "typecast," it's a chance to break out of the mold. That's a really nice pristine Seelie sidhe princess you've got there, but can you play a redcap anarchist as well? One-shots are chances to explore and push boundaries, and that's what Storytelling is really all about.

Adversary Characters

If your Shadow Court players want to interact with Seelie or Unseelie Court characters in the same troupe, a rather intriguing way to have them interact is as Adversaries. There are several ways to go about this:

The first method is to have courtiers sit in on the same sessions as the other characters. If you wish to preserve their secrecy, you'll need a number of secret conferences and passed notes to pull it off. Overtly, the betrayers or recruiters describe what the other characters would not mind seeing; covertly, they manipulate behind the scenes. This requires more "intellectual" Shadow Court characters.

The second method is to run a parallel story between the two groups. This is rather difficult, but the chapter on Storytelling in *Changeling: The Dreaming* gives some advice. It does help if the people involved can separate player from character. The saying, "I know about it, but my character doesn't," goes a long way. One word of caution: Although it is tempting for players to reveal plot details "out of character," it can destroy the integrity of the story. In addition, have the combat rules on standby. If the shadow clique is really good, you won't be forced to end everything with a massive brawl.

The third method involves constructing a story that allows two groups to encounter the plot separately. One night, you describe the Shadow Court version of the story;



the next, the Seelie Court tries to pick up the pieces. For instance, a jamming clique might heist a magical item from the duke one night, and a group of characters who serve him might try to pick up clues and track them down in the next session. The reverse is also possible: The Seelie Court might spend an evening trying to convince the duke that he needs better security in his freehold before they leave on another adventure; the next session, the courtiers break in and attempt an assassination.

The more you try to combine these three methods, the stranger the stories will become. Before long, you'll be passing messages that say nothing at all (to throw players off guard), throwing in a second Storyteller to narrate critical confrontations away from the rest of the troupe, and revealing at the last possible moment that the duke whom the jamming clique is trying to assassinate is a character one of the players portrayed three months ago. Take notes, be fair, and let the bodies fall where they may.

A Brief Guide to the Villains' Journey

The classical model for a Shadow Court chronicle is the archetypal Hero's Journey. Myth and destiny have a strong resonance in the world of changelings. The freedom that's offered by an Unseelie Legacy — the chance to truly discover one's self, no matter how horrific that self may be — beckons the character to follow a path of darkness.

Fae usually have the freedom to decide whether they wish to follow a path of light or darkness. Following a Seelie legacy involves giving in to one's nobler ideals. Seelie heroes pursue honor, uphold chivalry, and believe in love. An impure world, however, does not always respect these ideals. When they fail (and they often do), a wounded changeling gives in to mistrust, skepticism and doubt. He embraces his darker nature and turns toward his Unseelie Legacy.

For heroes, the realization of an Unseelie destiny is an exploration of the darker side of the self. In the paradigm of the Hero's Journey, falling into an Unseelie Legacy is like the "descent into the underworld." The hero is tested, and if he returns to the normal world, he is stronger and wiser because of it. Unfortunately, not everyone escape from the underworld. Some remain Unseelie by choice, preferring to trust in instinct, passion and the impulse to change. The stages of the journey, based on the "12-step chronicle" in the rulebook, are described below.

The Ordinary World: The first stage of this type of chronicle is set in the ordinary world. This is either the mortal world in which the protagonist lived before he

became fae, the Seelie world the hero knew before he met with tragedy, or the Unseelie world the protagonist knew before he was recruited. In a troupe, this is easiest when the story focuses on one character at the beginning. The other characters are either along for the same ride or hold importance in the protagonists' lives. The ordeals ahead will test the relationship between the clique members, so encouraging a strong bond between the members of the clique now will make the chronicle easier to run later.

The Call to Adventure and Refusal of the Call: The call, in this case, is an event that encourages the hero to turn away from the path of light and descend into his Unseelie Legacy. This will be different for a mortal than it will for a Seelie or Unseelie changeling. In each case, the call is the same: a pivotal event that destroys the life the hero once knew, or a tragedy or revelation that showed him the path of villainy.

Establishing the temptations of the character's Unseelie Legacy makes this easier. What is it about the character before the Chrysalis that establishes that possible destiny? People often live in denial regarding their flaws and imperfections, and it takes quite a bit to turn an otherwise sane and gentle person into an outlaw, a beast or a rake. Every person, however, has the potential to take that path.

Meeting with the Mentor: The mentor in this type of story is usually the leader of a clique, a mastermind or an Instigator, depending on the value of the potential recruit. The trick here is to decide whether the information the mentor gives is true (justifying the despicable acts the characters will perpetrate) or false (leading the characters on a journey through treachery and perception).

One common technique is to orchestrate the recruitment and frame a Seelie or a member of the nobility for the tragedy. Instigators and masterminds who use these types of techniques Ravage on a grand scale, and pulling off these plans benefits both them and the Shadow Court. This is perfect hook for adventures in which characters are Unseelie only for a brief while. They pursue revenge against their alleged enemies, find out the truth later, and then strike back at the bastards who used them. In the process, they redeem themselves and rise back to their Seelie fate.

There are also chronicles in which the actions of the Shadow Court are easily justified. Seelie have a great deal of pretense, but it doesn't always mean that they're fair... or even right. The Seelie part of a changeling's soul may be forgiving, but if the resentment that slumbers in his breast becomes too great, only the Unseelie shadow can pursue revenge. If the Shadow Court has spies nearby, they'll aid the changeling in his revenge.

Crossing the Threshold: Whether the villain joins a gang, a conspiracy or a cult, the first threshold on the villain's journey is usually the perpetration of the first crime. The villain needs to prove that he is capable of committing acts that would have shocked his former self. The first hit is the hardest, but once it's done, turning to a life of indecency and exploitation becomes almost natural.

The expanded rules for Ravaging suggest other ways to set up this first threshold. In the main plot, the clique will have an objective to achieve in this first adventure. Within the subplot of each character, the first time an Unseelie Ravages reaffirms the relationship between the villain and the world. The world has treated the villain badly, and now he strikes back. He justifies what has been done to him by inflicting suffering upon others.

Tests, Allies and Enemies: This is the longest stage of the journey. Once the path is set, the long descent begins. Fortunately, you've got quite a few "hooks" on which to base the plot. Take a good, long look at the Backgrounds of your characters, consider how the supporting cast ties in, and consider how to test your characters' Legacies. The second set of hooks you have are the seven tenets of the Manifesto. Which portions do the characters uphold? What kind of clique are you building? By unraveling the threads of plot that are set before them, they'll drift toward their biggest challenge: whether to emerge from the underworld.

You'll also need to plan out who your adversaries will be throughout this part of the chronicle. The characters will need to slowly learn who their opposition is, so this may involve a little bit of the "concept of the week" technique. If you pick one or two sets of adversaries, you can build on these concepts without vitiating the chronicle. If you throw in too many potential adversaries, the players will settle on learning about a new sourcebook for each adventure or taking on the Monster of the Week and leaving the game at that.

The Innermost Cave: The first few adventures set the stage for the hardest challenge, which is the lowest point of the villain's journey. The characters grow closer by overcoming adversity, developing their psyches and shadows, and refining their skills. In the Innermost Cave, facing the most challenging adversary also tests their souls and spirits. The hardening of their hearts that has taken part over the last few adventures has been set up so that they can be strong for this part of the journey.

The Supreme Ordeal: Layer after layer of plot peels away to reveal the ultimate force behind the scenes. This might very well be the Mentor who started the villains on their descent to begin with, or it might be a powerful Seelie

who was once their friend and ally. Either way, someone or something is going down. By facing the adversary, the characters face themselves and question their values.

