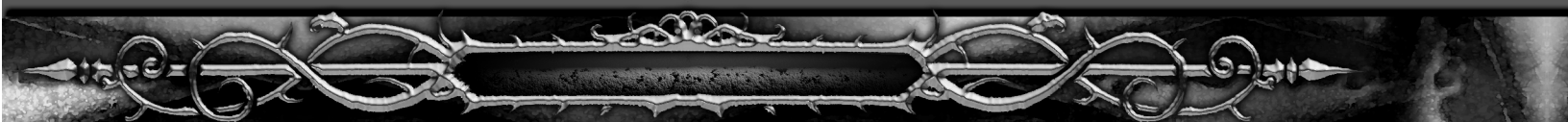
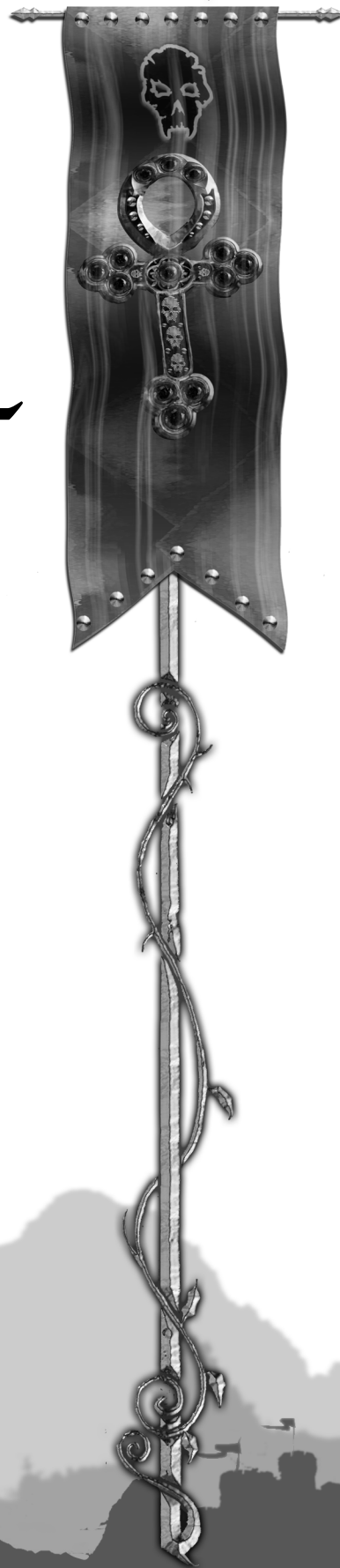




DARK AGES: BRITISH ISLES – CASUALTIES



Books tend to run over word count, because authors tend to run over their word count. Sometimes, the developer is conscientious enough to catch that overage before it goes to layout. Other times, we have situations like this. **Dark Ages: British Isles** ran quite a lot of pages over count, forcing me to go back and cut some stuff last minute. I didn't like the idea of just letting that material vanish into the ether, however, so we're making it available here.



From Chapter One

This section is from the vampiric history section, and while interesting, wasn't essential to the chapter. The Dagda and the Morrigan are both mentioned in Chapter Three, and I think gives enough context not to be confusing to the reader.

Ireland

I must mention the westernmost of the British Isles. Five centuries before the birth of Christ, a vampire who named himself the Dagda came to Ireland. He found a country torn by strife and warfare, but fought over by a strong vigorous people — they made good hunting. The Dagda claimed the island for himself. He did not Embrace childer. What few other vampires had come to the island submitted to him, or met Final Death. The Dagda was of the Clan of Kingship; some say he was a child of Mithras.

Two centuries before Christ, a female Brujah (remembered as the Morrigan) came to Ireland, fleeing a war in her native Greece. She was a powerful witch, apparently skilled in blood magic and in the powers of her Brujah blood. She and the Dagda fought, but neither could best the other. For a time, they involved other vampires in their battles, inviting vampires in Britain and on the Continent to aid in their battles. Eventually, however, both realized the pointlessness of the struggle. They sealed an alliance, loosely dividing their hunting grounds into the north and south of the island. Twice a year they came together to talk and to settle any disputes. Otherwise, they ignored each other and Ireland's other supernatural denizens. Surely there must have been an occasional conflict between the two of them, or between either of them and the barbaric Lupines of Ireland, but we have no record of climactic battles or decisive actions. Perhaps these elders were simply circumspect enough in their acts to avoid serious infractions, or perhaps the records simply do not survive.

