
STAWICKI
2007



We all fell out of different mirrors that night. I fell out of a big full-length one in a department store, and I ran when the alarm rang. Scratch stumbled and fell out of a mirror in a hotel, scared some poor dude half to death as he banged his secretary. Blithe dove out through one of those big mirrors over a vanity and wound up under a sheet; the house was empty and all the furniture covered. Topaz, well, his mirror broke as he came out of it, and the cuts on his leg were so deep that he had to go the hospital. And Little Amy pulled herself from a rearview mirror. Or at least, that's what she says. I don't know. She's not *that* little.

We all met up a week later. We were all scared. None of us knew anything, except that we *weren't going back*. We didn't even know where *back* was, we just knew it was bad and we weren't going.

We all came out of mirrors, so we called ourselves the Bad Luck motley. The other folks in the city thought it was pretty weird, us all coming out together, maybe we'd all escaped the same Keeper? And when someone said that, Amy'd start to cry and Blithe got all jumpy and Scratch grabbed my arm and squeezed, so I asked them to let it drop.

Bad luck comes in packages of seven years when you break a mirror, but there were only five of us. When we all noticed the tattoos on our backs, we figured out that the symbols meant numbers and ours were 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7. Two numbers — 1 and 5 — missing. Two of us hadn't come out of the mirrors, or maybe we just hadn't found them.

So here we are standing in front of that big mirror in the empty house. Topaz is looking at the floor, Scratch is fondling his rusty knife, Blithe is trying to calm Little Amy down, but I'm just looking through the mirror into the Thorns. I'm thinking that someone's in there, someone who is still *back*. And I can't walk away from that.

No matter where *back* is, I can't leave somebody there. I know that much.

Chapter 4
Storytelling

Let there be the pasittu-demon among the people,
To snatch the baby from its mother's lap.
— Atrahasis

…A Storytelling Game of Beautiful Madness

That's what the cover says, and it's a devil of a promise to make because it's almost a paradox. How can madness be beautiful? Where's the beauty in the inability to understand the rest of the world? Given the origins of the changelings — snatched as they are from their once-safe beds and dragged into the hoary realm of incomprehensible beings, madness seems inescapable and so much beauty hides a core of sharp ugliness.

Indeed, those fearful beginnings do provide a vibrant backdrop against which to place your **Changeling** chronicles. Imagine an artist's palette, first of all, a color-box from which you, as Storyteller, will "paint" your chronicles: the locales, the characters, the weird quests and dream-remembered promises. Don't consider the actual colors yet, though. Instead think about the *properties* of those colors. Imagine the bleak, painterly neutrals of the Hedge and the sharp, dry-brush edges of the thorns. Imagine the oversaturated, high-contrast variety of colors present at an august Court function. Imagine the textured patinas of a lost artifact unearthed, an untarnished metallic luster yielding into verdigris or perhaps the luminous nacre of a pearl plucked from between a dead man's chalky fingers.

That's just one aspect of **Changeling**'s visual representation. Beauty can come from the strangest places, or things that don't normally suggest beauty can in fact become beautiful in their function. Consider the savage beauty of a shark or lion, for example, and recall the "terrible" beauty of the witch-queen Jadis from *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Think about the beauty of loss — a virtuoso composition of a dirge, a masterfully painted memorial of a hero long gone, the turning of the leaves in autumn before the dead season. Recall a significant break-up: It was hell to go through, but aren't you glad she's gone now?

There are even words built into the English language that communicate the seemingly incompatible. You can combine your own choice words to create such suggestively impossible concepts: "The gentlest fear." "Forbidden pleasure." "A frisson of joy." "Comforting sadness." The melancholy promise of a rainy day. The smell of November. All of these are appropriate to **Changeling**.

The other portion of the formula, the madness of **Changeling**, is a gestalt of the very word's connotations and denotations. In a textbook sense, madness is an inability to understand relationships between cause and effect. In a conversational sense, it's a simple unsoundness of mind.

We even like to season the madness of **Changeling** with a certain Victorian fear and awe. In this sense, the mind and body are two separate, unrelated systems. Further along these lines, not only is madness the utterly alien perception and response suffered by the insane, but attempts to even understand of ameliorate madness are themselves potentially doomed to failure by madness — almost as if the "otherness" of one afflicted by madness were itself contagious.

A significant part of the madness of **Changeling**, however, is also a degree of wonder. This Storytelling game places its attentions on the strange whims and urges that make the witch in the forest glade want to eat children, or the host of the fancy ball who neglects to provide food or drink for his guests but maintains an enchanting orchestra to keep those guests waltzing until the moment before dawn. This game plays to the worries of the man who believes his basement is where "the bat-faced screamer" lives, the sleepless self-doubt of the girl who saw fey shadows dancing outside her window when no one was there, and the obsessions of the man who sets out a bowl of sour milk and a heel of bread and wears his clothes inside out.

Changeling is a different experience from most "fairy tales," though, in that the protagonists are more than hapless mortals. They're closely connected to Faerie themselves. The players' characters are those abducted to Faerie and returned from beyond the Hedge — they are principally of

both worlds but ultimately alien from either. Thus, they understand a little of that dream world's distant madness, but often only enough to make it seem even stranger.

Another important aspect to keep in mind is the modern nature of the World of Darkness and how the glance "through the looking glass" distorts the scenery. A mushroom ring the characters find is more likely to be located in a ruined basement beneath a tenement than it is in a wooded glade. The cruel antagonist probably resembles a high-society doyenne or relentless police detective. The Others could come out of a cracked mirror in a disused rest stop, not just an elaborate looking glass. These are modern tales, and are all the more powerful when the fantastic distortions play off the familiar.

That's not to say that traditional medieval elements don't have their place, just that when they appear, it's for a reason. Part of the madness of the game is also the juxtaposition of such anachronistic elements. It may well be that the sorcerer-lord of the Emerald Court indeed wears an antlered crown during his seasonal rule, but his reasons for wearing it are distinct rather than assumed. A recluse in a castle either comes directly from Faerie or he's making a statement.

Understanding these ideas is the key to **Changeling**. The stories you tell with it are, effectively, fairy tales adapted to modern sensibilities in a world tainted by horror. The setting elements illustrate that concept inherently — the monstrous beauty of the Fae, the lovely decay of the World of Darkness, the characters' longing have for the lives they once lived and the ersatz new lives they construct for themselves that can merely echo the old. It's melodrama and the harsh sobriety of the old Grimm stories, but it's also wonderment and the thrill of "happily ever after." Savor that incongruity. Let the stark contrasts reinforce your own appreciation of the chronicle you create, and let them be the vehicle by which your players experience the highs and lows of life among such a deranged, fascinating world. "Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't."

Of Wonder and Horror

Certain elements of fairy tales have always suggested some degree of horror, particularly in the original stories of the Brothers Grimm, and in the real-world legends observed since time immemorial by regional cultures. Indeed, what we often think of today as fairy tales are watered-down versions of their original incarnations, softened a bit to keep children in line without terrorizing them.

Well, the hell with that. Let's bring back the terrorizing.

The horror of the World of Darkness and the function of the fae in it necessarily rides as a close companion to the wonder of the dream world from which they come. A True Fae lord might be a ravenous monster who can sate his hunger only on raw meat, or a powerful witch might need to revivify herself by bathing in the blood of virgins. Look no further than some of the seemings themselves to witness some of these grisly legends: beasts who walk as men, giants who grind bones into meal and creatures born of the very shadows of night.

Most Storytellers will have little difficulty weaving the horrors of the World of Darkness into **Changeling** stories. The most important thing to bear in mind while doing so is to effect a stylized horror. Any slasher tale can conjure gallons of blood and mounds of glistening gore. The horror of **Changeling** is just as visceral but much more cerebral. It relies greatly on those delicious themes of madness and beauty, intrigue and nightmare. It is one color in the tapestry, not the only color (or even the predominant one).

Consider having an audience before an august scion of the Winter Court. Everything seems fine, but when the light falls from the moon through the crystals of the chandelier, the lady's face seems to be that of a slavering wolf… but then just as quickly returns to her own lovely visage.

A banquet with the vicar is a sumptuous affair. The table has been laid with all sorts of delectable viands and glimmering wines. A taste of the wine, though, bears the salty bite of tears, and the food is too rich, betraying a sense of cloying rot.

The dice game in the alley seems an innocent enough affair, with the neighborhood's urchins laughing, wagering marbles and gum, and cheering the rolls. As you look over their shoulders, though, you see that the dice are actually the teeth of some creature far larger than a man, and certainly more ferocious.

None of these are wholesome developments, truly. All of them provide a tiny spark of dread that a Storyteller can fan into a greater flame of horror or leave to smolder like embers with no further embellishment.

Note, though, that they play to **Changeling**'s central concepts. Witness the beauty of the courtier that hides a beastly aspect, the trust engendered by the man of the cloth jeopardized by the nightmarish nature of the meal and the childlike quality of the dice game spoiled by the gruesome quality of its playing pieces.

To add another level of horror, any one of these horrific development might not even be true. They might be the products of a changeling's dementia, or horrid dreams imprinted over the fabric of reality.

You'll want more than the standard scary "boo!" fare when you seed your **Changeling** chronicle with horrific moments. Juxtaposition is your best tool in the world of the grotesque fairy tale. Anticipation bears the stench of dread — the duke accepts your pledge of loyalty, but *splits your tongue with his knife to remind you never to speak his secrets*. Forbidden delights may become writhing nightmares — the hermit's golden apple bears a worm that *scuttles down your through as you bite into its flesh*. The contrast between the alluring and the vile punctuate dramatic moments in a

changeling's life, underscoring the deceptive world of the fae and the longed-for simplicity of human life.

Its elements of forlorn hope and proud elegance place horror squarely in a role of contrast, instead of being the entire point of the show.

Understanding the Changeling

While this book presents an enormity of specific information, we should probably spend a little while coming to understand the overarching concepts they represent. It's fine and good to take an interest in a particular seeming or Court, but what do the seemings and Courts represent? How do changelings relate to one another, and how do those relationships affect the stories a troupe wants to tell about them?

This section answers those greater questions: What do changelings mean to the world around them, and vice versa? Storytellers, we give advice here on key concepts that affect the changelings and how to integrate those ideas into your stories.

Other Than Human...

Changelings, plainly, aren't human. They're neither more nor less, but something wholly different. They were once human, but they were dragged, probably unwillingly, into a different world where the forces of Time and Fate made them into something else. They need contact with mortals, as they feast on the Glamour mortals' extreme emotional states can engender, but changelings forever remain outside the true membership of humans as we know them.

What this translates to within the context of a story is a sense of isolation. Changelings should frequently see exhibitions of mortal gestalt — whether positive or negative, jovial, desperate, violent or euphoric — and while changelings can participate, they won't really feel a part of what's going on. For example, a motley of changelings can certainly visit a parade, thronged with mortals, and the changelings may even see images that bring to mind the towering terrors of Faerie or the luscious luxuries of their own Courts, but in the end, the reason for throwing the parade will elude them. What does "Thanksgiving" mean to a changeling? Even if she knows the date it occupies on the calendar, with her own warped notions of family and propriety, she probably has no idea of why thanks is being given. Consider, on the other hand, a labor rally, with hundreds of angry workers shouting out their dissatisfaction. The changeling would certainly see that they were angry, and even be able to feed on the Glamour of that anger, but she wouldn't necessarily understand why they were so angry. They have work to do, right? Are they angry about *how* they're being asked to do it? About *where*? Mortal notions of a fair, safe workplace won't have any resonance for a creature who comes from a realm of immense privilege or endless, thankless toil.

Ultimately, what being other than human bestows is a sense of perpetually being outside. This is the core of what makes changelings feel "other" to those with more mundane lives. The experience between the two worlds simply doesn't translate, which gives changelings a cast of alien madness to those who observe them. Of course, changelings feel the same in return, but the fact that it's not their world makes it all the more acute.

...But Less Than True Fae

While their memories of Faerie are hazy at best, most changelings do remember the terrible awe that the True Fae engendered. Indeed, changelings might find a bit comparison with how mortals perceive changelings in the manner that changelings perceive the Others. Worse, changelings might understand the reasoning of the Gentry *somewhat* when the changelings encounter them, causing the changelings to doubt their own sanity, or to cause them to misunderstand what they really are.

Again, this creates more isolation for changelings, but in a much more dangerous sense. Changelings have no true idea what the Gentry want, but what they want on those rare encounters they share never seems to be in the changeling's interest. The Other may simply want to return to Faerie with the changeling in tow, or it may want to devour the changeling entirely. The Fae may have some warped notion of justice (or vengeance) that involves flaying the changeling alive, or a Fae might be in love with a changeling… but the way she expresses love is like unto a black widow's mating practices. Imagine the changeling paramour of a True Fae who inflates his own esteem, only to learn that she plans to kill him after they consummate their love, so that she might remember him "as he was in his best and brightest time."

From a Storyteller's perspective, representing the goals and wiles of the True Fae is an exercise in moderation, strangely. To be sure, the actions of the True Fae should seem outlandish and incomprehensible, but the Storyteller must be careful never to let them seem comical or pointless. After all, changelings and mortals don't know why the True Fae do what they do, so some degree of menace must always be present, as these are creatures who can exalt or extinguish lesser life with equal aplomb, assuming they give it conscious thought at all. A True Fae visitor might need to turn around three times before sitting down, for example, or might always be seen in the company of a horde of scuttling centipedes. Why? We don't know, and he doesn't acknowledge it.

Again, this will create a sense of isolation among the changelings. Their True Fae roots leave them confused and alienated, but they can't take true solace in the other half of their breeding, either. They truly are in between worlds that don't quite have a place for them.

Best of Both Worlds

A significant reason for the division between True Fae and changelings isn't to imply that changelings are the "lesser" of the two. Rather, it's to make use of more facets of fae legend. The True Fae provide for the elder terrors of the old legends, the entities utterly without human compassion or empathy. Changelings, however, can provide the aspect of Good Folk who just might be good, the fairy godmothers and guardian angels who may work to protect humans from their darker kin. Changelings have access to the majestic trappings of the fae, but are human enough that we understand them and can often empathize with them… even those of them who skew more toward the darker side themselves.

Seeming and Court

Part of the beauty of the **Changeling** setting is that it offers the players chances to soften the impact of those mutual alienations by taking pride or solace in their own cultures. Indeed, that's why the changelings have established the Courts: they understand their own need for companionship and mutual support, so they've fabricated a society that facilitates that sense of camaraderie. (Of course, the vicious politics at play also often foment crushing senses of ostracism, but only someone truly on the outs would genuinely complain about such, or so they reason.)

The players will already be doing their part to evoke what's cool about seemings and Courts, and the Storyteller should, too. First and foremost, the Storyteller should realize that seemings and Courts aren't inherently designed to be a method by which they can torment the players' characters. True, many conflicts form on the basis of partisanship, but that's because those changelings who belong to those organizations feel so strongly about them.

Let the players' characters feel strongly about them, too, and let the players feel strongly about the choices they've made. Over the course of a chronicle, show a variety of seemings and Courts in the best light possible. Dig out from each what makes them individually cool. Introduce the motley to an Ogre champion of unwavering resolve and have him compliment their conviction. Grant them a seat of honor at the Spring Court's seasonal convocation, where they're lauded by one of the freehold's eminent poets. Let them confer with a skilled Wizened who's stumped by a quandary, and let him praise them for providing the answer. Have a sergeant of the Summer Court pay them a compliment and ask them to join his brigade standing against a loyalist threat.

Remember, also, that what's cool need not necessarily be predisposed to the characters. That's definitely true in a horror story. The Ogre champion could easily become an implacable foe, the Wizened could conjure a potent curse against the motley or the motley's cups might be poisoned at the Spring Court convocation. The majesty and greatness of seemings and Courts aren't any less majestic or great when one assumes the role of a nemesis.

In short, shine a flattering light on what makes each seeming or Court compelling. Let that light illuminate the players' characters, too. That light can be both an honor and a peril.

Shifting Perceptions

Much of a changeling's life involves a constant flow of sensory input from a variety of sources. Unfortunately for changelings, many of these inputs are subjective, unreliable or just plain distorted.

The Lost's inherent connection to dreams provides one such example of these shifting perceptions. When mortals sleep, their dreams take them as close as it's possible for mortals to go to the realm of Faerie. Thus, the very nature of dreams is that they bring perceived portions of Faerie to earth through the minds of dreamers. Changelings suffer this, too, but in greater intensity. They are themselves conduits through which Arcadia passes, through their dreams and into the physical world. As a Storytelling technique to represent this, Storytellers may wish to have each player compose a few examples of dream-imagery that occasionally overtakes his character's mind. It's sort of like a dream-motif or a recurring delusion, if you will. Then, at the Storyteller's discretion, these dream-icons can manifest in the story, even to the point of being visible to other characters. For example, if one character has a recurring dream of a rampaging bear tearing through the foliage to pursue him — surely the stuff of nightmare! — then a "bear" might tear through the "foliage" just as the motley is about to gain entry into a hated rival's home. Of course, the bear is actually the rival and the foliage is the fence that lines his property, but the subconscious mind of the changeling (or even the conscious mind, for who can say how dreams truly work?) brings that dreamstuff into the world and imprints it, however briefly, over what seems to be reality.

The liquid nature of Clarity also provides some of these shifting perceptions. As Clarity decreases, a character might suffer madness or moral decay because his perception of what's moral and what isn't vacillates. Such is the effect of being under the sway of enchantment or in the proximity of Faerie's warping influences. Low-Clarity changelings can't distinguish between what's real and what's not, or in some cases, what's right and what's not. A Storytelling device to simulate this might be to substitute certain words for other words when conveying information to the character. Other characters in the motley should receive their fair

interpretation of events, but the character suffering from an episode of broken Clarity might interpret a different set of inferences. For example, a character might mistake his fellow Lost giving him succor for a gang of True Fae who want to haul him back to Arcadia, or he might believe an elevator's cable is actually a thick line of silk spun by an unseen gigantic spider. He might feel a stab of mistrust when someone who's never given him pause before speaks some critical comment. Some of this input might even seem to be completely impossible to understand conceptually (as with saying "You are approached by blue less than so many" when two police officers approach the character or "The computer printout whispers to you the smell of burning leaves") and thus very difficult to respond to.

As you can see, working with shifting perceptions is difficult, but it's a key part of **Changeling**'s themes of madness and dreams. The devices suggested above are intended to simulate that madness, but to minimize the player's frustration at having his options limited. You'll note that all of the devices described above still rely on the input of the player's character in question. The intent with shifting perceptions isn't to limit the character's ability to contribute, it's to see how that character contributes when reality becomes mutable to him, and he reacts to stimuli that aren't necessarily valid.

The dream-motif, for example, allows each character to define (somewhat) key thematic elements that haunt him. Thus, when he becomes aware of those motifs in play, the *player* knows that his input is being used to add significance to the story, while the *character* knows that those horrid things he sees when his consciousness passes too close to Arcadia are back again. The low-Clarity system still allows the character to take action in his environment, only he reacts in ways that seem odd to those who witness the truth of a situation because what he's perceiving as truth is actually distortion.

Starting a Chronicle

With all of this said, with all of the advice given here and there and with the wealth of setting information found in the rest of this book's chapters, where does an aspiring Storyteller begin? It's easy to say that **Changeling** is a game in which the troupe tells modern, urban fairy tales adorned with horror, but how does that actually come into play? What are the building blocks, as it were, with which the Storyteller creates his own unique setting in which to tell those tales?

One of the most important decisions in Storytelling is deciding where the story's going to occur and who's going to be a part of that setting. Being a Storyteller for a game like this is a bit different from being a novelist or short story writer, in that the primary protagonists are largely the creations of other people. That's actually a good thing, as it frees up the Storyteller's attention to focus on the other details of building the world and the conflict. In other words, don't worry about that now. Worry about certain other details instead.

The following section discusses the key areas the Storyteller will need to develop or work with his players to develop before the first word of a story is uttered. We can't tell Storytellers what the plot of their chronicles should be — it'll vary by troupe, and by which ideas in this book he cottons to most — but we can suggest the foundation to put in place so that the story isn't told in a featureless environment.

When the Storyteller sets his sights on creating the setting for his chronicle, he should keep these core ideas in mind. Naturally, other ideas will spring up, and that's great — Storytellers can take them down in their notes alongside these pillars of setting design.

What City?

One important decision when creating a setting is deciding exactly where that setting is going to be. In many cases, this decision comes first for Storytellers, so we treat it here as first among the chronicle-building concepts, because location is so key to the personality of the chronicle.

The decision on where to place the chronicle involves two significant choices right off the bat: Is the location real or fictional? If it's real, is it a place all of the players know (like their hometown) or is it somewhere entirely other from their experience?

The Hometown

Many Storytellers choose their own hometowns as the base of their World of Darkness chronicles for one simple reason: players understand them best. If all the players in the chronicle are from Chicago, then they'll all know what's where in the city and they'll have a mutual interest in the actions their characters take.

Using the hometown is also a benefit because it reduces the amount of research necessary to plan the chronicle. People who live in a certain place can't help but absorb a certain amount of history and current events in that location — such things are all over every newspaper and in most of the city's culture. If everyone knows that St. James Cathedral was restored in the 1980s, that'll mean the Storyteller doesn't have to go as far to get the characters to investigate the weird lights that have been seen emanating from the cathedral's windows every Candlemas for the past 20 years.

Moreover, using one's hometown gives a sense of verisimilitude that other locations simply can't capture. If the troupe has a favorite restaurant or bar and decides to have the characters meet there, it's a little more immersive, since the players can actually imagine what the place looks like. People of local interest might come into play — say, a mayor who was just recognized nationwide as one of *Time*

Magazine's best big-city mayors, or a local business magnate coming under fire for tax evasion. While they fall comfortably short of the "famous person makes an in-game cameo" device, they do lend a sense of veracity to a chronicle otherwise steeped in the supernatural and the unfathomable.

There are few drawbacks to setting a **Changeling** chronicle in the troupe's hometown. In some cases, certain players may know more about certain neighborhoods in the city or local history than the Storyteller. This is easily remedied by either conferring with that player or assuming some minor cosmetic changes occurred in the World of Darkness version of the city. Along those same lines, sometimes the troupe may know the city *too well* to preserve an air of mystery or wonder — but that's overcome by using one of the following options, or by encouraging players to actively separate their characters' knowledge from their own (which isn't bad advice in and of itself, but is more easily said than done).

Somewhere Else

Sometimes a Storyteller wants to set the chronicle somewhere the players don't know as intimately as their hometown. This may be for any number of reasons. The hometown might seem too small to reasonably host a diverse enough group of changelings to make for a dynamic society. Sometimes a different city simply suits the theme or mood of the chronicle better. Sometimes the Storyteller wants to build certain local secrets or communicate a sense of wonder by setting the story someplace faraway or even exotic.

This is a necessary choice for Storytellers who want their chronicles to take place "on the road" between multiple freeholds. It's also a good choice for Storytellers who want to lend a sense of fairy-tale mystique to their stories — imagine tales told in a London setting or near Neuschwanstein Castle!

Using a "somewhere else" city also makes it a little easier for Storytellers to stylize their cities. If geography in one Storyteller's chronicle doesn't exactly correlate to real-world locales in New York, no one's probably going to know if the players are all from Baltimore.

On the other hand, using a real city that's not the hometown necessitates a bit more research than is normally the case for a home-based chronicle. That's certainly forgivable, however, because it translates into a whole new location for the players' characters to explore and learn about.

Fictional Cities

Fictional cities have the benefit of being built *exactly* as the Storyteller wants them. The rotting manse where the landscaping doubles as the Hedge is precisely where the Storyteller chooses to place it. The local authority figures are headquartered as far or as close to changeling activity as they need to be landmarks and even local history are as mutable as the story demands: So you've got a 15th-century Romanian castle next to a World War I mass grave, which the Confederate Army once used as a supply depot? If all that serves the story, it's cool.

Fictional cities also serve the themes of the ever-looming sense of dream encroachment because their geography doesn't necessarily always make sense (almost always due to the choice of the Storyteller). The fact that something outside or other seems to shape the local cityscape adds to that feeling that inscrutable magics are at work, or that the capricious whims of the True Fae and influential changelings are at work. If the Storyteller has even grander, more arcane designs on what shapes the city, that's fine, too (and surely a source of anxiety for local changelings).

Some Storytellers may also wish to adapt real legendary or lost cities such as Brigadoon, Shangri-La, Roanoke or a **Mage**-free Atlantis to their chronicles. These work well if the popular accepted images of these locations play to a similar theme as the Storyteller has in mind for the chronicle.

Drawbacks to fictional cities include a larger unfamiliarity with the locality on the part of the players. If a character, say, wants to go to the docks to meet a contact at midnight, and never knew the city was landlocked, well, that's a problem. As well, the all-important suspension of disbelief required of players gathered around the table might be an obstacle. For many players, part of the appeal of the World of Darkness is that it's so similar to their own that their experiences in real life give some sort of frame of reference to their characters' lives in the game. If the story is set in a place that doesn't exist, that sense of understanding evaporates — the story becomes much more of a fantasy romp than a modern, urban fairy tale.

Trods and Population Density

This aspect of chronicle design is equally important as the location because the trods define how populous the freehold is going to be. Given that trods are places of fae power, the Hedge often turns loose those who have negotiated its brambles in trods (see p. 219 for more information on trods and the Hedge). Thus, a freehold with few trods, or with unreliable trods or both (heavens forfend) will have fewer changelings finding their way back there from Arcadia. A freehold with many trods or unwaning trods will have comparatively more changelings finding their way back through the Hedge.

What this means, then, is that the Storyteller can control the population density of changelings by giving attention to the number and usability of trods. A Storyteller who wants her chronicle to have a sense of dread, isolation or struggle against severe odds would be well served to have few trods or unreliable trods linking the domain to Faerie. A chronicle focusing on large, warring

Courts of changelings or one that highlighted the Byzantine intrigues of changeling society or simply one that wanted to project the same sense of cosmopolitanism as a large city might suggest are all good reasons to have a vast number of functional trods, or trods that have a reputation even back in Faerie as always being where they're whispered to be.

The beauty of this principle is that there are no wrong answers to it. Both of the extremes — few, treacherous trods or many, dependable trods — and every point in the spectrum creates a viable approach to Storytelling in the setting. Plenty of fairy tale archetypes evoke a sense of isolation and just as many others suggest a myriad of courtly dangers, so whatever the chronicle is designed to do, the usability of trods supports it.

As well, the presence of trods determines how much of a threat the True Fae are in a given chronicle, since they, too, must negotiate the Hedge when they choose to visit our world from Arcadia. While their abilities certainly surpass the half-breed powers of mere changelings, the routes the True Fae take back from Faerie are the same, and a freehold with isolation as a characteristic is going to have a similar dearth of True Fae pursuers as it does of actual changeling presences.

Antagonists

Storytellers for **Changeling** are fortunate in that they have a wide variety of antagonists from which to choose when coming up with enemies for the players' characters to run afoul of. You'll meet some of those monstrosities later in this chapter, but for now, let's focus on that variety.

While variety is certainly the spice of life, a Storyteller's vision for a chronicle should bring a distinct focus to the antagonists the characters will face. If the Storyteller locks in too heavily on one type of antagonist, she runs the risk of her characters becoming tired of facing the same type of threat every session. If the Storyteller doesn't focus enough, the story becomes less of a fairy tale and more of an episodic monster-bash-of-the-week.

The antagonists' presence in a chronicle depends greatly on the style and severity of conflict the Storyteller wants to employ (see below), but also relies on the clever use of the antagonists' variety. It's okay to bring in every antagonist from the book, if you wish, so long as it's done in a way that helps the flow of the story. Remember, too, that antagonists can have minions and lesser creatures they send forth to do their bidding. This is especially appropriate when establishing another changeling or even one of the True Fae as a major antagonist: the true mastermind is best saved for a final, climactic confrontation, probably right at the apex of the chronicle, not a single night's session.

Optimally, several Storyteller characters should serve as potential antagonists. This gives the Storyteller the opportunity to challenge the players' characters with opponents who suit a wide spectrum of activities. As well, having multiple antagonists allows the characters to peel back layers of the story, exposing flunkies as the lesser antagonists they are and eventually revealing the true threat (or threats, depending on your chronicle scope) as they eliminate the minor antagonists. The presence of mul-

tiple antagonists also builds a sense of tension that keeps the players' experience vivid. It truly becomes a world of horror if the characters never feel safe, and each minor victory, each moment of reprieve, becomes something worthy of a celebration.

Start at the beginning of the chronicle with an immediate threat, either a person or a Fae beastie that serves as something against which to pit the characters' short-term attentions. They don't need to defeat this threat in the first story — indeed, well-paced stories can keep characters chasing clues for sessions on end — but they do need to feel threatened by it. After all, that's what makes it an antagonist.

Thereafter, create an antagonist who'll serve as the long-term rival for the players' changelings. At the beginning of the chronicle, simply an idea will do for this type of Storyteller character. You don't need to know which Contracts she has or how many points worth of Merits she can access. "Vicious, low-Clarity hag of the Autumn Court" will give you a better idea of the chronicle's direction than "The big bad has 20 dots in Darkness Contracts and all five levels of Kung Fu." At the start of a chronicle, the long-term antagonist is more of an ideal than a concrete and immediate enemy to be cut down.

As the chronicle progresses, you'll see where the characters are growing, who they have relationships with and what kinds of antagonists they like to fight and can fit into the plot without feeling forced. Your initial antagonist served as the springboard into the chronicle, and how the characters reacted to the antagonist begins to show you the path they may take to the threshold of the ultimate enemy. The initial antagonist and the final one don't even have to be related by any plot elements. They're simply the introduction to the changelings' bizarre dream world and the ultimate enemy they face to resolve the chronicle's conflicts.

This two-tiered system may seem simplistic, but it works in the idiom of the classic tales of visitors from Faerie. It's good gamecraft to challenge the players with something immediate but also show them that they're a part of some unfolding larger story. In addition, you can complicate it to your tastes — make a webbed diagram, if you wish, of as many major and minor antagonists as you choose to have lurk within the chronicle. After all, some allies may have once been antagonists, and some enemies may come over to the players' characters' way of thinking.

Conflict

Think of conflict as something to be overcome, a challenge to meet during the course of the chronicle. This doesn't always need to be a physical threat that has to be beaten into submission. In fact, physical threats should be comparatively rare in a **Changeling** chronicle, given that the changelings themselves are relatively vulnerable to harm. It's more likely that conflicts will make themselves manifest in the form of courtly intrigues, social sparring, clashes of influence over rare resources and threats of a magical nature. A conflict might be a race between rival motleys of changelings to collect a palliative goblin fruit from the Hedge in order to earn a lord's favor. A conflict might take the form of an encoded letter that betrays a tryst between two noble lovers, which must be deciphered before the secret can be known. A conflict may be a search to find the lair of a skilled Wizened who can craft an item the characters need, and then the act of persuading him to make the thing for them. A conflict may be a hellish storm the characters must endure, or it may be enduring the ire of an acid-tongued scion of the Summer Court. Then again, it may be that the Stonebones who's been bullying the characters finally needs his comeuppance.

Conflict is what makes the story a story rather than just a snapshot of changeling life. Therefore, it's critical to a chronicle to include a wide variety of entertaining and challenging conflicts. As with antagonists, variety is key, and the secret to avoiding repetition (and bored players) is to pose a variety of different conflicts to them that they must overcome.

That said, it's perfectly all right to have a distinct type of conflict that serves as the chronicle's thematic challenge. For example, a motley whose players enjoy the quick-witted duels of words at Court will probably enjoy a predominance of social conflicts. A motley of spies and scholars who trade in information will favor mental and social challenges, while a pack of bone-cracking Ogres and Beasts probably favor physical challenges. That's great, and Storytellers should play to the characters' archetypes. The players obviously enjoy those kinds of conflicts, and they built their characters around overcoming the threats. Nothing's worse than being a socially adroit character and having to fail repeatedly at a seemingly insurmountable tide of manacle-wielding privateer ambushes.

Speaking numerically, an evening's session of **Changeling** — say, four hours — should involve two to five discrete conflicts, based on your players' style of play. Those immersive roleplayers who want to interact with the setting and the other characters won't need as many conflicts laid out before them, as they'll enjoy banter with the other characters and sussing out the secrets of the surrounding environment. (Attentive Storytellers will also find that these types of players often make the Storyteller's job easier, as they seem to embroil themselves in conflicts of their own making.) More reactive players may need a few extra threats to prod them into activity, which is a perfectly valid style of play (especially when the True Fae and their Host are always at the door, ready to drag one screaming back to Faerie). The Storyteller's prime duty in this regard, then, is to plan an implement a *variety of conflicts* that suit the styles and tastes of the troupe.

This almost inherently requires extra work on the Storyteller's part. She needs to have a number of conflicts ready

to drop into the characters' presence that can occur at the drop of a hat. As well, they need a way to be integrated smoothly into the plot, lest the players feel railroaded or the story become nonsensical. ("Why is Hawthorn's fetch hanging out in the park at four in the morning?") In practice, this means that, unless a Storyteller is exceptionally deft at weaving conflicts into the seemingly random wiles of the players' characters, she should have a back stock of conflicts that relate to the plot, key antagonists, and the character of the city at her disposal at any given time.

This is something that grows over the course of a chronicle but is best planned, at least in concept, at the beginning. If the Storyteller knows that something important marauds through the park at four in the morning, she can make a quick note during the planning stages of the chronicle as to what it might be. When the characters finally do go there, she doesn't have to throw Hawthorn's fetch at them because that was the plot thread she thought they'd be following up on during that session of the game. She can simply go to her notes, see that some hellish nightmare creature has made the park its lair, and either work with the traits she's already established for the creature or resolve the conflict from there.

Remember, too, that the conflict doesn't have to be physical, or at least combative. If the characters follow the leads to the park at four in the morning and the Storyteller doesn't have suitable traits in her notes for the nightmare creature, she can improvise a tense episode of hunter-versus-hunted. The players' characters won't see the nightmare beast during that session (or if they do, they'll catch only a glimpse), but they'll feel its psychedelic effects or the despair it engenders, or they'll smell the rank stench of nightsweat it exudes. The Storyteller knows enough to improvise the situation because she made notes for the nightmare creature conflict in the planning stages. She may even have enough of the concept fleshed out in her mind to improvise the creature's traits as well. Therefore, what may eventually turn into a fight (during some session later down the road) instead becomes a thrilling chase, and even an opportunity to glean some heretofore-unknown information about what exactly prowls through the park. And it ain't Hawthorn's fetch, because that's sleeping soundly in his girlfriend's bed, where it (sort of) belongs.

Theme and Mood

The games that use the Storytelling System make much of theme and mood, and they're certainly important to a chronicle, but they're products of the story itself rather than something a Storyteller must consciously build into the chronicle's planning stages.

Theme comes as a direct result of the story the Storyteller wishes to tell. If the plan is to make a chronicle that focuses on learning about the nature of changeling life over the course of several forgotten holidays, it's more likely a theme of "We all harbor sinister urges within ourselves" will emerge than a theme of "A quick rise to power often precedes a quick fall." That's because the story the Storyteller wanted to create revolves around an aspect of changeling life that reveals the characters' sinister sides, as opposed to a tale of duplicity at Court.

In a nutshell, what that means is that Storytellers don't have to worry about theme immediately. It'll emerge as they assemble the details of their stories. Once that story is up and running, Storytellers should make a priority of communicating their themes effectively — choosing the right sorts of challenges to pit characters against, populating the supporting cast with characters whose character details reinforce the theme — but the theme will eventually emerge on its own, to a greater or lesser degree. After all, the theme is nothing more than what the story means, and the tale acquires meaning in the telling.

If a Storyteller wants to try a different approach, he may choose to establish his theme before other aspects of the story, and that's a fine approach. In such chronicles, however, a sense of fable will occur — players may feel that "what it all means" acquires more gravity than "what's happening, exactly." That's fine, and fairy tales (even dark fairy tales) are certainly appropriate venues for such parables and morality plays, but the tone of the story is going to be significantly different from a story in which that same theme arose organically from the resolution of events. In once case, the story exists to express the theme. In the other, the theme emerges from the story.

Mood is a different matter, and a little less overwhelmingly literary to work with. In all likelihood, the mood of **Changeling** itself or of the larger World of Darkness is going to take the fore. That is, a **Changeling** chronicle will almost certainly feature a mood of looming madness, dangerous beauty or inchoate nightmare, or some other incarnation of those three core principles. Indeed, a **Changeling** story that didn't have beauty, madness or some aspect of dreamscape would make a strange case for "a Storytelling Game of Beautiful Madness."