The Reward and the Road Back: By this stage of the story, you should have a good idea whether the characters will transcend their Unseelie natures and resolve the chronicle as Seelie fae, or remain wicked and recalcitrant for a long time. There can never be hard-and-fast rules for something as ephemeral as transcendence. Overcoming one's flaws depends heavily on character motivations. Again, no villain or shadow acts without a motivation. Once a fault is redressed, a wound is healed, vengeance is attained, or love is found again, the motivation for the shadow is gone.

There are a few devices, however, that help Storytellers deal with this denouement. To begin with, when discussing experience points at the end of a session, one popular question involves asking what the character has learned. This is an excellent time to focus on where the character is headed. If the truth is consistently revelations like "There's no honor among thieves, after all," or "Never trust in love," that's a good sign that a Seelie revelation won't be coming up anytime soon. In fact, some players hate morals of any size or shape, and allowing them to revel in the Shadow Court places them in their natural element. Better stock up on black candles.

Still, the wrap-up at the end of each session is a chance to look at the road map of your chronicle and examine the terrain ahead. When you're approaching the end of your story, this is even more crucial. Talking about the high points of the session, discussing how the characters might develop, and discussing the motivations the characters pursued brings everything into focus. By the time the end of the chapter or chronicle arrives, the player and the Storyteller will have a feel for whether the character will remain loyal to the shadows or awaken from the nightmare.

The Final Threshold and the Return: This sets the catharsis of this type of Shadow Court chronicle. The final threshold, in this case, is an evaluation of the hero's destiny. Does he want to continue to be Unseelie, or has he overcome it? In this type of chronicle, the character doesn't actually have to return to the world he knew. If this is the case, the villain is on a long, hard ride into Endless Winter unless he is redeemed in your next chronicle. Either balance is restored, or the villain meets a tragic fate and remains condemned.

Again, the Unseelie calendar also helps set up this denouement. Society — whether that's the Seelie Court, Unseelie Court or Shadow Court — recognizes the final

changes in the characters. In the end, the hero is able to take what he has learned and bring it back into the world. In the process, you redefine what it is to be Seelie or Unseelie, but more importantly, you redefine what it is to be human. That, after all, is what creating good stories and living myths is all about.

A Final Word

Like many dark games, *Shadow Court* adventures can be placed in two categories: violent and nonviolent. If it is truly your heart's desire to turn *Changeling* into a bloody, violent splatterfest, there's not much in the way of rules that can stop you. If you really thirst for blood, a few black dots on your character sheet aren't going to stop you. An insidious Storyteller, on the other hand, can make your life a living hell.

First, it's worth noting that those who kill often wind up pawns for those who do not. Psychotic kill-crazy lunatics often wind up holding smoking guns for masterminds who can manipulate them. In short, they become stooges. Shadow fae who kill too freely are just asking to be used and discarded. Remember that a mastermind can help or hinder a clique. If the police happen to show up at just the wrong time when a clique is in action... well, more than

one clique has been Undone by Banality cooling off in a prison cell. If a mastermind betrays a reckless clique, he'll gain Glamour, and no one else will mind. Careful and stylish fae gain Prestige, but overly reckless maniacs are repeatedly used as stooges, until they're finally cast aside. Then their surviving cliquemates gain a reputation that's hard to shake.

Second, it's worth repeating that the Pageant isn't simply a matter of killing your enemies outright. Powerful Shadow Courtiers who live for the thrill of the hunt would rather eliminate their opposition with style. After all, that makes gaining Glamour so much easier. Slowly destroying a rival by spreading Banality around him is a much more satisfying taste of revenge than having some thug shoot him in the back of the head. Destroying an enemy's life until he turns Unseelie and becomes your pawn is even more satisfying. Why kill when you can corrupt? Murder invites investigation, but no human investigator can arrest someone for wielding Banality.

Then again, maybe your troupe prefers to spray blood on the walls. To each his own. Eat some red meat, watch some zombie films before the game, and then roll dice for four hours. Enjoy. But if you start to tire of killing, remember that there's an alternative.





Chapter Seven: Samhain

Let the Wild Rumpus start!

—Max, *Where the Wild Things Are*

The winter equinox marks both the beginning and ending of the Unseelie calendar. Since the Shattering, the rituals of Samhain have become more and more elaborate. By tradition, many freeholds and kingdoms will have festivities that are similar, yet the commoners and shadow courtiers in each one will flavor each event with their ingenuity, deviance and perversion.

Because the veil between the two worlds is thin, very few of the individuals present at Samhain ceremonies will remember what has occurred. This applies to other supernatural creatures as well. Only Instigators who possess the proper sorcerous rituals, and Ritualists who are protected by them, will recall what has occurred. Of course, they will use the information to their advantage later. What is hidden will become truth, and exploiting secrets builds new truths.

Hell's Night

As has been detailed elsewhere, the festivities of Samhain often begin on the night before. The exact

astrological factors have been ignored over the centuries, so Samhain is now celebrated on the same day of each year. The night before, Unseelie pooka, beasties and redcaps mark the importance of October 30th with vandalism and arson. The madness of Hell Night is the result. Rampaging in the streets, the assembled cliques will choose a few select locations for sacrifice. These may be chosen by masterminds beforehand, but more often than not, the tradition of Hell's Night is a way to gain Glamour and Ravage before Samhain proper begins.

TRICK OR TREAT

Mortals are well acquainted with some of the traditions of this night. Schoolteachers throughout the U.S. lecture on how common villagers made precautions against evil spirits with pumpkins; plates of food and vigilance. As a result, human children and childlings alike have a chance to dress up in spooky costumes and gorge on candy until they puke. Such is the way of mortals. The true stories of Samhain have been twisted to commercialize the event,



and tamed for the "mother-approved" version of one of the greatest nights of the year. Despite this, even Unseelie commoners mix a little Halloween decorations into their Samhain proceedings, largely to maintain a facade of normalcy, and to mock the holiday itself.

Childlings love this time of year, especially when they have the chance to misbehave. Smashing pumpkins, soaping windows, and scaring human children are only the beginnings. Unseelie with the Facade cantrip will give human children a taste of what the evening should really be. Disguising themselves as promising mortals whom they've watched throughout the year, some changelings live up to their names by switching places with human children on this night. The rest of the changeling's clique will offer some sweet Glamorous treats and bring their guest along for the ride. The inspiration found on that night brings nightmares for months to come.

Hide and Freak

Members of the Seelie nobility who want to display humility often go into disguise as well. At other times of the year, nobles who pretend to be commoners do so to

find out what their people think of them. Unfortunately, common folk are brighter than most members of the aristocracy give them credit for being. They choose instead to use such opportunities to misinform their superiors. The Samhain Mists play tricks on this night, though, and nobles find it easier to disguise themselves while Samhain is in effect. For one night, they have the freedom to go where they will and do what they please. Any roll to affect a disguise is made at a -2 difficulty.

The Samhain Mists will eradicate memories of what nobles attempt, but it also assists their enemies. If a commoner finds a noble in disguise, it is common to ask a boon of him. This is actually letting the noble off easy, since rivals who find nobles at this time typically have more pointed requests. If the boon has not been fulfilled by dawn, commoners will track down the noble, and extract payment by more physical means.

Unseelie nobility typically do not participate in this activity. They relinquish their titles as well, but they have more somber rituals to attend. These reach their peak (or nadir) with the Ritual of the Eidolon, which begins early in the evening and concludes around 3 or 4 a.m.

The Masque

While this practice is not required, some freeholds adopt the tradition of providing disguises for everyone present. Since identity is a tenuous concept at best, it is easily discarded on this night. Highly talented masquers will provide facades for guests to adopt, while more ingenious masterminds will provide facades that are so clever that few realize they are even present. By morning, these lesser facades will fade away. (Up to five can be created for one point of Glamour on this night of lies.) Romantics of the Masque legacy have been known to re-create famous courtly romances on this night, mocking and satirizing them every step of the way, and some even go so far as to take on the facades of courtly lovers to steal or ravish the objects of their affection.