In the century before Christ, the druids — the judge-priests of Gaul — came, a few at first, and then more. The Romans had driven these priests from their homeland, and they came seeking shelter. Soon they started seeking something of their old influence as well. The druids displaced the older Irish religions and priests, and introduced new gods and new rites to the people. Some wielded primitive magic, and these druids set about challenging the vampires. These magicians rooted out most of the lesser vampires from their havens. After a pitched battle in the north, they slew the Morrigan. The Dagda was impressed, but had no intention of letting these sorcerers survive to do the same to him. He found the druids as they celebrated and slew most of them, taking three as childer.

As the Dagda aged and slept more, his childer administered his domain. When other vampires sought out new hunting grounds, these "Lords of Connacht" or "Connachta" (so named because they had dwelled in the western part of the island in life) challenged them, and ensured their loyalty. But they never forgot their sire's murder of their fellows. Half a century after Christ's death, the Connachta came upon their sire as he was hunting and slew him. One of them supposedly took his soul as well as his blood, but I have a hard time believing this — why would the other two allow such an obvious shift in power?

The Connachta dominated the nighttime world of Ireland for a millennium. They faced many opponents, among them the witch of Connaught, the Lupines, newcomer vampires and the coming of St. Patrick.


Roman Times in Ireland

The Romans came to Ireland in AD 50 and set up two trading posts in Bray and Arklow. The ports of the eastern coasts of Ireland had long been trading with the mainland and the Continent. Because the Romans never expanded these small settlements, I speculate that they were part of a preparatory mission, designed to open the way for an invasion. But the invasion never happened. It is likely that the resources were not there, and the battles with the Iceni and then Picts and Albans in the coming decades prevented further incursions. Trade likely did continue between Romanized Britain and Ireland, but Ireland never fell under Roman hegemony. The Romans named the country Hibernia, a Romanized version of an older British word for the island.

Like the British mainland, Ireland was a loose patchwork of kingdoms, tribes and conflicts. Had the Romans actually invaded, Ireland would have been absorbed in similar ways.

Despite trade with Romanized Britain and the Continent, Irish politics remained unchanged for centuries. Irish pirates constantly raided western Britain. Piracy provided Ireland with slaves, one of its main exports of the day. Another major export was the Irish wolfhound. Irish traders roamed the European Atlantic seaboard and into the Mediterranean, and perhaps even further east, trading slaves, dogs, gold and whatever else came to hand. The constant warfare among the tribes, clans and sub-kingdoms of Ireland provided a steady stream of slaves to sell abroad. Piracy added to this total, meaning that Ireland probably had a wealthy merchant class in the eastern port cities.

By the coming of St. Patrick in AD 432, Ireland was divided into five major kingdoms, each of them a patchwork of smaller kingdoms. The five major kingdoms —



Meath, Leinster, Ulster, Connaught and Munster — each had a king, or taoiseach, who spoke for the subkingdoms of his province. Beyond these taoiseachs was the elected office of the High King. The High King (Ard-Rí) was the first among equals. His role was supposedly to bring unity among the tribes and provinces, organize armies against hostile external forces and moderate conflicts between kingdoms.

From the second century onwards, Roman missionaries came to Ireland to convert the population. They were not uniformly successful, but by the time St. Patrick came to Ireland, the Irish were at least familiar with Christianity. The real significance of St. Patrick is that he converted the Irish to *Roman Church* rule. In later eras, the peasants prayed to Patrick as the saint who guarded the gates of Purgatory, and as the Patron Saint of Ireland.

From Chapter Two

This section hurt to cut. It's the section on the Channel Islands. There's some very interesting information here, but it was a matter of deciding what was going to be most useful to the reader

The Channel Isles

The Channel Isles lie directly between England and France (where they are known as the Iles de la Manche) and serve as convenient stopping points on voyages between the two. They also serve as a very important staging point for the annual wine convoy traveling between Bordeaux and Southampton. Naturally, given the current state of hostility between the English and French realms — which will shortly become a genuine war — the Channel Isles are disputed territory. Most people on the Isles speak both English and French, with the occasional bit of local patois thrown in. The climate on all the islands is similar to Devon or Cornwall, but winter gales are frequent. The islands are situated in the Bay of St. Malo, off France, with their closest point being eight miles from the Cherbourg peninsula.

One custom of all the Isles is the Clameur de Haro, a Norman right that still applies. Under this custom, a person can obtain instant cessation of any action that he considers to be an infringement of his rights. At the scene, in front of witnesses, he must recite the Lord's Prayer in French and cry out, "Haro, Haro, Haro! A mon aide, mon Prince, on me fait tort!" ("Haro, Haro, Haro! Help me, my Prince, I am being wronged!") All actions must then cease until the local court hears the matter.

The Channel Isles, and in particular Guernsey, were used as trading ports by the Romans. Even then

they were an important transfer point between France and England. The Romans named the main island Sarnia, which later became Guernsey; the "ey" ending is Viking in origin and means "island." The islands enjoyed a fair amount of independence, though technically they were ruled from Lyons in France. Christianity was established in the third and fourth centuries, and St. Sampson later established a church in Guernsey; one of the island's main parishes is named for him.