In application, that means choosing the portions of this book that appeal most to the Storyteller and players and devoting extra attention to them. That is, an enterprising Storyteller should infer a certain amount of feedback from the players' choices (of seeming and Court for their characters, for example, and even of specific Contracts and other evidence of what it appears that they want to do) and combine those with her own tastes for a mutually satisfactory feel to the story. For example, if the players choose Darklings and Fairest for their seemings, they're going to expect a tale with long shadows and strikingly attractive supporting characters, or some interpretation of those ideas. By way of analogy, if theme arises from the story being told, mood arises from the specific elements the Storyteller and players bring into the story proper.

Character Relationships

In particular, the players' characters need to have some degree of relationship established. That doesn't mean the characters all have to know each other before the chronicle begins; what it means is that the players need to arrive at some degree of consensus as to what reasons their characters will have for sticking together.

Any number of reasons justify a group of changelings keeping each other's company. Turn to established genre classics, or invent one on the spot. Perhaps the characters are all somehow related — the fae-touched family is a staple of the genre. Maybe the characters all know each other from college or work and Fate has brought them together for some purpose. Perhaps, as children, they all were nursed by the same nanny, and now, later in life, they've found that unsettling commonality between them. Maybe they're just all newly returned and scared as hell, finding safety in each other's numbers. Perhaps they're all pledged to the same Court or noble, or have been handpicked to face some shuddersome task.

Character relationships also take into account the character's backstory and other aspects of persona development. In a sense, this can be construed as a character's relationship with himself.

Experienced players and Storytellers will understand the need for these sorts of definitions immediately. A character who has no background, no driving passions, no goals toward which he's working and no connections to anyone else anywhere outside himself isn't a character anyone cares about. Even that character's player. While it seems like a bit of setting safety to have nothing the character wants, needs or loves — that way, nothing can be threatened or taken away from the character — those sorts of lone wolves defeat the purpose of participating in a horror game. A good character, a character with enough complexity to merit player and Storyteller interest in a **Changeling** story, can probably be defined in three paragraphs or so, which is about a third to a half a page. Sure, some players can easily write more, but covering the bases without any padding will take at least that much space.

Things to attend to when building a background for a character include important moments in his life and history. When did he discover he was a changeling? When did he return through the Hedge? How does he feel about it? Who knows? What's the status of his fetch? What does the character want to do with his life? Does he have the career he wants? Does he have any material desires? Any spiritual desires? What's his family like? What's his relationship with his parents like? His siblings? His wife or girlfriend or lover? His children? His neighbors? Is he well-known? Who, outside his immediate family and significant others, has interest in him?

Basic Story Structures

This tenet is important because it deals with what the players' characters are going to do. In answering that question, though, the Storyteller must actually attend to two different aspects of story structure.

To build a foundation, the Storyteller must create an overarching sense of where the chronicle intends to go. This may be something as grand as a struggle for the characters' motley to ascend to leadership roles in each of the seasonal Courts or it may be as personal as protecting one's mortal family from the depredations of other fae. It may shake the foundations of local changeling society, as with ousting a hated tyrant of the Fairest, or it may be a subtle quest, such as driving away a motley of opposing changelings, so the characters can have a Hollow of their own.

Rome wasn't built in a day, though, and neither will the players' characters achieve their ultimate purpose the first time the troupe convenes (unless, of course, the story is designed as a one-shot and not a full-fledged chronicle, which is an entirely reasonable way to play). To that end, the Storyteller needs to devise a list of "plot steps," or segments of the characters' journey that take them from their humble beginnings to their ultimate achievements.

(It's possible to do this in reverse — for a Storyteller to start with small focus and then expand his vision of the chronicle's ultimate conclusion — but this is actually a more advanced Storytelling technique than it seems. In the hands of an unpracticed Storyteller, this from-the-bottom method of plot building often results in a chronicle that has no direction, and simply careens from one arbitrary encounter to the next. While that may work for a very post-modern fairy tale, it runs the risk of fomenting disinterest on the players' part. After all, if none of their greater efforts seem to be building toward any significant resolution, what's the point? Very existential, but a valid concern.)

During the planning stages, these plot steps don't need to be fully fleshed out. Before each session in which a given plot step will be the crux of the story, though, the Storyteller needs to invest the time an effort that he would in any story, as normal. As placeholders or vague ideas, though, the plot steps simply serve as an indicator of where the chronicle goes. Without plot steps, who knows what's going to happen next? While that sort of mystery is thrilling for the players to discover vicariously through their characters, if the Storyteller doesn't know where he's headed with the story, how is anyone supposed to care what occurs? If everything's occurring at random or on a whim, why would anyone invest herself in the story?

As a practical exercise, put a blank sheet of paper in front of you. This is going to be your "plot map," since a story is effectively a verbal journey: it begins somewhere and comes to a conclusion somewhere, too. At the top of the

page, write "Introductory Event." At the bottom of the page, write "Chronicle Climax." Between these entries, make five bullets, which you'll use to describe story events leading from one to the next. (You may also choose to map with empty boxes from left to right, like a flowchart.) Brainstorm a single event you'd like to use to kick off your chronicle, and write this idea beneath "Introductory Event." Next, brainstorm what you see occurring in the culmination of your chronicle, and write this idea beneath "Chronicle Climax." Next, fill in the five bullets, *from bottom to top*, using one word from each entry in the entry following it — and thus preceding it in the actual flow of the story — with some action or event that you imagine the characters participating in. This builds a connectivity between the events of the story.

Let's walk through an example:

• **Introductory Event:** Nightmares draw the disparate characters to a well in a condemned building's basement.

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• **Chronicle Climax:** The motley banishes the Erlkönig back to Faerie.

At this stage, we've brainstormed only the beginning and the end, but they tell us a lot about what's going to occur in the course of the chronicle. We know, first of all, that nightmares and the dreamscape are going to play some role, because they're what seems to serve to unite the characters in the first place. We also know that we have a key antagonist in mind, the Erlkönig, and that he's probably a True Fae, as the characters will eventually banish him to Faerie. We decided to use him because of the Goethe poem based on the Danish legend, both of which are suitably creepy to be good source material for a modern **Changeling** take on the subject.

• **Introductory Event:** Nightmares draw the disparate characters to a well in a condemned building's basement.

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• The Erlkönig's minions ambush the motley as the characters leave court.

• **Chronicle Climax:** The motley banishes the Erlkönig back to Faerie.

Next we see that we have some new enemies to contend with — people or creatures who work for the Erlkönig in some capacity. These may be nightmare creatures from the realm of Faerie, they may be privateers working for the Erlkönig or they may be something we don't even know how to explain yet because we're still brainstorming. What we do know is that we have a conflict here, and that it's sprung on the characters unknowingly when they leave Court. We've used "Erlkönig" as our linking word this time, so let's use "Court" as the linking word for the next leg of the plot map.

• **Introductory Event:** Nightmares draw the disparate characters to a well in a condemned building's basement.

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• The characters seek aid from established members of the changeling court.

• The Erlkönig's minions ambush the motley as the characters leave court.

• **Chronicle Climax:** The motley banishes the Erlkönig back to Faerie.

Some sort of social discourse becomes obvious here, as we have the characters looking for people to help them at Court. This is a particularly rich step in the plot map, as it leaves us with good questions to be answered later in our planning. Do the characters know yet that they're dealing with "the Erlkönig"? Are the characters in good standing among the Courts? Why do the characters have to ask for help in this formal venue as opposed to simply going to a network of close confederates? Is the threat so overwhelming that all of the local freehold might be affected, or have the characters alienated any potential help by this point so that they're forced to abase themselves before all of their changeling kin? Some of these questions might be answered as we step back in our plot map, but the players' actions might also answer those questions once we actually have the chronicle up and running for the troupe.

• **Introductory Event:** Nightmares draw the disparate characters to a well in a condemned building's basement.

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• Renegade changelings seek to strike out against established members of local changeling society.

• The characters seek aid from established members of the changeling court.

• The Erlkönig's minions ambush the motley as the characters leave court.

• **Chronicle Climax:** The motley banishes the Erlkönig back to Faerie.

We use "established" as our linking word here, so this suggests to us that there's social dynamic at play that carries us forward into the next leg of the plot (which we previously detailed). What becomes evident here is that renegades — perhaps members of the Courtless, perhaps spies within the Court, perhaps anarchist changelings who despise the entire system of Courts — entreat the characters to help them lash out against the institutions of changeling society. The plot direction implies that the characters aren't having any part of it, but we don't know that for sure yet. Also, this stop on the plot map suggests that the renegades come to the players' characters, rather than vice versa. From this, we

can perhaps discern that the characters are making a name for themselves and other changelings have an interest in what they can offer. Again, though, it's impossible for us to know that for sure at this stage, so we'll file that away in our minds or our notes to resolve in actual play or as we're filling in later details.

For our next step, we'll use "renegade" as the linking word.

• **Introductory Event:** Nightmares draw the disparate characters to a well in a condemned building's basement.

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• A changeling abducted by the Erlkönig returns to join the renegades.

• Renegade changelings seek to strike out against established members of local changeling society.

• The characters seek aid from established members of the changeling court.

• The Erlkönig's minions ambush the motley as the characters leave court.

• **Chronicle Climax:** The motley banishes the Erlkönig back to Faerie.

Now things are staring to come together! We see here that we know about the Erlkönig by this point, so we must learn about him here or even a bit earlier. As well, we see that the Erlkönig is almost certainly one of the Gentry, since he took someone somewhere — probably Faerie — and that individual escaped to join the renegades upon her return. The questions we have to flesh out the chronicle with are fewer but more relevant at this point. Given that the Erlkönig is True Fae and his captive returned as a changeling, what seeming does that changeling belong to? Why did she join the renegades? Has she resolved matters with her fetch? How did the Erlkönig capture the changeling in the first place? This last idea seems strong, so let's riff on that for our final stage of the plot map, using "abducted" as our linking word.

• **Introductory Event:** Nightmares draw the disparate characters to a well in a condemned building's basement.

• A shadowy form leaps into the well, with the abducted children slung over its shoulder.

• A changeling abducted by the Erlkönig returns to join the renegades.

• Renegade changelings seek to strike out against established members of local changeling society.

• The characters seek aid from established members of the changeling court.

• The Erlkönig's minions ambush the motley as the characters leave court.

• **Chronicle Climax:** The motley banishes the Erlkönig back to Faerie.

With the addition of this final (first) portion of the events that lead us to future stages of the map, but we're still broad enough that we have good questions from which to build the chronicle's mystery. The well comes into play, which is where the characters begin their introductory encounter. We have a shadowy figure — perhaps the Erlkönig, perhaps a lesser version of one of his servants we see later — leaping into the well *with children*. Here, we brainstorm that the children are probably sleeping, and probably being carried off to Arcadia, where the Erlkönig presumably makes them a part of his holdings there. We guess that they're sleeping, because it strikes us as a cool idea that this well is a repository of nightmare resonance, the last place in the human world where the child abductees are before they vanish into Faerie. This nightmare residue somehow reaches out to the characters, having drawn them here in the first session of the story, and in this second session, they gain some insight as to what's happening that made that residual nightmare energy so strong. Our questions are many but focused: Can the characters overcome the sleeper-thief before it absconds with another? If they can't, can they at least recover the child? Do they want to? That renegade whom they meet in the next stage: She's probably one of these abductees who made her way back, so they know this has been going on for a while. How do they meet her?

With all of the plot steps filled in, we now have a big-picture understanding of what we intend to happen in the chronicle. We answer some of those lingering questions, building a sequence of brainstorms into a cogent infrastructure on which to pin the rest of our chronicle details. Just to complete the exercise, let's flesh out some of those details and answer some of those questions. In addition, let's ask a few more of ourselves to give us more material to work with later in the chronicle's development.

• The characters, having never met each other at the start of the chronicle, are all drawn mysteriously to a well in the basement of a condemned building by screams and cries that haunt their nightmares. (Storyteller note: Waking nightmares? Nightmares that take physical form? Mine this for ideas.) They spend much of the first session getting to know each other, investigating the well and probably conducting research about the building and who owned it. (Storyteller note: The building can serve as a hangout for some mentally disturbed homeless, to hit the madness theme. As well, it becomes a moral issue if the homeless become agitated and attack the characters, as what moral high ground could the characters possibly have for responding with more violence?) (Storyteller note: If the characters physically climb into the well, they'll find some creepy detritus at the bottom. Things to consider are children's remains or maybe a torn remnant of the Erlkönig's cloak.) The session concludes with the characters vowing to one another to keep vigilant over the well, because it obviously foretells some dreadful occurrence.

• In the second session, the characters are recalled to the well by recurring nightmares. As they revisit the well, they arrive just in time to see some sort of fiend with unconscious children in its clutches leaping into the well. If they move quickly enough, they'll be able to trap the abductor

here in the physical world. If they don't go after the abductor, they'll have an opportunity to wrest the children from its grasp. If they simply let it go, so shall it be, but some sort of moral penalty will apply. (Storyteller note: Create two versions of the nightmare abductor. One should be physically tough to withstand a fight, while the other should have access to a variety of supernatural powers. This is to allow maximum versatility if the encounter comes to actual blows — the nightmare should be able to give the characters a scare for their well-being, so use the version that is strong where the characters are comparatively weak. The characters should overcome the fiend in the end, though.)

• For the third session, the characters come into contact with a member of a group of rebel changelings. How they make this first contact depends on what they do: they may meet her visiting the well, they may meet her at some social event or they may themselves be members of the rebel faction and make her acquaintance that way. (Storyteller note: Schedule a "pariah's party" to occur if the characters would prefer to meet other renegades. This is a good option to show them that the Courtless aren't a formal group of rebels, but rather a catch-all agglomeration of changelings who refuse to defer to Court rule.) From her, they learn that she came back through the well (Storyteller's note: Cover the logistics of making this a comparatively unreliable trod) and that, while in Faerie, she vaguely remembers laboring in the service of a Darkling lord named the Erlkönig.

• In the fourth session, the characters' relationship with the female Courtless blossoms. She brings the characters into contact with her own motley, a like-minded group of rebels and outcasts. As it happens, the outcasts are planning an attack on a group of empowered changelings of the Summer Court. (Storyteller's note: If the characters prove to enjoy political intrigue, this particular group of rebels may have the backing of certain anonymous members of the Winter Court, which may come up later if the characters pursue the connection.) Unless the players all decide to create Courtless characters of the beginning of the chronicle, the rebels' ideology will probably seem to radical to the characters, and they'll decline, which can make for a scene of good, tense diplomacy as they try to extract themselves from the rebels' company now that the characters know the rebels' plans. Certain moral issues may come to the fore here, too, as the characters realize they won't be able to help their embittered rebel friend, but they can at least attempt to stop future abductions. The rebels themselves are too tied up in their political struggle to bother with the depredations of some True Fae they haven't even seen anyway. (Storyteller's note: This may be a place to put a mole for the Erlkönig, given that his agents are going to attack the characters in the penultimate session of the chronicle.)

• For the fifth session, the characters know that they can't entreat the rebels to care about the Erlkönig's marauding, so the characters take the details of the Fae's presence to the changeling establishment that *does* care more proactively about the activities of the True Fae. (Storyteller's note: If the characters don't come to this realization themselves, an agent of the dominant season's Court can come to them, blackmailing them by telling them they've been seen consorting with shiftless rebels. Alternatively, a sympathetic go-between might serve as a good introduction to the proper Courts if the characters have active interest in dealing with the politics of the changeling Courts.) The characters spend the session talking to various nobles of various Courts and choosing from among them who might be the most capable allies with whom to pursue the matter of the Erlkönig's raids further. (Storyteller's note: It might be a good idea to have this Court function occur just as the seasons, and thus Court power, are going to change. This could illustrate the capricious nature of changeling Courts, as well as necessitate additional introductions to characters the next time they come to Court, exposing them to a variety of the different changelings in the freehold.) This is a great place to make valuable contacts even outside the context of the Erlkönig threat, in case the chronicle extends past its planned conclusion or can be revisited for a sequel.

• In the sixth session, after the characters have procured their physical and political assistance, but before they've met with that assistance, the Erlkönig's minions stage a sneak attack on the characters' motley. (Storyteller's note: This needs to be established within the context of the story. The Erlkönig has a mole, and the characters need to learn who it is or this is just a random attack. If the mole isn't one of the rebels, he's most likely someone among the Courts the characters have just conferred with. This traitor may work out to be a good antagonist for a future iteration of the chronicle, assuming the characters don't catch up with the turncoat herein.) This should be a tense session, with the Erlkönig's minions having the drop on the characters and the motley members feeling their unseen predator dogging their every move up until the moment before the attack.

• To conclude the chronicle, the characters face the Erlkönig personally. Hopefully, they have their backup from the Courts. (Storyteller's note: If the characters truly demonstrate an interest in the rebel cause, it might be best to rework the plot map a bit. Instead of forcing them to go find allies among the Courts, perhaps have the rebels aid the characters in confronting the Erlkönig. The session involving the Courts might set the Courts up as antagonists, again relying on the characters being seen consorting with the rebels.) The Erlkönig will either use the trod to find his way through the Hedge to come punish (or retrieve) the characters or the characters can meet him in a Hollow amid the Thorns for a truly strange setting. Alternatively, the Erlkönig might be assailable only in the dreamscape. (Storyteller's note: Make provisions for this, and see what the players' tastes run to over the course of the chronicle.)

Remember that the plot mapping stage is simply a brainstorming tool. You can move a step on the plot map, adjust it later or even eliminate it entirely if the initial idea doesn't bear the scrutiny you later apply.



As well, we suggest five steps simply because it creates a concise story arc that nonetheless offers several discrete points for key events. You may add more for a longer chronicle or even subtract two for a chronicle that will run for a shorter length of time. Five is probably the fewest you want in total, including your introductory and conclusive events, because you want to give an impression of things happening along the way. Any fewer, and your chronicle's events may seem to happen to quickly and without enough distinction between them.

Finally, note that our model here creates a very short sample chronicle. One you create will almost certainly be more complex. A plot map of this size may even be just one story in your chronicle, as opposed to the entirety of the chronicle itself.

Optional Design: Other Supernatural Creatures

Changelings don't claim hegemony over the supernatural World of Darkness, despite their own wide-spanning presence in it. A number of other supernatural creatures belong to the world as well, from vampires to werewolves to wizards and other entities less understood or definable.

While **Changeling** certainly contains all of the pieces Storytellers need to tell stories of madness, intrigue and dark beauty, some Storytellers enjoy bringing these outside presences into their chronicles, showing that some things are alien even to the alien wanderers come back from Faerie.

Among the World of Darkness games, **Changeling** is well suited to these crossover endeavors. Fairy tales often involve insidious blood-drinking monsters, men who can take the shapes of beasts and those who would learn the secrets men were not meant to know. Often, these come couched in the terms of the Good Folk themselves (and there are certainly enough methods in this book by which to simulate them), but sometimes an outsider makes for a strong inclusion in a story, particularly when the players think they've seen it all and the Storyteller wants to challenge their assumptions.

To that end, any of the supernatural types from the other World of Darkness games might bear inclusion. Storytellers should consider

exactly what role they want these interlopers to play before introducing them to a chronicle, however. For example, werewolves play perfectly into themes of isolation and of nature trumping man's efforts to control it. Vampires have a complex society of their own that can certainly rival the schemes of the changeling Courts. As well, vampires' predatory natures parallel the changelings' own, with a dark side: the undead's propensity for blood reminds the changelings that their own manipulation of mortal emotions can be savage and ruinous if indulged with recklessness. In the secrets of the mages, changelings can confront their own lack of understanding, much as the world around the fae regards them as in the thrall of madness. As well, the mages claim to know something of the changeling home realm, but exactly what they know and even how they perceive it certainly doesn't match the fae experience of Arcadia.

Given all these permutations, singular other supernaturals can highlight certain thematic elements of a **Changeling** chronicle. Storytellers may even wish to allow a player in the troupe to portray one of these other supernatural types, to which we say, go right ahead. Be careful of diluting the themes of the core chronicle too much with an overabundance of supernatural cameos, but with that caveat in mind, let the spheres of supernatural oddity overlap as you will.

Chronicle Paths

The life of the changeling is such that those who return from beyond the Hedge, from the Jeweled Realm, have a choice to make. They are alien from both the worlds of humans and the True Fae, but in leaving the latter, changelings have chosen to cast their lot with the former. Within this context, then, each changeling makes his choice. He may choose to regain his stolen life as best he can, or he may hone his fae arts and play the intrigue-riddled game of the changeling Courts.

Naturally, this is a significant choice — "How will you live your life?" — and it certainly affects both character concepts and the individual changeling's role in the motley with which he consorts. This isn't to say that changelings who choose to pursue the shadows of mortal lives can't get along with those who choose the pomp and circumstance of the seasonal Courts, but changelings who are at cross purposes with their intentions will certainly find their allegiances to one another tested. The returned fae find themselves pulled in opposite directions, even when they've made their choices. On the one hand, changelings need humans. Changelings need the Glamour that issues from strong emotion, and they need contact with mortals to retain their Clarity, else they revert to their wilder, more primal ways. On the other hand, every thinking creature seeks the comfort of its own kind, and in a way, the elaborate formalities of changeling society serve to give meaning to the proximity of one another.

What this ultimately means is that all changelings have dual natures that resonate with their ostracism from the lives of humans and Fae. Changelings are opportunistic creatures, seeking human contact for the benefits it gives them, manipulating relationships and circumstances so that they elicit the greatest emotional responses from the humans whose company they keep. At the same time, when changelings seek the company of other changelings, it's ultimately to make themselves more comfortable. Even the joys and miseries they endure while suffering the slings and arrows of courtly life exist primarily to let them know that they're not alone; there are others like them.

Storytelling this concept can be a challenge, but it can also be a tremendous boon to the roleplaying experience. More than anything else, this choice of which nature to indulge in one that needs to receive individual attention during the course of the chronicle. It's an intensely personal decision that reflects more about the changeling as a person than her seeming, kith or Court.

What follows here are a few ways to draw attention to this aspect of changeling personality without taxing the group dynamic with a series of single-character spotlights. No doubt all troupes will find the methods that appeal best to their tastes, and surely players will find their own methods of expressing this facet of the **Changeling** experience.

Attached to each of these techniques is a suggested experience point bonus that Storytellers may wish to award. The extra experience isn't mandatory — the added depth of character certainly pays its own dividends on investment — but sometimes it's good to acknowledge the extra effort on the player's part. With characters whose lives tend toward the melodramatic and the florid such as the Lost, every extra flourish speaks volumes. It will speed up character advancement more than in other Storyteller games, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. In some chronicles, a rapid rise to power is more appropriate, particularly as a beginning changeling isn't as out-and-out powerful by some standards.

• **Character Diaries:** Those players with a literary or expressive bent may choose to keep a sort of character journal, wherein they explore some of their characters' decisions and experiences as they would their own lives. This doesn't need to be anything verbose or even elaborate — each session might produce perhaps a paragraph of internal dialogue and some rationale for why the character did what she did in the session in question. Of course, some players will want to create more than a single paragraph, and kudos to them,

but the thrust of the character diary is the quality of the character insight, not the quantity. Likewise, the content is important here, not the format, and a character's "diary" might be a literal diary, a Web journal, an email circulated among the troupe or whatever. Other players can read or ignore these as they see fit, but the Storyteller should keep abreast of them, especially if she's awarding extra experience for them. The insights the player offers in the persona of the character can give the Storyteller new ideas to bring into the chronicle, or otherwise reveal the style of play she enjoys. Recommended experience awards for keeping a character diary are one or two bonus experience points per session journalled.

• **Limelight:** Every now and then, the Storyteller can decide to make a certain session of the chronicle a time for one specific character to take the limelight. In stories such as these, the character in question makes critical choices that relate to the plot, and the manner in which she's chosen to live her life comes to the fore. For example, a character who has chosen to try her luck with courtly intrigue might need to decide which of a pair of feuding nobles she's going to support and then encourage the motley to help her fulfill a pledge she's made to that noble. A character who has decided to make his way among the mortal world might have to intervene in some sort of family crisis, perhaps recovering something valuable or even retirement funds for his parents that a bogus investment opportunity was designed to bilk from them. (This doesn't have to be as mundane as it sounds — a certain amount of investigation of the finance company might reveal it to be an elaborate ruse that the company's using to defraud people across the country. The company may even have some supernatural personality pulling the strings behind it.) A clever Storyteller can blend a variety of these choices into the limelight, and, indeed, is best served by involving as many other characters from the motley as possible. For instance, perhaps the character who's tied his fate to the mortal world is going to get married, and members of the motley are in the wedding party. Maybe the character whose destiny lies among her fellow changelings needs a few days away from the courtly intrigue to collect her thoughts (or hide out), and she chooses to lay low with a character who dwells among mundane mortals. Whatever the case, the "limelight" character should have a chance to influence the story with her own choices, and her choices should reveal something about why she chose to lead her life as she did. Whether that's love, Mantle, family ties, Court Goodwill or genuine public concern is up to the Storyteller and the character's outlook. Recommended experience point awards for a character in the limelight are an extra one or two points above and beyond what the character normally earns over the course of the session or story. It's also worth mentioning that if the Storyteller chooses to use a limelight story, he should either be fair and allow every player's character a moment on center stage, or he should be up front at the beginning of the chronicle and let all the players know that their characters have to *earn* limelight consideration through development and characterization. A character who never progresses beyond the simplest of conceptualizations won't really have anything to bring to the limelight, and the situation would feel forced if a story revolved around her choices.

• **Solitaire Stories:** One method of making sure every player has an opportunity to explore the details of his personal choices is to break from the normal method of game play, which focuses on the troupe collectively around the table. If the Storyteller is willing, he can create a handful of vignettes, one for each player's character, and conduct those vignettes as short, solo stories, with only the Storyteller and the player privy to what occurs within them. Naturally, the player can share the details with the other players, but the intent is to take a singular look at how the character follows up on the choices he's made. In some ways, this is similar to running prelude for the character (see p. 78) but the difference is that solitaire stories occur during the flow of the chronicle once it's already begun. This allows the Storyteller and player to see how the chronicle has affected the character individually. As well, if the Storyteller runs numerous solitaire stories for each of the characters during the course of the chronicle, each story will attain greater depth, as each will resonate with the solitaire stories before it, and become almost a timeline of the character's personal progress. Storytellers can run these solitaire stories in the downtime between sessions, or they may choose to convene the troupe as normal but break the night's session into a collection of solitaire stories. In this latter case, the Storyteller may offer the other players the chance to look on (but not participate) as they see fit, so that they, too, might be entertained by these "character studies" that promote the growth of each character's personality. As with the limelight technique, subject matter for solitaire stories should vary by the player's preferences and the character's chronicle path, but the Storyteller has the benefit of not having to entertain the entirety of the troupe when their characters aren't the focus of the scene. This is especially recommended if the troupe has some players who are more dominant or assertive than others, or if the Storyteller has a specific plot thread he wants to weave into a single character's progression (either allowing that character to resolve the plot thread on his own, or solicit aid from fellow motley members). Experience awards for solitaire stories should be between two and six points, depending on the significance of the side story and what it means to the growth of the character in question.

• **The Rival:** Storytellers who trust their players implicitly and want to offer a personal touch to the chronicle might allow one or more of the players to create a rival. This is essentially like creating a Storyteller character, only the player does it — he comes up with a concept for a character who will rival his own and is also (at least initially) more competent than his own. The player then works with the

Storyteller to determine a backstory for the rival character, how the rival character might be integrated into the chronicle at large and the player's methods for having his character overcome the rival. In some ways, the rival is like the fetch (see below) because the rival has an immediately relevant tie to the character. The player is invested in the rival because he designed the character conceptually, and the rival is more capable than the player's own character, giving him a challenge to overcome. Naturally, the Storyteller doesn't have to take whatever rival concept the character comes up with, but this is an excellent way of gaining a firsthand look at the sorts of challenges the player wants to face. The Storyteller should tweak the rival's traits and details in his own notes, but the creation itself is a pure representation of what the player wants to overcome in the chronicle. It's also a concept that often arises in fairy tales: that of the "dark half," the alienated one-time ally or the storied nemesis. Experience point awards for working with the rival come into play in two different ways. First, the player's character should receive a bonus experience point or two when the player first designs the rival (depending on how much material he's given the Storyteller to work with and how viable it is for the story at present.) Second, when the rival does show up during the course of play, the character gains an extra experience point in sessions where the rival appears, and two extra experience points if the character manages to overcome the rival, even if only temporarily. In the long run, the benefits to the Storyteller are significant, as he gains a "stable" of characters whom the players' characters have a definite interest in besting. As well, those rivals are probably smart enough to see that if they're being consistently outperformed by the players' motley, the rivals may wish to found a motley of their own, thus taking the concept of rivalry to the next level.

Romance

It's the stuff that great stories are made of, from small-scale affairs to kingdom-destroying epics. The Lost can be greatly given to the kind of deeply emotional romance that tore apart Camelot or sent Ishtar and Orpheus to the Underworld. They're creatures of fae passion and supernatural emotion, but they also have the human capacity for constancy and devotion. Any **Changeling** chronicle should touch on romance one way or another. But how best to make use of this universal story element?

First of all, consider your group's interest in roleplaying romance at the table. Most groups are fine with a healthy presence of romance, as long as the game doesn't devote too much time and attention to the fine details of courtship and consummation. The obstacles involved in a romance tend to be of more interest to a group as a whole. Barring the Cyrano de Bergerac scenario, it tends to be easier to involve an entire motley in smuggling a friend into or out of hostile territory for a romance or helping him vanquish a rival than in whispering sweet nothings into his intended's ear. You'll find that players and troupes can vary quite widely on the preferred approach, though, so think of the people involved first. It really doesn't matter if the more intimate aspects of a romance are played out at the table, conducted privately via email or notebook or summarized succinctly — the only thing that matters is that you find the approach that's most enjoyable for your group. Talk to them about how far any given romance should go at the table (or away from it), as well as if they even want romance subplots in the first place. Not all players do, and you definitely shouldn't force a romantic subplot on a player who's not interested — or even on a player who's interested in general, but not in the specific romance you're promoting.

Next, consider the importance romance will play in any plots. Some romances are there largely to generate story hooks, with little emphasis on actual roleplaying of the romance proper. These romances are usually background elements involving Storyteller characters. Such romantic ties, rivalries, secret affairs and dangerous liaisons generate enough intrigues that the players' motley may be called on for a multitude of reasons: avenging slights to honor, arranging secret trysts, blackmailing courtiers and so on. It's usually good to have at least one such story-generating romance set up in your chronicle. It's realistic — changelings are passionate creatures — and it's an easy source for the occasional story, even if it doesn't take center stage in freehold politics. Of course, there's also plenty of reason to have a player's character be one of the principals in such a relationship, if the player's interested.

Most romances that involve a player's character more directly imply a greater focus on roleplaying the romance itself, instead of just the complications that result. (Those complications should be present, of course, but they're not necessarily the most important thing.) These romances are a powerful engine of character development. A character may change completely from the love of a good man or woman, or may resist such change or may fall into darkness by means of a passion betrayed or denied. If the player's interested in the possibility, it helps to figure out an attack plan for how to present such opportunities.

Can you plan a romance ahead of time? In some cases you can, though that depends largely on the character and the player involved. A player may request a particular kind of romantic interest, and you may create the appropriate character to match that interest. A player with the character concept of "good-hearted Ogre Knight" might ask for a damsel-figure (who may or may not be female, of course) to champion and defend, perhaps even to pine for from afar. Another player might be interested in having her shallow and insensitive Fairest character be gradually won over by a somewhat uncouth but true-hearted suitor, hoping to have her character deepen and grow as she discovers the power of genuine love. These are totally appropriate requests, of course. There's no difference between talking about a potential desired romantic subplot and talking about an old enemy your player would like to show up. The characters

shouldn't get *everything* they want in one easy-to-manage package, of course, but it's best to give players romantic interests they find engaging so that when you hit them with the inevitable complications they have a motivation to persevere, for good or for ill.

Spontaneity also has its strengths. For some players, it's the only way to do things; they'd rather have all their character development take place as direct reactions to unplanned encounters. Spontaneity also has the advantage of greater unpredictability, which is more likely to catch a player's attention. The downside is that you can't rely on it, of course. If a character who's interested in a romantic subplot goes through several sessions without finding any Storyteller characters who strike that particular spark, it can be a touch disheartening.

Once you've established a potential romantic partner for a player, and there seems to be sufficient chemistry to make the relationship worth pursuing in-game, it's time to consider adversity. The course of true love *shouldn't* run smooth — otherwise you have no story. Consider one or more of the following impediments to the happiness of a couple, either to apply before courtship can begin or to introduce during a romantic subplot.

• **Physical:** The rarest of obstacles, these tend to involve purely physical barriers to a romance. Distance is one possibility, as are events such as a kidnapping. Physical obstacles are the most obvious, but tend to be resolved the quickest.

• **Social:** Far more common are social obstacles to a relationship. Some may be simple, such as peer pressure or one of the principals already being part of a relationship. Family ties are a classic, and may also be related to political intrigues, such as if the Winter Queen has forbidden her Knights from associating with servants of her Spring rival. This is often the category for romances between a changeling and a mortal, or potentially a changeling and some other supernatural being. The precedents for social obstacles to a romance are practically innumerable, encompassing many of the great love stories of literature.

• **Psychological:** These obstacles exist largely in the mind of one of the principals. A character may still dwell on the memory of a lost love, and be reluctant at first to "betray" her. Another may uphold a desire to remain chaste due to religious or social reasons, thus warring between that belief and the temptation of desire. These obstacles require careful judgment to adjudicate just when or how they might be overcome — too early and it seems anticlimactic, too late and the passion may be lost. However, they make for highly satisfying roleplaying. If a player gives his character one of these obstacles as a personality trait, it may indicate a desire to avoid romantic subplots (a convenient excuse, basically), but it may also indicate a desire to have another character try to ease him out of his shell. If you don't know which it is, be sure to ask.

Finally, it's worth thinking about whether or not to end a relationship, and how to do so if it seems appropriate. **Changeling** is built on a core of tragedy, but it's also built on a foundation of hope. The best reason for ending a romantic subplot is if the romance itself is no longer contributing anything dramatic or entertaining to the game, and even the player seems complacent — or worse, bored. Ending the romance with an amicable parting, vicious breakup, betrayal or even death may contribute to the character's ongoing story. The thing to avoid is being too hair-trigger about this sort of thing, of course. You don't want to train players to think that any romantic interest they have is eventually just going to betray them or be tragically killed for the sake of melodrama. At that point, they start losing interest in romance as a subplot. And that would be a shame.

Chronicle Ideas

Putting all of this practical advice into, well, practice is a daunting task. To that end, we offer a few story seeds below, to help jumpstart those creative juices or to give a little direction to what may seem like a lot of broad advice that's tough to apply. Use these story seeds as you will: take a little bit from each of them, cultivate one in its entirety, germinate it with your own burgeoning ideas or leave them unexplored in the background.

Losing the Path

Trods have been disappearing all throughout the freehold, and no one knows why. The Courts are split on the issue, with some changelings worried that the magical power the trods represent and the pathways back for other prodigals have been lost, while more conservative voices see reducing the number of fledgling Lost in the freehold and limiting the access of the True Fae is a good thing. As the Courts bicker, however, neither side has attended to the practical matter of why they're vanishing.

The Devil's Own

A motley of exceptionally wicked Lost has taken up residence in the freehold and is terrorizing the mortal populace, feasting on the fearful Glamour provided thereby. Things have gotten so bad that a local church actually believes the changelings to be incarnate devils, and is training "witch hunters" to pursue the fiends and providing local media with sensational accounts of their dealings with the devils. For the sake of all changelings, this reckless motley needs to be brought into line, and the panicked congregation needs to be convinced that it's overreacting to a perfectly mundane threat.

The Dream Oracle

The most shameful of the changelings' secrets have become common knowledge and the Courts are in an uproar. The problem is that it's not just the normal Court intrigue and rumor-mongering that's to blame. It's a mortal writer whose inspirations come from her lucid dreams. The writer

herself doesn't know that she's transcribing the sordid lives of changelings and creating a scandal among the local freehold. On the other hand, she's received no small amount of local acclaim, and it's only a matter of time before her dreams-turned-novels find a national publisher. This would be a disaster for local changelings, for the attention they'd incur from other Lost and the ever-searching True Fae but also for the sheer public embarrassment of it all.