Mock Court

By tradition, this night is a chance for commoners to recognize fae who have escaped the notice of their betters. Common folk who are nominated for such titles have a chance to prove their worth by word or by deed. Since all is forgiven — and forgotten — on the following morning, this is the best time to confess transgressions against the nobility. Declaring retribution or revenge against a Seelie

or a member of the nobility will sway the voting. The titles awarded are the same in the hierarchy of the Unseelie Court. Seelie commoners are eligible as well, but only if they have undergone the Descent (described below).

Crowns and capes of papier-mâché and rags are presented, and all bow before the nobility of the Shadow Court. In less-civilized circles, the nobles wear bones and strips of flesh, and their crimson robes are dyed with human blood. Saving up for such festivities takes a long time and a great deal of discretion. Fortunately, human sacrifice is not as prevalent as it once was. We are indeed fortunate that we live in a world that is too civilized for such activities.

The Feast

Unseelie commoners also demonstrate their hospitality at this time of year. For the commoners in most freeholds, this involves multiple tables of food. The nature of the freehold influences what the feast will be. Some feasts are elegant repasts, with roasted pheasants, lightly toasted Samhain cakes, and several bottles of wine. Once the feast is underway, however, guests who rebuke such a pretense at culture will descend upon the feast with bottles



of ketchup and jars of mayonnaise, ripping apart food with their fingers and starting epic belching concertos.

Not everyone feasts in this manner. Childlings love to collect mountains of candy and sugary goodies, while redcaps are more than pleased to build temples of meat at which other fae can worship. For satyrs, the traditional feast involves sexual indiscretion and orgies of the most elaborate kind. It is not uncommon for this to eventually interrupt the main feast; after the first few hours, many of the foodstuffs present are incorporated into the orgy. However, this is not required. On this night of passion, gluttony and lust are seen as virtues, and so those who would not normally indulge, or who are forbidden against indulgence, will revel.

There is a variety of tournaments on this night, and the eating competition is only one of these. Satyrs and others who pursue debauchery have a tourney of their own, called the Satyr's Feast. The goal of their tournament is to see who can lead the most chaste and innocent individuals across the most sexual thresholds on one night. The converts can be enchanted, but all participants must be willing — it is a contest of seduction as well as technique. Enchanted mortals are the usual delicacy in a Satyr's Feast, even though some tragos prefer to get back to nature.

It is traditional for the redcaps to have their feast at a separate table. These staunch warriors have a long night of tournaments ahead of them, and despite their voracious appetites, gorging does tend to reduce one's fighting prowess. Piles of half-eaten food are set aside for their feast, along with broken furniture, scrap metal and other delicacies. In the unlikely event that innocents are killed on this night, there will be a pile of a few bodies for ogres and redcaps alike, after the bodies have been used to decorate the crowns and robes of less-civilized freeholds.

The Descent

Seelie who value their purity had best stay away from Samhain revelry. Any who witness the events of this night will be tempted to give in to their Unseelie Legacies for one night. Resisting this requires a Willpower roll (difficulty 9) and at least four successes. Seelie who overcome this first roll must attempt it again for each scene they witness. If they watch part of a ceremony and flee, however, they are fair game for cliques who didn't find the revelry of Hell's Night to be enough.

It has thus become a popular pastime for cliques to hunt down Seelie on this night, regardless of whether they have witnessed ceremonies or not. The taunting and mind games they indulge in will often result in a Seelie losing his temper or composure. The Descent is the inevitable result.

Honorary clique members will be corrupted or enlightened, depending on your point of view. By dawn, the guest will return to his Seelie Legacy, but the rest of the clique may be impressed enough to recruit him later.

Members of existing Unseelie cliques decide whether to switch alliances on this night and form new cliques. All oaths of bonding are off. It's common for long-standing cliques to reassemble, but witnessing the mock tournaments and bonfire storytelling sessions may change an Unseelie's mind.

To settle up old scores, long-standing grudges between members of a clique must be settled with mock duels. Part of the structure of the duel, however, depends on the ingenuity of its parameters. Shadow duels are usually fought with chimerical weapons, and these are often of elaborate design. Nockers and goblins offer their wares as party favors this night anyway, so the challenger must choose the weapons, and the challenged must choose the location. Secrecy is advised, but the Samhain Mists work overtime tonight, so mortals who thought they witnessed duels with razor-edged boomerangs on rooftops or chainsaw duels in gutted buildings can't fully believe what they see. Later, they remember these antics as typical Halloween shenanigans instead.

Bonfire Storytelling

At midnight, the bonfires are lit, and loyal Unseelie and corrupt Seelie alike compete by confessing their greatest misdoings of the year. Lying is an option, but it is traditional for a corrupt noble of House Gwydion to observe the ceremonies. Members of House Eiluned rarely participate at all. It is not uncommon for less-eloquent fae to choose champions to tell their stories for them. Many aspiring cliques will choose a skilled storyteller to join their clique for the next year to witness their accomplishments.

The stories that receive the greatest oration, biggest celebration, or highest number of sexual propositions are then referred to private audiences. Instigators make a point of being present, since they often consider these stories when deciding whom to award Prestige to and whom to condemn to lesser ranks. Once the new titles have been chosen, Instigators participate last of all. The Instigator who has achieved the greatest accomplishment for the year continues for the duration of the next year. The others are reduced to masterminds or guardians to make way for new rulers.

Goblin Artifice

Nockers and goblins love to compete, and as is typical of many social gatherings, one or two goblin groups will



announce the "fashion" for the gathering anywhere from one week to one month beforehand. The ceremony that results usually involves a great deal of destruction, as many of the goblin's creations don't last beyond that night. Less-valued creations are offered as "party favors," but the most imaginative are detonated for the pleasure of the Mock Court.

A separate category in this tourney is the manufacture of chimerical weapons. These devices are tested in the tourneys, although spectacular backfires are considered just as valuable as capacity to injure. Trolls, redcaps and ogres who barter for these items do so at their own risk. The more exotic weapons have a greater potential for impressing a crowd, but young apprentices find a steady trade in manufacturing chimerical polearms and elaborate chimerical swords. More discriminating patrons will purchase old near-dead cars and have them chimerically "detailed" for that night, transforming them into chariots and siege engines. Glamorous items produced over the last year can be offered as payment, although many nockers try to work their way into prestigious cliques by offering their works of art as samples. By the time dawn arrives, most of the scraps and remains have been salvaged.

Die, Asshole!

It's really tempting to try to get away with murder — literally — on this night. This is one reason why wiser Seelie stay away from larger Samhain celebrations or only indulge in small, intimate gatherings. One note of caution, though: Even if you don't believe in the Escheat, you'll still take on Banality for killing other fae on Samhain. The Bright Roads are busy on that night, and the Shroud can incur a "backlash" against fools who traffic with death too freely. Murdering a changeling on this night earns you one point of Banality whether you're Kithain or Thallain, although some Storytellers will set this at two or three points if they want an especially bloodless evening. In addition, the Samhain Mists will erase clues from extreme crimes from mortal eyes, but faerie eyes (or ogre noses) may pick up a few hints. Then again, conditioning someone else to kill is another matter entirely...

The Mock Tournaments

The knights of the Shadow Court are chosen at the annual Mock Tournament. There is a variety of categories in this competition, although all weapons employed are chimerical. The first few events typically involve wrestling, bare-fist fighting and boggan-tossing. It is possible to win either by defeating all of one's adversaries, or by impressing the crowd with innovative carnage. Each winner receives a title, which is good for the next year.