In the 10th century the Vikings made their mark in France, and Rollo's son William Longsword added the islands to the dukedom of Normandy. After that, the inhabitants were answerable only to the Duke of Normandy. When King John lost the territory of Normandy to Philip II of France, the Channel Islands remained loyal to the English crown. In return for this, King John granted the islands certain rights and privileges in 1215, which enabled them to be virtually self-governing, subject only to royal assent and enactments through the Privy Council. King John also established the Royal Court and appointed a bailiff, assisted by 12 *jurats*, to administer justice.


During the wars between England and France, the Channel Islands changed hands more than once, and a large proportion of the inhabitants died in French raids. The first major offensive by France came in 1214, when a French force led by Eustace the Monk was repulsed by a newly raised and armed force of "the whole manhood of the island."


A rivalry exists between the islands, and the natives have nicknames for each other. Guernseymen call Jersey folk "Crapauds" (toads), and Guernseymen are referred to as donkeys, Alderney men as cows and Sark natives as crows.

Guernsey

Guernsey is the second largest and the westernmost of the Channel Isles, 30 miles from France and 125 miles south of England. The island is approximately nine by five miles wide in a triangular shape, with a pleasant climate and fertile ground. At the southwest tip is Pleinmont point, the highest hill on the island and a reported haunt of witches. The main town on the island is St. Peter Port, on the south coast, which also serves as the island's main port. The most important strategic location in Guernsey is Castle Cornet, which was begun in 1206, and which has an impressive eight towers by 1230. It is on the south coast of the island, facing towards France, isolated on a rocky islet.

Guernsey is divided into 10 parishes, each of which contains at least one church, and directions on the island are often given in terms of the parishes. They are: Vale;





St. Pierre-du-Bois; Castel; Castel, St. Matthews; St. Sampson; St. Saviour; St. Martin; Forest; St. Andrews; and Torteval. Given the number of churches, and the number of rumors of witches (les Gens Vendredi, or the Friday People, as they are often called), one might think that the entire island was a hotbed of holiness and Hell. This isn't the case; most of the inhabitants of Guernsey are ordinary peasants, farmers and fishermen, and have a good command of French and English, as well as Guernesiais, the local patois.

A number of Neolithic sites on Guernsey, menhirs and dolmens (burial chambers built above the ground), survive in remarkably good condition. Such places as the La Varde dolmen, the Hougue de Dehus dolmen, Le Creux es Feies (the Fairy Grotto) and Le Trepied are assumed to be the work of fairies or the haunts of witches. Le Trepied in particular is supposed to be haunted by the cries of women waiting for their lover, the devil Baal Berit or Barberie, and no respectable woman would go near there on Friday nights. At least one Viking longhouse was raised on Guernsey, at Cobo Bay, and parts of it still remain.

Two particular menhirs, carved in the rough shape of women, are referred to as the Gran'meres. One of them stands at the churchyard gate of St. Martin's Church and is regularly offered flowers and fruit by the locals; the other is buried beneath the chancel at Castel Church. For the moment, the local priests seem to pay little heed to these quaint customs, though inquisitors might view them more harshly. Locals also believe that an evil black dog named Tchico roams St. Peter Port by night, haunting Tower Hill (where executions on the island take place), warning of bad news to come.

Lihou is a small island off the west coast at L'Eree, covering just 18 acres; the only buildings present are the Priory of St. Mary's (consecrated in 1114) and a watchtower occasionally used by the local militia. The causeway to the island is only uncovered at low tide, and the rocky coastline makes boating across at other times dangerous.

Jersey

Jersey, named Caesarea by the Romans, was never as important a port as Guernsey, but is the largest of the islands, with a land mass of 45 square miles, and has one of the best climates in the British Isles. Christianized early — St. Helier arrived in Jersey around 550 and was murdered in 556, giving his name to the island's main town — it enjoyed relatively peaceful times until the arrival of the Vikings, who built some of their longhouses in St. Helier during their raids.

The main military fortification on the island is Mont Orgeuil Castle, raised by King John as protection against France, which overlooks the Bay of Grouville from Mont Orgeuil itself. The Bay of Grouville has a gently shelving beach sheltered from the prevailing winds, and is the best landing beach on the island.

Jersey may be a pleasant isle of fishermen and farmers, like Guernsey, but it also bears the traces of past centuries. A huge ancient barrow known as La Hougue Bie is shunned by properly pious inhabitants, as are the strange ancient tombs down by La Cotte de St. Brelade — curious places with huge animal bones as well as human ones, and relics of pottery and jewelry.