The Nightmare Stone

Someone has placed a disturbing artifact in a prominent neighborhood of the freehold, a secret as yet undetermined by local changelings. What the Lost do know is that many of them have recently moved to the neighborhood, with little more rationale than they "just feel like it." What's worse, either the presence of all these changelings or the mysterious stone have been causing nightmares among mortals who spend any time at all in the neighborhood. Those who live or work in the neighborhood can't get a good night's rest and the whole place is rapidly going downhill — traffic projects are languishing, the police neglect the place if they can get away with it and places of business keep erratic hours. Who wants all the local changelings relocated so centrally, and does she know or care what effect her lure is having on the mortal world?

His Hatful of Hollow

A Skitterskulk has taken up residence in the freehold, and the local changelings find it impossible to resist him when he suggests a pledge with them. This shouldn't be any big deal, since pledges are such small affairs, but the lords and ladies of the Court fear the almost mesmeric power he has over changelings, and fear what he might exact from them if his powers are greater than he's currently letting on. The problem is that he dwells in his own Hollow, choosing to venture into the freehold only when he needs to fulfill some promise or claim a new one. Who is he — *what* is he — and why is he here? His alarming lack of Clarity (no doubt from spending so much time in the Hedge) scares the changelings and upsets local mortals. Are his powers merely what they seem, or does he have access to some fearsome greater abilities?

The Sun Has Set

It's time for the seasonal changing of the Courts, but the currently reigning Autumn Court shows no intentions of relinquishing its power at the due time. Such a gross breach of both Contract and etiquette has sent the freehold into a state of near civil war, with everyone rushing to choose sides with or against the powerful Court, including several high-profile defections to that Ashen Court. To complicate matters, a group of quiet loyalists plans to take the opportunity to lead one of the Gentry through the Hedge once the actual conflict breaks out, in hopes of having their True Fae master set all these warring waywards to the proper way of thinking.

Bloodroot

A new goblin fruit has turned up in the Hedge near the freehold, and though this goblin fruit has no apparent effect on changelings, it works as a narcotic for vampires. Exactly who found this out, no one knows, but one thing's for certain: there's a killing to be made selling this "bloodroot" to vampires, and every enterprising would-be dealer in scouring the city for vampires who want a fix. The vampires have even crossed some social boundaries with the changelings, and courtly

functions are almost always attended by tweaked-out vampires who have attached themselves to the entourages of prominent changelings. Who found the bloodroot in the first place and how did it just happen to show up in the local Hedge? What happens when demand exceeds supply? Are the Lost going to have a vampiric turf war on their hands? Are changeling dealers going to have a turf war of their own? The whole situation is rather sordid anyway, and won't someone please get these unseemly vampire junkies out of the Courts?

Fetches

When the Fae steal human beings from their cribs, or pull them into the Hedge as they walk alone down certain alleyways, they leave something behind. The being — the *thing* — the Fae leave behind looks identical to the person whom they stole, and, if the person were older than a child, can function in the abducted human's life with little difficulty. But that thing that the Fae leave behind isn't human and isn't fae. It is something in between, a construct made of shadow and Glamour called the *fetch*.

The Fae shape the fetch out of a portion of the abducted human's shadow and give it flesh made from materials found in the Hedge or that the Fae carry with them. A few weeks masquerading as a human being is enough to cement this Glamour-spun dross in the mortal world, though, and even the fetch's family can't tell the difference. When a changeling escapes her masters, though, and returns to the mortal world, she has an adversary waiting for her — the fetch, the creature that was given her life. This section discusses how player and Storytellers go about constructing a **Changeling** character's fetch, the powers and resources it has available and its role in the chronicle.

Why do the Fae bother? With all their power, surely it's more expedient to just take people and leave their families to wonder? Over the centuries, Fae have occasionally tried simply stealing people and not bothering to replace them, but the Fae find that human beings are persistent. Parents, especially, do not rest if their children are taken away, and over time these obsessed people can find evidence of the fae — changelings, gateways and so on. One of the reasons that so many faerie legends persist, perhaps, is because of carelessness on the part of Keepers. Better to create the fetch and let humans believe that everything is all right.

Building the Fetch

Every changeling has or had a fetch. The fetch is created at the moment that the changeling-to-be is stolen from the mortal world, and thus is nearly identical. From the time that the fetch begins its charade, its personality develops in much the same way a human's would in response to its environment. Just as a human being's personality and proclivities depend in large part upon genetics, however, a fetch's personality receives a great deal of influence from its "heritage."

Unlike changelings, though, who take on a great deal of the physical aspects of their Fae masters, fetches are crafted to be indistinguishable from humanity. The resemblance is imperfect, but the variations surface in behavior, rather than appearance. For instance, a fetch created by a deathly Fae might have a morbid streak, or simply have an interest in death and the dead. Such a fetch might grow up to be a funeral director or a pathologist, but just as easily might grow up in a completely different profession and read books on funerary practices for pleasure. Indeed, some fetches simply seem to be crafted more skillfully than others. Some are so heartbreakingly human-seeming that one would swear they have souls of their own, while others quickly demonstrate sociopathic or solipsistic tendencies that betray a more slipshod hand.

Likewise, not every Fae that abducts a human being does so for its own personal use. Some of the Gentry employ others for the task of stealing humans and fashioning fetches. Therefore, a changeling might return from Arcadia and discover that the creature that has been living her life has almost nothing in common with her — she spent the time living in a cave and has become an Ogre, while her fetch was crafted by the mercurial wind-Other that stole her from her crib. Such a changeling will have even more difficulty claiming her true identity than most, because time and circumstance have made her fetch so different from her.

The player and the Storyteller should work together to determine the circumstances under which the human was abducted, and thus the circumstances under which the fetch was formed. The player can, of course, leave this entirely up to the Storyteller, under the rationale that the character probably knows nothing about her fetch, and this if fine, if the Storyteller is amenable to the extra work. Many players, however, will enjoy being part of the process, and a player with a strong concept for the fetch and the relationship between this dark mirror and the changeling should be given a chance to express that concept.

The questions below are meant to help spur the creative dialogue between player and Storyteller on the topic of the fetch. It is impossible for this book to consider every possibility for these beings, but these questions cover the most important discussion points.

Questions

• **How much does the fetch know?** Does the fetch know what it is? A fetch created when a Fae steals an adult probably does, but a fetch made from the shadow of a baby might have grown up believing itself to be human. How, then, will this fetch react to learning the news that it is not, and never has been, truly human? Fetches don't always have a strong streak of fae malice; it's not completely inconceivable that a fetch would abandon its stolen life upon learning its true nature. This revelation, incidentally, doesn't have to come from the changeling that the fetch was created to

replace. Another changeling, should he discover a fetch, might choose to enlighten (or kill) the fetch himself. If that has happened, how does that affect the changeling whose fetch is now aware of her nature (or dead)? Does this give the fetch time to prepare a trap?

The fetch can sense the changeling to which it is tied (the mechanics for this are discussed anon), but a truly ignorant fetch doesn't know, initially, what it is sensing. It is unlikely, though not impossible, for a fetch and a changeling to meet without either one of them having any idea that the other existed. What kind of effect must this have on both parties, to meet what both perceive as a twisted mirror image? Can either the changeling or the fetch walk away from this event with her sanity intact?

• **How human is the fetch?** Is its true nature all but indistinguishable from the ordinary human it claims to be? Or is its psychology broken and warped, more like that of a psychopath? This question is important because it determines the balance between the understandable, even sympathetic rival and the horror of the cruel facsimile that wears a stolen face. Both are even possible — a fetch might have an innocent façade of a personality that masks a second persona driven by a heart of rotten alder. Because a fetch can exist anywhere on the scale, it can offer a story of moral and ethical turmoil or of starker, more surreal psychological horror. This variance also makes it easy for the Storyteller to maintain a sense of mystery and dread where the fetch is concerned; it's impossible for the player to know just exactly what kind of reflection her character casts.

• **How entrenched is the fetch in the mortal world?** Fetches don't have the same degree of supernatural power that changelings do, but fetches do have the advantage of years of living among humans. A fetch might have become a policeman, a politician, a rich and influential person or (for a more immediate threat) a soldier or gangbanger while the changeling was enslaved. Leaving aside the question of influence for a moment, the fetch might have married and even adopted children (fetches are, themselves, unable to procreate), and thus be all the more willing to fight to keep its identity. And is the changeling willing to step into this life? If she's not, does she really have the right to take it from the fetch, given how many others will suffer from the sudden departure of this "person?"

• **Is the fetch still around?** Fetches, though crafted rather than born, are living creatures of a sort. They can fall victim to violence and bad luck just as any person can, and a changeling who pushes through the Hedge and tries to reclaim his identity might discover that this identity died years ago. While this is arguably less of a problem than having to find and confront the fetch, the changeling returning to a world that believes her to be dead creates just as much conflict and drama as a world that believes something else to *be* her, and so shouldn't be discouraged outright.

Of course, it's possible that a player might state that her fetch is dead in order to dodge the issue entirely, either because the player believes that this will make her character's life easier or because she wishes to focus her character's story on other things (Court politics, for instance). That's fine — the chronicle is the players' at least as much as the Storyteller's. Consider, though, that just because the world believes that the fetch died doesn't make it so. The fetch might be living somewhere far away, only to return at a critical moment (which raises the question of why the changeling couldn't sense the fetch before now — or maybe she did, and simply repressed the feeling out of hope or denial). The fetch might be enslaved to another changeling, masked from the character's perception by this master's magic. The fetch might even have learned the truth of its existence and entered the Hedge in an attempt to find the changeling (for whatever reason), and still be stuck there, needing rescue.

• **Did the mortal's family ever suspect?** On the one hand, fae magic is powerful, and the facsimiles created by the Fae are nearly perfect. On the other hand, a parent — a mother especially — knows her children. But what would a young mother say when she enters her baby's room one morning to find something that is functionally identical to, and yet *is not* her child? Who could she possibly tell? At worst, she might attempt to harm the child and be rewarded with prison or incarceration in a mental institution. At best, she convinces herself that she is wrong, that this is some post-partum delirium that

No Fetch...

...actually *is* a possibility for a **Changeling** character. A human being who accidentally wanders into the Hedge and is captured might not have a fetch created to represent her. Such a character still faces some of the same issues as a character whose fetch died (her mortal identity might have been declared dead), but the character doesn't have to worry about the fetch popping up someday to cause trouble.

Or does she? The Fae are clever, and have an understanding of time that mortals do not. Even if the mortal encountered the Others far from her mortal home, the Fae who enslaves her might send an envoy to the entrance to the Hedge to create a fetch for this wayward person. This might not happen immediately after the human is captured... or it might happen shortly *before* the human is captured. What if the human follows her fetch into the Hedge and thus winds up becoming enslaved, which in turn requires the creation of the fetch?

any new mother might go through, and goes about raising the child as best she can.

This kind of conflict takes on slightly different flavors depending on which member of the family has the suspicion. A father who realizes the truth is probably ridiculed or reprimanded for not wanting to grow up and take an active part in his child's life. A brother might somehow notice that his baby sister *changed* last night, but no matter how genuine his terror, all he hears is something about "sibling rivalry." A teenage girl has always relied upon her twin sister when times got tough, but that sister went away for the weekend, and although someone came back wearing her clothes and talking in her voice, it doesn't remember any of their code words or signals.

The changeling who returns to the mortal world, then, can be a source of incredible relief to these unfortunate people by explaining the truth. Such a person, once convinced, could be a powerful ally in the changeling's conflict with the fetch, whatever form it takes. Of course, if the fetch realizes what's going on, it might feel compelled to correct the situation. The fetch might resort to violence or use of supernatural powers, but what if it could arrange for the overly perceptive relative to be abducted by the Fae and replaced with a fetch of its own?

Character Creation

A fetch is created in much the same way as a **Changeling** character (see Chapter Two for details). The allocation of the fetch's dots, while numerically the same as the changeling, demands some consideration.

One possibility is to distribute the fetch's Attribute dots in the same way as the changeling's. The fetch was fashioned as an exact duplicate of the changeling, after all, so it makes sense that their basic capabilities would match. Likewise, if the changeling possesses Merits that reflect innate capability (such as Ambidextrous), then the fetch should as well. Skills and Merits that develop over time, however, are unique to the fetch and should be decided based on how the fetch has spent its life. If the fetch replaced a person after she was already an adult, though, the Skills and Merits might match much more closely. Indeed, differences at this stage might provide the changeling a way to track when she was taken — if the changeling has the Iron Stamina Merit and the fetch does not, people close to the character might remember that she suddenly lost her high pain threshold "after she got lost in the woods that summer."



If the fetch replaced the person when she was young, though, even Attributes might not match. Experience plays a large role in development, and how could the experiences of an Fae-enslaved human and an Earthbound fetch possibly be the same?

Another way of looking at this, though, is that when the changeling returns to the mortal world, the fetch immediately realizes it and develops some sense of itself. This might cause it to gain knowledge of Skills the fetch wouldn't otherwise possess.

For instance, a Fairest changeling, forced in Arcadia to be the bodyguard for a spoiled Fae child, has become an expert swordsman. He escapes and flees through the Hedge to the mortal world. His fetch awakens one morning knowing that something is different and that he is in danger. Unable to pinpoint the source of his dread, he finds himself absent-mindedly practicing fencing maneuvers with an umbrella. The fetch is developing the Weaponry Skill, and depending on how much time elapses before the changeling finds and confronts the fetch, he might quickly reach the changeling's level of mastery.

The Storyteller might choose to decide the fetch's game traits, or allow the player to do so. Either way has its advantages. If the Storyteller does it, the player truly does not know what to expect from her character's imposter, and this should heighten the suspense when the inevitable confrontation occurs (it is also probably more expedient for the Storyteller to handle this aspect of character creation, which might be a factor depending on how often and for how long the troupe meets). If the player does it, she has the ability to show the Storyteller exactly what she expects from the fetch/changeling dynamic, which is helpful for the chronicle as a whole. One way of compromising in this instance might be for the player to allocate the dots as usual, but for the Storyteller to spend a certain number of experience points on the fetch to reflect its years in the mortal world. Therefore, these points should generally be spent primarily on Skills and Merits, rather than supernatural powers. As these powers go, fetches do not have access to Contracts and pledges in the same way as changelings do. Fetches have their own supernatural abilities, however, which are detailed below.

Finally, consider Virtue and Vice. These traits represent a way to highlight the differences or similarities between the fetch and the changeling. If the Virtue and Vice are identical, that doesn't mean that the characters express them the same way. A Gluttonous changeling might have been the food-taster for a Fae king in Arcadia, and developed a taste for rich food born of the knowledge that any given morsel might kill him. His fetch, though, might be a simple drunk in the mortal world.

If the Virtue and Vice are different, this might be a simple matter of differing experiences shaping the characters, but these traits might also develop in an odd mirror-image to one another. For instance, the changeling mentioned above has the Vice of Gluttony born of a fatalistic attitude. His fetch, therefore, might have developed the Virtue of Temperance out of a desire to *avoid* this kind of excess.

Character Creation in Brief

The first four steps of character creation proceed as described on p. 72 of this book, with regards to the number of dots that fetches have to distribute. How those dots are allocated is discussed in the text of this section.

Step Five (adding the supernatural template) varies a bit:

- Fetches do not have access to Contracts or pledges.
- Fetches do not have seemings (and thus kiths).
- Fetches cannot gain status in any of the Courts. It is *possible*, however unlikely, for a fetch that is aware of its nature to gain the Court Goodwill Merit, but as fetches are not changelings fetches cannot have dots in Mantle. An unusually non-hostile fetch might (again, as a remote possibility) come to think of itself or even be regarded as a member of a given Court, but in game terms, the best the fetch could hope for is a high Court Goodwill rating. Given that most changelings have a high aversion to these simulacra, though, it would take a very specific circumstance for a fetch to be even grudgingly accepted into changeling society.
- Fetches begin with one dot of Wyrd just as changelings do. The Wyrd rating of a fetch *always* matches the Wyrd rating of the changeling the fetch impersonates, though, so if the player trades Merit dots for Wyrd, the fetch reaps this benefit.
- Fetches have Morality, similar to mortals, rather than Clarity. Fetches therefore derive none of the benefits that changelings do from having a high Clarity rating, but fetches also do not risk Morality for the same kinds of acts (see p. 91 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). A fetch's Morality has no real connection to its model, and may be high or low, with associated derangements or without; some fetches effectively have a Morality of 1 or 2 from the moment of their creation.
- Fetches automatically gain the Attuned to the Wyrd Echo. The player (or Storyteller) selects one additional Echo per dot of Wyrd that the fetch possesses. During play, if the changeling's Wyrd rating increases, the fetch gains an additional Echo as well as a dot of Wyrd.

Example of Fetch Creation

Chuck has given Matt an interesting and dynamic character in Jack Tallow (see Chapter Two for the process of Jack's creation). Since Chuck has elected not to know Jack's human name, Matt is largely in control of the fetch. Still, he asks if Chuck has any input. Chuck reminds Matt that Jack was only taken from the human world a few years ago, but says that he envisions Jack's fetch as being "what Jack's like when the candle is blown out."

Before thinking about Attributes, Echoes and other mechanical considerations, Matt gives a few thoughts to what has happened to the fetch in the time that Jack was lost in Faerie. Matt decides that the Winter Princess who abducted Jack fashioned the fetch out of disused candles, string and a piece of Jack's shadow. Therefore, the fetch is

cold, wasted and burned out. Matt decides that the fetch *tried* to live Jack's life, but without Jack's zeal was open to manipulation. The fetch fell in with a group of militant protesters (Matt leaves their exact cause vague for the moment, but makes a note to decide it during play based on what would shock or horrify Jack the most), and the whole bunch was arrested when a demonstration turned violent. The police dug up information on "Jack" that allowed them to prosecute him on trespassing, vandalism, breaking and entering, theft, invasion of privacy and a host of other charges. While Jack certainly would have fought these procedures, the fetch simply didn't care enough, and was sent to prison. Of the two years that Jack was enslaved, the fetch spent 15 months behind bars. It was released from prison only a few months before Jack burned his way back to the world of his birth.

With all of this in mind, Matt takes a spare character sheet and goes to work. Since so much of Jack's Attribute distribution relates to his fiery, yet fragile, concept, Matt decides to rearrange things a little. He drops Presence from 4 to 2 and increases Composure from 1 to 3 — Jack's fetch, lacking Jack's burning conviction, learned to keep his mouth shut. Likewise, Matt decides that Jack's fetch is too fragile and raises its Stamina to 2 (the fetch doesn't have to be exactly balanced, after all).

Skills get the same treatment; dots in Social Skills are moved to the Physical category (Matt reasons that time in prison raised the fetch's Athletics, Brawl, Larceny and Weaponry while all but eliminating Jack's talent for rhetoric — Expression fades entirely, Persuasion drops to 1 and Intimidation and Streetwise rise to 2). Matt leaves Mental Skills alone; he wants the fetch to be recognizable as Jack, and their knowledge base is one area that Matt reasons would remain fairly consistent. Matt likewise leaves the Cover-Up Specialty, but moves Jack's Specialty in Firearms (Pistols) to Brawl (Sucker Punch) and his Specialty in Expression (Oratory) to Streetwise (Prison).

Following that logic, the Eidetic Memory Merit stays, but Contacts and (obviously) Court Goodwill and Freehold Status go. This leaves Jack's fetch with five free Merit dots, and Matt considers Merits such as Fast Reflexes or Danger Sense (both appropriate given time in prison). He decides, though, that being "quick on the draw" is more Jack's arena, and that his fetch should be slower, steadier and more physical. Matt assigns three of the fetch's Merit dots to Fighting Style: Boxing; if Jack picks a fistfight with his fetch (not entirely out of character, given his fiery temper), he'll be in for quite a shock. Matt puts the last two dots into Allies — although the fetch isn't nearly as sociable as Jack, it did make friends with a couple of other inmates who were released around the same time.

The fetch's Advantages are computed in the same manner as any character's are. Its Clarity rating starts at the same level as Jack's (seven dots), but Matt figures that time in prison wore on the fetch's sanity a bit, and drops the rating to six. Normally this bestows five experience points, but since Matt already gave the fetch an extra dot of Stamina, he doesn't feel the need to spend these points (not a fair trade, numerically, but again, who's counting?).

Finally, Matt assigns the fetch's Echoes. The fetch has a Wyrd rating of 1 (because Jack's Wyrd is 1), and thus the fetch has one Echo aside from Attuned to the Wyrd, which all fetches possess. Matt looks over the list and chooses the Normalcy Echo, reasoning that the ability to blend in and go unnoticed serves an ex-con well.

Matt takes a few notes on what the fetch has been doing since its release from prison. It is on parole, and thus is watched very carefully by the authorities (if Matt decides to extend the political themes of the chronicle from the changeling world to the human world, he might add a shadowy element to these "authorities" — maybe Homeland Security is interested in "Jack," which could get dangerous if they find Jack rather than the fetch). The fetch doesn't have the desire to break the terms of the parole, and checks in with its parole officer right on schedule. Of course, Jack has no idea what the terms of this parole *are*, and so is probably going to break them through ignorance (not that he'd respect them if he did know them). Matt makes a note to stretch this mistaken identity issue out as long as he can before confronting Jack with all of the details of his past. Some characters might make a point to learn the truth quickly, but Chuck has portrayed Jack as so easily distractible that Matt figures he should have no trouble getting some good mileage out of this storyline, especially since the Normalcy Echo makes the fetch hard for Jack to find.

The fetch might, in time, be "re-ignited" — its passion for life might start to burn just from proximity to Jack. Just for the moment, though, Matt decides that the fetch perceives Jack as just another cop, a servant of some unknowable higher order come to enslave or destroy him (ironic, considering Jack's revolutionary principles). The fetch meets this with cold, pragmatic planning. The fetch spends most of its time around its fellow ex-cons, always carries a roll of quarters to use as a weapon (since a gun would be a parole violation that he doesn't want to risk) and carefully watches his surroundings. The fetch, Matt decides, is reactive, not proactive, which lets the highly proactive Jack make the first move. The fetch's name — Jack's *real* name — is Randall Vey.

Magic of the Fetch

Fetches are unable to call upon Contracts or forge pledges, not being changelings or Fae themselves. Fetches are, however, able to use their fae heritage to their advantage. All fetches begin play with the Attuned to the Wyrd Echo, and gain additional Echoes as their Wyrd rating increases.

Echoes, as the name implies, as powers based upon the fetch's relationship with its changeling counterpart. That



is, the fetch is nothing but secondary to the changeling, a placeholder, a stopgap to prevent other humans from going after the Fae. Most Echoes function only in the presence of changelings, and some function only on the changeling that the fetch impersonates.

Some powers can only be acquired by fetches with a certain Wyrd rating. These are noted after the name of the power ("Shadow Step (Wyrd 3)," for instance).

Echoes

• **Attuned to the Wyrd (automatic):** All fetches can recognize the Lost for what they are, even before the changelings to whom the fetches are attuned return to the mortal world. Similar to all fae creatures, fetches see changelings' fae miens as well as their mortal guises. In addition, fetches can sense changelings coming before they see them. This sensation is general; the fetch cannot differentiate between Lost, but can tell when a changeling is in the same area (within a 50-foot radius). The exception, of course, is the changeling that the fetch is impersonating. The fetch can immediately tell if that particular changeling is within this distance. This attunement means that changelings cannot surprise a fetch (see p. 152 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

• **Call the Fae (Wyrd 5):** The fetch can send up a beacon to the Others, usually as a last resort. The Fae might choose not to respond, but then again, they might jump at the chance to reclaim a servant (possibly gaining an edge over an adversary). The fetch spends 10 points of Glamour (only five required in the Hedge) and screams, rings a bell or otherwise makes a loud noise. The True Fae hear the call, though if and how they respond is up to the Storyteller.

• **Death of Glamour (Wyrd 4):** The fetch becomes a sinkhole for Glamour, creating a small zone in which no Contracts are honored and no fae magic can function. The Storyteller spends 10 points of Glamour and rolls Resolve + Wyrd (obviously, this Echo takes several turns to enact due to the Glamour expenditure). If the roll succeeds, no Contracts function within a 50-foot radius and all beings that can hold Glamour, including the fetch itself, lose one point per turn. The changeling weakness to iron, however, also ceases to function during this time, so this power can be of some small benefit. This Echo lasts for one turn per success.

• **Enter the Hedge (Wyrd 1):** The fetch can enter the Hedge the same ways that a changeling can (see p. 216).

• **Feast of Shadows (Wyrd 2):** The fetch can consume the shadows of living beings in order to heal itself. Capturing a shadow requires a roll of Dexterity + Wits – the victim's Resolve + Wyrd. The victim loses a point of Willpower from the shock. The shadow regenerates itself within one scene, or sooner if the victim regains Willpower before the scene is over. Once the fetch has captured the shadow, the fetch can consume it. The shadow begins at the same Size rating as the person who cast it, but loses one point of Size per turn whether the fetch is eating or not. The fetch heals one level of bashing damage per turn spent eating the shadow, one point of lethal damage for every two turns and one point of aggravated damage for every three turns. The fetch can choose what order to heal this damage in, if applicable.

For example, a fetch battles its changeling and does poorly, suffering three points of bashing damage and one lethal. Fleeing, the fetch finds a man waiting at a bus stop and rips his shadow away. The man is Size 5, so the shadow begins at Size 5 as well. It takes the fetch one turn to get to an alleyway to eat in peace (Size 4). The fetch spends two turns eating the shadow and heals one level of lethal damage (Size 2). A drunk man stumbles into the alley and vomits into a trash can; the fetch is startled and stops eating, and the shadow fades a bit more (Size 1). Annoyed, the fetch finishes the shadow (healing one level of bashing damage), and stalks after the drunk who distracted him to tear *his* shadow away.

The fetch can only shadows only from living beings with souls. This means that werewolves, changelings and mages are fair game, but vampires are not. Stealing a shadow from a supernatural being has a benefit, though; add the being's power trait (Gnosis, Primal Urge or Glamour) to the effective Size of the shadow.

• **Match (Wyrd 1):** The fetch has an intuitive sense of the changeling's actions and mindset, even beyond the connection usually present. The fetch and the changeling always act on the same Initiative (both roll and use the higher result), and any ties on contested actions go to the fetch.

• **Mimic Contract (Wyrd 2):** This Echo only works in the presence of the fetch's changeling counterpart. The fetch spends one point of Glamour. On the following turn, the fetch can use any Contract that the changeling possesses.

• **Normalcy (Wyrd 1):** This Echo is permanent and never needs to be activated, although the fetch can turn it *off* for a scene if the fetch so desires. The fetch is completely undetectable by fae magic. As far as the perceptive magic of the Fae and changelings are concerned, the fetch is simply a human being. The fetch must turn this power off to use other Echoes (with the exception of Attuned to the Wyrd). This Echo cannot protect the fetch from its creator's magic.

• **Shadow Step (Wyrd 3):** The fetch can draw upon the shadow-stuff of its creation to teleport limited distances. The fetch must find a shadow large enough to step or fall into, and the Storyteller spends a point of Glamour. The fetch disappears into the shadow and reappears from any shadow of comparable size with 100 yards. The fetch can use this power to escape from a pursuer, circumvent a locked door or gain a tactical advantage over an opponent (appearing behind her, for instance). The teleportation normally requires an instant action, but with the expenditure of three points of Glamour, this action is reflexive. The fetch does not have to see where it is going, but if it cannot see its destination the fetch gains no protection from unfavorable circumstances there.

Storytelling the Fetch

The role that the fetch plays in the chronicle depends on the Storyteller and the players, of course. That said, the fetch is well suited to highlight a few of **Changeling**'s themes, and can make for stories unique to this game.

The fetch is fashioned out of a piece of a human being. Specifically, the Fae use a piece of the person's shadow, but this is an obvious metaphor for the soul… and to the Fae, metaphor is as good as truth. The fetch, therefore, is put into the role of imposter without any choice in the matter and usually with no idea of its position. It isn't until a changeling escapes from Arcadia and arrives, breathless and bloodied from a harrowing run through the Hedge, that a fetch realizes that he is different.

What form does that realization take? One fetch sits bolt upright one night, sheet soaked with sweat, in the middle of a panic attack so intense he can barely breathe. Another might find herself standing in a crowded square one day, tears running down her face, because she suddenly cannot remember her name or where she lives. Yet another fetch walks out of class at the college he attends only to be grabbed by the lapels and slammed against the wall by a man whom his friends don't get a good look at… but after the assailant runs away, the fetch is so terrified he can hardly stand, because the face of his attacker was identical to his own.

Fetches are not necessarily "evil twins" to **Changeling** characters. Many fetches believed themselves to be human until shown otherwise by their counterparts. Their emotions may have betrayed a certain fae sensibility, but a fetch may never have understood that its peculiarities were all that peculiar. Are they more prone to sociopathy because they lack true souls, or do they mimic human morality because they are meant to blend in? Is killing a fetch really murder, from an ethical or moral standpoint? (What it means from a Clarity standpoint is more immediate, but Clarity doesn't represent what's ethical or moral.) These are questions that your troupe can confront, if you wish to tell a story about the fetch.

Conflicts inherent to **Changeling** are discussed on pp. 239–240, but below are some conflicts and stories specific to the fetch and its role in the chronicle.

The Fetch as Adversary

Once the fetch realizes what it is and that the changeling exists, it's very likely to be incensed. As long as the changeling is around, it knows that it's a fake, a mannequin made to dupe the relatives of the changeling. But while the changeling has been gone, *it's* been doing all the work, and it's been doing it quite well, thanks anyway. Why should the changeling get to show up and take it all away just because he actually happens to *be* the genuine person?

This kind of attitude doesn't have to stem from bitterness or fear, though it certainly can. As mentioned earlier, the fetch might have a spouse and (adopted) children, and whether it can feel genuine love or not, it certainly isn't going to give up its family without a fight. At the other end of the spectrum, the presence of the fetch's changeling mirror may erode away the fetch's last human sentiments, "freeing" it to a state of solipsism akin to that of a serial killer.

The fetch can be a violent adversary to a changeling. The two can spend their days sparring, attacking whatever the other holds dear, while at night they enter their shared dream and battle there (see p. 193 for an explanation of how fetches fit into dreamshaping).

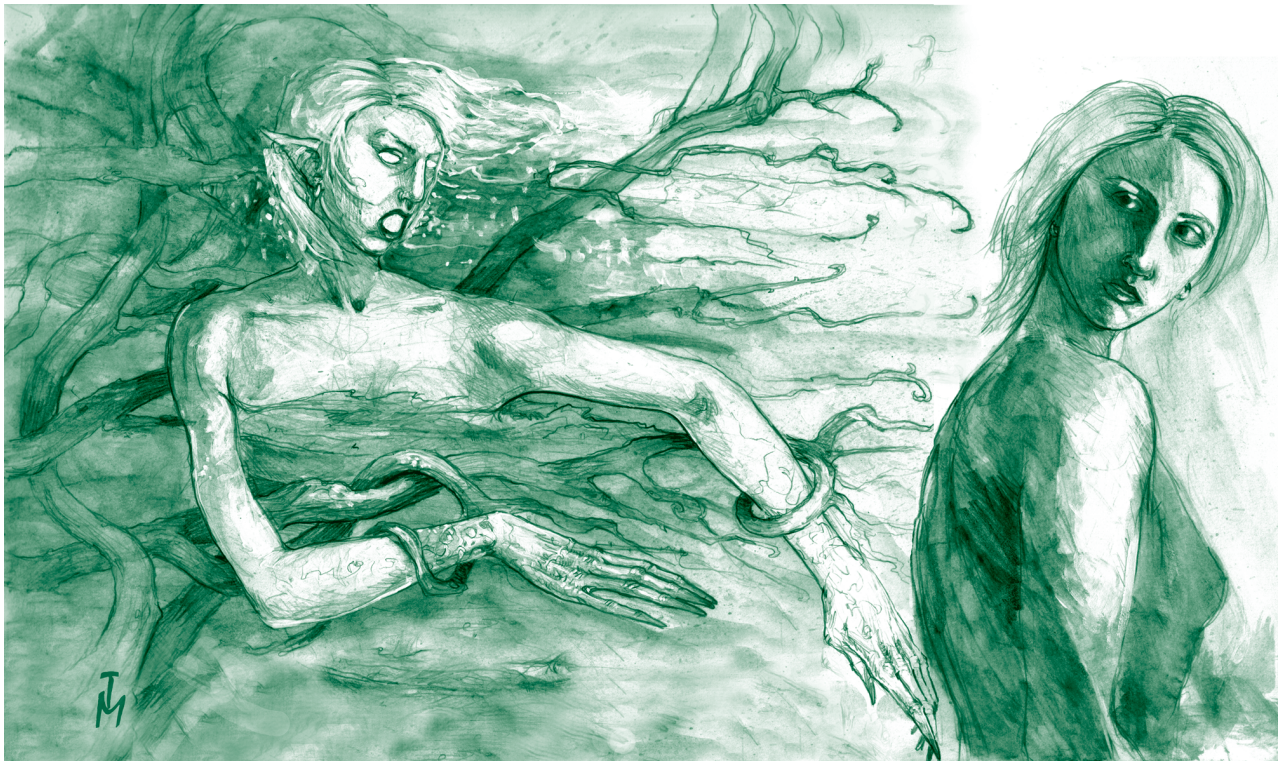
The fetch can oppose the changeling in an exclusively social fashion. Mostly, the fetch is the greatest social threat in the arena of mortal society, where the fetch has the advantage of roots. It's the one who knows the names of the children's friends and teachers, who has been networking at the office, who can more effectively press charges against a "vagrant stalker." In some cases, though, a fetch can give the changeling trouble within the context of Lost society. What if the reigning monarch decrees that fetches cannot be killed, but must agree to give up their stolen lives and return to their changelings' shadow? The fetch then needs to be convinced to submit to this fate, or beaten down and degraded to the point that the fetch agrees. The battles between changeling and fetch then aren't literal, physical battles but political and emotional games of wit and endurance.

The Fetch as Other Half

Some Lost believe that they can merge with their fetches. The fetch can, they say, step back into the changeling's shadow and give up its stolen life. This is akin to death for the fetch, of course, but the fetch's memories of its life as a human being transfer to the changeling. In that moment, the changeling becomes whole again, casts a shadow and regains the entirety of his soul. He's still a changeling, yes — nothing's going to take that away from him — but he's human, as well.

It's beautiful idea, but is it true? Enough changelings believe it that the idea persists, for whatever that's worth.

If merging with the fetch is possible, it probably requires an extraordinary set of circumstances. Perhaps as part of creating the fetch, the Fae had to build a clause into the Contract that enabled what was sundered to become whole again. This clause might involve beating the fetch in a certain type of combat, or might require that the fetch knowingly and willingly agree to the "merger." Perhaps the changeling can complete this merger if he drags the fetch back into the Hedge and keeps the fetch prisoner there for a certain amount of time… but of course that fetch will probably scream for help until it's hoarse, and in the Hedge, who knows what might answer?



New Merit: Broken Mirror (Milestone)

Effect: Regardless of the fetch's true nature, whether the fetch is capable of genuine compassion or is become as solipsistic as the Other that spun it of wood and shadow and rusty wire, killing a fetch isn't easy for a changeling. Destroying the duplicate of a changeling (or, worse, one's own) feels entirely too much like destroying the changeling in question, or like destroying a part of yourself. Such a task is a breaking point for changelings of Clarity 5 or higher (p. 92).

However, the act of personally destroying one's own fetch is also a turning point of sorts. The killing may erode the changeling's sense of self, but it also places him in a greater mastery of his own fate. And as Arcadia's orphans, fate is more than a simple abstraction to the Lost.

The player may invoke the Broken Mirror Merit once per story to gain three additional dice on a roll, just as if he had spent a Willpower point. This Merit does not count as a Willpower expenditure, and can in fact be used on a roll that is also augmented with a Willpower point, for a total of six dice.

A changeling who personally kills his own fetch gains this milestone Merit, without having to purchase it with experience points. This Merit can be gained only in play; it cannot be given to a character during character creation, even if his fetch died during the course of his prelude. Players who want to simulate killing their fetches as part of backstory may choose to purchase extra Resolve or Composure at character creation instead.

The Fetch as Myth

Maybe there is no such thing as a fetch.

Of course, that requires jettisoning ideas such as Echoes and other supernatural capabilities of the fetch, but perhaps the fetch is just a myth. That would mean that changelings out to reclaim their lives are victimizing innocent people, people who have no memory of "stealing lives" not because the Fae wiped that memory or because they were too young to remember but because they *just didn't do it*. These innocent people have no way to fight the changelings, no way to convince them of their innocence beyond simple pleading. For all these innocent people know, these horrific nightmares are here to take them away to the lands beyond the Hedge, to make them slaves and take their lives away.