The weapon-based categories employ chimerical devices, most of which are provided by nockers and goblins. The results of each event are recorded on goblin parchment and presented to one of the Instigators present. Thus, many warriors of the Shadow Court are given titles that they will not remember until weeks later when they are informed by Instigators. In particular, the Grandmaster of Double-Chainsaws and Grand Carnage Knight titles are held with great esteem.

The last event of the night is car jousting, a tradition that dates back to the late '50s. This event usually involves the assistance of squires, although some trolls have been known to tear the roofs off vehicles and steer one-handed. Motorcycles and buses are also allowed, as are chimerical mounts. The wreckage is then salvaged by the goblins, who put it to good use.

Recruitment

Masterminds and Unseelie eshu travel freely throughout all the events looking for potential recruits. Repressed and neglected Seelie who fall into the festivities are prime candidates, as they often display their true potentials. Seelie who undergo the Descent, nonetheless, are still rather tight-lipped about their Seelie allies.

Unseelie who are not yet members of the Shadow Court are sought out and observed during this time. It is not necessary for an Unseelie to be condemned before joining a Shadow Court clique, but those who have demonstrated their disdain for the Seelie and the nobility are often contacted at this time.

There are also distraught individuals who seek out the Shadow Court for vengeance or enlightenment. Commoners with vendettas contact cliques in the shadows at this time in order to petition their grievances. Nobles and sidhe who have fallen into despair or tragedy are approached by Unseelie who offer a chance to follow the intricacies of the Pageant. Seelie who undergo the Quest of the Darkest Heart find it easier to set out on their paths veiled in mystery, and so Samhain is an excellent time to start.

Weapons of Dishonor

Lucky (or unlucky) changelings may manage to come away from the festivities with a few "party favors" or prizes.

Goblin Chainsaws

This is one commonly used "weapon of dishonor" at Unseelie gatherings. Although this goblin device is similar to a regular chainsaw, modifications have been made to the teeth mounted on the chain. A wide variety of sharp objects, such as razor blades, bits of glass, severed forks and steak-knife tips, are welded to the chain. Using this impossible-looking contraption requires a Dexterity + Melee roll (difficulty 8). It inflicts up to Strength + 7 dice of damage (depending on how well it's built), but if the attack roll is botched, each 1 will inflict one level of damage on the user. While chimerical chainsaws only give the illusion of removing limbs with more than five successes, these puppies actually do it. Are ya feeling lucky?

Using two Goblin Chainsaws at once ("Florentine Technique") increases the difficulty to 9 and requires you to split your Dice Pools. It does look impressive, though!

Goblin Blunderbuss

This black-powder weapon is a favorite at parties. You can load with anything, including pieces of junk that fly off an exploding Goblin Chainsaw. Dexterity + Firearms is the skill to use it, and if you succeed, roll up to seven dice of damage (again, depending on how well it's built). If you should ever botch, you'll take the brunt of the damage from its catastrophic breakdown. Goblin marksmen are often covered with a variety of entertaining scars.

Instigation

Powerful fae come out of hiding to meet personally with their contacts at this time. After rituals of sacrifice, confession and ceremony, they decide who is most qualified to work as Instigators over the next year. Secret societies shift their alliances, and hidden oaths are made for the upcoming year. Grand schemes are discussed, and vendettas are plotted.

Instigators also discuss at this time whether the seven tenets of the Manifesto have been advanced, and they

sometimes have lengthy debates over interpretation. Finally, times and places are set for drop points and meetings, and their conclave disbands for more personal rituals. Only a select few are invited to these gatherings, but preparations for the year are made during Samhain.

The Sluagh Ritual of the Dead

As sluagh delight in secrets, they are eager to hear the revelations of the dead at this time of year. Gathering near suspected haunts, graveyards and other places that are important to the deceased, they invite wraiths to join them in ceremony. Deals and alliances are made, although few last beyond the following Samhain. Sluagh never forget the oaths they make during this time of year, although they sometimes forget the circumstances that prompted them. The Shadow Court is often paranoid about the dead, but sluagh have the freedom to make deals without interference or concern from the court.

The Ritual of the Eidolon

Early in the night, Unseelie nobility attempt to communicate with fae who are lost in the lands of the dead. Black avians descend into the chambers where their rituals are perpetrated, and fae whisper questions and information to these eidolons. They seldom return before three or four in the morning, and so nobles often sequester themselves before they retire for the night as they wait for a response. Quill in hand, they write down the responses they receive, although many of these dreamlike notes appear quite cryptic the following day. (In general, anything written down or recorded electronically slowly dissipates before dawn.) If deceased fae have requests to make, the living will respond again before daylight overtakes them and send the eidolons on their way again.

Prophecy

Soothsayers of the Shadow Court will also try to predict... or verify... tragedies to occur over the next year. The difficulty for any Soothsaying that bodes ill-fortune is at a -3 on this night. Ritualist cliques typically make one of these predictions each hour, and deliver them to the newest Instigators at the end of the night. They are never able to accurately predict whom the next Instigators will be, however. The events of this one night are too drastic for even Soothsayers to predict fully.

An hour or two before dawn, the Soothsayers will then hold a ceremony for the newest Instigators, wishing

them good fortune. As there is never human sacrifice at these events, the few survivors that are left after the crowns and robes of human body parts have not been made are not ceremonially butchered at this time. Of course, the ogres and redcaps first must clean up after the feast of dead bodies that did not occur.

The Legend of the Heavens

There are legends that the most powerful Unseelie in Arcadia can return to Earth at this time, but only for one night. As part of their pact, however, they cannot appear in their true forms. The most devoted members of the Shadow Court are contacted by them at this time, and can converse with them about the progress made on Earth. Prophecies have confirmed that the darkest of the Unseelie cannot return to Earth until Endless Winter has been made a reality, and so the most successful Instigators of the Shadow Court receive guidance at this time. Childling Thallain spies consider this possibility to be more thrilling than Christmas. As with many events heavily obscured by the Mists, these visions are quite elaborate and surreal. Use of the Gremayre Background clarifies the meaning of these visits and identifies them for what they are. Receiving an emissary from Arcadia is considered a signal of honor.

The Final Mystery

It's not really a party until someone gets broken.

—attributed to a writer residing in Seattle

As the first rays of dawn appear, the Mists are at their strongest. Save for the Instigators and their ritualists, none remember what they have seen. Those who vaguely remember often have brief glimpses, often obscured as visions or allegorical metaphors. Some seek out the Gremayre for truth, but portents are hard to find. (Characters will only be able to deduce the truth from clues they find on themselves, even if players remember the evening quite well.)

The Instigators remember, though, and they carry out their foul plans in the months that follow until Samhain returns. Save for the mysterious blood-stains that the Unseelie boggans love to clean up, the scrap metal that goes to the goblins, the odd sores and telltale bleeding shamefully hidden by Seelie guests, and the complete absence of any ceremonial victims left over, the ritual of Samhain remains as a nightmare hidden in the depths of the subconscious... for another year, at least.



Chapter Eight: Notorious (and not so notorious) Kithain

Gallery of Notorious Kithain

*You have had all that money can give you,
But that wasn't enough.*

*You became a thrillseeker... thrillseeker... thrillseeker...
Kill for a thrill.*

— sampled by Ministry in "Assassin"

Yrtalien of House Ailil (The Forsworn Prince)

Until the Shattering forced his departure — along with the other sidhe — from the mortal world, Yrtalien ap Ailil was just another dissolute son of an Unseelie house. Granted, he claimed descent from Ailil himself, through one of the house founder's many sisters, but blood alone did not distinguish him from any of the other members of his line. In Arcadia, however, Yrtalien soon found himself the ringleader of a group of young sidhe lords and ladies, sons and daughters of royal blood who balked at the stultifying courtliness and stagnation that surrounded them. As the eldest son of House Ailil's ruling queen, Yrtalien stepped naturally into the position of spokesman for a growing portion of the Arcadian fae. At first, he argued with the rulers, trying to convince them that Arcadia could not remain shut away from the mortal world. When his words were met with contempt, he and his followers precipitated a series of incidents, intended

to shock the older fae out of their complacency. When that, too, failed, Yrtalien renounced his loyalties to his elders and declared war on the rulers of Arcadia.