Local legend also states that a green glass chalice was brought back from Caesarea in AD 1101, and has since resided in Genoa Cathedral. The legend claims it was the vessel used by Nicodemus to collect the blood of Christ when he took Him from the Cross. Some have also compared it to the green stone that is supposed to have fallen from Lucifer's crown when he was cast down from Heaven. The numerous local churches and priests, however, have little to say about such superstitious beliefs. They also deny the tales of local witches who gather on the east coast to cause shipwrecks and gather the resulting spoils.


As with Guernsey, Jersey is divided into twelve parishes. They are St. Ouen, St. Peter, St. Brelade, St. Mary, St. Lawrence, St. John, Trinity, St. Helier, St. Saviour, St. Martin, Grouville and St. Clement. Each of these parishes has at least one church, and some have several.

Sark

Sark, or Sargia (as the Romans called it) has seen little habitation since Roman times. The island lies some six miles east of Guernsey, and 20 miles from France. It is on a plateau averaging 100 yards above sea level, surrounded by near-vertical cliffs that made colonization difficult, despite fertile land. It is perhaps three miles long by one and a half miles wide, with the smaller part of it, "Little Sark," linked to the main island by a narrow strip of land 112 yards high.

In 565, the missionary St. Magloire was granted half of Sark. He founded a monastery in the northwest of the island (still known as La Moinerie), a watermill above the landing place at Port du Moulin, and a dam and sluice upstream for ponds at L'Ecluse. Astonishingly, these all survived pillaging in the ninth century by Norsemen. Like the other Channel Isles, Sark was part of the Duchy of Normandy.

The island became a pawn in the power games of monks and barons, passed as property between abbeys



and baronies and bishoprics. At the moment it is under French rule, like the other islands. The current population is perhaps 400, and most of the land is populated. Crops include wheat and flax, and popular foods include conger eels (caught and dried) and rabbits. Lacking trees, the inhabitants use bracken, gorse and seaweed for fuel.

Sark is governed by the Seigneur (who takes oath directly to the King) and is divided into 40 free holdings known as tenements, which are held by the families who live there in perpetual tenure from the Seigneur, and may not be bought or sold without his permission. Land is indivisible and passes to the eldest son in its entirety. The Seigneur's permission is required for all marriages on the island, and he is also the only person allowed to keep pigeons, which might have implications for those wanting to send messages by carrier pigeon. (This is termed the *Droit de Colombier*, or the right of pigeon keeping.)

There is little on Sark to interest outsiders, though rumors persist of a seam of silver somewhere on the island. The parish church of St. Mary's (endowed by the De Vernon family) provides religious consolation to the islanders, with a priest to say Mass. On the west coast are some caves that might be worth exploring at low tide, particularly Les Gouiliots, as it is rumored that wreckers conceal their treasures there. Part of St. Magloire's monastery also survives, with at least two of the monks' small chapels still standing.

Alderney

Alderney is the northernmost of the Channel Islands, only eight miles from France. Most of the few hundred inhabitants live in or around the main town of St Anne's, as it is a small island, with an area of barely three square miles. It holds the remains of a Roman fort, *Castrum Longini*, long since built over. The island is comparatively underpopulated due to the huge tidal swells around Braye Harbor; the tide to the south is known as the Race and has been fatal to many ships in the past. Only one church stands on the island; St. Anne's Church, raised on the site of the original chapel built by Saint Guernole, Abbot of Landevennec, who brought the Christian faith to Alderney.

Little else is notable about Alderney, save its fame for its cows. Northwest of Alderney lies a very small island, Burhou, which is only half a mile long and has a single small stone hut on it. Nobody lives there, but it is reportedly haunted by the ghost of a monk who retired there to live in meditation and died in screaming insanity, forswearing his vows and calling upon the Devil.

Herm and Jethou

Herm lies three and a half miles to the east of Guernsey, only two miles long by less than a mile wide. However, it has an excellent natural harbor to the west, which is safe in practically all weathers. Because of the harbor, the island supports a couple of small villages and a church — St. Tugual's, raised in the 10th century. A menhir near the coast acts as a landmark for mariners, warning them when they are near a particularly dangerous group of rocks.

Jethou is a small island immediately to the south of Herm, barely compassing 44 acres; it is believed that a storm in AD 709 washed away the strip of land that connected it to Herm. The first resident was Restauld, a master mariner for Duke Robert of Normandy, who was given the island by Robert when the former became a monk. Later it passed to the Abbey of Mont St. Michel, which makes little current use of it.

From Chapter Three

Two sections here. First, a quick rundown of the High and Low Clans in the Isles. It's good information to have, but again, I didn't think it made or broke the book. And then, we have a quick section on fae, demons and ghosts. This one hurt to cut; it's very cool stuff, but since it's not game information (since **Dark Ages: Fae** isn't out for a few more months), I decided it could get cut.