Story Hook — The Fetch Prelude

The players create characters as described in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**; they are (or believe they are) normal mortals. As the game progresses, however, they see evidence of the Fae creeping through — strange shadows in mirrors, whispers coming from dark corners, odd reactions from animals and any other strangeness the Storyteller feels like inflicting. The characters find each other through circumstance, possibly directed by these odd events, though this "direction" is really only comprehensible in hindsight. The first time they are all together, the area becomes dark, the creeping shadows of the Hedge become visible, and they *know* — an alien being is lurking somewhere, hunting for each of them.

At that point, the players create their changeling characters, using the fetches as a base. This is a reversal on the "standard" **Changeling** chronicle, but if the Storyteller wishes to ease players into the game (and set up a story about the fetches with a bit of moral ambiguity in the process), it's a great way to start.

Antagonists

Although a changeling's first impression upon returning to the human world may be one of relief, few have the luxury to revel in their newfound freedom for long. Just as the legendary "fair road" leads not to Paradise, but to the gates of Hell, their escape from Faerie does not guarantee a safe haven. Adversaries and antagonists threaten changelings' safety, freedom, sanity and even their very souls, revealing this ostensible respite to be its own treacherous trial. Some of these dangers are overt, wielding claws, fangs or Fae magics. Others are more subtle, although no less dangerous. All too often, an unsuspecting changeling has fallen prey to an underestimated human pawn, or even one of his fellow wayfarers, while seeking aid from what he deemed to be a more clear threat. The lesson most changelings learned first in Faerie remains true upon their return: things are rarely what they seem, and the greatest harm may come from where you least expect it.

The Lost

Those who have escaped Faerie often are drawn to one another as they try to make their way in the mortal world. The threat of madness lies thickly in what they have endured, not only in their time in Arcadia, but also upon returning to the "real" world, a place they no longer truly

belong. Finding others who understand somewhat of the threat is often the first step toward defending themselves against it, and it's easy to bond quickly with those who seem to be kindred spirits.

Simply being a changeling, however, is no assurance that any given individual will be a friend or ally. Intentionally or not, the Lost can also be each other's most potent adversaries. Even within "civilized" changeling society, political machinations and rivalries can be a deadly business, pitting Court against Court in Machiavellian plots that lead to treachery, betrayal, even death. Manipulation and intrigue come instinctively to the fae. Many changelings learned to wield these skills with lethal proficiency at the feet of their Keepers. Changeling freeholds offer protection from external threats but possess their own inherent dangers — high-density changeling populations breed high-density political entanglements.

Outside freeholds, the threats only worsen. Unhampered and unprotected by the pledges and promises of at least superficial cooperation, Lost who are not associated with freeholds are often focused even more highly on self-preservation and their own personal agendas. Should they be so inclined, changelings' innate ability to see through the Mask — not to mention their access to Contracts and pledges — makes it an uncomfortably simple matter for one changeling to hunt down another. Likewise, those who have survived time in Faerie and returned to the human world often know enough about Arcadia, the Gentry — and each other — to make them among a Prodigal's most dangerous enemies.

Madmen

No changeling escapes Faerie entirely whole. Most are scarred, physically and emotionally, from their struggles to return to the lands of their birth through the hungry passages of the Hedge. All have lost something during their abduction and return: treasured belongings, precious friends, their pride and in some cases, their sanity. Many factors can combine to shave away at a changeling's reason. The longer changelings spend in Faerie, the less likely they are to be able to successfully transition back into human society. Likewise, those who were taken at a young age or who had pre-existing mental instability have less connecting them to the mortal world and are more prone to suffering debilitating madness, should they manage to return.

While the jarring return to the human world is never easy for those who have spent time in Faerie, for some the touch of the madlands never fades completely. They find themselves seeing, hearing and experiencing things that "normal" humans cannot, in a world with no sympathy for such perceptions. Other changelings are likely to empathize with these delusions, and most freeholds attempt to provide aid, as long as the afflicted individual is not blatantly homicidal and is willing to accept their assistance. In this way, some madmen are able to team up with other changelings and eventually regain enough Clarity to make their way in the mortal world. Others, however, are not that lucky.

Madness is not always a direct and immediate result of one's time in Faerie. For some, especially those who had adapted to the mutable reality of life in Arcadia, it may be the human world that slowly erodes away at their sanity. Changelings are just as susceptible to the biological, psychological and social causes of mental illness as their human counterparts. Dealing with the duality of their changeling nature only adds to these influences, making changelings more, rather than less, likely to succumb to mental illnesses as they return to the mortal world and attempt to juggle their dual lives.

Insanity

Not all madmen are raging beasts. Madness can creep up subtly, sneaking into the cracks and crevices of the mind and blurring the demarcations between reality and fantasy so gradually that it is impossible to say where exactly insanity begins and sanity is left behind. Even for those who are able to keep their lack of Clarity hidden for a time, however, madness is confusing, frightening and debilitating. Most chilling, however, is the fact that madness is very often progressive, with the gap between sanity and madness deepening exponentially as time passes. Eventually, others will notice the discrepancy between the madman's reality and that of those around him, and if it goes unchecked, eventually he will no longer be able to function in society, either human or changeling.

Many strong (and entertaining) representations of mental illness exist in modern media. Films such as *A Beautiful Mind, Frailty, Three Faces of Eve* and *Jacob's Ladder* portray the frightening nature of insanity, while books such as *Movies and Mental Illness* address the topic of understanding madness through its portrayal in film. Technical journals such as *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* can offer accessible non-fiction information on the topic as well.

The Mad Hound

Quote: *"You think I can't see you? I see you! I see what you really are!"*

Background: Jules fell into Faerie as a youth while attempting to escape yet-another beating from the local bully and his gang. Scrambling through the overgrown bushes, Jules found himself not in the empty lot he expected but deep within the dark maze of the Hedge, where he quickly drew the atten-

tion of a pack of briarwolves. Escaping the shadowy monsters made eluding the human predators he'd just ran from seem like child's play. The pack toyed with the boy, chasing him through hungry thickets that tore first at his clothing and then at his skin. They nipped at his calves, bloodying his trail, but he was used to dealing with bigger foes and slipped into the center of a huge bramble so fiercely thorned that the massive briarwolves could not quickly follow. When the brush parted, he thought they'd found a way in, but instead he found the black-pelted Fae who would become his Keeper standing over him.

What followed next was an eternity of nightmare. Jules, if the stories he tells in his more lucid moments can be believed, served for 70 long years as the head of his Keeper's hunt. During his service, his body was transformed at her whim from human to hound and back, until he himself was uncertain which of the forms, if either, was truly his. He escaped one night while on a hunt, his astute senses picking up an almost-forgotten scent that led him, howling and baying, back to the selfsame thicket his Keeper had found him in. Impossibly, the scent seemed as fresh as the day he first walked into the Hedge, and he quickly tracked it back to the spot he'd entered through.



The Jules who pushed his way back out of the overgrown bushes was a lifetime of hard hunting different than the gangly youth who'd entered. No wonder then, that the gang of teenaged boys who'd chased him there in the first place were more than a little surprised at the snarling adult who emerged from the same bushes that their young prey disappeared into. They were no more surprised than Jules himself, however. Despite the half-remembered dreams of decades of hunts, only a few moments had passed in the "real" world. His family, expecting their teenaged son's return, turned their back on the tattered adult who attempted to claim his place. They called the police, who took the "transient" into custody. He spent that night, the first of many over the ensuing years, in the city drunk tank, a cell that resembled his "kennel" in Faerie enough to further blur the lines between his various realities.

Description: Jules might easily be mistaken for any mortal vagrant. His mahogany skin is heavily layered with dirt and grime, and his hair forms a raggle-tag ruff of earthy brown and tarnished silver that stands out wildly around his hunched shoulders. His hands are layered with mismatched gloves, all of which have been torn through at the ends to expose long, ragged fingernails, thickened into horny talons. His feet are swaddled in layer upon layer of heavy socks that turn his lower extremities into awkward stumps, and he wears no shoes, regardless of the weather. He keeps the collar of his pea jacket turned up against the wind, and his baggy camouflage-print cargo pants are ripped in more places than they are whole. Gnarled yellow teeth, long and sharp, hide behind the bushy jungle of his unkempt beard. When he speaks, the words most often alternate between grumbling snarls seemingly spoken to himself, and barking accusations leveled against the entirety of the world around him. More frightening, however, are the moments when Jules seems completely lucid, when his dark gaze catches someone and holds her and his words are succinct and precisely chosen. At those moments, when the animal cunning flashes brightly in his eyes, Jules is at his most dangerous.

Jules's mien betrays his bestial nature: his feet and hands are half-paws ending in sharp canine claws. His skin is bristled with patches of mangy fur, and his lower jaw juts forward, barely able to contain a maw full of gnarled and pointed teeth.

Storytelling Hints: Perhaps the return to the mortal world broke Jules's already strained grip on reality. Perhaps his family's rejection of the life he was on the cusp of remembering. But whatever snapped his fragile psyche, the fact remains that Jules is a broken man. Whatever goals he had as a youth have been stripped away by the decades spent as his Keeper's hound. Now, Jules is a prisoner without a prison,

bereft of even the chaotic control of his Fae master. Still feral, Jules is as apt to turn on those who offer him kindness as he is to appreciate it. During his most agitated moments, he's barely more than an animal in mostly human skin, capable of brutal physical attacks and wily stalking. When he is lucid, however, he is easily more dangerous. As ill suited as he is for life in the mundane world, he has no desire to return to his former captivity. He sees anyone bearing the touch of Faerie (including other changelings) as a potential threat to his freedom, and at most times will do his utmost to avoid them. When he's at his most lucid, however, he will take any opportunity to sabotage their works and lead them to harm. He may be mad, but he's not an idiot — his instincts are strong enough to make him a cunning enemy.

Seeming: Beast

Kith: Hunterheart

Court: Courtless

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Investigation (Tracking) 3, Occult (Fae) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Larceny 2, Stealth 3, Survival 3, Weaponry (Claws) 4

Social Skills: Animal Ken 3, Empathy 2, Intimidation 2, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Danger Sense, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 3

Willpower: 5

Clarity: 1

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 8

Defense: 4

Speed: 15

Health: 8

Wyrd: 4

Contracts: Smoke •, Fang and Talon (Canines) ••••

Glamour/per Turn: 13/4

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Dice Pool*
Brawl	0(B)	6
Claws	2(L)	10

Loyalists

The Fae rarely hunt openly. More common (and more insidious) are those who do their bidding. These loyalists, serving as spies, investigators and saboteurs, can often cause more harm to a freehold through their clandestine presence than could a direct raid by the Fae.

Some loyalists are unwitting spies. They may believe they are serving their Court or noble order in their clandestine observations, not realizing the identity of the individuals they report back to. Others, for one reason or another, serve their Fae mentors deliberately. These loyalists may believe such betrayals of other changelings will net greater profit than the price upon their newly returned souls and thus be willing to provide information, perform tasks or even act as subtle assassins, all while moving undetected among their changeling cousins. Not all of those who serve the Others knowingly, however, do so willingly. The Gentry are masters of manipulation, and more than one changeling has accepted what seems to be a sweet bargain with them, only to realize otherwise too late.

Bondthrall

Quote: *"Art is sacrifice."*

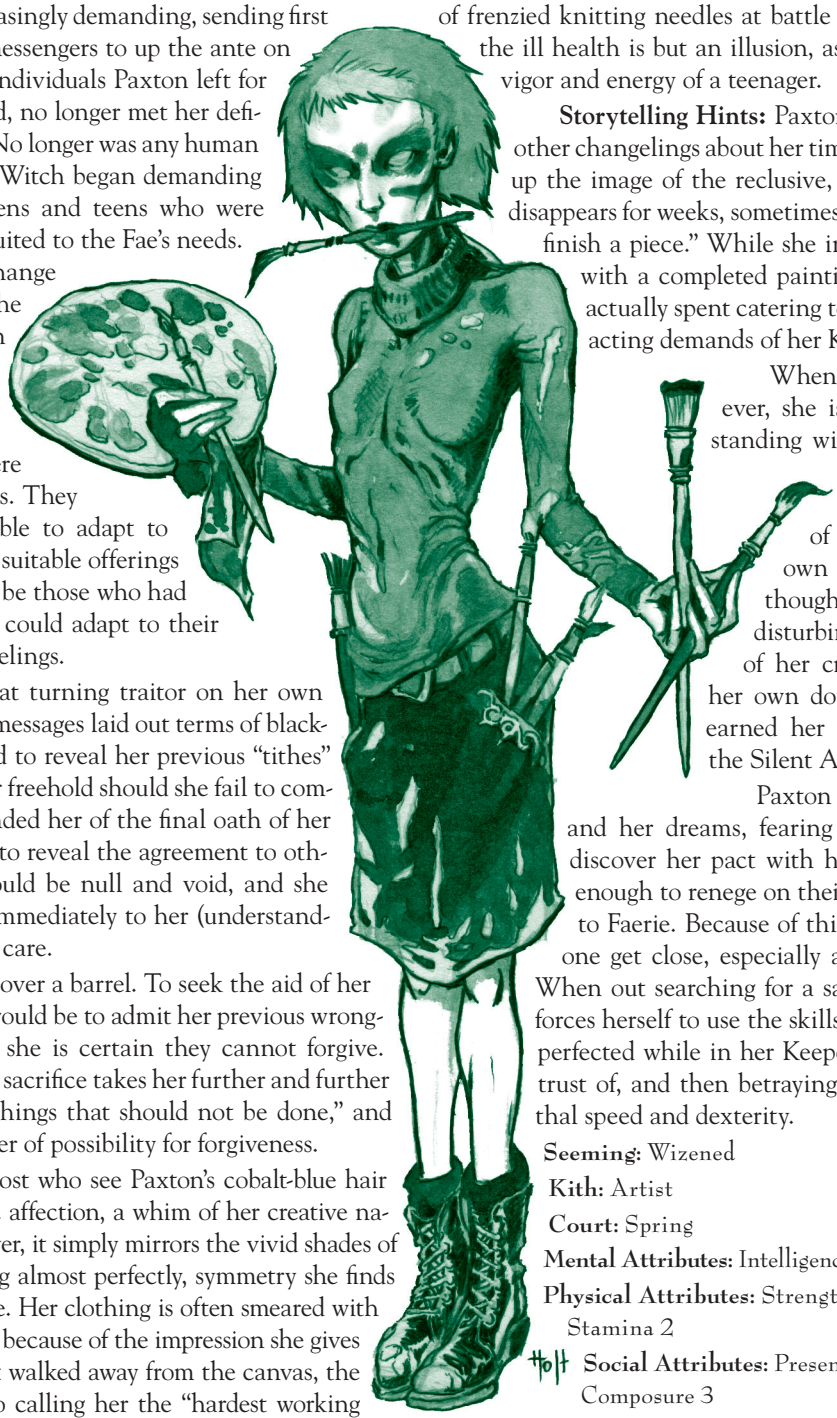
Background: Paxton first drew the attention of her Keeper when she was barely old enough to walk. First in her dreams and then occasionally in person, the Hoarfrost Witch watched covertly as the child's artistic talent developed from remarkable crayon sketches to prodigy-level talent in a wide variety of media. As the girl's natural gift grew, so did her Keeper's interest and influence on her life. Paxton's parents consistently struggled to encourage her art without allowing it to become her sole defining quality. This became an even more difficult task as their 10-year-old garnered first local, then international attention from art critics and aficionados. Her parents sought professional advice as their daughter, who'd always been introspective, seemed to hide further and further inside herself as her art advanced in quality and grew more and more extreme in subject matter. Then one day, as the counselor warned them it might, the drawing stopped completely. Overnight, their artistic waif grew boisterous, even temperamental, but apparently at the cost of her creative interest and talent. As the pastels and acrylics slowly disappeared into the depths of her closet, her once acclaimed name faded from the media's view. Paxton's parents grew accustomed to their new fetch-child, never suspecting that their true daughter had been kidnapped through the Hedge, claimed at last by her Keeper.

Once her new ward was secure, however, the Hoarfrost Witch grew quickly discontent. Separated from her family and the world she called home, Paxton's talent first faltered and then failed. Neither the witch's bribes nor threats could restore it. At length, the Keeper agreed to allow Paxton to return to the lands of her birth for the majority of the year, but bound her in a pact with a steep price.

As a young adult, Paxton "reclaimed" her place in the mortal world with the unusual, but invaluable, aid of her Keeper. Paxton's sudden change of temperament (and the just-as-abrupt return of her interest in art) surprised her parents, but they attributed it to her recent enrollment at a local university. Even more surprised was her fetch, which, with the aid of a knife gifted by her Keeper, served as the first of Paxton's sacrifices to the Hoarfrost Witch in exchange for her semi-freedom.

Paxton agreed to bring the Hoarfrost Witch other "suitable wards," in exchange for reclaiming her human life

and the freedom to remain in the human world for much of the year. Originally, her tithe was simple and straightforward: on the night of winter solstice, she would bring an infant human child to a designated trod and leave it body there for the Witch. However, after a few solstices, the Witch became increasingly demanding, sending first missives and then messengers to up the ante on Paxton's pact. The individuals Paxton left for the Witch, it seemed, no longer met her definition of "suitable." No longer was any human child sufficient; the Witch began demanding older children, tweens and teens who were stronger and more suited to the Fae's needs. Paxton made the change reluctantly, feeling she had little choice in the matter. Soon, however, the Witch claimed that even these youngsters were not suitable offerings. They were, she said, unable to adapt to Faerie, and the only suitable offerings from then on would be those who had already proved they could adapt to their new home — changelings.



Paxton balked at turning traitor on her own kind. However, the messages laid out terms of blackmail that threatened to reveal her previous "tithes" to her Court and her freehold should she fail to comply. They also reminded her of the final oath of her pact. Were she ever to reveal the agreement to others, her freedom would be null and void, and she would be returned immediately to her (understandably angry) Keeper's care.

Now, Paxton is over a barrel. To seek the aid of her fellow changelings would be to admit her previous wrongdoings, a guilt that she is certain they cannot forgive. And yet, each yearly sacrifice takes her further and further across the line of "things that should not be done," and removes another layer of possibility for forgiveness.

Description: Most who see Paxton's cobalt-blue hair take it for an artistic affection, a whim of her creative nature. In truth, however, it simply mirrors the vivid shades of her Wizened seeming almost perfectly, symmetry she finds somehow appropriate. Her clothing is often smeared with acrylic paint. In part because of the impression she gives of having always just walked away from the canvas, the media have taken to calling her the "hardest working artist in the world" or "the painter who never rests." This is, however, just as most aspects of her life, is a meticulously constructed image crafted by the artist herself.

In her true mein, the Bondthrall seems wasted and ill. Her eyes are a flat slate-gray without iris or pupil**.** Her frame fades from painfully slim to anorexic, all angles and planes without a curve in evidence. Her diminutive height — barely five foot in her stocking feet — adds further to the impression of illness. Her fingers are almost skeletal, and when busy at work, give the impression of a double handful of frenzied knitting needles at battle with each other. Yet the ill health is but an illusion, as she moves with the vigor and energy of a teenager.

Storytelling Hints: Paxton refuses to talk with other changelings about her time in Faerie, and plays up the image of the reclusive, eccentric artist. She disappears for weeks, sometimes months at a time "to finish a piece." While she inevitably does return with a completed painting, her time away is actually spent catering to the increasingly exacting demands of her Keeper.

When she is present, however, she is a member of good standing with her freehold. Her artistic bent has ensured her a place of some respect in her own Spring Court, although the dark and often disturbing subject matter of her creations, as well has her own dour nature, have also earned her no small favor with the Silent Arrow.

Paxton guards her privacy and her dreams, fearing that should anyone discover her pact with her Keeper, it will be enough to renege on their deal and return her to Faerie. Because of this, she rarely lets anyone get close, especially at her local freehold. When out searching for a sacrifice, however, she forces herself to use the skills of manipulation she perfected while in her Keeper's care, gaining the trust of, and then betraying, her targets with lethal speed and dexterity.

Seeming: Wizened

Kith: Artist

Court: Spring

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (Art History) 3, Crafts 4, Medicine (Anatomy) 3

Physical Skills: Drive 2, Firearms (Pistol) 2, Stealth 2, Survival 1, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Expression 4, Persuasion 3, Subterfuge 4

Merits: Court Goodwill (Winter) 3, Mantle (Spring) 2, Meditative Mind 1, Fame 2, Resources 2
Willpower: 5
Clarity: 7
Virtue: Fortitude
Vice: Pride
Initiative: 6
Defense: 3
Speed: 9
Health: 7
Wyrd: 3
Contracts: Vainglory ••, Fleeting Spring •••; Goblin — Trading Fate for Luck (•), Fair Entrance (••)
Pledges: None active
Glamour/per Turn: 12/3

Militia

For generations, some particularly militant Lost have gathered others to themselves in the name of exacting retribution upon the Fae. Some militant Lost seek to merely stop the Fae's marauding enslavement of humans; others to drive the Fae to annihilation, if such a thing is possible. The most ambitious seek not only to put an end to the Fae, but, finding no place for themselves in the mortal world, seek to claim Faerie for themselves and create a changeling realm within their former prison. For the most part, these groups have remained the stuff of drunken aggrandizing and wishful, if impractical, thinking. Even were the factions to muster a standing army, their incursion into Arcadia would likely be doomed. Vengeance, however, is a harsh mistress, and those driven by revenge often eschew logic in its stead.

What makes these militia antagonists is their zeal. They are willing to make "sacrifices" that the Summer Court would ordinarily revile, throwing pawn after pawn away in the effort to catch a single rook. It doesn't matter that their pawns might have lived better lives if they hadn't been recruited or press-ganged into the militia cause, or even used as unwitting bait or couriers to draw an enemy out of hiding. The warhawks, in the pursuit of their cause, have become as callous toward their "comrades" and "fodder" as the Others.

Warhawk

Quote: *"Justice is a bloody business."*

Background: Elusive to the extreme, the Bloody Wing is one of the largest militia groups who reportedly are gathering forces against the Fae. The wilder rumors suggest the Bloody Wing has members (or at least information gathering contacts) in every major freehold in the world. Their soldiers, however, are very circumspect. Realizing that most Lost don't yet agree with either the Bloody Wing's goals or methods, the group operates in the shadows of changeling society, forming small "talons" of no more than a dozen members, of which only one may know the identity and location of other talons. One of the more infamous talon leaders is known simply as Nemesis.

During her childhood, the attention Trudy Long received was always famine or feast — with the feast being heavily laden with poison. Adults in her life inevitably ignored her or else inundated her with violence and inappropriate attention, which transitioned seamlessly into a series of adult relationships with men whose dysfunctions ranged from borderline psychotic to criminally abusive. On the night when Nemesis was born, yet another late-night argument with Trudy's drunk common-law husband turned violent. She fled the cheap double-wide trailer they shared, and while crossing the broken rural countryside between their home and the nearest payphone, she was taken by a Fae raid. Her captor bartered her to a violent creature whose abuse made that of her mortal partner seem trifling in comparison. By all rights, she should have died several times over, during the first years she spent in his demesne. Faerie, however, is a strange place. At first, the woman who once was Trudy believed she had just become accustomed to the daily beatings and sadistic abuse. In time, however, she discovered that through the Contracts she earned with her blood and tears as part of his holding, she had been strengthened. His blows fell less painfully across her shoulders, which had become broader and stronger under his attacks. She learned from him things he never intended to teach her. Manipulation. Treachery. Ruthlessness. And how to strike when it would do the most harm. When opportunity arose, she cold-heartedly stepped over the top of other members of her Keeper's household, slowly but inexorably intertwining herself into increasingly vital places in his works. While she never shied from his blows, what little free time she could steal was spent honing the new physique her time in Faerie bestowed upon her. She worked both her speed and strength until the only individual in the household who could lay a hand upon her was her Keeper, and then she waited for him to leave the house just long enough for her to take charge.

Nemesis's rebellion was brief and vicious. As she led her fellow changeling servants away from her Keeper's household, her hands were caked with blood. Her memories led her back to the dirt crossroads from which she'd been taken, where she found herself alone on the far side of the Hedge. Unlike many of her kind, she had no desire to reclaim the pitiful excuse for a human life she'd lost. Instead, she began seeking out others who'd been wronged by the Fae, trying overtly at first to recruit changelings to her goal. The Bloody Wing gave her a place to put the tricks learned during her time in Faerie to good use.

Description: While Trudy Long was an introverted and plain-faced woman, Nemesis has blossomed into something quite different. She stands, broad-shouldered, just under six feet tall, and walks with the confidence

of someone who knows her place in the world. Her true mien is pale and faintly gray like finest marble, her hair jet black, and her features, although rough, speak of the strength she inherited from the Ogre whose Contracts once bound her. When putting forth a rare appearance as Nemesis with her talon, she uses the strongest of pledges to mask her identity. As Alice Concord, Nemesis's supposed messenger and aide, she dresses to downplay her stony nature, in stark contrast to her unyielding and often overwhelming militant persona.



Storytelling Hints: Nemesis has contacts in multiple freeholds. In order to assure herself the resources to pursue her goals, she has used every advantage — looks, brains, wit, personality and an absolute lack of conscience where her objective is concerned — to amass a veritable dynasty of finances and followers who are loyal to the Bloody Wing. Few, however, know her for the faction's leader. Most who have met her directly believe her to be Alice Concord, the faction's leader's trusted aide-de-camp. As Alice, Nemesis has deep ties to those who recruit for the Bloody Wing throughout the mundane world. She provides them with whatever incentives best suit their needs, from information to aid them in their own political and socio-economical maneuverings to physical resources and finances. Once their loyalty is gained, they are expected to contribute with commensurate devotion to the cause, allowing her to recruit others. This method, while middling effective, has not provided Nemesis with the powerbase she believes she needs in order to force widespread support for her goals, however, leaving the fanatical leader scrambling desperately for ways to bring her plans to fruition. Among the more extreme measures rumored to be used by the Bloody Wing are forced conscription, including blackmail, threats against family members and even mind- and emotion-influencing magics to garner reluctant "volunteers."

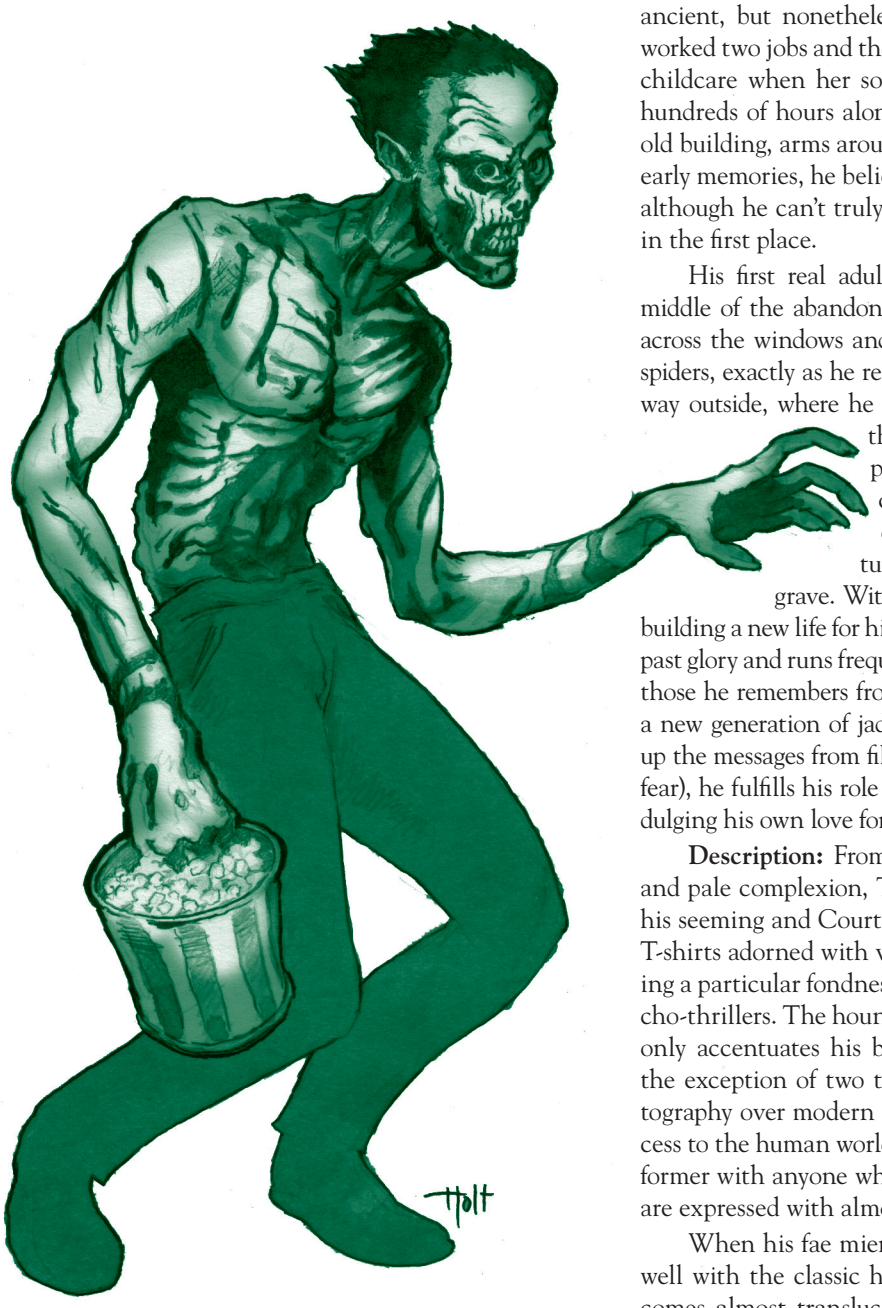
Nemesis herself is capable of portraying whatever combination of personality traits seems most likely to be effective to garner support for her organization. She can play the sophisticated diplomat, the hard-core militant or the flamboyant rebel with equal ease, often slipping from one to the other as necessary to achieve her goals.

Seeming: Ogre
Kith: Stonebones
Court: Summer
Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 4
Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3
Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 4
Mental Skills: Academics (Tactics and Strategy) 3, Computer 1, Investigation 3, Occult 3 (Fae), Politics 4
Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (Stony Fists) 4, Firearms 2, Stealth 1, Weaponry (Sword) 3
Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression 3, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 2, Socialize 3, Subterfuge (Alter Ego) 3
Merits: Contacts 3 (Militia, Summer Court, Bridge-Burners), Danger Sense, Disarm, Fast Reflexes 2, Mantle (Summer) 2, Status (Bloody Wing) 4
Willpower: 8
Clarity: 4
Virtue: Justice
Vice: Wrath
Initiative: 9
Defense: 3
Speed: 12
Health: 8
Wyrd: 2
Contracts: Darkness ••, Stone •••••, Vainglory ••; Fleeting Summer ••, Eternal Summer ••
Pledges: The warhawk prefers to bind herself in pledges in which one of her charges is oathbound to aid her in her cause, in return for her "patronage."
Glamour/per Turn: 11/2
Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Dice Pool*
Brawl	0(B)	8
Machete	2(L)	9

Bridge-Burners

The passageways between the lands of the Fae and the lands of humans are fraught with danger. But no risk found on the path is as great as the fact that they exist at all, at least according to some. These radical separationists believe the only safety from the insanity of Faerie and the predation of the True Fae comes in cutting off passage between Arcadia and the mortal world entirely. And they are willing to sacrifice anything — the lives of those still in Faerie, the safety of those around them, even their own changeling powers and eventually their lives — to ensure their goals come to fruition.



Burgeoning Terrorist

Quote: *"The alternatives may not be pretty, but… I've seen Hell. I'm not going back."*

Background: Terrance remembers almost nothing of his time in Faerie. Some changelings believe this is a mercy. Terrance isn't so sure. The experiences may not be available to his conscious mind, but they seep through the cracks into his subconscious often enough to make him doubt his sanity. One thing he doesn't doubt, however: whether the things he imagines really happened or whether they're just inspired by his experiences there, he never wants to go back.

His early human recollections center around memories of a dark theater and hours spent raptly staring at the ancient, but nonetheless captivating, screen. His mother worked two jobs and the rundown theater was cheaper than childcare when her son wasn't in school. Terrance spent hundreds of hours alone in the darkness of the cavernous old building, arms around a bucket of stale popcorn. Those early memories, he believes, led him back out of the Hedge, although he can't truly recall how he got into, or out of, it in the first place.

His first real adult memories are of standing in the middle of the abandoned theater that was, save for boards across the windows and doors and a copious population of spiders, exactly as he remembered it as a child. He made his way outside, where he was soon discovered by members of the local freehold. With their help, he pieced together bits and pieces of his childhood memories enough to track down his mother, who had, unfortunately, worked herself into an early grave. With few other choices, Terrance began building a new life for himself. He's returned the theater to its past glory and runs frequent showings of vintage films such as those he remembers from his youth. By sharing horror with a new generation of jaded youth (and occasionally backing up the messages from film with a firsthand "encounter" with fear), he fulfills his role in the Scarecrow Ministry while indulging his own love for classic horror films.

Description: From his lanky stature to his ebon hair and pale complexion, Terrance seems the epitome of both his seeming and Court. He dresses predominantly in black T-shirts adorned with various movie advertisements, showing a particular fondness for 1950s monster movies and psycho-thrillers. The houndstooth blazer he wears over the top only accentuates his boyish looks. He's soft-spoken, with the exception of two topics: the merit of vintage cinematography over modern works and the need to sever Fae access to the human world. While he will heatedly debate the former with anyone who will listen, his views on the latter are expressed with almost clinical preciseness.

When his fae mien is in evidence, Terrance blends in well with the classic horror films he reveres. His skin becomes almost translucently pale, with dark eyes recessed deeply in shadowed sockets and thin cracked lips peeled back to reveal a gnarled mouthful of rotted teeth. His slim form is cadaverous, riddled through with leprous sores and unhealed wounds from which dark ichor oozes.

Storytelling Hints: Terrance teeters on the razor edge between radical belief and terrorist action. His nights are filled with terrible dreams of being lost in the Hedge, half-remembered memories of his time in Faerie and the dark recollection of things he had to do to escape it. During daylight hours, he seems quite logical in his goals, but his dedication to them is fueled by the nights he wakes up drenched in cold sweat with the hoofbeats of the Fae Hunt still echoing in his mind. For years, Terrance has attempted to garner

support for his quest: to close off all access to the mortal world near his freehold — and eventually throughout the world. He has to date gained little headway.

Recently, Terrance's nightmares have been getting worse. Memories of his time in Faerie are beginning to re-emerge unbidden: horrific recollections that only add fuel to his fervor to sever all passages into or out of the lands that haunt him. He's coming to realize that the chances of enlisting others to aid in his quest are slim, and has begun making plans to take action on his own. He's filled the theater with stockpiles of highly flammable material, which he plans to use to destroy the trod at its heart. He regrets having to do it; the building is his home, and he fears that a fire sufficiently large to destroy it and the trod will likely spread to the inhabited buildings on either side. But as long as the trod exists, the danger exists with it. Perhaps, when that byway is severed, the rest of the changelings will see realize the danger and see how effective it is to cut themselves off from the Hedge, and thus the Fair Lands, completely. If not, he will have at least blocked one entryway, and perhaps given himself some respite from the encroaching nightmares.

Seeming: Darkling

Kith: None

Court: Autumn

Entitlements: Scarecrow Minister

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics (Cinema) 4, Computer 1, Investigation 2, Occult (Changelings) 2, Politics (Changeling Society) 2, Science 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Firearms 1, Larceny 3, Stealth 3, Survival 1

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression 2, Persuasion 2, Socialize 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Encyclopedic Knowledge, Mantle (Autumn) 3, Resources 3

Willpower: 5

Clarity: 4

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 6

Defense: 2

Speed: 11

Health: 8

Wyrd: 3

Contracts: Darkness •••••, Fang and Talon (Bats) ••, Fleeting Autumn ••

Pledges: No permanent pledges. Similar to many bridge-burners, he has difficulty feeling safe in long-term bindings, particularly those enforced by Glamour.

Glamour/per Turn: 12/3

Soulless

Arcadia is no place for a human, a fact that is made painfully clear by the effect entering has on the human soul. Those who pass through the Hedge, as captives of the Fae or through their own wanderings, often feel that a part of them begins to wither: the unique spark that made them human. Relief of sorts comes with the return, and the Lost have come to believe that their souls are reunited with them when they reach mortal soil once more.