Although his armies, composed of some of the realm's strongest and boldest warriors, battled fiercely and bravely, they could not stand against the united forces of the ruling houses. Many of Yrtalien's companions surrendered or were captured. Finally, Yrtalien and a handful of trusted comrades made a glorious final stand. As a last resort, the prince of House Ailil attempted to force open a doorway into the mortal world, hoping to unleash a tide of Banality into Arcadia, so that it would be forced to reunite with the mortal world to recoup what Glamour it could.

He was taken before he could effect his scheme and brought before the rulers of Arcadia for trial and punishment. The other rebels, too, were tried and sentenced to exile in the mortal world. Yrtalien's punishment, however, because of the enormity of his crime, was unique. Declared "forsworn" by the kings and queens of Arcadia, he was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment in a halfway realm constructed of Glamour, and placed between the Dreaming and the mortal world. From that solitary prison, he could dimly perceive the goings-on in both worlds, but could interact with neither of them.

Years passed. How many, he could not say, for time meant nothing in a realm of timelessness. He found that he could gather Glamour from his own suffering, achieving epiphanies from his misery. Little by little, his power grew until he was at



last able to make contact with a sorceress of House Eiluned in the Kingdom of Pacifica. Eventually, he was able to effect his escape from his prison and entered the mortal world, where he could begin anew to seek a way to forcibly unite Arcadia with the world of humanity. Unfortunately, his isolation in a Glamour-drenched environment drove him over the edge of sanity, transforming a once shrewd and eloquent rebel into a maniacal tyrant wracked by the throes of Bedlam.

Etienne duBois (The Face of Terror)

Born to a Parisian cobbler in 1771, Etienne duBois grew up during a time when anger toward the French aristocracy's high-handed arrogance and ignorance of the state of the



lower classes was escalating. Only slightly better off than the beggars and the common laborers, Etienne's family worked hard just to survive. Etienne underwent his Chrysalis in the summer of 1789, amid the uproar that accompanied the storming of the Bastille.

A nearby motley of Unseelie trolls, redcaps and nockers, already in the process of sating themselves on the creative anarchy that surrounded them, felt the surge of Glamour that encapsulated Etienne and rushed to his side. They found the fledgling redcap in the throes of his transformation, beset by a group of soldiers who were venting their outrage at the mob on an apparently helpless target. By the time they were able to rescue Etienne, the new changeling's face was a bloody, pulpy ruin that even healing Glamour could not completely repair. From that day forward, Etienne became an avid supporter of the cause of revolution, finding his thirst for blood and savagery more than satisfied in the social upheaval that marked the French Revolution and the subsequent Reign of Terror.

In 1792, Paris saw its first guillotine. Etienne was enchanted with the instrument and quickly insinuated himself into the ranks of executioners. Calling himself "*Le Visage du Peur*" (The Face of Terror), the redcap delighted in doffing his executioner's hood long enough to allow his victims a quick glance at his scarred and mangled face, his private revenge for what he suffered during his Chrysalis. He took special delight in the execution of those aristocrats exposed by his kenning as Kithain. To them, he would announce that his guillotine's blade was tipped with cold iron. This was not true, but Etienne reveled in the look of sheer despair on the faces of these doomed fae.

Like so many others during those bloody and fickle days that marked the Reign of Terror, Etienne eventually found himself accused of treason and slated for execution. He and the few remaining members of his motley fled Paris for the French countryside, where they established a dubious reputation as highway robbers. Stories of the foul deeds perpetrated by a band of outlaws led by The Face of Terror soon made their way into popular folklore.

Etienne's death has never been documented, although rumors abound that he met a fate both vicious and bloody. Many Unseelie commoners—redcaps in particular—regard him as a folk antihero. In areas of the world that are wracked by civil disorder and public rioting, there are always rumors among the fae that The Face of Terror has been reborn.

Tyria Winter

Unlike most of the members of House Leunhaun, who emerged from the Dreaming in Ireland in 1969 and chose to remain in Hibernia, Lady Tyria felt the siren call of the Summer of Love and made her way to San Francisco. Her own musical talent and her affinity for musicians quickly drew her into the midst of the rock and roll revolution that was transforming the sound of popular music. Calling herself

Tyria Winter, she became the female singer of a psychedelic band called Winter Solstice. To avoid having to interact with the sidshe of San Francisco, she passed herself off as a member of House Liam, claiming to eschew her nobility in favor of associating with the commoner Kithain. Upon the few occasions where Winter Solstice shared a stage with Aeon, the band led by the Fief of Goldengate's Duke Aeon, she managed to minimize contact with the Seelie duke.

Winter Solstice might have attained national prominence had it not been for the bad luck that seemed inextricably to strike its most talented musicians. Within a year of its inception, the band's lead guitar player, Johnny Light, suffered a nervous breakdown and left to join a religious cult. His replacement, Darren Gilmore, died within six months from a drug overdose, just after producing a trio of the band's best songs. The dynamic guitar virtuoso, Malcolm Frawley, who became Tyria's lover, lasted just over a year. Many of the band's followers noted that Tyria's incessant worry over Malcolm's health took its toll on her, for she aged visibly during the time she and Malcolm were together. His untimely death at 21 from a massive coronary surprised no one who was familiar with the freewheeling lifestyle of the band. Strangely enough, Tyria seemed to recover her youthful vigor and beauty after Malcolm's death.

Eventually, Tyria's best efforts to bring talented musicians into her band began to fail as rumors spread that members of Winter Solstice dabbled in black magic and that the band itself was under the influence of a curse. Tyria moved the band to Los Angeles, where she has found a new cache of talent to prolong her youth. Except for Tyria, all the original members of Winter Solstice are now deceased. Having learned her lesson the first time, Tyria now makes her way through the most talented and stage-shy session musicians in the city.



Edna Bayler (Edana of House Balor)

Revolutions need money, and since her return to the mortal world, Edana of House Balor has made it her job to find the necessary capital to support armed insurrection in Northern Ireland and a half-dozen other countries. Edana chose well when she selected a mortal body to house her faerie nature. As the heiress of a prominent Anglo-Irish family from County Derry, she enjoys the luxuries of the privileged class while secretly siphoning off portions of the family wealth to purchase munitions, weapons, explosives and other supplies for her current favorite terrorist groups. In addition, her talent for fundraising (both in Europe and America) has benefited the Shadow Court as well, allowing its members to stockpile their own caches of specially made iron weapons.

A dark-haired beauty with a natural eloquence that enables her to charm others into giving her money and promising favors, she has become one of the Shadow Court's chief recruiters and apologists. Those Kithain to whom she speaks find themselves longing for the freedoms and camaraderie she promises as members of the Shadow Court. Some have embraced their Unseelie natures simply to be allowed to remain in her vicinity. Such is her charisma that many believe she is in love with them, too — even in the face of proof to the contrary.

Clad in long skirts, peasant blouses and colorful shawls, she embodies the picture of Irish beauty. The skirts also conceal the deformity that is part of her birthright as a member of House Balor — a twisted ankle and foot. Wearing a special boot, she manages to move gracefully despite the slight limp she cannot hide and the slowness of her progress.

The Littlest Beastie

Quote: *Monsters aren't scary at all, unless it's dinnertime. Do you want to join us for dinner?*

Prelude: Mommy told you there's no such thing as monsters. Why didn't she believe you? It's such a shame that you had to introduce her to the Thing under your bed. And why did she have to go into your closet when your new group of friends were so hungry?