The High Clans


While the activities of the Ventrue, Toreador and Brujah drive the politics of the Baronies of Avalon, other Cainites of the High Clans make their havens in the British Isles and pursue their own agendas.

Brujah: The Zealots represent a large proportion of the vampires on the Isles, with Brujah barons such as Nathaniel of Carlisle and Eileen of Uilidh wielding vast political power. Zealots also serve among the satraps. Some more scholarly Brujah have taken to haunting the universities at Cambridge and Oxford; the most notable of these is the scholar Nicholas, who vociferously urges the current Prince of Oxford to step down and allow a more learned Cainite to guide the city's nights.

Cappadocian: The Graverobbers are few, dwelling primarily under Mithras' protection in the Baronies of Avalon. Mithras' seneschal, Roger de Camden, is of this clan; his loyalty guarantees a degree of safety and protection for other Cappadocians. Alfonse di Padua, the Prince of Oxford, is also a Cappadocian, but unlike many of his clanmates, is more merchant than scholar (to his eternal embarrassment, given the city he claims).

Lasombra: One Lasombra is known to be active in the Baronies of Avalon: Lucius, legate of the Crimson





Curia. Lucius is currently in Lincoln, overseeing the Cainite Heresy's interests as the cathedral there is repaired. He also works with the Toreador Deacon Aelfred, attempting to help his fellow Heretic assume control of the nearby Fief of Norwich. Several Lasombra merchants and seamen travel to the Isles and can be found on occasion in Bristol or Dublin. Few stay; Mithras detests members of this clan.

Toreador: The Toreador are a puissant force, influencing much of the lands beyond Mithras' direct influence, and many operate within the Church in the baronies themselves. The Toreador tend to look to France for guidance and cultural leadership, and many are agents of the French vampiric courts. Important Toreador in the Isles include Baron Robert of Edinburgh; Baron Adrian of Canterbury (a high-ranking member of the Cainite Heresy, he insists upon the title "Archbishop"); the Promethean scholar Brother John of Saint Albans; and, of course, Mithras' rival Melusine d'Anjou, the "Queen" of Winchester.

Tzimisce: The Tzimisce are rare in the British Isles, but there have been constant reports of a coterie of the Fiends visiting the city of Cork to commune with some spirit or power sleeping there. Some of these rumors even suggest that this coterie has slain all the other Cainites of Cork save for its baron, Hector. Hector denies this and says he only knows of two other vampires in Cork.

Ventru: For the Warlords, the British Isles is their second most important base in the War of Princes, after the Holy Roman Empire. They are also the most numerous High Clan in the Isles. Though they plot and intrigue among themselves, all respect the lord of London, Mithras, and pay him homage. Ventru plots and campaigns of violence are awe-inspiring, and Ventru knights and barons of the Isles are held up as paragons for other European Ventru to imitate.

The Low Clans

Because the High Clans dominate the nightly conflicts and intrigues of the Fiefs of Avalon, it sometimes may seem that the Low Clans, especially the Ravnos, Setites and Assamites, are few and irrelevant. This is most untrue. The Low Clans are everywhere.

Assamites: The Children of Haqim are always welcome in the Court of Mithras. He has been an ally of that clan for centuries. Assamites are infrequent visitors to the British Isles, although one small coterie, led by a vizier named Hassan of the Bloody Hand, has made a temporary home in Bristol. These Assamites are guests of Mithras, and in return for his hospitality, work to help suppress the Cainite Heresy in Britain.

Followers of Set: The most prominent single Setite in the Isles is Mariott D'Urban, an erudite scholar, wit


and philosopher whose presence is welcomed throughout the Baronies. While many of the barons fear and despise the Setites (having rarely met one, and having heard only rumors), they make an exception for D'Urban. The worldly and well-traveled lord has charmed even Mithras. D'Urban is unaware of the Black Magdalenes, a sub-sect of the Cainite Heresy that worships Mary Magdalene as a kind of sacred whore. The Magdalenites are currently hiding in the Fief of Chester, spreading their perversity among the citizenry at a snail's pace, lest they attract the attention of Baron Marcus.

Gangrel: The wilds of the British Isles don't boast as many Animals as those of Germany or even France, but a fair number of Gangrel do walk these Isles. Many of the Gangrel here hunt for the Lhiannan, claiming some ancient feud between their clan and the Savages. Not all English Gangrel are Feral wanderers, though. Aethelwulf, Mithras' warlord and one of his staunchest supporters belongs to this clan. For more information on both Aethelwulf and the feud between the Gangrel and the Lhiannan, consult the **Players Guide to Low Clans**.