Then there are those who weren't so lucky. An unfortunate few find themselves back in the world of humans, and yet the shard of their own humanity remains painfully elusive. Perhaps they spent too long in the lands of Fae and were sent back through the Hedge long after their human souls had withered and died. Perhaps the horrors they endured at the hands of their Fae Keepers were so great that their own souls now reject returning to their fae-tainted psyches. Or perhaps they are merely the victims of fate; the unlucky one-in-a-million for whom something cataclysmic goes wrong, denying them any hope of returning to even semi-human existences.

Whatever reason denies them its return, the changelings that others call Soulless are horrific. Unfettered by human morals, incapable of human emotions, these creatures are the closest rivals to True Fae in alien nature, if thankfully not in power. Soulless beings have no concern for the balance of Clarity; they often epitomize such extremes that the idea of "balance" is antithetical to them.

Some are controlled only by a desire to destroy, inflicting immediate and devastating damage on the world they return to. They may set themselves up as snipers on school grounds, suicidal bombers or abusive authority figures. Others are driven to subtler, but no less amoral, goals. More subtle ones may mimic normal humans or changelings for a time while wreaking untold damage below the surface. Unfortunately, while they are no longer fettered by Clarity, they do not lose their knack for changeling magic. They retain access to whatever Contracts or pledges they forged and learned in Faerie, and are just as single-minded about striking new ones, should it suit their goals.

Where most changelings may find it difficult to pick back up their human lives, the Soulless may do whatever is necessary to reclaim the lives that were stolen from them. They do this not from affection for family or friends, or a desire to truly become the people they were once more. Instead, they simply find their earlier identities the most expedient roles to slip back into — niches tailor-made for them, with only a few messy details required to reclaim them. Their fetches, should they exist, are eliminated with stark efficiency. If friends or family members notice the sudden change between the pseudo-human fetch and the newly returned Soulless (if indeed the two were all that different), their concerns are ignored, with no attempt made to ex-

plain them away. Why, after all, should the Soulless care if those around them are uncomfortable or suspicious? The exception, of course, is those who are adamant enough in their concerns to inconvenience the Soulless significantly. Similar to the fetch, such individuals are most often dealt with quickly, efficiently and without the slightest regret.

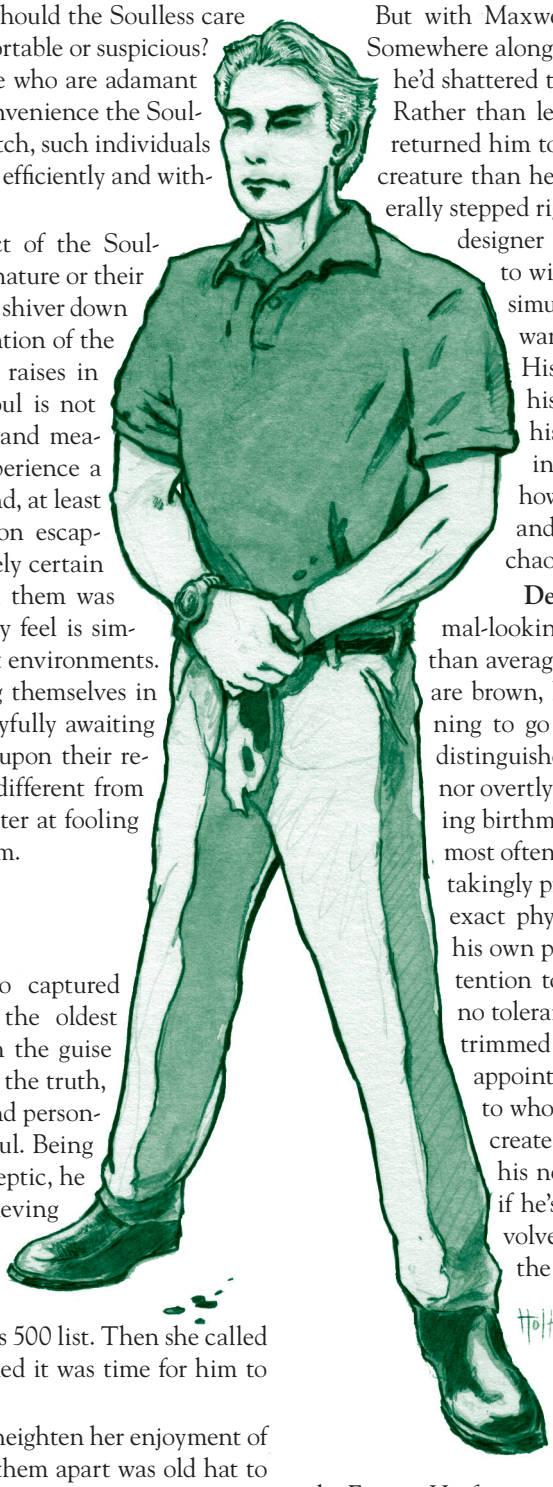
The most frightening aspect of the Soulless, however, is not their amoral nature or their ruthless drive. What sends the icy shiver down any changeling's spine at the mention of the Soulless is the niggling doubt it raises in the back of their minds. The soul is not a tangible thing, to be weighed and measured. While all changelings experience a withering upon entering Faerie and, at least by contrast, a strengthening upon escaping, it is impossible to be absolutely certain that whatever was stripped from them was truly returned. Perhaps what they feel is simply a reaction to the two different environments. Perhaps they are merely deluding themselves in thinking that their souls were joyfully awaiting the chance to merge with them upon their return. Perhaps they are truly no different from the Soulless themselves, only better at fooling themselves and those around them.

Serial Killer

Quote: *"Game over."*

Background: The Fae who captured Maxwell Stevens used one of the oldest tricks in the book. Appearing in the guise of a financial mogul, she told him the truth, offering success in his business and personal life in exchange for Stevens' soul. Being the epitome of a jaded modern skeptic, he laughingly accepted, never believing that the contract was more than a rather dated joke. Five years later, he'd followed her advice and parlayed his company onto the Forbes 500 list. Then she called for one last meeting, and explained it was time for him to pay his debt.

Building up humans only to heighten her enjoyment of their degradation when she tore them apart was old hat to his Keeper. She kept him in Faerie, one day for each day of his success, and each moment spent in her "care" brought a new torment with it. Her final torture was releasing him with full memories of his time spent with her, and sending him back to try to piece together a life in the human world. She thoroughly expected to gain another five years of pleasure from watching him scramble through the trials of human poverty, and possibly insanity.



But with Maxwell she'd done her work too well. Somewhere along the five-year-long path of torment, he'd shattered to an extent she hadn't anticipated. Rather than leaving him a broken human, she'd returned him to the mortal world quite a different creature than he'd been. When he returned, he literally stepped right back into the tailored suits and designer shoes of his old life, pausing only to wipe the oily ichor of his fetch's slain simulacrum from them before going forward with his new life and his "game." His Keeper, although entertained by his actions, is slightly disappointed at his seeming composure upon returning to the human world. Eventually, however, she believes he will crack, and she looks forward to watching the chaos when he does.

Description: Stevens is a very normal-looking individual, with slightly better than average height, build, and looks. His eyes are brown, his hair a shade darker and beginning to go to steel gray at the temples in a distinguished fashion. His skin is neither pale nor overtly tanned, and he has no distinguishing birthmarks or scars to draw attention. He most often wears casual business attire, painstakingly pressed and unerringly altered to his exact physical specifications. He maintains his own person with the same meticulous attention to which he gives his "game," with no tolerance for deviation. His hair is neatly trimmed and nails manicured at a standing appointment every two weeks, by a woman to whom he barely speaks. His clothing is created by the same tailor who catered to his needs before his time in Faerie, and if he's noticed Stevens' reduction in involvement in the choice of his clothing, the tailor's not mentioned it — fortunately for him. Maxwell's wife was not so lucky.

His fae mien is unearthly, but in an oddly subdued way. His hair remains short and well-groomed, but takes on the luster common to the Fairest. His features are flawless and slightly attenuated, and his eyes are deep and empty pools of black. Though any changeling would notice him as one of the Lost, he would be easily overlooked among his more vibrant cousins, a gray dove obscured by the colors of a tropical aviary.

Storytelling Hints: Stevens' daily routines are as structured as his toilette, save for the time dedicated to pursuit of his game, which, although meticulously planned, supplants any other activity. The basics of the "game" are

simple. Take someone and reduce him to his base components, physically, mentally, emotionally and eventually, literally. The pawns in the game could be anyone who catches Maxwell's eye. Age, sex and appearance matter little. Nor does he have a particular "type." In fact, preferring a challenge, he rarely seeks out similar victims from one "game" to the next.

Once his victim is chosen, he observes her until he has determined her routine. For some pawns, this takes a matter of days. For others, weeks or months. Once determined, he chooses the precise moment when they are least likely to be missed, and simply removes them from their world, pulling them into the Hedge into his private Hollow. This nook, although not large, suits Stevens' needs exactly. It gleams with stainless steel walls and bright chrome instruments. Retractable chain leads and eyebolts dot the room, conveniently placed for pawns of a wide variety of sizes. Propane jets heat surgical-grade implements to cherry-red within moments, and glass-front cabinets conceal a veritable cornucopia of acids, narcotics, poisons and placebos to ensure his game never grows boring. And, at the center, a tapered drain, complete with a disposal capable of pulverizing even the heaviest bones, ensures that the Hollow is easily returned to the pristine state he prefers, post-game.

As his Keeper was before him, Stevens is motivated entirely by his own amusement. He takes great pains to avoid detection and capture, not because he fears it, but because it would put an end, at least temporarily, to his game. He sees everyone around him as a pawn, picturing himself above them all in his role as the master player. When challenged, whether by an investigating officer or a nosey family member, Stevens quickly assesses his "opponent" and sets about ruthlessly bringing them to utter defeat in the most degrading and debilitating way possible. He takes great pleasure in not only killing those who challenge him but by transforming them from player to pawn. Once he has them utterly helpless, physically and emotionally stripped bare, he then continues with his normal "play." Mrs. Stevens was the first of his "opponents." He keeps her wedding ring — and the finger on which it still rests — as a memento of his first victory.

In the past years, Stevens has played his game against many "opponents," and won every time. Recently, however, he's begun to grow bored. Humans can be such narrow and two-dimensional creatures, breaking far earlier than he himself had under his Keeper's devoted attentions. He's turned his attentions to bigger challenges, eschewing human pawns for those with a bit more stamina — supernatural stamina.

Seeming: Fairest

Kith: None

Court: Courtless

Entitlements: None

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Computer 2, Investigation 4, Medicine (Anatomy) 1, Occult (The Hedge) 1, Politics 1, Science (Chemistry) 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Drive 1, Larceny 1, Stealth 3, Weaponry (Knife) 4

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression 1, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Socialize 1, Subterfuge 4

Merits: Fast Reflexes 2, Fresh Start, Hollow 8 (Size •, Amenities •, Doors ••, Wards ••••) Iron Stomach, Weaponry Dodge, Resources 3

Willpower: 8

Initiative: 9

Defense: 3

Speed: 11

Health: 8

Wyrd: 4

Contracts: Mirror ••, Smoke ••, Vainglory •••; Goblin: Fair Entrance (••)

Pledges: Similar to many Soulless, the Serial Killer avoids forging pledges on anything but the most temporary basis.

Glamour/per Turn: 13/4

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Dice Pool*
Brawl	0 (B)	6
Knife	1 (L)	9

Mortals

While other changelings may be among the most dangerous enemies the wayfarers may encounter, humans are more numerous and in many cases just as deadly. Even without guiding fae influence, bureaucrats, police investigators and general busybodies, those who somehow become aware of a changeling's supernatural existence, can be significant adversaries for the Lost. Likewise, human bodyguards, strong-arms and hit men can be just as dangerous to a changeling as a supernatural foe, especially when outfitted with weapons and protections designed specifically for dealing with non-human adversaries. When strengthened by the bestowments of a changeling benefactor, an ensorcelled human can prove to be a significant adversary to anyone whom the human's mentor targets him toward.

Oathbound Protector

Quote: *"Something about your story doesn't add up, and you're not going anywhere until we get to the bottom of this."*

Background: Close to 20 years ago, Officer Pitts was investigating what promised to be a routine break-and-enter case. Neighbors, alerted by howling dogs, called complaining of a vagrant moving around in an abandoned building on their block. Pitts went in, expecting to find a drug deal,

and instead discovered a bedraggled young girl attempting to escape from what appeared to be a giant of a man dressed in black, emerging from the decrepit house's basement. The officer called for the man to stop, and the attacker turned on him instead. To his credit, Pitts held his ground, even when the stranger reached for him with arms twice as long as a human's. According to procedure, Pitts ordered the creature to stop, and when it continued forward, emptied his entire service revolver into a three-inch diameter grouping in its chest. The stranger didn't even slow down, batting the officer aside like a child's plaything as it reached for the screaming girl again. Luck was on Pitts's side that night. The creature's blow knocked him into the garden fencing, jarring free a length of wrought iron that he swung, like a baseball bat, at his foe. The iron caught the stranger off guard, giving the girl time to escape. Pitts, on the other hand, was left with nothing but a piece of bent iron and an angry… something charging at him. The Fae knocked Pitts over and leapt atop him, and only blind luck saved the police officer's life. The fencing jammed in the soft soil next to Pitts, and the stranger's attack impaled it on the metal. Pitts squirmed out from under the creature's body as it writhed on the iron rod. As he scrambled for his radio, he paused in disbelief as the corpse in black was suddenly no longer there. There was nothing but a tattered green garbage bag impaled upon the iron stake.



The girl returned, creeping up on him while he was still staring at the fluttering litter. She introduced herself as Lovenia Stain, and within a week, he was working for her. It took much longer for him to earn her trust and for her to begin to reveal a glimpse of the half-mad world she dwells within.

Description: Pitts doesn't look his 64 years. In fact, during the last 20 years, he hasn't aged a bit. His hair still shows only the slightest feathering of gray at the temples, and the crow's feet at the corners of his eyes are more a result of his usual stern countenance than age. He's extremely fit for a man nearing retirement, his shoulders broad and his waist as narrow as it was when he first met Lovenia almost two decades ago. He is most at home in his uniform, to the extent that even his casual clothing tends to incorporate the same navy shades and crisp pleats. He earned the "Pit Bull" moniker for his tenacious work ethic and investigative abilities, but his strong jaw and square features don't detract from the nickname.

Storytelling Hints: Robert Pitts became a cop back when high school kids smoking cigarettes in public was a crime worthy of police attention. In the 45 years he's been on the force, he's seen his town's population more than double, its murder rates skyrocket and violent crime become an everyday occurrence. Girls turn up pregnant younger every year, and the average age of thieves, drug abusers and murderers falls even faster. Tobacco was replaced by marijuana as the drug of choice for teens, which was in turn replaced by coke, crack and crystal meth in rapid succession. Pitts has weathered it all with stoic diligence, despite wages that haven't increased and death threats that have. Nothing seems to surprise the "Pit Bull" — perhaps because he knows that no matter what evil humanity is capable of, there's much worse walking the streets he patrols.

Pitts is an example of an ally who is not actually ensorcelled, but who has received a minor blessing and is still quite useful. He suspects that there is something "not quite right" about his association with Lovenia, but he'd be skeptical of the idea that she wasn't really human anymore. He does suspect there are things in the world that "normal folks" don't know about and wouldn't understand if they did — and that, unfortunately, the average citizen's lack of information and comprehension don't protect them from what's out there. He and Lovenia have struck up a mutually beneficial agreement. At the most surprising times, she will often have exactly the piece of information he needs to crack the hardest dead-end cases. And he, in exchange, follows up on some of the leads she drops his direction.

For Pitts, the arrangement is ideal. His success rate on homicides, missing persons and violent crime cases is easily double that of any other officer on the force, thanks in no small part to Lovenia's tips. And, while her leads have led to investigations that may not have been strictly by the book, they've always ended up revealing crimes of a sufficiently graphic nature to alleviate any misgivings he may have had about the source of his information. He just tries not to think too hard about the obviously inhuman nature of some of the things she sends him against.

For Lovenia, the relationship is just as idyllic. She occasionally uses a Contract to divine information her pet human requires for his work, and in exchange, her adversaries and their minions are quickly and efficiently dealt with whenever they garner too much power or block her goals too effectively. And, should she need direct protection, she knows just whom to call for an "escort" through a troubled situation.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Computer 1, Investigation (Detective) 4, Occult 1, Politics 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Drive 2, Firearms (Revolver) 3, Stealth 2, Survival 1, Weaponry (Nightstick) 3

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 2, Socialize 1, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Contacts 3, Danger Sense, Disarm, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 3, Fresh Start, Iron Stamina 3*, Quick Draw, Status (Police) 3

Willpower: 8

Morality: 5

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 9

Defense: 3

Speed: 11

Health: 9

Pledges: The Oathbound Protector receives the benefits of a pledge with the task of medial alliance and the boon of a blessing of fortitude (granting the benefits of Iron Stamina 3). A side effect of this blessing is that he seemingly does not age. Should he break this pledge, the blessing is lost, and his age will catch up to him, granting him an age-related Flaw such as Lame (see the World of Darkness Rulebook, p. 219). [Task: Alliance (–2); Boon: Blessing (+2); Sanction: Flaw (–2); Duration: Season (+2)]

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Range*	*Dice Pool*
Brawl	0(B)	–	7
Nightstick	2(B)	–	9
Lt. Revolver	2(L)	20/40/80	7

Fae-Struck

While some changeling pawns may not fully realize their patrons' nature, other changeling pawns are blissfully aware. Just as superstars, politicians and religious leaders have their smitten followers, so do the changelings. A fae groupie may have grown up feeling like an outsider to human society, longing for some explanation for this alienation. Those who've stumbled across the existence of changelings may believe they have discovered the reason. Some may even falsely believe themselves to be changelings, rather than simply socially inept. However, once indoctrinated into the reality of the situation, they often become obsessed with the fae. This obsession is predominantly fueled simply by their belief that their contact with changelings marks them as "special" rather than just "weird." Some become obsessed pawns of one changeling or another, and their blind loyalty is manipulated by their patrons' adroit machinations and used to promote their own goals or thwart those of other Courts, orders or individual adversaries with unswaying dedication. Others may aspire to "win" the same "power" that they perceive changelings as having, seeking out greater and greater ensorcellments to make them more and more "special." Some eventually grow dissatisfied even with the wonders available to fae allies and use their contact with the lost to try to attract the attention of the True Fae and engineer their own kidnapping into Faerie. These may not only be a danger to their mentor's enemies, but to their mentors themselves, as they fumble their way through attempts to attract the attention of those the Lost would rather avoid.

Fae-struck individuals are often not as overtly influential as those with a firmer grasp on "reality" (as humans know it). They may simply be young or immature, their naiveté leaving them vulnerable to fae manipulations. Or, in many cases, they may be genuinely dysfunctional, unable to thrive within the "real" world and quickly accepting any explanation (outside of their own inadequacy) that justifies their inability to hold down a job, maintain a relationship or function well in human society. But effective or no, there is something to be said for the power of fanaticism, and the fae-struck possess that a-plenty.

Devoted Groupie

Quote: *"I always knew there was something else out there… something more… real."*

Background: As the only son and heir to a wealthy political family's fortune, Michael Wyndham never had to work for what he desired. Discontented with his lot, however, he immersed himself in fantasies of a more noble and romantic time, focusing his education and leisure on the pre-Raphaelite and Victorian eras with an emphasis on literature and art, rather than following in his father's business and political footsteps. While still very much the pampered son, he was approached by a motley that had scoped him out as a potential resource. In the changelings, Wyndham saw an answer to the seemingly pointlessness of his mundane existence.



Description: Effete and beautiful, Michael Wyndham could have sat for one of the masters as the epitome of boyish charm. He affects a romantic version of gothic fashion, carrying it off with careless aplomb few who were not raised in the cradle of privilege could muster. His lean grace and striking good looks make him a favorite of the Fairest, for although he cannot rival their beauty, he at least does not offend their senses by appearing as mundane as most humans.

Storytelling Hints: While he may not be the strongest or most combat-ready of adversaries, Wyndham is dangerous because he is a fanatic. Discovering the existence of the fae has validated what had been, up to that point, a meaningless life. He appears utterly devoted to the Lost who have recruited him to their cause, and will not hesitate to put his considerable intellect and resources to their aid, providing research, weapons, manpower, sanctuary and whatever else his family's money and influence can buy. In this way, he may well end up as an adversarial force to any changelings who opposed those he is aligned with.

Wyndham poses just as great a threat to his associates as to their enemies, however, although they do not realize it. He has become obsessed with the idea of becoming a changeling himself, hoping at first to be "turned" or transformed by his new compatriots. Upon discovering that this is an impossibility, he has begun subtly pumping those he associates with for information on how they were taken by the Fair Folk or came to find Faerie themselves. Given the opportunity, he will do anything in his power to draw the attention of the True Fae, in hopes of being taken away and made a changeling himself, despite having been warned of the horrific realities of this fate. He is, however, undaunted. To this end, he will pay any cost — including sacrificing the motley he is allied with — in hopes of realizing what he believes now to be his true destiny.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 1

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (Literature) 4, Computer 3, Investigation 3, Occult (Fae) 2, Politics 2, Science 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Drive 1, Larceny 1, Stealth 1, Weaponry (Fencing) 1

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression 2, Persuasion 2, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Encyclopedic Knowledge, Contacts (City Hall) 2, Resources 4, Striking Looks 2

Willpower: 6

Morality: 5

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Speed: 10

Health: 6

Pledges: Ensorcelled (The Ancient Pact)

Weapons/Attacks:

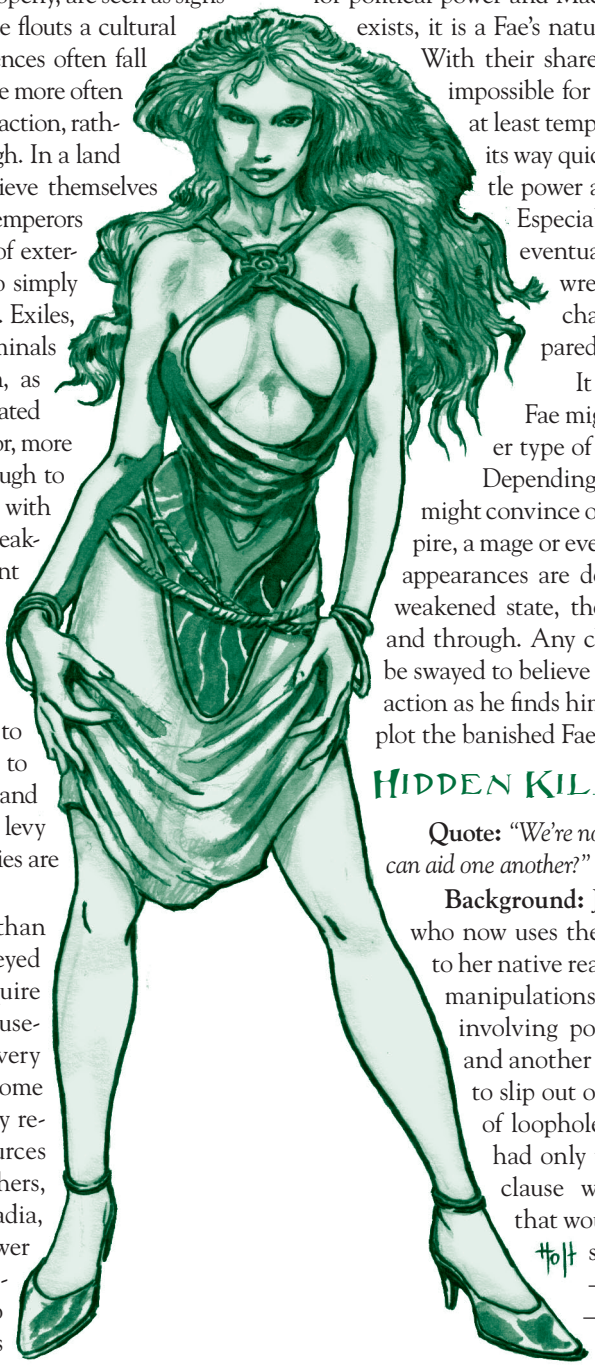
Type	*Damage*	*Range*	*Dice Pool*	*Special*
Rapier	2(L)	–	4	–

The Banished

Things in Faerie are often not what they seem. As the touch of the True Fae extends out into the lands of humanity, that rule extends along with it. Changelings' seemings rest just below the surface of the reality that humans can perceive. The Hedge waits hungrily on the borderlands between Faerie and the human world, caring little for whether its victims "believe" or not. Even the staunchest friend may be a foe in disguise, warily eluding bonds of oath that might betray their duplicity. The Banished are but another example of this phenomenon.

It is difficult for humans to imagine what atrocities might be great enough for one of the Fae to be cast out of their homeland. In a "society" where duplicity, manipulation, betrayal and bloodlust are no more than foibles, crimes deserving of banishment are few and far between. Most of those who have been

exiled from Faerie are not criminals, per se, in the sense of having caused harm to other denizens of Faerie or broken the laws of their culture. These things are not only expected of the Fae, but, as long as they're done properly, are seen as signs of strength. If one of the True Fae flouts a cultural covenant and fails, the consequences often fall heavily upon her head, but they are more often inflicted as a direct reaction to her action, rather than as a judgment from on high. In a land where most powerful entities believe themselves to be, if not gods, then at least emperors in their own demesnes, the idea of external justice is weak, as opposed to simply consequences of any given action. Exiles, therefore, are less likely to be criminals as humans would describe them, as opposed to those who have violated their Contracts with Faerie itself, or, more often, who have been foolish enough to bind themselves into Contracts with banishment as a sanction for breaking it. Because of this, banishment sanctions might be among the most severe used amongst the True Fae, and are rarely permanent. Being separated from Faerie permanently is a death sentence to creatures that are, if legends are to be believed, essential immortal, and even "short" sanctions that would levy banishments of decades or centuries are not entered into lightly.



Although far less powerful than those who have merely journeyed into the human realm to acquire slaves or for some other Fae amusement, the Banished still pose a very real threat to any changeling. Some hope to earn themselves an early reprieve by bartering valuable resources (such as changeling slaves). Others, resigned to life away from Arcadia, set out to establish their own power base in the human world, using whatever abilities are left to them to build their own regimes and make themselves veritable deities among the mortals they manipulate. These often include the same powerful or influential humans that changelings desire to use for their own purposes, resorting in a resource struggle. As well, a banished Fae may take sadistic pleasure in gaining control of friends and family of Lost and weaving them in as pawns in their manipulative games.

Other Banished play a more devious game, masquerading as weaker fae and dealing directly with Lost society. They are better-suited to this than one might expect. Many aspects of changeling society are based loosely upon those they remember from their time in Arcadia, and if a hierarchy for political power and Machiavellian machinations already exists, it is a Fae's nature to try to take advantage of it. With their shared knowledge of Faerie, it is not impossible for a banished Other to mask itself, at least temporarily, as a changeling, and work its way quickly into positions of overt or subtle power among those they once enslaved. Especially for those who know they will eventually return to Faerie, the price for wreaking great havoc from within changeling society is very low, compared to all of the potential benefits.

It is even possible that a banished Fae might masquerade himself as another type of supernatural creature altogether. Depending on his nature and visage, he might convince others that he is a werewolf, a vampire, a mage or even something entirely unique. But appearances are deceiving, and regardless of their weakened state, the Banished remain Fae through and through. Any changeling who allows himself to be swayed to believe otherwise will eventually rue the action as he finds himself tightly woven into whatever plot the banished Fae has set into motion.

Hidden Killer

Quote: *"We're not so different, you and I. Perhaps we can aid one another?"*

Background: Just as many of her kind, the Fae who now uses the name "Keri Urban" lost access to her native realm as the result of her own failed manipulations. In a particularly intricate plot involving power exchanges between herself and another Fae, she bargained on being able to slip out of her pledges through the tiniest of loopholes. Unfortunately, her opponent had only feigned ignorance of the escape clause while setting up circumstances that would force her to betray her oath if she attempted to use it. Her exile — "for a hundred fae lifetimes" — was among the most severe ever meted out in Fae history, although like everything else in Faerie, it is not exactly as it seems. Through her own divining and the reading of omens, Urban believes she has found a loophole, and she has begun to put a plan into motion that she believes will allow her not only to return to Arcadia, but to do so more powerful than when she left.

Description: Although the True Fae often retain their ability to take on their natural form when out on the hunt or otherwise traveling in the human world, banished Fae

no longer has this ability. They are condemned to a more mundane (if such a term can ever be used to refer to one of the Fair Folk) existence. Urban's mortal form is but a pale shadow of the one she chose to wear in Faerie, let alone her truest form. That is not to say, however that it is anything near to mundane. She stands near to six feet tall, with a curvaceous build that would put a valkyrie to shame. Her hair falls nearly to her waist in a tangle of golds, oranges and reds, and her beauty is enough to cause traffic accidents when she walks down the street.

Storytelling Hints: Even a decade in the mortal realm is not enough for an essentially immortal being to adapt completely to life away from Faerie. Urban often comes across as very low Clarity, perhaps even dangerously so, even to those she has wooed into trusting her. She deals much more adeptly with changeling society than that of humans, and uses the ties she's developed with her local freehold as a buffer against those things that she not only cannot understand but has no desire to expend the effort toward learning. Her goal is singular, if clandestine, and anything that does not directly support that goal is beyond the range of her interest.

The Fae who calls herself Keri Urban lost the vast majority of her powers when she was exiled from Faerie. That being said, she is still a powerful entity, rivaling the strength of an experienced and adept changeling. For someone used to being a god in her own world, however, this is a severe handicap. Many of the Contracts that Urban once possessed are with aspects of Arcaedia itself, making them useless once her ties to that world have been severed. She still possesses some supernatural acumen, however, and no small measure of charm that, when coupled with eons of experience in high-stakes games of manipulation and intrigue, make her the match for almost any human or changeling she encounters.

Urban believes that the key to undoing her banishment early lies in a broad interpretation of "one hundred fae lifetimes." In order to end her exile, she believes that she must offer enough years of fae life — not necessarily her own — to equal a hundred fae lifetimes, through sacrifices to the Hedge that currently separates her from her homeland. Once she realized that she was not doomed merely to wait out her eons of imprisonment, but could whittle away at it through butchery, she quickly turned to setting this plan in action. As she is vastly less powerful than any of the unbanished True Fae she might encounter, the obvious solution is to sacrifice changelings instead. Rightfully fearing the wrath of an entire freehold brought down upon her, were she to merely set about waylaying and killing their members, Urban has infiltrated her local freehold and established herself well in its ranks. Her role as a Duchess of the Icebound Heart comes naturally to her, as does her place as a dedicated member of the Winter Court. Unfortunately for those around her, the fact that she seems to be an epitome of both is due in a large part to her True Fae nature.

Seeming: While Urban does not actually possess a changeling seeming, she is most often mistaken for (and masquerades as) one of the Fairest.

Court: Winter

Entitlements: Duchy of the Icebound Heart

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 5, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Investigation 2, Medicine (Intoxicants) 3, Occult (Fae) 4, Politics (Changeling) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Larceny 3, Stealth 2, Survival 2, Weaponry (Rapier) 4

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Expression 3, Intimidation 4, Persuasion (Seduction) 4, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 5

Merits: Fast Reflexes 2, Fighting Finesse (Rapier), Iron Stamina 3, Natural Immunity, Striking Looks 4, Mantle (Winter) 4

Willpower: 7

Clarity: 3

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 9

Defense: 4

Speed: 12

Health: 8

Wyrd: 7

Contracts: Darkness ••, Elements (fire) •••, Vainglory •••••

Pledges: The Banished is exceptionally cautious about binding herself to pledges with changelings, and avoids doing so unless absolutely necessary. Mortals are her preferred target.

Glamour/per Turn: 20/7

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Dice Pool*
Rapier	2(L)	11

Hobgoblins

Caught between the world of Faerie and mortal lands, the Hedge is home to a bizarre plethora of beings the likes of which are seen nowhere else. Some are constructed, willed and crafted into being by the True Fae, and then lost or discarded when their fae interest wanes. Others are freed intentionally to guard the byways of the Brambles against intruders. Some of the most macabre seem to be manifestations of the Hedge itself, weird creatures that make their home in the inhospitable Thorns, or have carved out a niche for themselves in a Hollow. These entities run the gamut from sentience to merely reacting to stimuli, and vary in size from infinitesimal to hulking masses. Some are stationary, others lethally mobile. And while some small few are fairly innocuous, seemingly content to merely eke out an existence in this bizarre zone, many are violently predatory. Unfortunately for those who must make their

way through, looks are often deceiving, and what seems to be a harmless denizen might easily be their downfall. Just as the clearest passageways through the Hedge can hold the most danger, so the most mundane encounters within its walls can quickly turn deadly.

Briarwolves

Quote: [blood-curdling howl]

Background: Although the Hedge can be lethal to those who tarry too long in its thorny pathways, not all who get lost within the Bramble die, at least not right away. The supernatural realm imposes changes upon them, even if they do not travel all the way into Faerie proper. Or so say some rumors that try to explain the existence of the terrifying predators known as briarwolves. Others claim that briarwolves are merely manifestations of the fear and danger of the Hedge itself come to life in a physical form. Since these creatures are sometimes used as hounds by the True Fae, some believe that briarwolves are magically created by the Fair Folk (perhaps from among their more recalcitrant slaves) to discourage changeling servants from attempting to return to the mortal realm. No matter where they came from, briarwolves are some of the singularly most frightening creatures that make their home in the Hedge.

Description: The most fearsome aspect of briarwolves is not their razor-sharp claws or their gaping muzzles full of jagged teeth. It's not even the smell of old blood that surrounds them as a product of their preferred hunting style or the eerie echoes of their howls to one another through the Thorns. The single most terrifying thing about briarwolves is that they're human — or at least they were at one point.

Although they run just as easily on four legs as two, they are completely capable of standing bipedal, especially if it aids with their hunting. And while they may possess almost any combination of human and animal predator physical characteristics, their eyes always retain a human aspect.

Storytelling Hints: When a briarwolf pack has located its quarry, the members begin to stalk it from a distance, baying out to one another across the thickets of the Hedge. Although they are certainly capable of stealth, they prefer to announce their presence, raising as much fear in their prey as possible before beginning their actual attack. Their howls tend to create a flight reaction in those who hear them, inciting panic and sometimes even flushing an otherwise safe victim from its sanctuary.

Once the pack's prey has begun to flee, the chase is on. Briarwolves eat meat, but also feed upon emotions, with a strong preference for fear, pain and desperation. To this end, briarwolves will chase their intended victim to the point of exhaustion, nipping first at non-vital bits to injure, but not seriously debilitate, their prey. As the hunt continues, and the victim's adrenaline soars, the pack will move in to inflict more and more serious injuries, each time allowing the victim to scramble onward for a while before the next attack. Tracking someone who has been hunted by briarwolves is a grisly business as his trail produces first nothing more than frenzied footprints accompanied by a light splatter of blood but then begins to manifest increasingly gory evidence of the pack's sadistic savagery. Near the end of the hunt, briarwolves are renowned for eviscerating their quarry in such a fashion that the entrails spill forth from the abdomen without killing the victim. The pack then chases the prey through the thickest parts of the Hedge, leaving bloody gobbets of flesh and organ on the Thorns in their wake, before finally moving in for the kill.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Investigation (Tracking) 4



Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl (Claws) 5, Stealth 5, Survival 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Prey Reactions) 3, Intimidation 3

Merits: Danger Sense, Brawling Dodge, Direction Sense, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 3, Fresh Start, Iron Stamina 3

Willpower: 5

Initiative: 8

Defense: 3

Speed: 15

Health: 9

Wyrd: 2

Contracts: Darkness •••••; Elements •, Fang and Talon (Wolf) ••••

Pledges: None

Glamour/per Turn: 11/2

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Dice Pool*
Brawl	0(B)	8
Claws	1(L)	9
Bite	2(L)	9

Noppera-Bo

Quote: *"You are lucky I was here to help. I know a shortcut."*

Background: One of the greatest challenges facing changelings is their lack of firm identity. The Noppera-Bo are hobgoblins that seem to embody that lack of identity and use it against those who travel within the Brambles. The Noppera-Bo were perhaps born of trickery, confusion and fear, or perhaps of changeling's own self-doubts, made solid by the inherent power of the Hedge. Regardless of their nature, they are a real danger to those who travel the Hedge. Although usually more impish than overtly malevolent, the Noppera-Bo take great pleasure in tricking travelers and leading them astray, often into the same perilous situations the hobgoblins profess to be attempting to avoid. Sometimes, however, for reasons known only to them, a Noppera-Bo will directly serve the will of one of the True Fae, leading those who would follow it directly into servitude, or worse.