Concept: Your best friends when you were little lived in your television set. The coolest of them were the monsters. Daddy wasn't really a monster, not like Mommy said he was, but when he took his bottles of whisky somewhere else, Mommy was too sad to play with you. She kept you in your room and never let you be free.

Now you're big. You're five, and in your new home, you know how to take care of yourself. The nice troll who runs your freehold gives you all the spaghetti and Oreos you want, and when all the other children are away, you get to play with the rest of the monsters. You never have to keep your fur combed or wash your claws, and you get to say and do anything you want, as long as the grumps don't catch you at it.

Roleplaying Hints: Playtime never ends. You're a wild animal, indulging in whatever you want and doing whatever you please. If this helps out your clique, though, they'll keep you around for when the fun really starts. You're innocent, but amoral. In short, you're free.

Ravaging Threshold: Destroy Illusions

Equipment: Scary children's books, a backpack, a fuzzy puppet and half a bag of cookies.



The Shadow Court

Changing: The Dreaming™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Court: *Unseelie (Shadow Court)*
Legacies: *Rogue/Savage*
Political Impulse:

Seeming: *Childling*
Kith: *Thallain/Beastie*
Motley/Society:

Attributes

Physical

Strength ●●●●●
Dexterity ●●●●●
Stamina *Excitable* ●●●●●

Social

Charisma *Wicked* ●●●●●
Manipulation ●●●●●
Appearance ●●●●●

Mental

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

Abilities

Talents

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

Skills

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

Knowledges

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

Advantages

Backgrounds

Chimera ●●●●●
Gremayre ●●●●●
Prestige ●●●●●
○○○○○
○○○○○

Arts

Deceit ●●●●●
Chicanery ●●●●●
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○

Realms

Actor ●●●●●
Nature ●●●●●
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○

Other Traits

Glamour

●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●○○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□

Banality

●○○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□

Health

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

Experience

Goblin Arsonist

Quote: *You want to know why I do this? Look into the flames, and you'll find all the answers you want.*

Prelude: No one listened to you when you were growing up. The world around you seemed wrong, but there was nothing you could do to change it. Whenever you tried to put your thoughts into words, you could never really express how you felt. Now at least you can find a way to make people listen, even if they don't know it's you.

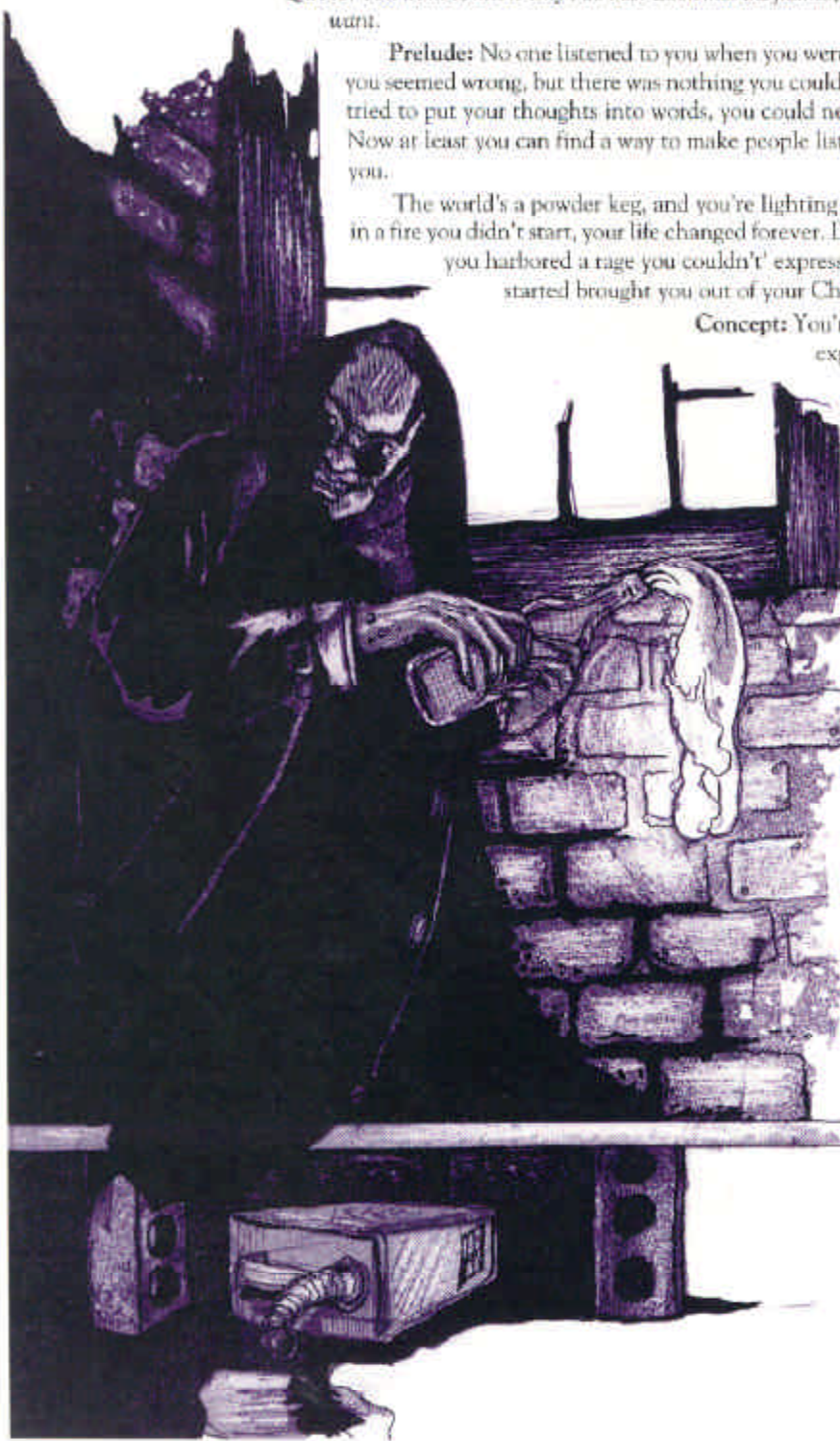
The world's a powder keg, and you're lighting the fuse. After your family died in a fire you didn't start, your life changed forever. Drifting from one job to another, you harbored a rage you couldn't express, but the first conflagration you started brought you out of your Chrysalis.

Concept: You're an artist with flame. You're an expert at kitchen chemistry, and the devices you construct impress the detectives who are trying to track you down. That little blaze you propelled into the police station didn't dissuade them, but now that you've moved to another state, you've bought yourself a little more time. The freehold that protects you is helping you by keeping you steadily employed. Your clique has a message to spread. The world has to wake up, and you're the wake-up call.

Roleplaying Hints: Fidget occasionally when no one is listening to you. Whisper to yourself until you absolutely have to speak, and then burst out with ideas and emotions. Your life is the same way. It's nice and quiet when you need to be silent, but when your creations speak, everyone listens.

Ravaging Threshold: Create Anger

Equipment: Trench coat, chemicals of choice, lead pipe, sunglasses, your favorite lighter and really fast tennis shoes.