Malkavians: The Malkavians are numerous and can be found almost everywhere. Some serve as seneschals and advisors to baronial courts. Others haunt the roads, or prey on the weak and infirm. Still more hunt in the cities, lairing in the homes of wealthy merchants. Some are sought out for their strange insights and peculiar perspectives. These "seers" can be found in almost every fief. Peter de Kennet, Seneschal of Exeter, is one of Mithras' satraps. Idris claims domain over Caer Idris in Powys, and is so adept at stealth and subtle use of Dementation that even the local Lupines believe the mountain's strange mental effects to be a quirk of the land.

The most famous Malkavian in Britain is Seren, the Baroness of Gloucester. A capable administrator and a canny politician, she plays the part of the insipid, pathetic Malkavian to all newcomers and allows them to underestimate her. Those who dare show her disrespect during one of her mood swings, or while welcoming a newcomer, can expect serious and immediate punishment. Seren's wrath is a fearsome thing; her punishments are hideous and inventive. Those who know her, however, have learned to respect her immense abilities and competent leadership.

Nosferatu: The Lepers skulk in the streets of London and lurk in the swamps and fens of the Isles. Some work against Prince Mithras (such as the Promethean Ragged Jenny) and others support him (such as his spymaster, Richard de Worde). Still others, such as the strange Nosferatu called Verica, the Ghost of the Stones. She resides in West Kennet and has managed to stay true to her faith as a Christian and true to her purpose (protecting the holy sites of the Fief of Winchester)



despite the fact that several packs of werewolves and several individual Tremere would love to see her head on a platter.

Ravnos: The Ravnos are the first Romany to come to Britain for centuries, and centuries more pass before the first families of itinerant “tinkers” arise in the Irish midlands, but many wander the roads of the British Isles — peddlers, workmen, thieves, entertainers — and the Ravnos travel with them. No one has ever made a census of the Ravnos in the British Isles, but they seem to be very few. These Ravnos are “western” Ravnos, and have little relationship with their distant kin in the Orient. They present themselves as “happy wanderers” but they keep to themselves, and try to stay out of the War of Princes.

Tremere: Perhaps not the most populous of the Low Clans in the British Isles, the Usurpers are certainly the most despised. Mithras makes no secret of his distaste for this clan; he would see Lion’s Gate burn if at all possible. This, of course, makes the fact that his rival Melusine is allied with the Tremere all the more galling.

The Tremere, for their part, have chantries in the County of Clare in Ireland as well as in Durham, and have agents in both Oxford and Cambridge looking for promising recruits (and lurking Hermetic magi). While the *Massasa* War doesn’t rage here with the same intensity as in Eastern Europe, the Usurpers are aware that several Hermetic chantries in the Isles await plundering and assimilation into the clan.

The Others

Beyond the struggles of the High Clans in the courts, and the nightly conflicts of the Low Clans, other vampires hunt in the British Isles. These vampires take little interest in the War of Princes and prefer to be left alone.

Salubri: Matthew of Lindisfarne is the most respected, and possibly the only, Salubri in the Isles. A former warrior turned ascetic, his writings on quieting the Beast and understanding the works of God are much sought after by followers of the Road of Heaven. He is protected from Tremere assassins by two powerful forces. First, Lindisfarne is home to a chapter of the shadow Inquisition; these inquisitors have had no cause to suspect that the saintly elder monk with the soft voice is a Damned thing (for his part, Matthew would sooner meet Final Death than see anything happen to these soldiers of God, and helps them whenever he can). Second, despite his faith, Mithras respects Matthew’s reputation and writings; local Mithraists work to ensure no Tremere assassin reaches Lindisfarne. Indeed, Mithraist followers of the Road of Heaven have adapted some of Matthew’s texts. Matthew has recently sent a missive to London calling on the Privy Council to give

sanctuary to any Salubri who wants it. Reportedly, Roger de Camden is interested in this proposal.

Lamia: A coven of these disease-carrying female vampires operates in London, performing strange rituals in the old parts of the city. Rumor has it that they perform rituals in old buildings constructed on top of ancient plague pits. Mithras’ Cappadocian ally Lord Camden does not acknowledge these Lamia, but he has not made any move to expel them.

Lhiannan: The Gangrel burned the Lhiannan out of most of their old haunts and massacred them in droves. All that is left are the half-dozen Lhiannan in the British Isles. Twice the witch Magda has cried out into the night, calling the survivors to her, and twice has heard nothing (see Chapter Four for more information on Magda).


The Others


Britain’s legends are full of things other than “mere” vampires, sorcerers, or werewolves. Ghosts stalk the night, demons whisper in the ears of those who may be tempted to sin, and the fae throng in the woods and sing on the downs. Of course, some of these legends may be attributed to mages, vampires or werewolves, but some might — and do — have their own explanation.