Description: The Noppera-Bo most often appear initially masked as normal humans or changelings. They can take the form of any kith or seeming, but most often choose appearances that are either akin to those the hobgoblins wish to trick or that will be likely to elicit sympathy from their victims. Their masked forms are normally small in stature, however, and they often appear injured, ill or simply emaciated. Noppera-Bo are especially fond of taking the shape of small children or beautiful, frail females.

Those who have encountered the Noppera-Bo report that the clothing they initially appeared in was similar in style to their own, and that the creatures spoke to them in a tongue understandable to each of the travelers. Uncertainty remains as to whether this is the result of empathetic or telepathic probing, or is instead the effect of some sort of mind-altering illusion that only makes the viewer believe in the familiarity of what she is sensing. Regardless, the Noppera-Bo will use their human or changeling seeming to work their way into the company of a group, playing up their apparent weakness or injuries to full affect.

The Noppera-Bo's natural form is much more disquieting. Roughly man-shaped, they wear formal robes and have skin as smooth and white as an eggshell. Noppera-Bo faces are utterly devoid of features (no eyes, noses, mouths or ears), and their bodies are entirely hairless.

Storytelling Hints: Although they regularly travel in groups of two to four, normally a single Noppera-Bo appears at the first encounter with any traveler or group, with the others watching covertly. Taking an innocuous form, the lead creature attempts to insinuate itself in with its would-be victims. Sometimes it will profess to have information of value



to the group: the location of an item or individual they seek or a short cut to their destination. Others times the Noppera-Bo will attempt to play upon their sympathies, hoping they will not be so cruel as to leave the "helpless" individual that it appears to be alone as they continue their journey. If, for some reason, the group does eschew the creature's company, another of the Noppera-Bo troop will attempt to connect with them using a different seeming, a short time later.

Assuming that one of the Noppera-Bo is eventually successful in connecting itself to the Hedge-travelers, it will attempt to gain their trust, offering small bits of helpful advice. The Noppera-Bo may be able to show them a safe Hollow to camp in briefly, or the location of some goblin fruit to aid in healing or perhaps lead them around some obvious obstruction or danger in their path. However, this aid is all a part of the Noppera-Bo's game. Once the creature has earned their trust, it will begin leading them into trouble, rather than away from it. Their path may be diverted to wander near the carnivorous vine patch, rather than going around it, or they may "accidentally" find that the "safe" Hollow they sought has been claimed by a hungry beast. During this time, the rest of the Noppera-Bo's troupe will fill whatever roles necessary to keep the travelers in a heightened state of tension. The Noppera-Bo may mask themselves as True Fae or some other dangerous encounter to be witnessed from afar, and thus herd the group in the "right" direction. Or, they may simply lend special effects to the "game," taking the voices of dangerous predators, or even pretending to be fallen victims of some mysterious attacker as suits the drama being woven. Noppera-Bo troops take great delight in seeing how many perils they can lead a group into before they fall under suspicion. Great kudos goes to those that are able to put their victims into several life-threatening situations in a row before being discovered, with the highest honors being given to those that are able to actually convince their quarry to sacrifice themselves to save the Noppera-Bo that has led them to their peril.

When, at last, the Noppera-Bo's duplicity has been discovered, they have one more trick to play. When confronted, they reveal their true form, hopeful that their lack of features will give their erstwhile victims one last fright before the troop escapes off into the depths of the Hedge.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Investigation 3, Occult (The Hedge) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Larceny 3, Stealth 3, Survival 3

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Expression 1, Persuasion 4, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 4

Merits: Direction Sense

Willpower: 4

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Speed: 9

Health: 7

Wyrd: 5

Contracts: Mirror ••••; Artifice ••, Darkness ••

Pledges: None

Glamour/per Turn: 14/5

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Dice Pool*
Strike	1 (B)	3

The True Fae

Thankfully for changelings, the Others are rarely encountered in the mortal world, which possesses more than enough of its own dangers. Most wayfarers will never see another Fae after having escaped Faerie, and they strongly prefer to keep it that way. Even so, the fear of the Gentry, both for their own inherent solipsistic cruelty and because of the threat of being returned to Arcadia, is one of the greatest driving forces in a changeling's life, and with good reason. When one of the Gentry is encountered, there is often little a changeling, or even a motley, can do to thwart its efforts. They are preternaturally endowed with skills and abilities the likes of which even the most adroit changeling cannot hope to rival alone. This often makes the best encounter with a True Fae the one that a changeling escapes from with his life.

The True Fae use mechanics similar to those of changelings, at least when manifesting in the mortal world. In Faerie, the True Fae's power is far less limited, something changelings know all too well.

Arcadian Huntsman

Quote: *"There is no greater sport than the Hunt."*

Background: From the dawn of time, the hunter archetype has played a vital role in the mythologies of human culture. "The Sorcerer," one of the earliest known cave paintings still in existence, immortalizes the image of a powerful hunter adorned with the sweeping rack of a stag. From India to the Celtic Isles, gods, demigods and mythological figures have appeared bearing the same combination of hunting prowess and horned visage.

No changeling knows for certain whether the Horned Hunter is one of these mythic old gods who inspired legends of the same or whether he has merely affected a similar appearance as part of his chosen role. He is, however, the epitome of the archetype: cunning, skillful and entirely ruthless in his chase. His appearance is heralded by the bugle of a hunting horn, quickly followed by the baying of his hounds. Whether in the Hedge or the human world, changelings who hear these sounds are well served to hide. Those who run from the Hunter rarely survive the chase.

In days gone by, the threat of an immortal hunter from beyond was one that even humans felt strongly. Many tales of

folklore speak about those who barely escaped the Wild Hunt with their lives, or of those who were taken and never seen again. In recent history, the Horned Hunter has rarely been seen in the mortal world, seeming to prefer the supernatural wilderlands of the Hedge for his hunting grounds. Rumors exist, however, of freeholds he has visited. Although the stories vary, certain elements remain consistent. While damage to the building and grounds was minimal, not a single changeling escaped alive. The bodies of some were found arrow-shot, gutted or hound-mauled. The rest were dragged off in chains, presumably to replace slain members of his hunting pack.



Description: Just as many of the True Fae, the Hunter can affect a variety of forms, although he certainly has favorites. He sometimes appears as a giant of a man wearing the head and neck of a massive elk, stag, bull or goat, sometimes with the lower legs or feet of the same. Other times, his face and neck are human as well, boasting broad sweeping antlers or massive sharp horns. His skin may be pale, but is more often dark as night, lit only by the pale gleam of his eyes and a trail of witch-fire.

Regardless of the form he takes, he is a powerful and electrifying sight to behold. More than one legend speaks of a changeling who, when called by name by the Hunter, left her sanctuary and went willingly to his side — and her death — simply by force of his dominating and arresting aura.

Storytelling Hints: The Horned Hunter has no interest in negotiation or communication beyond the sound of the horn and the baying of his hounds. Once his prey is chosen, he will stalk it to the borders of Faerie and beyond, using every ounce of his skill to bring his prey to ground. Those who attempt to confront him directly will find that this Fae is no creature of challenges and duels. He has no tolerance for the niceties of fae Courts, and his interactions tend to be very straightforward. He sees the world, both fae and mortal, as existing in a hierarchy of predator and prey, with himself at the apex of the food chain.

Not all of his hunts are to the death, however. His power is as much of the bower as it is of the bow, and when he sets his sights upon a conquest, few are capable of resisting. No gentle lord of poems and flowers, the Hunter pursues his carnal quarry with as great intensity as any other prey, be they male or female, young or old. He brooks no more resistance to these predations than to those of the more traditional hunt: both are most likely to end with his prey lying gasping and bleeding at his feet.

The Horned Hunter travels with a pack of shadowy hounds, forged from the shadows of his changeling prey. Use the statistics of briarwolves, above, to represent his coursers.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 6, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 6

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Investigation 5, Medicine 3, Occult (Fae) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Firearms (Bow) 6, Stealth 5, Survival 5, Weaponry (Knife) 4

Social Skills: Animal Ken 6, Empathy 3, Intimidation 6, Subterfuge 4

Merits: Danger Sense, Meditative Mind, Ambidextrous, Direction Sense, Disarm, Fast Reflexes 2, Fighting Finesse (Knife), Fleet of Foot 3, Fresh Start, Giant, Iron Stamina 3, Quick Healer, Toxin Resistance, Inspiring, Striking Looks 4

Willpower: 9

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 11

Defense: 5

Speed: 16

Health: 12

Wyrd: 8

Contracts: Smoke •••••; Fang and Talon ••••• (All animals), Stone •••, Vainglory ••••••; Eternal Autumn •••••

Glamour/per Turn: 30/8

• **Immortal Flesh:** As one of the True Fae manifested in the mortal world, the Hunter can shrug off some of the lesser slings and arrows of the mundane. Bashing damage does not affect the Hunter at all, unless delivered by a cold iron bludgeon. Cold-forged iron causes aggravated damage, should someone be skilled enough to strike him with such.

• **Ruled By Passion:** The True Fae are entities almost embodied by their passions and vices, with higher morality and self-denial little more than a whim to them. For them, passion *is* virtue, and the denial of passion an affectation. Their supernaturally amoral nature is reflected in an inverted ability to regain Willpower. The Hunter regains one Willpower point from indulging his Virtue, but refreshes his whole pool when satiating his Vice.

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Range*	*Dice Pool*
Bow	4 (L)	80/160/320	16
Knife	1 (L)	–	9

Goblin Markets

By the dark of the moon, under an abandoned overpass in the bad part of town, the fairies gather to hawk their wares. When the night of the Sabbath draws mortals home to bed, the creatures of dream set up shop in the darkened plazas of the local shopping mall. In the brightest noon, the path between two rowan trees in the park will take you to a hollow in the Hedge where your forgotten dreams will sell you your heart's desire. From faerie fruits to forbidden Contracts, arcane tokens to unbaptized human infants, anything can be had at the Goblin Market. The only question is: are you willing to pay what the merchant asks?

An Unearthly Bazaar

A Goblin Market is at once a location and an event, a sort of black market for the fae where they can acquire the rare, the exotic and the mystical. Nearly every freehold boasts a relatively frequent ("stable" would be a misnomer of the worst sort to apply to any dealings of the fae) Market, whether the Courts admit to it or not, and for those few that lack one there is no shortage of wandering Markets journeying from town to town via the treacherous byways of the Hedge. Goblin Markets take many forms, with some resembling Middle Eastern *souks*, others the market squares of traditional European villages and still others, especially wandering Markets, resembling the archetypal image of a gypsy camp or a tinker's wagon. Regardless of actual appearance, Goblin Markets tend to be archaic; even those that set up in modern commercial districts look anachronistic and out of place, wooden stalls and vigorous barkers cheek-by-jowl with the credit card machines and electronic cash registers.

When and Where

Just as so many aspects of changeling society, Goblin Markets are governed by Wyrd, bound up in concepts of fate and time. Similar to the faerie gatherings in old folk tales, a Goblin Market occurs only at certain times and in certain places; when the time is right, any changeling (and even the odd hapless mortal or two) can enter. When the time is wrong, it's as if the Market never existed. Some changelings whisper that this is in fact the case: When the time comes for a Goblin Market, the Wyrd aligns itself and the market exists, and in fact has *always* existed. When the moon moves out of phase or the seasons turn past, the Market is gone and was never there. While this might explain why a Market never leaves even the slightest evidence of its presence behind, this scarcely explains how one can buy something from a merchant who never sold it to you at a market that doesn't exist. Logic-minded changelings discount the theory on these grounds, while others just shrug and accept the paradox as part and parcel of changeling existence.

The frequency of a Goblin Market is usually roughly connected to its size. Smaller Markets are often held on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, while the larger ones are tied to the lunar cycle or the march of seasons, appearing once a month to once a year. These larger Markets often draw pilgrims from other freeholds near the Market's location. A Goblin Market may last as long as a week, but almost never lasts for less than a half a day (usually from dusk till dawn). While there are daytime markets, the preponderance take place during the twilight or nighttime hours. Even diurnal Markets are usually held indoors or in a location shaded from the light of the sun.

The exact location of a Goblin Market can vary widely from freehold to freehold, but most are held in similar types of locations: desolate, sparsely populated areas where mortals are unlikely to wander by. Borders are a particularly popular choice, both in the literal sense (county line roads, state boundaries and the like) and the metaphorical (the edge of a forest, sea shore or boundary between two neighborhoods). The Market itself is frequently secluded, tucked under an abandoned overpass or in a thick copse of trees. There in the darkness, lit by corpse-candles and will-o'-the-wisps, the merchants set up shop.

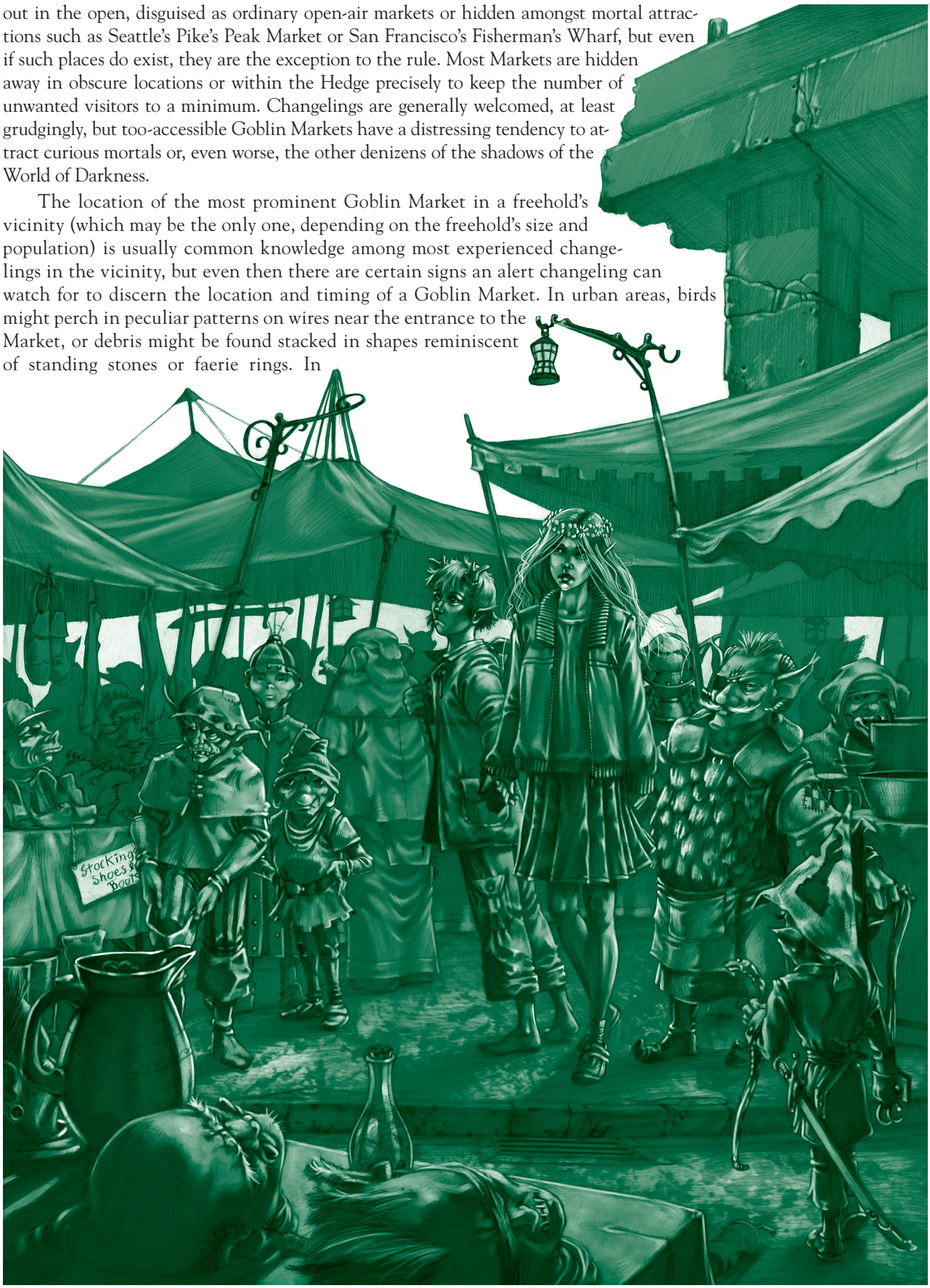
Many Goblin Markets do not actually exist in the mortal realm, and instead are held in Hollows within the Hedge itself. These Markets are often even more fanciful, seeming to exist on the ocean floor or in the branches of an impossibly tall tree, among other possibilities. Hedge Markets, as these are sometimes called, are objects of both terror and fascination for many changelings, for while many of the rarest and most potent merchandise cannot be found in the earthly markets, popular changeling belief holds that the True Fae frequent — or at least occasionally patronize — the Hedge Markets, seeking rare and exotic trifles from the mortal realm or the souls of wayward changelings to snatch away back to Faerie.

How and Why

Goblin Markets, as a rule, don't stand out. There are rumors in some of the larger cities about Markets held right

out in the open, disguised as ordinary open-air markets or hidden amongst mortal attractions such as Seattle's Pike's Peak Market or San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf, but even if such places do exist, they are the exception to the rule. Most Markets are hidden away in obscure locations or within the Hedge precisely to keep the number of unwanted visitors to a minimum. Changelings are generally welcomed, at least grudgingly, but too-accessible Goblin Markets have a distressing tendency to attract curious mortals or, even worse, the other denizens of the shadows of the World of Darkness.

The location of the most prominent Goblin Market in a freehold's vicinity (which may be the only one, depending on the freehold's size and population) is usually common knowledge among most experienced changelings in the vicinity, but even then there are certain signs an alert changeling can watch for to discern the location and timing of a Goblin Market. In urban areas, birds might perch in peculiar patterns on wires near the entrance to the Market, or debris might be found stacked in shapes reminiscent of standing stones or faerie rings. In



more rural locales, crop circles, faerie rings and mounds or odd formations of stones might mark the entrance to a Goblin Market. The signs can be other than visual, as well: the sudden scent of hollyhock blossoms, a snippet of strange music on the breeze or the sensation of "fairy pinches," sudden, sharp stings along the skin, can also be a clue. In the case of smaller Markets, or those that follow a nomadic path, or of changelings who avoid interaction with the larger freehold society, these signs may be the only way to locate a Market.

Even once you've found a Goblin Market, though, actually getting inside can prove difficult. Markets that exist wholly in the mortal world are frequently guarded by hulking, powerful hobgoblins that determine who is allowed in and who is not; Markets held within the Hedge may have even more esoteric requirements for entry. The entrant might have to enter a deep cave and sound three blasts on a horn he finds there, or he might have to recite a short poem before stepping into a ring of mushrooms. Dark rumors whisper of Goblin Markets that deal in especially grim merchandise and that can only be accessed by performing a ritual of human sacrifice on the night of the new moon, but where such a Market might be found is anyone's guess.

An even greater mystery, at least for most changelings, is *why* these Goblin Markets exist in the first place. What possesses these creatures to come together in such a strange echo of commercialism? Is capitalism really *that* universal? While the answers are unclear, there are many theories. Some changelings believe that it is a simple matter of survival; the goblins and dream-creatures that operate the Markets require Glamour for sustenance, and the bargains, buying and selling act as a sort of pledge between buyer and seller, providing the merchant with Glamour in much the same way as a saucer of cream left out for a changeling who helps with the mending does. Coming together into Markets makes their "prey" seek out the merchants, who are provided with an all-you-can-eat buffet of Glamour. Others theorize that the creatures of the Hedge are, in fact, much more intelligent and social than most changelings give them credit for, and that Goblin Markets are simply the one aspect of that society that changelings commonly encounter. The Lost are allowed access to the Markets because of the resources they provide, but are not welcome in the thorps and townships where the hobgoblins dwell. Still others claim that the entire concept of the Goblin Market is an elaborate trap, engineered by the True Fae to ensnare their wayward slaves. In this view, common amongst the especially paranoid element of changeling society, the goblin "merchants" are in fact the loyal servants of the Fae, and the wares offered for sale are honeyed traps set out to entice and ensnare unwary changelings.

Who and What

Many changelings, upon hearing of the Goblin Markets for the first time, assume them to be little more than a formalized setting for the local motleys to gather together to buy and sell and trade. Surely the term "Goblin Market" is an affectation, a mere turn of phrase to make the whole affair seem less crassly commercial. Within moments of setting foot in a Goblin Market, those assumptions are shattered. The merchants who operate the stalls are not the familiar faces of the local Courts, or the majority of them even recognizable as changelings. Hobgoblins and bits of broken, forgotten dreams, creatures of the Hedge and, if rumors are to be believed, even the odd exiled Fae or two: these are the purveyors of goods at the Goblin Market. Tiny men with the faces of cats sell pigeons' wings tied with string while knobby, gnarled creatures like living trees offer the unshriven souls of mortal men tangled in their branches. Bristle-tailed imps provide tutelage in mystic arts while huge, hulking trolls vend sweetmeats of dubious origin. Some changelings choose the life of the goblin merchant over pledged loyalty to Court and freehold, but they are in the distinct minority.

Although Goblin Markets often seem like completely disorganized mobs of individual merchants come together as much for convenience as anything else, woe betide the changeling who tries to set up shop in a Goblin Market without permission. The Marketeers are actually tightly-knit troupes, bound to one another and their Markets by oaths and pledges, and they take a strong dislike to interlopers trying to push in on their turf. The goblins' punishment for such transgressions is legendary. In one freehold in the Pacific Northwest, a changeling caught trying to sell goblin fruits at a Market was forced to gorge himself on his wares until his stomach ruptured — which the magic of the fruits promptly repaired, so that the process could be repeated over and over until the unfortunate's entire stock was consumed, at which point his bloated body was dragged into the wildest part of the Hedge and left to its fate.

Goblin merchants seem to have an uncanny sense for outsiders trying to work the Market; oddly, the goblins don't seem to care if changelings conduct business between themselves elsewhere, even if said business directly undercuts the Market. All that matters is that the sellers at a Goblin Market all be pledged to it and to each other.

How a changeling might fall in with a Market and swear its pledge is a mystery; few Lost are bold enough to claim they know the secret oath of the goblin merchants, and fewer still are correct in their claim. Given the paucity of information on the subject, most changelings suspect the pledge involves oaths of secrecy and detachment from Lost society in addition to those of loyalty to the Market. What effect such an oath might have on a changeling's Clarity is a chilling thought, and likely one of the reasons there are few actual changelings in the Goblin Markets.

Despite their draconian enforcement of their own exclusivity, Goblin Markets have no shortage of wares with which to entice the discerning changeling. Even the smallest Markets offer an array of goblin fruits and assorted trinkets from the wilds of the Hedge. Larger ones can provide even more exotic wares: dreamstuff and tokens, even artifacts from Faerie proper (though why any changeling would want such an artifact is a puzzling question). No catalog of goblin wares can ever be truly comprehensive, of course, but the following list covers some possibilities to help kickstart your ideas.

Goblin Fruits: Perhaps the most common, or at least most commonly useful to changelings, item for sale at a Goblin Market is goblin fruit. Bushels and baskets of all varieties of fruit line the stalls, while vintners, bakers and cooks of all description prepare a dizzying array of dishes using the fruits as principal ingredients (which have the same game effects, and count toward the maximum number of goblin fruit a changeling can carry, as a raw fruit). Wise changelings make sure they know exactly what they want, or bring a companion knowledgeable in the peculiar botany of the Hedge, as the merchants are seldom scrupulous enough to clearly delineate the edible fruits from the vilest poisons. A sampling of goblin fruits can be found on p. 223.

Tokens: Tokens offered for sale at Goblin Markets tend to be those with particularly nasty drawbacks associated with them, though the power of the item is correspondingly potent. The Monkey's Paw, from the classic story of the artifact that grants wishes at a terrible cost, is a prime example of the sort of thing typically offered by goblin merchants. That isn't to say that they don't sell less powerful or less dangerous tokens, they just tend to proffer their most potent stock most freely. After all, the greater the token, the greater the price it fetches, and if the nastier drawback creates trouble for the item's new owner, well, that suits the typical goblin sense of mischief just fine.

Goblin Contracts: Learning new Contracts is a time-consuming and difficult process for changelings. The goblin merchants are fully aware of this fact and only too happy to offer their services to expedite the process. The fact that Goblin Contracts are intrinsically flawed and carry drawbacks associated with every use is conveniently omitted from the sales pitch. Most changelings learn to be wary of goblins bearing Contracts early in their lives, but sometimes the need outweighs the risk associated with a Goblin Contract (and, of course, there are always inexperienced changelings who can be fooled into thinking they're getting a great deal). Goblin Contracts are fully described on p. 164.

Skills: For those who want to improve their talents but don't want to spend the time training and studying, goblin tutors can sometimes be found at the Markets that can bestow supernatural prowess in various fields. Mechanically, this works just as improving Skills normally through experience point expenditure, but the goblin tutor obviates any requirement to spend time practicing or working to improve the Skill. Goblin tutors are most commonly found for Skills such as Occult, Melee, Athletics, Persuasion, Socialize and Crafts, the sort of Skills one might traditionally bargain with supernatural entities to learn. Goblin tutors that can teach more modern skills, such as Computer, Science or Firearms, are significantly rarer.

Mortal Slaves: Not all mortals stolen by fairies end up taken back to Faerie by the lords of the True Fae. Some mortals who wander into the Hedge are set upon by opportunistic Marketeers, clapped in chains, and dragged off to the Goblin Market to be sold as slaves for whatever dire purpose their new masters might devise. These human chattel are usually ensorcelled before going on the block, so they are better able to interact with their masters. While some changelings do purchase slaves in this manner, the presence of a slaver at a Market tends to make the locals edgy. The True Fae, after all, have a much greater desire and use for mortal men, women and children than most changelings, and one never knows when they might drop by to inspect the merchandise.

Esoterica: Dreamcatchers made of spun spider silk and the bones of children. Tears of the moon in a crystal phial. Sweetmeats and dainties, necklaces of flies' wings and garments of gossamer chains. Many of the wares offered at the Goblin Market defy description or classification. They have no game-mechanic effects and provide no advantage or disadvantage per se, but can be used to expound on the otherness and the dreamlike logic of illogic that abounds in **Changeling**. These esoterica might simply be background filler, strange items the characters hear being hawked somewhere in the Market or vital elements needed to complete a story. Just remember that Goblin Markets are all about the weird, the unexpected and a liberal dose of the macabre.

Paying the Piper

It's hardly surprising to the average changeling that the merchants at the Goblin Market don't take U.S. dollars or whatever the local mortal currency happens to be. What is often more surprising is that there seems to be no logic to what the Goblin Markets *will* accept as payment. A changeling might be able to purchase a priceless gem-encrusted goblet for the cost of a few locks of golden-blonde hair, while another might have to promise a rare and powerful token for a handful of magic stones. Sometimes the price isn't even an actual object, but some metaphysical requirement, such as a favorite memory from before a changeling's abduction or a pledge of a future favor. Exactly what the Marketeers get out of these arrangements is up for debate; some Lost posit that the prices they pay are simply bartered in turn to other, stranger entities, while the paranoid suggest that every Goblin Market in the world is somehow tied back to the

True Fae, and each bargain a changeling makes brings him — or maybe even *all* changelings — one step closer to being dragged back to Faerie and bound so securely that he'll never escape again.

In game terms, since the price of goods at the Goblin Market isn't measured in the sort of currency represented by the Resources Merit, the cost of buying from a goblin merchant is reflected in one of two ways: Glamour for items not represented by game-mechanic Traits and experience points for those that are. For example, buying a single goblin fruit might cost only one Glamour, since the fruit can only be consumed once and then is gone, while some strange piece of esoterica might cost anywhere from one to five Glamour, depending on the item's usefulness or importance. By contrast, buying Goblin Contracts or tokens costs experience points, as would a mortal slave (represented by the Retainer Merit). Paying these experience points works exactly as normal experience point expenditure, except that from a story perspective the experience represents some aspect of the character being "paid" to the merchant.

Optional Rule: Dangerous Bargains

The simple rules presented here are perfectly adequate for bargaining with goblin merchants, but classic fairy tales on the topic often feature more outlandish bargains. If you want to evoke these stories, here are a few options to consider:

Memory: Many stories feature fae creatures with an inordinate fondness for memories, especially happy ones. A changeling might agree to give up her memory of a specific event or person. This specific memory loss incurs a –1 die penalty on Social rolls in situations that refer to that memory, such as speaking to an old flame whose memory the character gave up.

Virtue/Vice: The character offers up one of her strongest passions in return for her heart's desire; until the next new moon, whenever she would regain Willpower from indulging her Virtue or Vice, she regains no points.

Sanity: One of the steepest prices a changeling can pay. The character immediately loses a point of Clarity as though she had failed a degeneration check. This price is only asked for extremely rare or potent items.

If you choose to use these steeper costs of bargaining with goblins, consider giving players a slight break on experience point costs; reducing the new dots multiplier by one is a good rule of thumb.

Using Goblin Markets

Goblin Markets can provide a variety of functions in your chronicle. Just as the Hedge in general, they can showcase the fundamental otherness of the fae side of a changeling's nature, rooting her squarely in the surreal and the mad. They can enhance the sense of paranoia underlying the core of **Changeling**; after all, you might not be able to trust your fellow changelings, but you can at least understand how they think. With goblins, you never really know *why* they do what they do. Of course, they can also be used as the backdrop for a wide variety of stories, from fairly simple and straightforward attempts to acquire a necessary item to more complex, adversarial stories.

The Madness of Dreams

Simply put, Goblin Markets just don't make much sense. Leaving aside for the moment the fact that many of the merchants aren't even remotely human in appearance or outlook, the entire pageant of buying and selling is skewed through a heavy veil of dream logic and seeming nonsense. Like Alice when she arrived in Wonderland, a changeling new to the Goblin Market finds that he can rely on none of his preconceptions to guide him. Merchants sell low and buy high, request payment in forms that seem utterly impossible and offer strange goods whose use can only be guessed at as though they were the most valuable and useful items in the world.

You can play up this bizarre and alien aspect in a variety of ways. When setting the scene at the Goblin Market, emphasize the strange, weird and unusual items being offered. If the characters never actually *see* the merchandise in question, so much the better; sure, that barker *says* he has three pinfeathers from a human being's wing, but who is to say what's actually in that gilt-inlaid box sitting enticingly apart from the other wares? Likewise, keep the offered price of items expressed in strange and seemingly illogical terms. Wares at the Goblin Market are rarely bought and sold for mere coin, even if the coins in question are Faerie drachmas smelted from moonsilver and crocodile tears. Be careful, though, not to overdo it; when the goblin merchants start offering their wares for the price of a three-dollar bill, you've moved away from the beautiful madness of the Goblin Market and into absurdism. The surreal aspects of the Goblin Market should be tinged with an undercurrent of the bizarre and the macabre.

If you are fortunate enough to have particularly vivid dreams that stay with you after you wake up, you might consider starting a dream journal and using it as inspiration for scenes set in Goblin Markets. Not every dream will be appropriate fodder for a World of Darkness game, of course, but as far as verisimilitude goes, there's no better source for dream-imagery and logic quite like your own subconscious.



Books on dream interpretation might also provide you with inspiration for the weird and unusual.

Human beings (and changelings, for that matter) are social creatures, and to a large extent, we base our perceptions and reactions on those around us. That's why sitcoms have laugh tracks, and why sporting events are more exciting when you can experience the roar of the crowd. You can use that unconscious reaction to increase the sense of alienation and unease by showing the players that the other shoppers and merchants seem to find nothing out of the ordinary or illogical about the manner in which deals are made at the Market. The cognitive dissonance created by the incongruity will heighten their sense of being off-balance and unsure what's going on around them.

Paranoia

When you get right down to it, Goblin Markets aren't put on for changelings. Sure, changelings are welcome to browse the goods, and their coin (in whatever form it may take) is typically honored, but a wise buyer remembers that he is simply a visitor benefiting incidentally. The majority of merchants and buyers at a Goblin Market are goblins and other denizens of the Hedge, and those beings are, at best, ambivalent about the existence of changelings. Shopping at a Goblin Market should be a tense, nerve-wracking experience, as risky as it is potentially rewarding. You never really know whether the goblin merchant you're dealing with has fairness in mind or whether the goblin is just waiting for you to complete the sale before it marches off to its Fae lord and gives away your exact location; for that matter, you can seldom be sure the "merchant" isn't one of the Fae in disguise, waiting like a Venus flytrap for unsuspecting changelings to wander by and be ensnared.

Of course, you don't want to overplay this angle, or the players will never want to visit a Goblin Market (which isn't an inherently bad thing, but it does remove a Storytelling tool from your arsenal). Remember that paranoia is the *fear* that everyone is out to get you. If everyone really is out to get you, it ceases to be paranoia and becomes certainty. Play up the mistrust and the fear with the occasional thinly veiled sneer or merchant who seems just a little *too* interested in the characters' activities and lives. Leaving some ambiguity — maybe that sneering shopper just doesn't like changelings, or the merchant thinks his obsequiousness will get him a better price — can help keep the players on their toes.

Goblin Market Story Hooks

Goblin Markets provide no shortage of potential story hooks. Treat the following brief list as a palette of ideas; combine them in whatever way suits your fancy, use them as individual elements or just use them as a springboard for your own ideas.

The MacGuffin: One of the most common elements of fiction in many genres, a MacGuffin is some item that drives the plot forward, but otherwise contributes little to the story. The Maltese Falcon is a MacGuffin, as are the Sword in the Stone and the Golden Fleece. This particular plot device can be cliché if handled poorly, but when done well, suffice it to say there's a reason it has become a classic. The MacGuffin could be as simple as finding the right merchant at the right Market and buying the MacGuffin (which could be quite a story in and of itself), or you can add more wrinkles to it. Maybe a rival of the motley's wants the same item, and what should have been a straightforward purchase becomes a bidding war. The

characters might have to engage in a great deal of politicking to broker a sufficient payment to outbid the rival, or they might have to fend off underhanded attempts to take them out of the bidding (or launch such tactics themselves). Even if there is no rival involved, the merchant might divine how important the item is and set the price exorbitantly high: the bloom of a rare goblin fruit found only in the wilds of the Hedge or the promise of a character's firstborn child.

Liberation: The wares at Goblin Markets sometimes include things most right-thinking folk would find abhorrent, including human slaves or, rumor has it, even the snared souls of the dead. Some motleys might be motivated to try to put a stop to this process, either on principle or for more personal reasons. Changelings have families, too, and those mortal relatives are no less likely to stumble into the path of a goblin slaver than any other mortal. The characters might be able to stage a straightforward raid to free the captured mortals; depending on the characters' audacity and skill, they might even succeed. Unfortunately, that's the *least* of their problems. The political fallout within the freehold will almost certainly be massive, and that's to say nothing of the retribution of the slavers themselves. Then there's the issue of what to tell the rescued mortals about what happened to them, especially if the liberated thralls know the changeling's fetch. How does a changeling explain a running battle with trolls and nightmares to his sister, when said sister knows him as a thoroughly average, slightly dull college student?

The Price We Pay: In a similar vein to the Liberation hook, this story involves a changeling ally of the motley who has made a bargain with a goblin merchant that the ally is no longer able or willing to pay. Maybe he promised to spend a year and a day as the goblin's indentured servant and has since learned that the merchant intends to sell him back to his Keeper, or perhaps he has suffered amnesia and can no longer provide the happiest memory of his childhood. The characters must find a way to get their friend out of the bargain he is trapped in; no easy task for beings whose very souls are built around the idea that a promise is inviolate.

Escape: The worst fear of every changeling has been realized. One of the True Fae has struck a bargain with the creatures of the Goblin Market to see the characters forcibly returned to Faerie. The motley members must try to escape the Goblin Market and return to the relative safety of the freehold with every hand in the Market turned against them. Harried by nightmares and furies, this story becomes an exercise in evasion and sudden ambush. Perhaps a single merchant offers the changelings succor — but is it an actual ally, or merely a more cunning hunter than its ilk?


STAWICKI
2007



He stood there on the path, smug as always. He thought this would be over quickly, that the man standing in front of him would die at the end of his blade and he would walk back through the gateway to his victim's woman. He had already taken her, changing his face so that it looked like his enemy's. Hence the duel.

He smiled, and tightened his grip on the hilt of his knife. "Make your declaration," he said.

"I, Aston of the Autumn Court, challenge you to a duel. We shall fight, and we shall not stop until one of us lies dead. That is my declaration."