The Shadow Court™

Changing: The Dreaming™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Court: *Unseelie (Shadow Court)*
Legacies: *'Bogle/Fiend*
Political Impulse:

Seeming: *Grump*
Kith: *Thallain Goblin*
Motley/Society:

Attributes

Physical	Social	Mental
Strength ●●●●●	Charisma ●●●●●	Perception ●●●●●
Dexterity ●●●●●	Manipulation <i>Innocent</i> ●●●●●	Intelligence ●●●●●
Stamina ●●●●●	Appearance ●●●●●	Wits <i>Exploitative</i> ●●●●●

Abilities

Talents	Skills	Knowledges
Alertness ●●●●●	Crafts <i>Fiend</i> ●●●●●	Computer 00000
Athletics ●●●●●	Drive 00000	Enigmas 00000
Brawl 00000	Etiquette 00000	Investigation 00000
Dodge ●●●●●	Firearms ●●●●●	Law 00000
Empathy 00000	Leadership 00000	Linguistics 00000
Expression 00000	Melee ●●●●●	Medicine ●●●●●
Intimidation 00000	Performance 00000	Mythlore 00000
Kenning 00000	Security ●●●●●	Occult 00000
Streetwise ●●●●●	Stealth ●●●●●	Politics 00000
Subterfuge ●●●●●	Survival 00000	Science <i>Fiend</i> ●●●●●

Advantages

Backgrounds	Arts	Realms
Contacts ●●●●●	<i>Delusion</i> ●●●●●	<i>Actor</i> ●●●●●
Dreamers ●●●●●	00000	<i>Trop</i> ●●●●●
Prestige ●●●●●	00000	00000
00000	00000	00000
00000	00000	00000

Other Traits

Glamour

●●●●●○○○○○○○○

□□□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○○

□□□□□□□□□□

Banality

●●●●●○○○○○○

□□□□□□□□□□

Health

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

Experience

Eshu Revolutionary

Quote: Excuse me, ma'am, are you a registered voter?

Prelude: Why has the Man always been down on you? Maybe your politics are a little extreme, but your only crime is drifting into political groups that need your help. You inspire them, and then some "incident" tears it all apart. It's like the last 10 years have been one long dream. Now that you've changed, the Dream has become real, and the game is played for higher stakes.

Concept: You've spent too many nights sleeping in the back of your car, crunching through books on political theory, and arguing in coffeehouses. If it wasn't for your knack with people, you'd have crashed and burned a long time ago. As long as you don't argue politics with the people who offer you food and work, you'll get by somehow. If you don't, you're going to have to work some "joe job" until you can get back on your feet.

Once you've settled in, you adjust your political theory to get in with one of the local fringe groups. Since you're very eloquent, you eventually manage to recruit them to your way of thinking: A little Glamour and a few Dark Arts help with this. By the time you're finished, you'll have a group of mortals willing to fight for you, and if they burn out in the process, you can always move on to the next town.

Roleplaying Hints: First, establish who can protect you for the next few weeks. You've got to focus on your relations with your clique first, and the mortals who are going to help you further your goals will follow.

Ravaging Threshold: Break Trust

Equipment: A 10-year-old car, half a tank of gas, a trunk full of bumper stickers, T-shirts and pamphlets, and a road map.



The Shadow Court

Changeling: The Dreaming™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Court: *Unseelie (Shadow Court)* Seeming: *Grump*
Legacies: *Schismatic/ Wayfarer* Kith: *Eshu*
Political Impulse: Motley/Society:

Attributes

Physical	Social	Mental
Strength ●●○○○	Charisma ●●○○○	Perception <i>Tinsightful</i> ●●●○○
Dexterity ●●○○○	Manipulation <i>Engaging</i> ●●●○○	Intelligence ●●●○○
Stamina ●●○○○	Appearance ●●○○○	Wits ●●●○○

Abilities

Talents	Skills	Knowledges
Alertness ●○○○○	Crafts ○○○○○	Computer ○○○○○
Athletics ○○○○○	Drive ○○○○○	Enigmas ●●○○○
Brawl ○○○○○	Etiquette ○○○○○	Investigation ●●○○○
Dodge ●○○○○	Firearms ●○○○○	Law ●○○○○
Empathy ●●○○○	Leadership ○○○○○	Linguistics ○○○○○
Expression ●●○○○	Melee ○○○○○	Medicine ○○○○○
Intimidation ○○○○○	Performance ○○○○○	Mythlore ○○○○○
Kenning ●●○○○	Security ○○○○○	Occult ○○○○○
Streetwise ●○○○○	Stealth ●●○○○	Politics <i>Fringe</i> ●●●○○
Subterfuge ●●●○○	Survival ●●○○○	Science ○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds	Arts	Realms
<i>Dreamers</i> ●●●○○	<i>Contempt</i> ●●●○○	<i>Actor</i> ●●●○○
<i>Prestige</i> ●○○○○	○○○○○	<i>Scene</i> ●●○○○
<i>Resources</i> ●○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○
○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○
○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○

Other Traits

Glamour

●●●○○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□

Banality

●●●●●○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□

Health

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

Experience

Machiavellian Manipulator

Quote: *There are no absolutes in politics, love or war — only sides. I can show you how to be on the winning side.*

Prelude: You suspect you were exiled from Arcadia for “political” reasons. Not surprisingly, you have spent most of your time in the mortal world insinuating your way into the halls of power — or as close to them as you can get. You hold memberships in the Shadow Court, the Beltaine Blade, and a half-dozen mortal and changeling organizations dedicated to various kinds of one-upsmanship. It doesn’t hurt that your sidhe beauty attracts all the wrong kinds of attention from those who are begging to be used.

Concept: As a member of House Ailil, manipulating people is in your blood. Your role in the Pageant dictates that you undermine the preconceived notions of loyalty, honor and trust. Entrenched attitudes and blind adherence to ideals are anathema to you, and you seek to open the eyes of all around you to the true nature of the world — your idea of the truth, at any rate. You show a different face to each, reveling in their ignorance of your true goals. When they finally tumble to your deceptions, the revelation is all the sweeter for their former trust in you.

Both mortals and changelings are your pawns, and you enjoy moving them about from cause to cause without ever giving away your true allegiances. You derive satisfaction — not to mention Glamour — from running the show from the shadows, then eventually unveiling the web of lies, broken promises and dirty dealings you have made them a part of. Vampires would cry blood tears to have your manipulative touch.

Roleplaying Hints: There are a lot of chumps in the world and you can spot them a mile away. You always get closer, though. It’s so much easier to use someone who trusts you. Set them up and watch them fall. The name of the game is to come out on top any way you can — and forget the losers trampled underfoot. Pick them up and dust them off a few times before abandoning them, though — just so they’ll think you really care.

Ravaging Threshold: Destroying Illusions

Equipment: Copy of *The Prince*, cellular phone, stock reports, compromising photos of several prominent movers and shakers



The Shadow Court

Changeling: The Dreaming™

Name:

Court: *Unseelie (Shadow Court)*

House: *Ailil*

Legacies: *Riddler/Courtier*

Romantic Legacies: *Climber/Jongleur*

Political Impulse: *Reformist*

Seeming: *Wilden*

Kith: *Sidhe*

Motley/Society: *Several*

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

Gremayne ●●●●●
Political Connections ●●●●●
Prestige ●●●●●
Resources ●●●●●
●●●●●

Arts

Contempt ●●●●●
Delusion ●●●●●
Sovereign ●●●●●
●●●●●
●●●●●

Realms

Actor ●●●●●
Face ●●●●●
Scene ●●●●●
●●●●●
●●●●●

Other Traits

Intrigue ●●●●●
Disguise ●●●●●
Bureaucracy ●●●●●
Psychology ●●●●●

Glamour

●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□

Banality

●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□

Health

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

Experience

Satyr Edge-Dancer

Quote: *Light the fires! Let us dance to the end of all things and the coming of Endless Winter.*

Prelude: You were always drawn to the arts and to those who created lovely items, danced gloriously and sang rapturously. Too drawn. Some called you an arts groupie; you just wanted to show your appreciation in the most intimate way you knew how. After your Chrysalis, when you became a satyr for the first time, you understood why.

Then something went wrong. You began feeling under the weather. Many times you would awaken with no memory of your true self. No one knew what it was called at first; by the time it was given a name, it had progressed too far for any sort of healing to help you. In bitterness, you dance to the end of yourself and all that you hold dear. If it is all to end, you don't care about preserving yourself as long as possible or what happens to the world around you. Experience everything you can. You don't have much time left. Sure, you'll be reborn, but who cares? That will be some other time, some other you. Let the dark revels begin! Welcome to the Unseelie side of your nature.