Ghosts

Ghosts haunt Britain. Any old wife will be glad to share tales of the ancient soldiers who battle on the hill at night, or the green-haired widow who lurks near the pond after drowning herself there, or the evil lord who walks the battlements of his fortress after being cut down by his enemies, or the screaming skulls that appear in the old monastery after sunset. People believe in ghosts... and in the Dark Medieval world, ghosts exist.. The following are some of the more widely carried legends that might have come to the ears of characters, and be considered worthy of investigation. The truth of any of these stories is left in the hands of the Storyteller.

The **Battle of Mount Badon** is recorded by Geoffrey of Monmouth as having taken place in the fifth century, between Britain and Saxon, where Arthur broke the back of the Saxon advance and slew their leaders and a tenth part of their forces. It is said that the ghosts of Arthur and many of his war leaders have returned to this place, the location of their greatest victory. It is also said that rash treasure-hunters or priests have been found there at dawn, with many wounds on their bodies and a look of inconceivable terror on their faces. Certainly, if any know the site of Mount Badon, then it is unwise to go there unless prepared for battle. However, even the learned disagree as to where the legendary battle took





place, with some suggesting it was at the old Solsbury hillfort, near Bath, and others claiming it was at Badbury Rings hillfort (now hidden by thick woodland) in Dorset, or at Liddington Castle (adjacent to the town of Badbury) in Wiltshire.

Lough Gur in Ireland is a vast lake that houses a castle sunk deep beneath, haunted by the ghosts of the sorcerer Gerard Desmond and his young bride. He agreed to reveal certain secrets of dark magic to her, including the mystery of the Black Cat, but on the condition that she uttered no sound. He then showed her such terrible sights that she screamed aloud, upon which the castle caved in on her and her husband, and sank beneath the lake. Every seven years, Gerald Desmond rises from the waters and, riding on a white horse shod with silver, circles the lake three times before returning to its depths. If anyone can catch his rein during that time, Desmond will yield his accursed grimoires to the courageous soul.

In **Cornwall**, the ghosts of wreckers who died during storms while looting ships that they had lured onto the rocks can still be seen on stormy nights, bearing torches and hunting for the treasure they hid in the local caves. It is said that anyone who can follow them down through their caves before the tide comes in may claim their treasure, but that a priest must then bless the treasure, or it will turn to salt water in the morning.

At **St. Albans Abbey**, in Hertfordshire, terrified locals have heard ghostly choral singing late at night, and seen the figures of monks processing through the abbey grounds, led by the martyr St. Alban. Of course, no truly Christian man would have grounds to fear such ghosts.

Bramber Castle, near **Steypning** in Sussex, has more than its share of ghosts. The spirits of three children of William de Braose, who were starved to death by King John in the early 1200's after their father angered the king, are consigned to haunt the castle. The other ghosts are Lady Maud de Hurst and her unknown peasant lover. After Sir Hubert de Hurst, her husband, discovered Lady Maud's infidelity in 1210, he murdered her and walled up her lover alive within the walls of the castle. Her ghost wanders the place, rapping on the walls and searching for her lover.

Fae

Legends of the fae are common throughout Britain, but the actual explanations as to what they really are vary wildly. Some claim they are nature spirits, creatures of the woods and wilds, while others say they are angels who refused to choose a side in the battle between God and Lucifer, and who were condemned to remain caught forever between Heaven and Hell. Others again say they are the souls of dead pagans, not good enough for Heaven

or wicked enough for Hell, while some of the more learned believe they are the children of Adam and Lilith.


Any peasant is likely to know the usual ways to ward off local fae. These vary in different parts of the country, and include such things as a horseshoe nailed above the door, a bowl of milk left out by the fire, red thread, rowan twigs, holy names, the sound of church bells and so on. Extreme courtesy is necessary when dealing with the faerie lords (or Sidhe, as some call them) who sometimes ride the roads at night or at midday. Groves of oak, ash and thorn trees are known as faerie groves and should be left alone, and certainly not cut down unless the priest is present to bless the area and make it safe from fae influences. Similarly, rings of mushrooms, also called faerie rings, show where the fae have been dancing, as do the great ancient circles of stone. Anybody who frequents such a place at night does so at his own risk.

Some faerie take changelings, kidnapping a baby and leaving behind a log of wood enchanted to look like a child, or one of their own children, in the empty cradle. Wise parents notice that their baby is not eating or drinking, watches everything going on with eyes too old for his body, and is wasting away in his crib. Various ways exist to force the fae to return a changeling: Known tales include attempting to baptize the child, taking him onto holy ground, carrying him to the faerie court and demanding the return of your own child, or doing something unlikely (such as attempting to cook in an eggshell) and thus causing the changeling to cry out in astonishment and reveal its true nature. Nobody is quite certain why the fae steal children, whether for servants, future spouses, or sacrifices to Hell.