"I accept your challenge." He had no need to name himself, for he did not use a name. He did not claim allegiance to a Court. He refused to tie himself to anything. No woman and no words held him.

The duel began. He drew out his knife and advanced on his opponent. Aston stood there, still and silent.

No, not silent. Whispering. What was he saying?

"Come back, boy. I haven't done with you yet. You'll kneel before me and do my bidding, boy. You'll take what I give you and thank me, else you'll find yourself bent over and serving my stable hands again! Come back here, boy, or I'll change myself before our fun tonight, and you can barely breathe as it is!"

The words of his Keeper. He felt tears well up, and his knife dropped to the ground. He looked to both sides, but saw only the unforgiving Thorns of the Hedge.

Aston stepped forward and pointed at him. "On your knees, boy." He could only obey. Aston reached down and picked up the knife. "Shut your eyes."

"Please," he whispered.

"I am Aston of the Autumn Court," said his opponent, "Marquis of Shameful Remembrance." The knife slid home, and he heard the last sounds he ever would. "Shame you put so little stock in names, or you might have known what that meant."

Appendix One
Entitlements

I too shall lie in the dust when I am dead,
but now let me win noble renown.
— Homer, "The Iliad"

Nobility is a powerful, almost living thing. An entitlement — the gaining of nobility through joining a noble order — provides more than just a title. It's an alteration to a changeling's own heart and mind, a badge of purpose, power and terrible will. An entitlement grants the entitled fae significance, strange blessings and a transformed mien. But the way to nobility is a path of thorns whose every turn is marked with peril. New political intrigues threaten to hang the changeling by her neck until she is dead. Old adversaries rise from the darkness to steal her power. And the True Fae are drawn by the sickly sweet taste of untested nobility. For every new ally and secret blessing, the changeling now finds that she faces untold pitfalls and foes. Make no mistake, joining an entitlement and becoming ennobled is a powerful thing. But it also threatens her life and sanity in ways never before suspected.

The Noble Order

The noble order is a fundamental part of changeling society. An order may be formed out of vanity or necessity. It may grow out of a like-minded group of changelings who commit to a single cause or form from a disparate cadre of fae who use the order to keep tabs on one another. Changelings may parade their noble orders about in full public view, or they may stay well beneath the watermark of common knowledge, gathering in "secret" societies to which membership can be both coveted and feared.

The noble orders are sometimes called "entitlements," and changelings within the orders who earn specific titles are known to be "entitled." The title granted by a noble order is the same for all changelings within that order — all the fae who belong to the Duchy of the Icebound Heart are *all* considered Dukes and Duchesses. The order doesn't feature a single Duke and several Knights or Squires beneath them. The title is universal throughout that order. While the Duchy may feature an internal hierarchy unique to the order, this element remains irrelevant to those outside the group. Those entitled share the designation: a gathering of the Duchy, for instance, would see all of its Dukes and Duchesses in attendance.

Joining an Order

One must first meet the prerequisites put forth by the oaths and Contracts that bind the order together. An order's set of prerequisites can be nearly anything, though for the most part an order demands an obligatory level of Wyrd (usually Wyrd 2 or 3), as well as a few other Traits emblematic of the order's purpose and theme (a noble order of thieves might have a Larceny 2 prerequisite, for instance). Sometimes, an order is Court-specific, requiring that its members first belong to the appropriate ruling Court. (The Satrapy of Pearls, for instance, demands that its Satraps first have a particular Mantle within the Spring Court.) A character cannot possess multiple entitlements at the same time; conflicts of loyalty are sure to arise, and thus each order will accept only those who are not otherwise titled.

While none of the entitlements listed here are seeming-specific, rumors of them do exist — odd little orders of Darklings or Fairest, changelings gathering in truly secret societies. Some even suggest that kith-specific orders exist; though, if they do, they must be very esoteric and sparsely attended.

If a changeling meets the Trait and character prerequisites, she must then meet the roleplaying obligations. Every order demands that the changelings within its ranks be worthy in some way. Some ask for spare trials of loyalty or ability, while others put their potential members through hell and back to test their mettle. Every order is different, with trials and ordeals unique to its design.

Provided that a changeling fulfills all obligations, she must then swear an oath to the order. This oath is supernatural in origin, much like the pledge sword to a Court. Just as everything else, the pledge required is unique to every order. One group may ask that a changeling swear to a Byzantine codex of laws and bylaws, signing off on a hundred little intricacies of conduct before gaining the full benefits of membership. Another may have a single phrase or sentence that informs the purposes of the order and holds the changeling to one crucial act or behavior.

The Eldritch Orders

Rumor has it that some entitlements have been around for thousands of years, existing as secret societies within various freeholds. Supposedly, these eldritch orders are only for the most powerful changelings (requiring a steep set of Traits to gain membership, such as Wyrd 5+ or Mantle 5 in a particular Court). The bonuses that come as part of the ennoblement are equally steep, however, granting changelings unseen measures

of power. Of course, most of the changelings who belong to such ancient entitlements have also lost much of their perspective, often possessing Clarity well below the norm. Most seem to have ways to conceal this, however, appearing to be normal and sane to unprying eyes.

Advantages of Title

Upon swearing the oath and joining the order, a changeling gains a few benefits key to that order. The first benefit is a supernatural bonus of some kind that comes with the sworn pledge. (All noble orders are founded through the same sorcerous means as the four Courts. Joining one requires a similar magically binding oath.) This bonus may be a small blessing, token or access to certain pledges unique to the order. A character doesn't need to purchase these bonuses separately with experience points; she gains them automatically upon joining that noble order and becoming entitled.

The changeling also gains some changes or ornamentation to her fae mien. Such ornamentation is often minor, and comes in addition to the changeling's existent mien. (If the ornamentations born of the entitlement conflict in any way with the character's extant seeming, the player can choose between conflicting elements, as she has some measure with which to design her character's mien.) Changes to her mien are part of the mantle of power given by an entitlement's very nature — her flesh now wears the badges of whatever strange heraldry and grim purpose the order possesses. The ornamentations of an entitlement are not as permanent as the physical changes wrought by years in Faerie; ornamentations of entitlement are Wyrd-shaped manifestations of solid Glamour, and typically dissolve away into mist or faint strains of music when separated from the changeling.

Certain Social bonuses may also come into play. While this isn't universal, many entitled changelings gain a small (+1) bonus to any Social rolls when dealing with other nobles, be they from the Courts or from another entitlement.

One perhaps unexpected bonus is in an entitled changeling's relationships to the True Fae. The Gentry seem to refuse to deal with most changelings, seeing them as so clearly "lesser" and tantamount to slaves or worse. Gaining a title through a noble order seems to raise a True Fae's estimation of that entitled character.

This doesn't mean that a Fae will act favorably toward the character, however (and in fact has its own disadvantages, see below). It means that the Other grants the character a small measure of social propriety. Instead of just attacking the changeling or attempting to abscond with her back into the Hedge, the Fae may offer her some minor formalities. A True Fae might offer a character a game of chance, a game of skill, a riddle or some kind of strange bargain or time extension ("If you promise to stand on this spot in one year, I will come for you then and give you that extra time, but if you fail me, I will hunt down the rest of your motley, as well"). A Fae may also offer specific formalities that suit a changeling of a particular title: offering to joust with a Knight, for instance.

Of course, the Gentry are deceivers all. Any formalities offered are purely stacked in the True Fae's favor, or so the creature hopes. What it does, however, is offer the entitled changeling a potential loophole through which she might wriggle free. It may grant her some measure of time, or at least a chance to escape the attention of those vicious Others.

Disadvantages of Title

Just as possessing a title can offer some Social bonuses, possession of a title can also incur Social penalties. The Storyteller may at times invoke a penalty when making Social rolls involving changelings who do *not* belong to a noble order (such "common" changelings may feel angry, nervous or otherwise uncomfortable around those so-called nobles, and the penalty reflects that). A penalty may also occur if the character is dealing with a changeling from a competing or adversarial order. (Note that these penalties are not universal, but are optional modifiers left to the prerogative of the Storyteller.)

The other disadvantage of possessing a title is in dealings with the True Fae. While it's true that, as noted above, the Gentry offer some formalities to the ennobled changelings, this bonus also comes with a somewhat significant downside, as well. The downside is that the Others always notice a changeling with a title before they notice a changeling without one. Why this is remains unknown. Do the True Fae, believing themselves nobles above all nobles, find it all the more satisfying to victimize and humiliate entitled changelings? Or does the noble badge of a title simply draw the Fae without them even realizing it, as blood in the water will draw hungry sharks?

This paints a rather large bull's-eye on the backs of the entitled changelings, and for some sours an otherwise sweetened deal. The Fae will always deal with an ennobled changeling before deigning to notice a "common" changeling without a title. Thus, membership in one of the noble orders is a double-edged sword. Yes, it confers to the changeling a number of benefits both social and supernatural. But it also lures the Others, which is a cost too steep for many.

Quitting an Order

Once in a noble order, it's in the changeling's blood and bones. That's not to say she can't quit the order, either to free herself from all entitlements or to join another order. Doing so, however, is costly.

To renounce the order, a changeling merely needs to swear aloud that she is leaving the order. The spoken words are not enough — she must truly *mean* it (hence it's difficult to coerce a changeling into shedding her entitlement). But, if she declares herself apart from the order with the full intention of leaving it, then it's done. It doesn't matter if anybody can hear her make this declaration of separation — the pledge that allowed her to join is now broken. Her title is void.

All bonuses gained from her membership within that order cease immediately. Tokens gained as part of the initial oath become useless, existing now as objects with no magical effects. Any Social bonuses, too, are gone.

She also suffers a number of deleterious effects. The first is that she now suffers a –1 die Social penalty when dealing with any changelings from her old order. Even if they claim understanding, some part of the broken pledge taints the relationship.

Second, breaking a pledge is a sin against Clarity (see p. 92).

Third, she loses a full Willpower dot. This dot can be repurchased with experience points (see p. 77 for these costs), but breaking the pledge and ripping that magic out of her saps her will.

Bishopric of Blackbirds

I will gamble my own soul to help the souls of others. Let us have faith.

The life of a changeling is never easy. Whether navigating the Hedge on the return home, dealing with one's fetch or plotting a course through the crushing rocks of a freehold's cruel politics, one finds pitfalls at every turn. It doesn't help that exposure to these elements only help to decrease a changeling's confidence in his own perceptions. As Clarity drops, the fae's ability to discern reality from unreality, the dream state from the waking or madness from sanity grows weak. A single changeling who lets this lunacy creep in at the edges means that others are letting it in, too. That can damage the sanctity of an entire freehold, and put everybody in danger.



Enter the Bishopric of Blackbirds. They believe themselves the salvation of the freehold, positioning members to be there when others need them. That is their first stated goal: to assist those poor Lost (which, to most Bishops, constitutes *all* of them) when necessary. This can manifest in many ways. The Blackbird Bishops, for instance, often wander the Hedge and look for those who have escaped from Arcadia or who are plainly lost. The Bishops offer their aid, helping those poor souls return to the world. Maybe a changeling has a problem with her fetch, and a Blackbird Bishop will help her come to terms with her "other." (They won't help her destroy the fetch, but they will attempt to either forge an understanding between the two, or will instead help her to forget that life and never again try to contact her Fae-made twin.) The Bishops offer guidance to those who are lost, above all. As a changeling, it's all too easy to lose one's way, and the Bishopric accepts the role of savior.

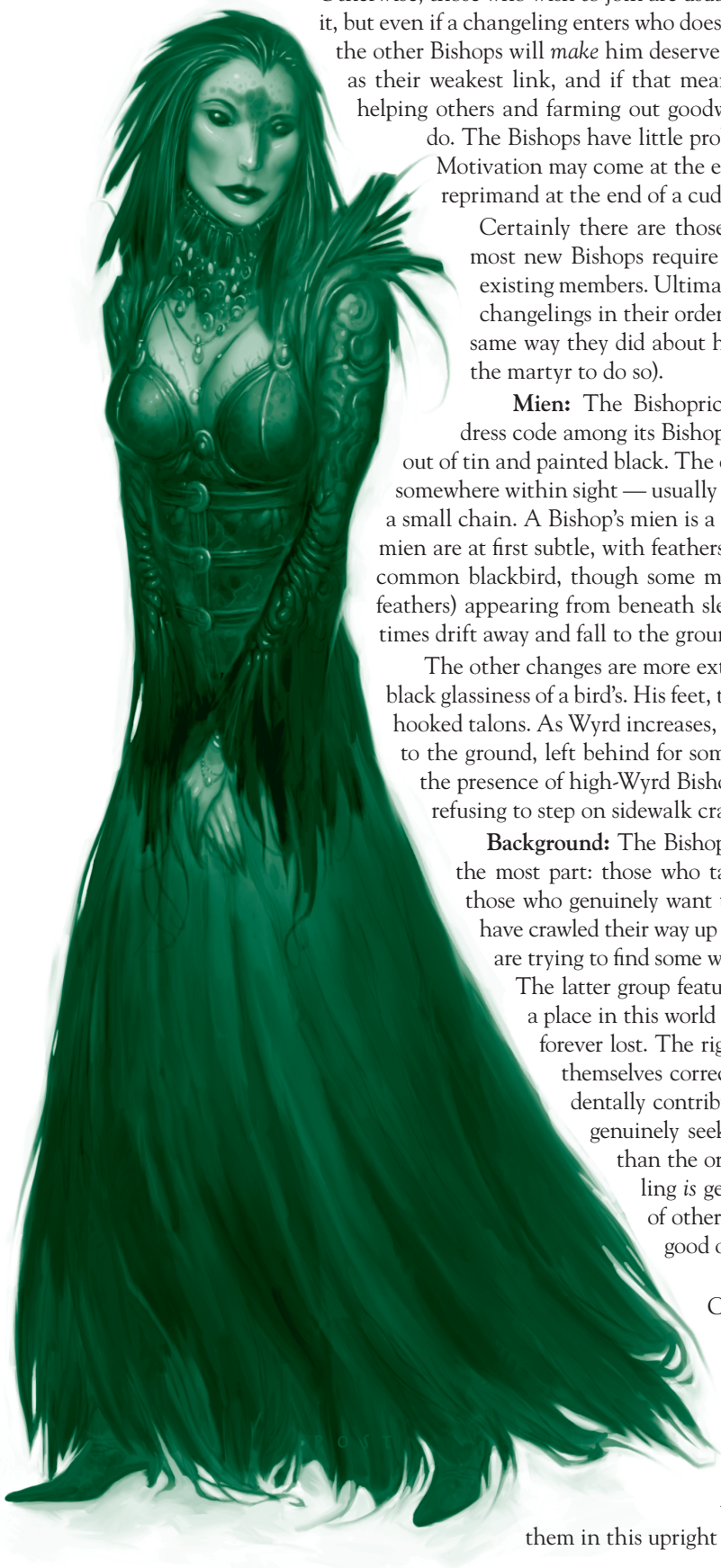
Of course, salvation doesn't come free. From the order's earliest days under its supposed founder, the Bishop Lily Rose, the Blackbird Bishops are bound to require some kind of payment in return for aid. They do not provide aid without making it totally apparent that, by accepting a Bishop's help, the needy changeling agrees to an unnamed favor that will come due at some point in the future. Now, the Bishops don't normally use this power for selfish gain — no, instead they use it to help the freehold. A favor might be to tithe some Glamour to the local Court, or to help another changeling deal with his fetch or even befriend a lonely soul. The favors demanded are generally done in service to the freehold, though sometimes the request can be quite intensive. For this reason, many changelings note that the blackbird is both a good and bad omen. In some stories, the blackbird is a sign of ill omen or sexual temptation. In others, though, blackbirds represent peace and love. For the Bishops, this is perhaps appropriate: earning a Bishop's aid sometimes requires a favor whose work ends up far outweighing the reward.

Of course, the Bishopric knows that it walks the line between two omens, and it ultimately posits that both perspectives are true. Because here is the second stated goal of the Blackbird Bishops: to restore Clarity to the freehold. They preach long and loud about the dangers of lost perspective, about how the temptations of madness are alluring but damning. They struggle to help others find serenity and perspective, which often comes at the cost of their own Clarity. Delving into the Hedge time and again to search for lost fae is dangerous to mind, body and soul. Helping another changeling fight his inner demons and outer adversaries puts the Bishop at risk. They know this going in; it's part of their oath to the order. If they lose their own Clarity — and life or limb — to help others gain them back, so be it. They do what they must.

Titles: Blackbird Bishop (male and female)

Prerequisites: Wyrd 2, Empathy 2

Joining: The first and perhaps most common way that a changeling joins the Bishopric of Blackbirds is by using his membership to pay off a pledged debt. When offering aid in reward for a future favor, the Bishop makes it clear to most that one way out of the pledge — a clause to the contract, so to speak — is to become a Blackbird Bishop. Seeing as how the Bishops are devoted to helping the freehold and preserving Clarity, it serves the order's goals in the long run to have more members. (Though, again the cruel irony presents itself that some Bishops end up with alarmingly low Clarity without realizing it, and thus they become the ones weakening the fundamental sanity of the freehold.)



Otherwise, those who wish to join are usually allowed to join. The other Bishops discuss it, but even if a changeling enters who doesn't deserve the grace and wisdom of the order, the other Bishops will *make* him deserve it. They recognize that they're only as strong as their weakest link, and if that means dragging one of their own headlong into helping others and farming out goodwill through pledges, then that's what they'll do. The Bishops have little problem in "motivating" their slacking brethren. Motivation may come at the end of an hours-long lecture — or from a swift reprimand at the end of a cudgel.

Certainly there are those the Bishops want nothing to do with, and most new Bishops require a vote of confidence from a majority of the existing members. Ultimately, though, the Blackbird Bishops *want* more changelings in their order, and believe it'd be ideal if everybody felt the same way they did about helping one another (even if it means playing the martyr to do so).

Mien: The Bishopric doesn't assert any common appearance or dress code among its Bishops, except for a single bird pendant hammered out of tin and painted black. The order expects its Bishops to wear this pendant somewhere within sight — usually pinned to a lapel or hung around the neck via a small chain. A Bishop's mien is a whole different matter. Changes to a Bishop's mien are at first subtle, with feathers (usually the black and brown feathers of the common blackbird, though some manifest red-tipped feathers or oily blue-black feathers) appearing from beneath sleeves, cuffs and collars. These feathers sometimes drift away and fall to the ground around the changeling's feet.

The other changes are more extreme. A Bishop's eyes may take on the round black glassiness of a bird's. His feet, too, may turn knobby and shriveled, ending in hooked talons. As Wyrd increases, the number of feathers grows before they drop to the ground, left behind for some humans to find. (Humans, too, feel odd in the presence of high-Wyrd Bishops — mortals grow abnormally superstitious, refusing to step on sidewalk cracks or walk beneath ladders.)

Background: The Bishopric is home to three types of changelings, for the most part: those who take comfort in feeling righteous and needed, those who genuinely want to do some good in this world and those who have crawled their way up from the bleak pits of slavery and madness and are trying to find some way to mitigate the horrors they've experienced. The latter group features changelings who are just happy they have a place in this world and aren't tangled in the Hedge, bloodied and forever lost. The righteous changelings will do anything to prove themselves correct and virtuous, and by doing so, they coincidentally contribute some good to this world. Those Lost who genuinely seek good things are fewer and further between than the order prefers to admit — worse, when a changeling *is* genuinely committed to the sanity and security of others, he often does so at the cost of his own. The good ones always seem to become martyrs.

Socially, some may have belonged to the Courts, but many of the Bishops long drifted between the Courts, earning goodwill but rarely committing themselves to any one ruler over another. They simply did not have a place before, and now they do. (This is why many Blackbird Bishops are zealously committed, sometimes frighteningly so. And they're happy to demand that others join them in this upright noble order.)

Characters within the order tend to have a pretty balanced array of Traits, which abstractly suits their needs just fine. Most act as the jacks of many trades, masters of none. Of course, some Skills take prominence: Empathy, Persuasion, even Subterfuge. Otherwise, expect that Bishops have a rather diverse spread of Traits, Merits and Contracts.

Organization: Internally, the Blackbird Bishops gather in councils (sometimes called *synods*) to discuss matters regarding the freehold. Frankly, councils are rarely conclusive; for the most part, discussions go around and round, an endless tautology of same ideas. (Those who have witnessed a synod have observed that the Bishops obviously like to hear themselves talk.)

When it comes to results, the Bishops manifest effects with their missions. In a persistent attempt to keep their own perspectives (and thus, Clarity scores) from wavering, the Bishops walk among humans and involve themselves in humanitarian efforts. Perhaps the Bishops help some charitable association build houses for the poor, maybe they work at homeless shelters or perhaps they moonlight as late-night suicide hotline counselors. This is advantageous in a number of ways beyond helping to stabilize Clarity. First, it lets them spot other changelings who may need help finding the freehold or reclaiming their sanity. Second, it gives them opportunities to soak up various strong emotions — desperation, depression, hope or gratitude — and thus reclaim some measure of Glamour. Some changelings outside the Bishopric claim that these so-called missions fulfill another advantage: giving the Bishops yet another reason to act haughty and self-righteous.

Concepts: Crazy street preacher, drug counselor, experimental psychotherapist, head of a homeless shelter, New Age guru, old gang leader, self-righteous ex-reverend.

Privileges

Below is a token available to all Blackbird Bishops upon joining the order.

Aspersorium (••)

The Aspersorium is a small, fist-sized container, appearing usually as a small pail or cup. Most such cups feature ornate filigree or scrollwork, and are generally made of metal (silver, brass, pewter), though a few are glass and are instead rimmed with metal ornamentation. The changeling puts any kind of water inside of the cup and whispers a few prayers offered to the weave and weft of Fate itself, asking for a moment of lucidity and perspective. The water, now "blessed," can be flicked onto or sprinkled upon another character's brow. Upon activation, the blessed water helps restore that person to some measure of sanity. If that person possesses any mild derangements, those derangements disappear for a single scene. If that person possesses any severe derangements, then those derangements downgrade to their mild counterparts (i.e., Paranoia becomes Suspicion) for the scene. The Aspersorium also grants the affected person +1 bonus to any Perception rolls he makes during the rest of the day (until he sleeps).

Action: Instant

Drawback: The martyrs of the Bishopric believe that what this token grants to others is able to do so only because it draws it away from the Bishop who uses it. Upon using this, the Bishop suffers a –1 die penalty to any Perception rolls made on his behalf over the rest of the day — his eyes sometimes sting or tear up, and he may even feel a minor headache stirring behind them. This lingers until he gets at least four hours of sleep. This penalty is cumulative — if the Bishop blesses a motley of five changelings, the Perception penalty grows to a –5 modifier.

Catch: In addition to the drawback noted above, the character also takes on the target's derangement (mild or severe, whatever is possessed) for the rest of the scene. If the token is used on a character who does not possess any derangements, then the user of the Aspersorium takes on one mild derangement of the Storyteller's choice, which lasts for the scene.

Rumors of the Bishopric

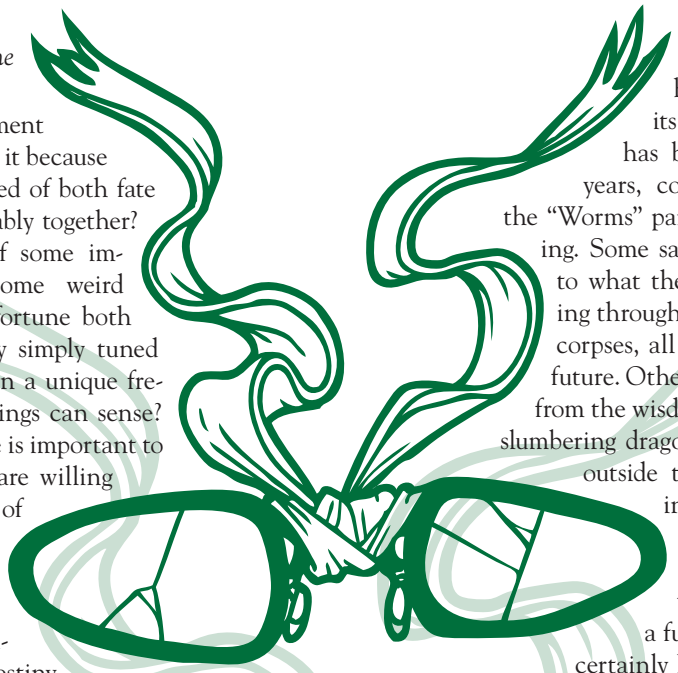
Characters might hear the following rumors regarding the Bishopric of Blackbirds:

• In some cities, the Courts disdain the Bishops and their intrusive, self-righteous natures. In places where this happens, the Bishopric works similar to the old "underground railroad," helping changelings escape oppression. Some Bishops even help to foment rebellion.

• Some whisper that the Blackbird Bishops are *only* a bad omen, and have some ulterior motive. Further whispers suggest that the Bishops help fuel the activities of the sociopathic bridge-burners, thus truly "enforcing" Clarity's law. Other rumors say that the Bishops live to help "reform" fetches, but everybody knows a fetch can't be made normal or sane, right?

• Rumor is that no Bishop will accept the role of ruler in any given Court. Some say that their founder agreed to this long ago, and if any Bishop ascends to King or Queen, that freehold is certainly doomed.

College of Worms



My eyes always seek the impossible and the insane.

Fate is a critical element to changeling existence. Is it because the land of Faerie is formed of both fate and time, braided irrevocably together? Are changelings made of some immeasurable ephemera, some weird non-physical mixture of fortune both good and ill? Or are they simply tuned into it, as if fate lingers on a unique frequency that only changelings can sense? Whatever the reasons, fate is important to changelings, though few are willing to truly examine it for fear of what they might find.

The fae of the College of Worms believe that fate needs to be scrutinized. The threads of destiny aren't easy to find — the number "13" on a passing cab, the image of a crow formed in the steam that darkens a mirror, an oddly-shaped paper cut on one's ring finger — but they're there for those who care to sort the chaff from the wheat. And why do they do this? If fate is truly a force that exists, then it operates in the world on every level. Thus, fate can explain the past and foretell the future. More importantly, if the seemingly inscrutable threads of fate can be parsed and understood, then perhaps the College of Worms can help predict when terrible things might happen to the freehold. If these changelings can predict the coming of the Others, and when they might come to abduct mortals from this world — or when the Others might return to hunt those who have escaped them — then such a service is of profound interest. The diviners of the College are not necessarily *glad* to provide such a service, as doing so often engenders a risk to their Clarity. But they feel it needs to be done, and accept that they are the only ones truly willing to commit to the task.

Searching out such elements of fate may take them into the past by poring over old books and manuscripts (or by scanning websites for odd typos or Fortean sightings). They may also examine the present, looking for signs and portents happening in the moment, anything from a council of black cats conglomerating in a hidden alley to a cryptic configuration of high scores on the Galaga machine down at the abandoned arcade. By probing the past and obsessively observing the present, the diviners hope to form a picture, however murky, of the future.

Of some argument is how this noble order gained its name. The College, which has been around for hundreds of years, continues the debate on how the "Worms" part of the name came into being. Some say that worms are appropriate to what the diviners do: hungrily chewing through books, history, artifacts, even corpses, all in an attempt to discern the future. Others suggest that the word comes from the wisdom of the old "Wyrms," or the slumbering dragons of old. A few changelings outside the College have less flattering things to suggest, comparing the diviners to ringworm (which the diviners are quick to note is not a worm at all, but a fungus). Whatever the case, it's certainly had an effect on the diviners' seemings (see below under "Mien" for more information).

Titles: Diviners of Worms (sometimes just called "diviners" or "augurs")

Prerequisites: Wyrd 3, Investigation 2, Occult 2

Joining: Any who wish to join the College of Worms must first apprentice with a current member of the order. Apprenticeship has no fixed time limit associated with it — it can be a month, a year, or 10 years. Most apprenticeships last around a year, but what really matters is that the tutor feels that her apprentice is ready to give his oath to the College, and "readiness" is one's willingness and ability to see the largely undetectable threads of fate emerging in day-to-day life. The tutor tests her apprentice over and over again — did he see what the lottery numbers were for the past seven nights and can he rattle them off? Did he hear the malapropisms in the president's speech last night and what they *really* said, and didn't he hear those same misspoken words used in that child's rhyme heard as they passed the playground? Important, too, are the conclusions an apprentice draws from such sightings. Does the sighting invoke the coming of the True Fae? Did fate inadvertently discuss the apprentice's murderous fetch? Did the pattern of flies on the north wall foretell the breaking of a significant pledge by the current Court in power? The tests given aren't fixed, and are instead made up in the moment — every apprentice finds himself challenged differently from the next.

What's curious is that the tutor makes a pledge to the apprentice never to give up on the student's training. If the apprentice remains unready, then the tutor continues train-

ing. Two years, 10 years, a lifetime — the pledge remains (or the tutor becomes susceptible to the apprentice's changeling powers from the breaking of a promise). In most cases, if the apprentice is woefully unprepared, then it's up to the student to quit. The tutor won't break his pledge (though she may attempt to force her student to quit, thus ending the pledge).

When the tutor deems that a student's apprenticeship comes to an end, that's it. At that moment she is brought before the rest of the College, and they finalize her oath to the order.



Mien: Certainly, most diviners tend toward scholarly appearances, maybe choosing a houndstooth suit jacket and tie, or a simple buttoned-down shirt with khaki pants. Others take their supposedly sacred roles as diviners more seriously (especially if they're "official" diviners for one or several Courts), wearing elaborate robes or other ceremonial garb to indicate their station. While the College in general has never formalized any raiment for its augurs, the order in a given freehold may have. The College in Miami may don plain white robes, as white as the Florida sun. The College of London may instead wear black robes with red braiding and elaborate stitching and needlework meant to indicate one's training or exploits.

A diviner's mien changes in a number of ways. The most obvious and disconcerting change is the suggestion of worms crawling beneath the skin — the flesh rises and moves as never-seen worms squirm and burrow. (Some say that as Wyrd increases to abnormally high levels, the worms *do* sometimes pop out of the skin — and then crawl away to the nearest crevice or cubbyhole.) The other change is the pair of eyeglasses that appear perched upon a diviner's nose. The eyeglasses may be in any shape, composed of any metal — round and silver, gold and square — but the common theme is that the lenses themselves are always cracked (though the diviner's sight remains excellent). As Wyrd grows, the cracks deepen and multiply.

Background: The intellectual and academic changelings find that the College of Worms is perfect for them. It allows them to expand and engage their minds, furthering their studies. Many diviners come from various intellectual pursuits — college professors, students, writers, artists or world travelers — because this allows them to continue doggedly pursuing their own theories and interests. The College is a haven for such types.

Of course, it's also a haven for conspiracy theorists, Glamour junkies and paranoid schizophrenics. The twisting strands of fate are insane enough all on their own, and sometimes the off-kilter or mad find that the College is just the place to "express" themselves. Some come to the

College and hide their weird habits or lunatic peccadilloes, fearing that if anybody found out about their wild theories or behaviors, they'd never make it past the apprenticeship. The reality is, the other diviners sometimes recognize that mad or low-Clarity changelings are sometimes given over to *special* insights. Yes, someone must separate the true insights from fanatical conjecture, which is why most of the unhinged diviners are given "handlers" who shepherd them from afar. The College sometimes accepts such troubled Lost in the hope that it will help them further plumb the vagaries of fate. It gives the College something of a bad reputation, however, because for every three studious diviners, the order features one conspiracy nut or changeling who thinks the Hedge is talking to him. One bad apple spoils the sauce.

Obviously, most diviners tend toward Mental Traits being dominant. Mental Merits such as Eidetic Memory or Encyclopedic Knowledge are treasured, too. That's not to say that other Skills aren't useful. Some use Stealth to stay hidden and observe notable phenomena (or steal books, because most diviners love their books). Some might use Socialize, Streetwise or Survival to examine various patterns — those within nature, in the cities or in a crowd. The College features a disproportionate number of Wizened and Darklings, with the appropriate Contracts being equally prevalent.

Organization: Most diviners stay together, and remain as outside of Court politics as is possible. This isn't true for all. As noted, some end up as the Court diviners for one or several seasonal rulers, or instead work for one of the other noble orders in a "freelance" capacity. The majority within the College find solidarity amongst themselves. Every College tends to be a bit standoffish to other non-diviner changelings as kind of a defense mechanism (they assume everyone thinks they're crazy, and so they don't bother with them at all for fear of confronting such distrust and disdain). This is seen in varying degrees, however, particularly in the nature of the College's symposiums.

Every College holds symposiums. The more members they have, the more symposiums the order holds throughout the year. Generally, they try to have one a month. A symposium is a lecture given on a particular topic. The topics are often about fate and time or other esoteric subjects, but might instead simply be something that a speaker feels particularly passionate about, whether it's the rise and fall of local insect populations or obsessive ruminations about pop culture. Some symposiums are open to other changelings, and therein lies the barometer for just how trusting the College is. The more approachable a College is in a given freehold, the likelier it will be that symposiums are open to all changelings. (Truly open Colleges have guest speakers from outside the order; this is admittedly unusual.) The more closed-off and paranoid the College becomes, the more symposiums end up only for other diviners.

Outside of symposiums, one way that drives the College and the rest of the fae into contact (and sometimes conflict) is the ringing of the *tocsin* bell. The ringing of the bell is sometimes literal, but often as not it's simply a term for the College's "alarm." Whenever diviners come upon what they feel are destined pre-indicators of threat ("Three dead children with the same name were found across the city within minutes of one another! It's a sign!"), they warn the ruling Court. The Court is free to listen or reject them out of hand. Honestly, the warnings are wrong nine times out of 10 — but it's that 10th time that's a real killer. Some are happy to waste resources on those nine times that nothing manifests in the hopes of catching the one time it does. Others reject the College *tocsin* without even hearing their warnings (some even have standing policies to keep the diviners out of their way at all times).

Concepts: Asylum escapee, author of cult conspiracy novels, computer programmer, doctor of neuroscience, homicide detective, professor of British literature, sufferer of synesthesia.

Privileges

In affirming his pledge with the College, a neophyte diviner gains the following token.

The Diviner's Instrument (•••)

Every diviner within the College of Worms is expected to possess a divining tool suited only to her. She chooses the nature of the tool: a pouch of runes, a cup of pigeon bones, a hand-drawn Tarot deck, a scrying mirror made from an old Maybelline compact. Upon joining the order, the pledge to become a diviner connects this instrument to the strands of fate, if only with a few perfunctory threads, enough to grant the token a small and relatively safe measure of power (anything greater would wreak havoc upon the poor changeling who carried it). The token's power is passive. The changeling uses the device (tossing the bones, reading the cards or whatever mechanical action one normally performs to "use" the diving tool), and upon activation receives no insights at the time of use. The insight comes later. When about to make a roll, the player determines that the insight is finally revealed to the character and helps grant her feelings (be they instincts or an odd *déjà vu* sensation), which translate to bonuses on that roll. The character can take a number of dice equal to the character's Wyrd score and add them to that roll. However, this must be done within a number of hours equal to the changeling's Clarity score. If she goes beyond that time limit, she cannot access the hidden insight provided by her divining tools, for they are lost. The Diviner's Instrument is a fickle thing, much as fate itself, and can only be used once per game session.

Action: Instant

Drawback: All Perception rolls made during the time the "insight" is active (i.e., during a number of hours equal to the changeling's Clarity) suffer a –1 die penalty. The only exception to this is if the changeling chooses to make a Perception roll the recipient of the token's Wyrd bonus (at which point no penalty is given, and the full bonus is received). The reason for the Perception penalty is that, when considering fate, the changeling looks for fate's fickle fingerprints — often in the wrong place. She becomes easily distracted. When she's supposed to see a blue truck driving past, she may instead be looking skyward, examining the contrails left by an airliner.

Catch: If the changeling chooses to eschew the Glamour expenditure or Wyrd roll, or if a character uses the token who does not possess either, then the Diviner's Instrument confers a significant penalty in addition to its bonus. *After* the player chooses which roll gains the bonus his character gained by using the token, the Storyteller chooses another roll made later in the day to receive a *penalty* equal to the character's Wyrd score (maximum –5 dice). As noted, fate can be quite fickle, especially when it is not paid its proper due.

Rumors of the College

The following rumors regarding the College of Worms may find a character's ear:

• Some say that the diviners are not always so free-wheeling with dangerous information. Stories suggest that they have little caches of knowledge and artifacts, known by some as Treasuries, and others as Tombs.

• Word around the Court is that the diviners have, through their studies, uncovered old forbidden Contracts that changelings aren't meant to know. Some of the oldest augurs are said to possess knowledge of grim necromancies and fate-twisting secrets. Such knowledge is supposedly written down in a book known as the Bad Doctor's Codex.