Concepts: You take risks, always pushing the envelope. You don't care what others think of you and you'll say whatever comes into your head regardless of who it offends. What the hell? What can they do to you, kill you? You're dying anyway. Why not go out in style?

Roleplaying Hints: Be the first one into any new situation. Have utter disregard for the proprieties. Court danger. Insist on experiencing new things—especially if they might kill you.

Eat fugu fish; drink belladonna. Dance out on the ledges of skyscrapers. Hunt werewolves armed only with your silver tea service....

Leaving Threshold: Courting Death

Equipment: Usually none. You prefer to pick up stuff along the way as you need it. Things are more exciting that way.



The Shadow Court™

Changing: The Dreaming™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Court: *'Unseelie (Shadow) Court'*
Legacies: *'Fool/Troubadour'*
Political Impulse: *Anarchist*

Seeming: *'Wild'*
Kith: *Satyr*
Motley/Society:

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

Chimera ●●●●●
Dreamers ●●●●●
Gremayre ●●●●●
Resources ●●●●●
●●●●●

Arts

Chicanery ●●●●●
Contempt ●●●●●
Soothsaying ●●●●●
●●●●●
●●●●●

Realms

Actor ●●●●●
Fae ●●●●●
Trop ●●●●●
●●●●●
●●●●●

Other Traits

Seduction ●●●●●
Art ●●●●●
Philosophy ●●●●●
Theatre ●●●●●

Glamour

●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□

Banality

●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□

Health

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

Experience

Sluagh Childling Assassin

Quote: ...And his head went smush! Just like that.

Prelude: Saturday morning cartoons, video games, comics and ninjas. You loved them all — as long as you could turn down the sound and watch the cool stuff scroll by. You decided early on that killing the "bad guys" was fun. Bad guys are anyone who is on the "other side," mostly those stuck-up Seelie. Your Chrysalis came early, and you found your calling: the silenced bullet in the dark, the unseen wire stretched across the next to the top stair. For a nine-year-old, you're doing pretty well. Three kills this year already!

Concept: You are a member of the Children's Crusade, recruited just after your Chrysalis by older members of the society because of your lightning reflexes, delight in "scoring high," and utter lack of conscience about your actions. To you, killing is just a game — like all the other games you are so good at. For all you know, after you leave the scene, your victims just get up, dust themselves off, and pull themselves together, while someone pushes the Reset button.

Roleplaying Hints: Point your finger at people and mouth the word "bang" (quietly). Sneak up behind people and follow them around like a shadow until they notice you — then whisper "Gotcha!" Get close to people and give them hugs (very tightly around the neck). You're always practicing. Someday you'll have the highest score of all!

Reaving Threshold: none

Equipment: Bag of gummy worms, slingshot and iron pellets (kept in a bag), pocket Nintendo (TM), silenced pistol that looks like a squirt gun



The Shadow Court

Changeling: The Dreaming™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Court: *'Unseelie (Shadow Court)'*
Legacies: *'Peacock/Wayfarer'*
Political Impulse:

Seeming: *Childling*
Kith: *Slough*
Motley/Society: *Children's Crusade*

Attributes

Physical

Strength ●●●●●●
Dexterity *Lightning Reflexes* ●●●●●●
Stamina ●●●●●●

Social

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

Mental

Perception ●●●●●●
Intelligence ●●●●●●
Wits *Combat Nerves* ●●●●●●

Abilities

Talents

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

Skills

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

Knowledges

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

Advantages

Backgrounds

Chimera ●●●●●●
Gremayne ●●●●●●
Mentor ●●●●●●
Treasures *(ever-renewing bubble gum)* ●●●●●●
●●●●●●

Arts

Delusion ●●●●●●
Legerdemain ●●●●●●
Wayfare ●●●●●●
●●●●●●
●●●●●●

Realms

Fae ●●●●●●
Prop ●●●●●●
Scene ●●●●●●
●●●●●●
●●●●●●

Other Traits

Search ●●●●●●
Disguise ●●●●●●
Sewer Lore ●●●●●●
Technology ●●●●●●

Glamour

●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□

Banality

●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□

Health

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

Experience

The Shadow Court™

Changeling: The Dreaming™

Name:
Court:
Chronicle:

Legacies:
Romantic Legacies:
Title:

Seeming:
Kith:
House/Motley:

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●○○○○	Charisma	●○○○○	Perception	●○○○○
Dexterity	●○○○○	Manipulation	●○○○○	Intelligence	●○○○○
Stamina	●○○○○	Appearance	●○○○○	Wits	●○○○○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	○○○○○	Crafts	○○○○○	Computer	○○○○○
Athletics	○○○○○	Drive	○○○○○	Enigmas	○○○○○
Brawl	○○○○○	Etiquette	○○○○○	Investigation	○○○○○
Dodge	○○○○○	Firearms	○○○○○	Law	○○○○○
Empathy	○○○○○	Leadership	○○○○○	Linguistics	○○○○○
Expression	○○○○○	Melee	○○○○○	Medicine	○○○○○
Intimidation	○○○○○	Performance	○○○○○	Mythlore	○○○○○
Kenning	○○○○○	Security	○○○○○	Occult	○○○○○
Streetwise	○○○○○	Stealth	○○○○○	Politics	○○○○○
Subterfuge	○○○○○	Survival	○○○○○	Science	○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds	Arts	Realms
○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○
○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○
○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○
○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○
○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○

Other Traits

Glamour

○○○○○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Willpower

○○○○○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Banality

○○○○○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Health

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

Ravaging Threshold

The Shadow Court

Household: _____ Political Impulse: _____
 Leige Lord: _____ Sam Day: _____

Merits & Flaws

Merit	Type	Cost	Flaw	Type	Bonus

Experience

Total: _____ Total Spent: _____
 Gained From: _____ Spent On: _____

Birthrights/Boons

Frailties/Flaws

Combat

Weapon	Difficulty	Damage	Conceal	Range	Rate	Clip

Brawling Chart			
Maneuver	Roll/Difficulty	Damage	Actions
Body Slam	Dex + Brawl/7	Special	1
Grapple	Dex + Brawl/6	Strength	1
Kick	Dex + Brawl/7	Strength + 1	1
Punch	Dex + Brawl/6	Strength	1

Armor

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

The Shadow Court™

_____ Vassals _____

_____ Holdings _____

_____ Dreamers _____

_____ Mentor _____

_____ Possessions _____

Gear (Carried)

Treasures

_____ Oaths Broken _____

_____ Oaths Sworn _____

_____ Contacts _____

_____ Retinue _____

Chimerical Items

Chimerical Companions

_____ Freeholds _____

Location

Description

Location	Description
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

The Shadow Court

History

Prologue

Date Ennobled: _____ Secret Societies: _____
Cliques: _____

Appearance

Chronological Age: _____ Mortal: _____
Apparent Age: _____
Date of Birth: _____
Chronological Age: _____
Hair: _____
Eyes: _____ Face: _____
Race: _____
Nationality: _____
Height: _____
Weight: _____

Visuals

Oath Bonds Chart

Character Sketch

The Shadow Court™

The Secrets of Winter

Tear aside the veil and learn the sinister secrets of the Shadow Court. Discover their dark rites and forbidden Arts. But beware — the Unseelie do not take kindly to those who pry into their affairs.

The Shadow Court is a complete guide to the Unseelie for both players and Storytellers. This book offers a wealth of information — from playing Unseelie characters to running Unseelie chronicles. It offers everything from new Arts, kith and noble houses to secret societies, Unseelie festivals and customs.



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ISBN 1-56504-710-9
WW 7005 \$18.00



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Printed in Canada