Different fae inhabit different parts of the British Isles. In England, most fae are the sort known as the Little People, who help around the house when suitably propitiated, or creatures such as bogies and goblins, which hide in abandoned mines or lonely places and bring misfortune and death where they may. Faerie lords and ladies such as Oberon and Titania, renowned as the King and Queen of the Fae, are few and far between, and only interact with humans if they need a human midwife or musician, or if the human stumbles on their revelry and dancing.

In Ireland, the fae are generally referred to as the Sidhe, but are also known as the Good Folk, the Blessed Ones, the Little People, the Gentry or the Wee Ones. They often travel abroad, and faeries such as gold-hoarding leprechauns and shape-changing Pwca are known and watched for by all sensible peasants.

In Scotland, the faeries are divided into two broad categories, the Seelie and Unseelie Courts. These two courts travel across the countryside in Rades (or Rides) where they fly across the woods and fields on the wind



like ghosts. The Unseelie Court shelters the blood-drinkers, the devourers of flesh, the redcaps who dye their caps with fresh blood and the warriors armed with elfshot that kills any human whom it touches. They are so terrible to behold that people have died of fright just watching them pass by. The Seelie Court, by contrast, is home to the gentle Faeries who watch over the innocent and leave gifts for the virtuous; small house-guarding brownies and gnomes, and golden-haired lords and ladies.

Welsh Faeries, also known as the Tylwyth Teg, are courtly noblemen and ladies known for their love of horses, and many stories circulate of a traveler who is called aside from the road at night to tend to a priceless stallion or assist a mare with her foal, and who is then paid in gold for his work. Welsh fae are often called the Fair Folk, Night Walkers or Them Who Be, and they always wear green about their person, even when attempting to pass in disguise.

Demons

Demons walk the world. Nobody disputes this. Gargoyles are carved and set on the roofs of cathedrals in order to scare demons away. Lucifer himself may be portrayed as an easily fooled buffoon in half the common folk tales, but in the other half he manages to carry away his victim's soul. Everyone's heard the story about the farmer who remarks carelessly that he'd "sell his soul for a mug of good ale," and ends up finding he has done precisely that.

Some tales of demons are generic; the black cat or toad who is actually an imp in disguise and a witch's familiar, the mysterious dark gentleman who shows up when an honest man has just lost all hope and despaired, the howling mob of demons conveniently exorcised by a helpful saint, or the huntsman whose dogs have eyes of fire and teeth that drip blood. (Some people claim that the latter is actually a creature of faerie and an ancient god, rather than a demon, to which the Church replies that in any case both are damned.) Incubi and succubi bring erotic nightmares with them and lie with innocent men and women, sucking out their souls. Incubi and succubi also make agreeable bed-partners for overweening sorcerers, and may serve them as concubines, body-servants,

pages, scribes or other tasks that will keep them close at hand. Other demons are more singular and exotic.

In Ireland, Cromm Cruach (or Cromm-cruaich, *bloody head*) is still worshipped in some quarters. This demon manifests as a living head of gold, which must be born into the world at ceremonies where he is invoked. The demon's stone image shudders during the invocation, as the blood of infant sacrifices is smeared over him, and grows a caul, which is then torn asunder to reveal the golden form of the demon. The bodies of the children are then buried beneath his shrine. Cromm Cruach offers plentiful corn and milk and prosperity to those who worship him, but expects them to offer up their own children in return. Some worshippers claim that he is merely an aspect of the Dagda, the father-god, but Old Faith mages and Spirit-Talkers deny this vehemently. He is a cruel and vicious demon who roams Ireland at will but may only enter a place if summoned there.

In Lancashire and Yorkshire, it is said that a demon known as Rawhead and Bloody Bones (sometimes shortened to Bloody Bones, or Old Bloody Bones) haunts old marl-pits or deep ponds, seeking to drag children in and drown them. Similar demons elsewhere in the country are Peg Powler (also sometimes called the spirit of the River Tyne) and Nelly Longarms. They are more violent and murderous than corrupting, though some tell stories of them making bargains with evil men or sorcerers, and offering them wealth or power in exchange for children as sacrifices.

According to local legend, the Devil himself rides around Malmesbury once a year, on the anniversary of the third night after an old witch's death. She had made a pact with the Evil One, but confessed on her deathbed to the local monks, who placed her body in a stone coffin with iron bars and said Masses for her soul. Demons came for her soul on the first two nights, and on the third night the Devil himself appeared riding upon a black horse, and in a voice of thunder called to her to rise out of her coffin. Her corpse replied that it was bound down by chains and bars. The Devil thereupon repeated some words, at which the coffin burst asunder. Seizing the witch, he placed her on his horse and rode away to Hell. The witch's grimoires were never found — or, if they were, the monks have not seen fit to discuss the matter.