• Fate, some suggest, drives the diviners mad. All of them end up crazy — so crazy, in fact, that once in a while one goes back to the True Fae and asks to be that Keeper's apprentice to learn the *true* secrets of fate and time.

Duchy of the Icebound Heart

I refuse to be a slave to love and a servant to grief. I prove this by breaking hearts and drinking the sorrow from within.

The heart is a fragile thing. Sometimes it seems to be *too* delicate, as if formed from brittle glass and frail twigs, pumping blood as thin as water. Humans certainly possess fragile hearts, but changelings do, too. Sometimes, a changeling's heart is even more fragile; time spent amidst the True Fae seems to have left cracks in many a changeling's already delicate heart, and too many are given over to their emotions, to the heady lusts and weepy loves they encounter at every turn.

That means one thing: the heart is a vulnerability. It can be used to lure someone this way or that, can be manipulated so that one will do anything to avoid having his heart broken again.

The Dukes and Duchesses of the Icebound Heart recognize this fact, having themselves been once-vulnerable, and they have sworn to never again be helpless in such a way. No longer will they be the puppets, instead becoming the puppet-masters.

Most of the changelings in the Duchy are potent manipulators, playing emotions like a master harpist. It gets them whatever they want, whenever they want it. Need a new car? Date the salesman, or better still, the guy who owns the dealership. Want to feel treasured for a night? Call an old lover, have a tryst under the promise of renewing that old fire and then kick him out the door. The Dukes and Duchesses even attempt to ply the heartstrings of other changelings, most of whom should know better (the Duchy does not operate in secret, after all). Knowing better doesn't stop the heart from wanting what it wants, though, does it? Too many changelings have given in to the manipulations of the Icebound Dukes and Duchesses, buying into false promises and offered desires far too often than what common sense should allow. The fae of the Duchy know: Love is power. So, too, lust. Learn to use them, and they become like keys able to open any door. Fail to use them, and you become the door to which others hold the key.

At the end of the day, the changelings of this order recognize that they have given themselves over to a callous double standard. They have stopped being the victims to monsters by, in a way, becoming monsters themselves. The changelings find that they're able to look past this unfortunate turnaround, convincing themselves that if *they* don't act the monsters, then someone else will. Perhaps this can eventually teach the poor heartbroken fools to steel themselves against such manipulation in the future, and that's almost like doing them a favor, isn't it?

Besides, these changelings believe you're one of two things in this world, the abuser or the abused. They've simply chosen the wiser path, or so they believe.

Titles: Icebound Duke (male), Icebound Duchess (female)

Prerequisites: Wyrd 2, Persuasion 2, Subterfuge 2, Mantle (Winter) 1

Joining: What the fae of the Duchy do is con artistry. Everything is a confidence game, with the fulcrum of every con being the emotions of another. Those who usually end up joining the ranks of the Duchy are often those who seem able to recognize the con and turn it around upon the Duke or Duchess who's running it. Particularly gifted changelings might even be able to orchestrate the game from the get-go, playing the victim while truly controlling the outcome of the con. It's not often that this *works*; the Lost of the Duchy have been at this game for a long time, and can often recognize the smell of deceit hanging in the air. That being said, they're also notoriously vain, which can lead one to be more than a little shortsighted. Those who remain unwilling to believe that they could ever again be victims soon end up as victims.

Regardless, that's the key to impressing the ranks of the Duchy. One must show that one's heart is sufficiently encased in an unbreakable carapace of ice. Turning the trick back around on the emotional tormentors is a *virtuoso* move, one worthy of the Duchy.

Oh, and a future Duke or Duchess must belong to the Winter Court. Those of the other Courts don't have a fair

comprehension of sorrow, and thus don't belong in the Duchy. That *does,* however, make them excellent victims, or so these changelings say. Worth mentioning is that the Icebound Dukes and Duchesses don't maintain a very positive relationship with the fae of the Spring Court. The Icebound changelings have, in a way, pilfered the Spring Court's attack on "desire" and are doing it in their own selfish way. A rivalry exists between the Court and the order.

Mien: The Icebound Dukes and Duchesses dress to impress. Each member of the order has an angle to play, and exterior appearance helps to reinforce that angle. One Duchess plays the "troubled waif" role, appearing in the dress of a humble, oft-abused urchin girl. A Duke might alternately play up the role of the sensitive loner (clothes off the racks at the Salvation Army, white iPod headphones dangling from the ears) or power-broker playboy (sharp-angled suits, polished shoes, engraved money clip). The changeling's outward exterior always helps to reinforce whatever persona that character uses to get her way.

The fae's mien changes, too. The normal trappings of the Winter Court are present, only moreso: breath of frost, icy skin, hoary eyes. Another change to one's mien is the addition of frozen tears that cling to the character's face. These tears are more symbolic than realistic, looking like frozen teardrops fastened to the cold skin of the character's cheek. As one's Wyrd increases, so do the number of tears. A Duke or Duchess with an abnormally high Wyrd score begins to have trouble at her task, because those tears seem to give off a palpable aura of sorrow. Those around them begin to feel overwhelmed by it — which, as it turns out, makes it difficult for them to ply their trade in broken hearts.



Background: Those who belong to the Duchy were usually once emotionally available — too available, really, for in most of them it meant being used, abused and discarded. These fae belong to the Winter Court for a reason. The grief they've suffered in this life both before and after being snatched away to Faerie is usually significant. Some suffered near-constant heartbreak, jumping from relationship to relationship, flitting through a cascading series of codependent lovers and cruel paramours. Others suffered more tangible tragedies: loved ones lost in accidents, injuries suffered by abusive parents, extreme anguish at the hands of the True Fae.

Membership in the Duchy allows these changelings to turn the tables on their own sorrow, refusing ever again to be sidelined by sadness. (The reality is not always so easy; some suggest that the changelings of the Duchy have only hidden their sadness in that icy heart, and by refusing it, it only grows. The frozen tears that come as part of the Icebound seeming represent the most obvious clue.)

Stat-wise, most Icebound Dukes and Duchesses have strong Social Attributes and Skills, though many didn't start out with Social being primary, having only developed such Skills through their inclusion in the Duchy. Many such changelings specialize in one or two key Social Skills, much as a weapons trainer might be uniquely skilled with a particular sword or pistol. A consummate "life of the party" Duke might possess

the Socialize Skill at high levels, while a Duchess who acts as a shadowy seductress might prefer strong Persuasion or Subterfuge scores.

Organization: The organization of the Duchy is informal; they travel and attend parties together, moving like a wolf pack through the flocks of unwitting sheep, but beyond that, they've very little specific organization. Two rules of note stand out, however.

The first is that the Icebound Dukes and Duchesses aren't supposed to work their cruel heartbreaking manipulations upon one another. It's not part of the oath to enter the order, however, but instead remains as a casually mentioned "rule." Of course, it utterly fails. The characters who enter the Duchy are now users, and have in the past generally been used; therefore, like a pit of sharks or a cage full of tigers, eventually someone's going to get bitten. They play their games with and against one another constantly; few, however, admit it. Nobody wants to admit that he's playing his fellow members, and no member wants to admit to being played. The practice is the elephant in the room that nobody talks about.

The second rule is the pronouncing of the Rake. Once a year, often on the first of January, the Duchy names its most successful libertine. The changeling who is seen as most successful at enslaving and breaking hearts is given the title until the next year. The members of the order don't choose the Rake — that is, somewhat incestuously, the task of *last year's* Rake. The qualities considered when naming a new Rake are purely up to the old Rake. Number of conquests? Adept at appropriate Contracts? Sharpest dresser? While this sometimes works out fairly, some Rakes simply bounce the title back and forth to one another, glad-handing each other with yearly rewards while the rest of the Duchy sits idly by. Few are willing to put up with such nonsense, however, and find ways to cruelly end the reign of the current Rake. The advantage of being Rake is, within most freeholds, a label that earns the changeling notable bragging rights (and perpetual dance partners at whatever affairs the Winter Court holds in a year). In some domains, though, the order actually forces its members to tithe Glamour up to the Rake via various imbalanced pledges (where the Rake does minimal effort, and the rest of the changelings do the lion's share of whatever effort the pledge requires).

Concepts: Bitter waif, broken-hearted housewife hag, consummate cheater, codependent cheater, everybody's favorite bartender, owner of dating service, pathological liar, poly-amorist puppet-master, serial rapist, shallow courtesan, vindictive courtier.

Privileges

Below is the privilege available to all members of the Duchy.

Heart Hooks

Heartbreak is a powerful thing. It can be fickle, too — a heart might be broken after a particularly potent one night stand in a neon-lit highway hotel, or might not be broken after a years-long marriage disintegrates. The Icebound Dukes and Duchesses strive to bring heartbreak to others, because it gives them power.

The changelings of this order gain +3 Social dice over those whose hearts the changelings truly broken. Only those who have truly been decimated by the relationship are truly weakened in such a way. While it seems odd that one would gain a benefit *after* the heartbreak, that's part of the privilege. It cores the heart, removes some intangible strength from the person and the changeling benefits by taking that strength unto herself. Its uses are many. She can call upon the heartbroken to perform simple tasks ("Get me a drink, will you?") or to use in elaborate schemes to make another jealous (and thus secure yet another broken heart). Make no mistake, it's cruel. While some changelings maintain a vast stable of old lovers, many simply discard them after a few uses. Discarded lovers don't always handle it so well. Some give in to massive sorrow, eventually killing themselves. Others fail to have productive relationships, resorting to stalking or other sorts of deviancy. The most ironic is when those abandoned playthings become just as the changelings who destroyed their hearts: callous, vindictive, abusive. The bonus remains until the victim loves again, as intensely as he once loved the Duke of the Icebound Heart.

Legends of the Duchy

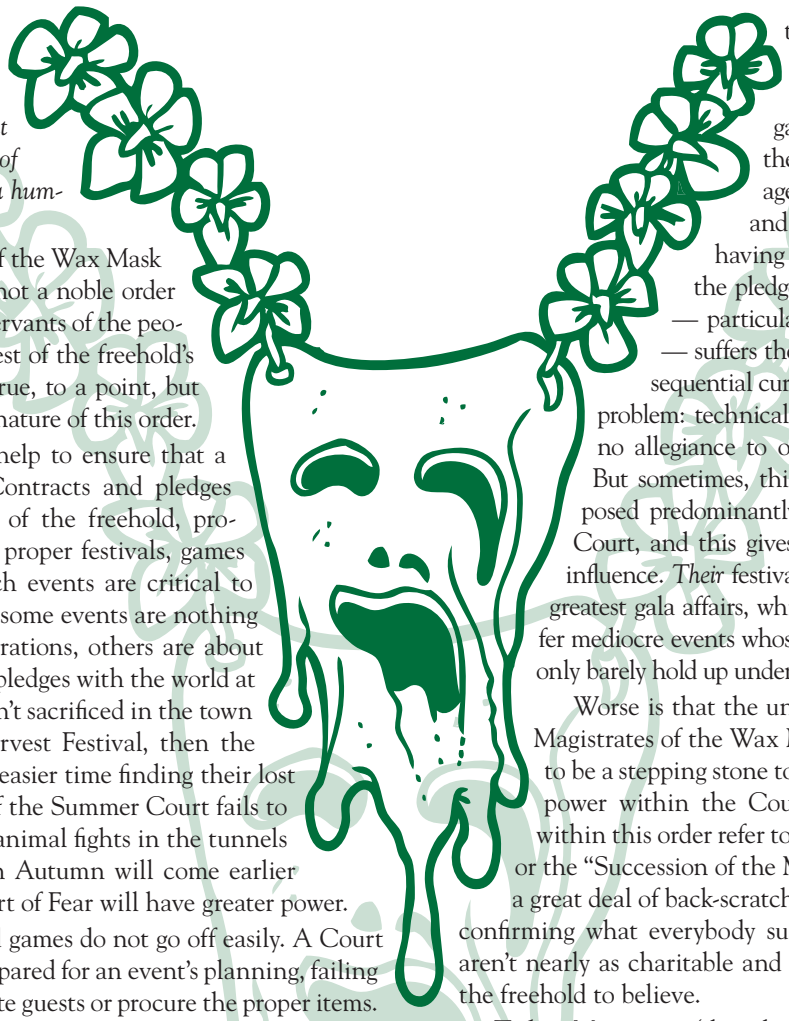
Changelings might hear of the following rumors regarding the Dukes and Duchesses of the Icebound Heart:

- Some claim to have seen the changelings of this order break off some of the frozen tears from their face and melt them into the drinks of their soon-to-be conquests. Nobody knows what this does, precisely, but it's assumed that it softens a victim's resolve against the emotional machinations of the changeling.

- Check the freezer of a Duke or Duchess of the Icebound Heart. Know what you'll find? Hearts. *Real* hearts, ripped from the chests of their subjugated lovers and encased in ice. (That's why the poor fools are so pliable after the fact; they no longer have the heart to resist.) The only way to really hurt a changeling of the Icebound Heart is to destroy these frozen organs, shattering them somehow.

- If you can make a Duke of the Icebound Heart fall in love with you, and then *you* break *his* heart, you gain power over all the poor souls that he hurt (emotionally) over the years. Of course, doesn't that make you as bad as him?

Magistrates of the Wax Mask



And so I give myself over to the will of the freehold and act on its behalf to ensure that the games and festivals of old are honored. I am a humble servant.

The Magistrates of the Wax Mask pretend that they are not a noble order at all, but are instead servants of the people acting in the interest of the freehold's greater good. This is true, to a point, but hardly depicts the full nature of this order.

The Magistrates help to ensure that a Court keeps up its Contracts and pledges with the changelings of the freehold, providing them with the proper festivals, games and other events. Such events are critical to many freeholds; while some events are nothing more than mere celebrations, others are about renewing treaties and pledges with the world at large. If three sows aren't sacrificed in the town square during the Harvest Festival, then the True Fae will have an easier time finding their lost changeling servants. If the Summer Court fails to hold its blood-soaked animal fights in the tunnels beneath the city, then Autumn will come earlier that year and the Court of Fear will have greater power.

Such festivals and games do not go off easily. A Court may be woefully unprepared for an event's planning, failing to invite the appropriate guests or procure the proper items. What if one uses the wrong knife to slit the bull's throat? Or fails to ensorcell the proper number of humans who will act as playthings for the night's affair? Failure to plan properly can result in broken pledges and a freehold in revolt.

Enter the Magistrates, who have a long legacy of providing the Courts with their aid in regard to such events. Some simply add their help when the Court asks for it. In other cases, the ruling Court may hand over the reins and let this order of changelings control the entire affair. It all seems aboveboard, and the Magistrates play at being humble. They claim to be acting in the best interest of the freehold, and are at its tender mercies.

The reality is often quite different. In many freeholds, this grants the Magistrates of the Wax Mask considerable power. First, they often end up in charge of the invitation list. A snub from the Magistrates is a clear message. Second, the Magistrates end up relied upon so heavily in regards to the proper festivals and games that this affords them a great deal of leverage. Insult the Magistrates, and one runs the risk of having them purposefully spoil the pledge, and thus the freehold — particularly the presiding Court — suffers the lion's share of the consequential curse. This leads to another problem: technically, the Magistrates have no allegiance to one Court over another. But sometimes, this order finds itself composed predominantly of members from one Court, and this gives that Court substantial influence. *Their* festivals suddenly become the greatest gala affairs, while the other Courts suffer mediocre events whose pledges and Contracts only barely hold up under scrutiny.

Worse is that the unspoken rule is that the Magistrates of the Wax Mask is lately perceived to be a stepping stone to other noble orders and power within the Court. (Some changelings within this order refer to this as *cursus honorum*, or the "Succession of the Magistrates.") It leads to a great deal of back-scratching and favor-currying, confirming what everybody suspects: the Magistrates aren't nearly as charitable and impartial as they'd like the freehold to believe.

Titles: Magistrate (though other internal titles are used; see "Organization" below)

Prerequisites: Wyrd 3

Joining: The official "party line" for becoming a Magistrate is that those who wish to join the order may join the order. No tests, no trials. One's interest in serving the freehold by performing a rather rigorous job (and a known time-sink) is enough to warrant entry.

It doesn't always work that way, however. The truth is that, in many freeholds, the Magistrates represent a rather exclusive club. Those within the order possess a great deal of potential power, even though it's not meant to be such a socially profitable endeavor. As noted, membership in this order is also perceived as a springboard to greater roles within the Courts or freehold, and the Magistrates know that "not just anybody" deserves access to that opportunity.



And so, they tend to freeze out potential Magistrates of whom the current Magistrates don't approve. They make life difficult for such a novitiate (before he makes the pledge to become a Magistrate), or ignore his requests entirely. They never act so obviously as to make threats, but threats often become implicit in their actions.

Of course, that's not to say a character can't join the Magistrates after they've written him off. He simply has to play them at their own game, and find some leverage against them. Either that, or meet with their approval in the first place.

Mien: Many Magistrates dress professionally and humbly. Some wear simple suits and dresses, others plain robes. Not all resist dressing flamboyantly — after all, they are the curators and creators of some of the greatest and most necessary events held by the freehold. The chance to enter the spotlight for a time is compelling to some, though other Magistrates often frown upon those that give into such brazen urges.

A Magistrate's mien changes in one substantial way: the slowly oozing wax mask that the changeling may don over his normal face. The mask is largely faceless and featureless, with dollops of fresh wax occasionally breaking open and running in rivulets down the length of the face. Sometimes, the mask takes on the color schemes of whatever Court is in charge at the time — green for Spring, reds and oranges for Summer and so forth. However, a telling sign is that a Magistrate belonging to one Court above others often finds that his wax mask reveals his allegiance: even if the Court of Fear is currently in power, if the Magistrate belongs to the Winter Court, his mask may show the icy blues and hoarfrost whites of his own people.

Background: Those who join the Magistrates of the Wax Mask are generally of two sorts. They're changelings who believe themselves bound to duty and so they join the order with the intent of performing work for the freehold, or they're the young Turks of the region who see the Magistrates for the opportunity the order presents. Too often, the first group often loses sight of its humble stance and ends up just like the second group — the potential to claim hidden leverage and secret authority is just too good to pass up for many such creatures.

Inevitably, those entering the order are proficient in either Mental or Social Skills or Attributes. Those who find Mental stats dominant tend to remain in the lower ranks of the group, finding themselves tasked time and again with the administrative duties (see "Quaestor," below). Those who become Magistrates and have Social stats as primary (or develop them over their time within the order) usually rise to greater things. This isn't universally true, of course. A particularly cunning Magistrate with little social grace may still find himself able to outwit the others (they rely on honeyed tongues, while he relies on a sharp mind), but it's less common than changelings would like to admit.

Organization: The Magistrates give themselves over to a rather strict three-tiered organization. Those on the lowest tier are known as *Quaestors*, and are responsible for what other Magistrates perceive as all the "boring" stuff: lists of names, inventories of items, finances, calendars. The Quaestors handle all administrative manners.

Above the Quaestor is the *Curule Aedile* (or simply "Aedile"). The Aediles are the ones who meet regularly with the Courts, acting as liaisons and planners. They're very hands-on, and represent the "public face" of the Magistrates.

Above them is a single changeling known as the *Magister Equitum* (literally "Master of the Horse," a position of great power in ancient Rome). Every Magistrate in a given freehold has a Magister Equitum, who acts as the guiding force behind the order. Usually, the Magister represents a powerful position, having the ear of whatever reigning figure controls the Court at any given time of the year. Some Magisters are even capable of usurping the expected power of the extant nobles, acting as a shadowy ruler from behind the scenes.

(One final note: Some Magistrates, particularly the Magister Equitum, take on bodyguards from outside their order. They refer to such unaffiliated bodyguards as "Lictors," and make it clear to these changelings that being a Lictor is a good way to curry favor and enter the Magistrates of the Wax Mask. It's not always true — brute force doesn't necessarily equate to political finesse, but lies are sometimes necessary to keep servants in line.)

Concepts: Bacchanalian party planner, bacchanalian beast, control freak administrator, number-cruncher, political advisor, Queen's right-hand advisor, savvy bureaucrat, social butterfly.

Privileges

The following token is available to all Magistrates of the Wax Mask.

Waxen Violet (••)

The violet — that small, purple flower with the sweet smell — is sometimes considered a symbol of one's humility and trustworthiness. That is, at least, how the Magistrates hope it will be perceived, and this token goes a good way toward ensuring that. This small flower, preserved in a thin coating of wax, is a token that one pins to his clothing (or skin if he's willing to suffer a pinch and a few beads of blood). When activated, the Violet gives off a pleasing aroma that seems to linger around the Magistrate. Those who are within 50 yards must succeed on a Resolve + Composure roll, and must achieve successes that equal or surpass the Magistrate's Wyrd score. Failure to do so indicates that the Magistrate appears — as the flower suggests — humble, and ultimately trustworthy. He gains +3 Social dice against those affected. The effects of this token last for the remainder of the scene.

Action: Reflexive

Drawback: The Violet has its effect on the changeling who uses it, as well. Except for him, the effect is somewhat soporific. The lingering aroma has a sleep-inducing effect that, while thankfully delayed, is still quite potent when it finally strikes. The changeling has two remaining hours left awake after using the Waxen Violet. If he does not find a place to sleep before that time, he will collapse into slumber unless he spends a Willpower point. That Willpower point only earns him a single turn, however (though several points can be spent to grant several turns). Once asleep, the character sleeps for eight hours straight. If at any point he's forced awake during this time, he suffers a –2 dice penalty on all rolls until he is able to go to sleep and finish his eight hours.

Catch: In addition to the Drawback, a mortal or other character using this token without the requisite Glamour expenditure or Wyrd roll suffers one lethal wound upon its use. The Violet literally numbs the flesh beneath where it rests and "drinks" a wound level (its petals turning deep reddish-purple in the process). This wound always leaves a small, puckered scar shaped like a flower.

Rumors of the Magistrates

What follows are a number of rumors one might hear about the Magistrates of the Wax Mask:

• Supposedly, the Magistrates hold their own clandestine festival once a year, called the Renewal of the Mockeries. Beforehand, they form effigies of all the changelings the Magistrates detest, which often includes many of those in power. The Magistrates stuff the effigies with hay and pig hearts, wrapping them in burlap and painting their faces in blood. The Magistrates destroy the effigies at the festival, whispering malicious invective against them as they tear them apart — these insults are said to act as very real curses that affect the changelings mocked by those ragged effigies. This festival is said to be part of the order's old oaths. Without it, the order would fall apart.

• The Magistrates keep a massive network of ensorcelled mortals hidden from the rest of the freehold. So far, nobody has been able to find out what purpose this network serves. Weirder still, each human has a number branded or tattooed upon his skin (somewhere hidden, such as upon the inner thigh or around the side of the torso).

• Ever peel away a Magistrate's oozing wax mask? Some say that one of the Ogres of the Court of Sorrow did that a few years back, and couldn't talk about what he saw underneath for weeks. And even then, he's never quite explained it. The face beneath has turned wretched, he said. The face of a true goblin. Bloodless and wrong.

Margravate of the Brim

To the Margravate, I promise many things. I promise to never join the ranks of those perfidious Courts, much as I promise to never be stupid enough to go swimming with sharks. But I'll protect my kind no matter what I think of them, from threats without and threats within.



Every freehold has its borders, unofficial demarcations that separate a changeling community from the vast and frightening world beyond. The Lost form freeholds in part because doing so protects them; while such protection is far from perfect, a tightly knit community allows changelings to "circle the wagons," so to speak, thus guaranteeing at least *some* security.

The Margravate of the Brim is composed of those changelings who belong to the areas at the edges of this community, the so-called Brim, or "border marches." These March Lords and Ladies claim that dwelling within the freehold is no safer than living outside of it — and, at least the enemies outside usually have the courtesy to stick the knife in your chest instead of your back.

The fae of the Brim make one thing clear: those of the Courts are not to be trusted, at least not without a solid pledge to keep one's hind end safe (and even then, the slippery eels always seem to have a couple of loopholes, just in case). To the Margraves, the nobles of the freehold are treacherous cowards on the best day, and fickle monsters on the worst. It doesn't matter to what Court one belongs, they're all bastards. And so, the Margraves have chosen to live on the periphery of changeling society, eschewing the tangled politics of the Courts and demanding that their own members remain soundly apolitical.

And yet, contrary to the March Lords' bitter disavowal of anything Court-related, they are sworn to protect the freehold — which, ironically, means they're sworn to protect those of the Courts, as well. The Margraves believe themselves to be the first and hopefully *last* line of defense against those outside the freehold who would dare to bring harm against the changeling community. A largely militaristic order, the March Lords train on whatever weapons they can scrounge together. They stockpile anything from shotguns to sharpened shovels, preparing for what they believe is an inevitable conflict, a coming bloodbath between the changelings and their Fae keepers.

For all the Margraves' bluster, they can't remain outside changeling society forever. Old pledges and key festivals still bring them back into the fold — they just drag their feet and loudly protest whenever such an occasion occurs. Some are secretly glad to mingle with Lost outside their order, desperate to reconnect with old friends or just plain anyone outside the bitter and often strict Margravate. Others accept the opportunity to mingle again with fae society because it helps them keep an eye on their "adversaries." In some areas, the order even sends spies to integrate back into the society, so they can report back to the Brim and ensure that the safety within the freehold is as sound as the safety without.

The March Lords look down upon the changelings of the Courts, just as those of the Courts frown upon the changelings of the Brim, considering them privateers, lunatics or simply ill-mannered beasts. And yet despite misgivings on both sides, the March Lords do what they must to protect the freehold from threats both real and imagined.

Titles: Margrave, March Lord (male), Margravine, March Lady (female)

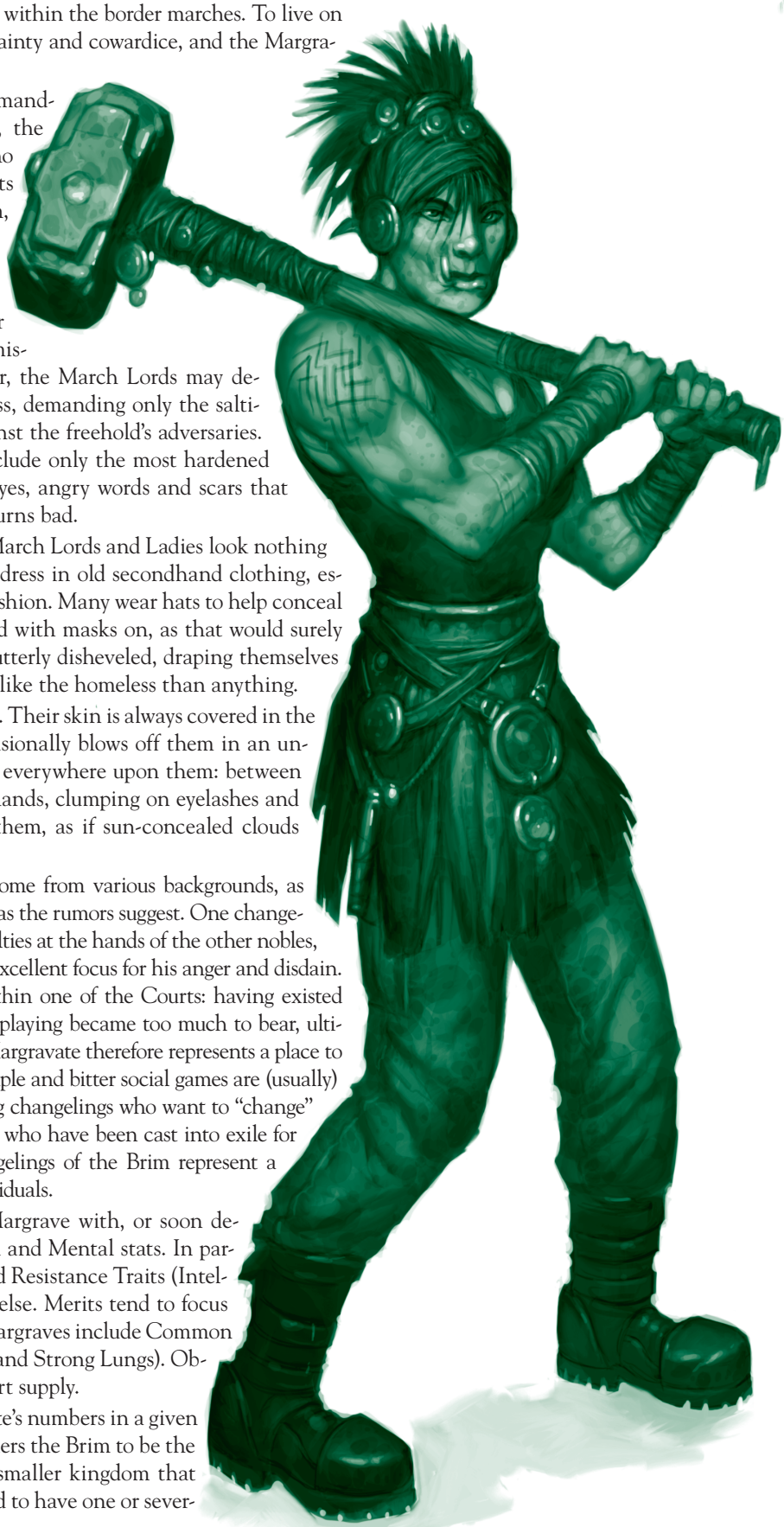
Prerequisites: Wyrd 2, Clarity 5 or higher

Joining: One cannot belong to the Courts and simultaneously belong to the Margravate of the Brim. Some within this order merely distrust the Courts, others loathe the Courts outright — but rarely does a Margrave have a positive word to share about the so-called nobles. Therefore, connection to the Courts is the uttermost demerit. Even those who no longer belong find themselves distrusted for years, regardless of how often they've proven their worth to the March Lords.

The other base requirement is that one must live just outside the freehold. The Margraves have their own maps that show the often-improvised boundaries between the freehold and the outer world. Between the two waits the border marches, a kind of buffer zone between that which belongs to changeling society and that which does not. The border marches might be a street, a whole block or a broken procession of fallow fields and tracts of old forest. The changelings

who belong to this order must dwell within the border marches. To live on either side is to declare one's uncertainty and cowardice, and the Margravate cares little for either.

Some March Lords are more demanding than others. In one freehold, the Margravate might take any Lost who have outwardly rejected the Courts and their noble vanities. To them, nothing else matters. Eschewing the Courts is proof enough, and everybody has some kind of skill they can bring to the table, whether it's hammering nails or writing missives. In another freehold, however, the March Lords may declare a prohibition against weakness, demanding only the saltiest, most stalwart fae to stand against the freehold's adversaries. These veteran outposts tend to include only the most hardened changelings — those with mean eyes, angry words and scars that itch and tingle when the weather turns bad.



Mien: For the most part, the March Lords and Ladies look nothing like Lords or Ladies. They tend to dress in old secondhand clothing, eschewing any interest in luxury or fashion. Many wear hats to help conceal their faces (without walking around with masks on, as that would surely spook the humans). A few appear utterly disheveled, draping themselves in the filthy rags and looking more like the homeless than anything.

Their miens only reinforce this. Their skin is always covered in the red, brown or ashen dust that occasionally blows off them in an unfelt wind. The grit and grime lurks everywhere upon them: between their teeth, ringing their callused hands, clumping on eyelashes and brows. Shadows, too, drift across them, as if sun-concealed clouds move swiftly overhead.

Background: The Margraves come from various backgrounds, as much a ragtag bunch of changelings as the rumors suggest. One changeling may have suffered merciless cruelties at the hands of the other nobles, and now uses the Margravate as an excellent focus for his anger and disdain. Another might have come from within one of the Courts: having existed as a noble, the politicking and gameplaying became too much to bear, ultimately weakening his Clarity. The Margravate therefore represents a place to escape all that, where politics are simple and bitter social games are (usually) shunned. Other Margraves are young changelings who want to "change" the dynamic, and some are older fae who have been cast into exile for real or perceived crimes. The changelings of the Brim represent a rather eclectic, ragtag bunch of individuals.

Most changelings enter the Margrave with, or soon develop, a strong reliance on Physical and Mental stats. In particular, they tend to favor Power and Resistance Traits (Intelligence, Strength) above anything else. Merits tend to focus similarly (standard Merits for the Margraves include Common Sense, Danger Sense, Strong Back and Strong Lungs). Obviously, Court Contracts are in short supply.

Organization: If the Margravate's numbers in a given freehold support it, the order considers the Brim to be the order's own lesser freehold, like a smaller kingdom that rings the larger. The Margraves tend to have one or sever-

al meeting places, known as "outposts." At the outposts, the changelings of the order gather together to discuss policy, compare tactics, tell war stories or drink themselves into a numb haze. They don't have festivals or dances (unless some old promise demands that they do so), as these hardened fae aren't much for social occasions.

In direct opposition to the Courts and their strangling monarchies, the Margravate adheres to a strict democracy with each member providing one vote. All salient issues and concerns are put before the entire order so that every March Lord and Lady can have a say and help forge the Margravate's direction.

The order only has a few positions unique to the entitlement, and these don't carry greater or lesser power so much as they demand the completion of particular tasks. The *Cartographer* keeps fresh the maps that detail the territory marked by the border marches, but also tends to keep relevant maps of the freehold and the surrounding environs, as well. (He also notes as much as he can about the locations of where other changelings may dwell and operate.) The *Doorman* keeps watch over any known gateways into the Hedge, at least those that lie within the Brim itself. The Doorman also is the one who enters the Hedge when necessary — while the other Margraves are in no way prohibited from doing so, the Doorman is expected to be particularly skilled in walking the roads and knowing the proper paths. The *Crow's Nest* is responsible for policing his own within the order and keeping a vigilant eye on potential threats rising from all sides. He also looks for portents that presage the coming of the True Fae.

Concepts: Angry dissenter, ex-noble from one of the Courts, mad exile from the freehold, paranoid defender, political activist, reluctant liaison, spy for the Courts, unpretentious leader, weird non-conformist union leader.

Privileges

Below is a privilege shared by all March Lords and March Ladies.

Safety of the Brim

The territory defined as the border marches or Brim differs for every freehold, but usually is composed of the land that surrounds the freehold proper (again, loosely defined, but the Margraves make a very concerted effort to map out the boundaries). This generally accounts for at least a few square miles of land.

When within the territory of the Brim, a Margravine gains a number of minor bonuses, for this is *her* territory, and she knows it better than any fancy Court-enslaved fool. When within the accepted territory of the border marches, the changeling gains the following: +1 to her Initiative modifier, +1 to any Perception rolls made (including the Wits + Composure rolls made to detect surprise attacks) and +1 to any Stealth rolls made (as she knows how best to use the land and its shadow to conceal her actions).

These effects end if she leaves the known territory — even stepping over the invisible "line" that marks the border between freehold and Brim, or Brim and what lies beyond, will cut short her bonuses. She gains no penalties while outside her territory from this effect, though the Storyteller may see fit to incur penalties for other reasons.

Rumors of the Margravate

Changeling characters may hear the following rumors regarding the Margravate of the Brim:

• They're building an army. Everybody knows it. Some people hope that they're building an army to attack the Fae, but that's not right. No, the Margraves are building a militia to take over the Courts, to remove them and to install democracy. Some changelings think this sounds well and good, but others recognize the reality — in doing so, they may make themselves vulnerable to attack by the Fae. Nobody wants to be dragged back through the Hedge and down the trods. Nobody wants to go back to slavery. Except, obviously, the March Lords.

• Rumor has it that the Margravate has an assassin within the ranks, and has since its inception. It's said that once a March Lord assassin grows too old or feeble, he begins to train another to take over for him. They assassinate powerful figures from the Court — those who have grown *too* powerful, so the story goes.

• Every year, the Margraves adjust their maps slightly. The Brim grows by a few inches every year, part of some ceremony or festival. Problem is, it encroaches toward the freehold, not away from it. Some even whisper that the March Lords and Ladies believe that the Brim is a living thing, a place with its own mind. They worship it as one might worship old gods or the True Fae. They want it to grow. They want to feed it.

Sacred Band of the Golden Standard

You have my word. This is what I seek. My glory for the freehold, and my name in all the tales.



For as long as they've been around, the fae of the Sacred Band of the Golden Standard have been warrior-poets and glory-hounds, hungry for recognition by their own kind and all the changelings of the freehold. To have stories told about them makes them timeless — it enters their name into the invisible annals of history.

On the surface, what they do is protect the freehold. They serve whatever Court is currently in power, regardless of whatever Mantle or Court Goodwill its members have earned over the years. The changelings of this order are noble warriors serving the military needs of the reigning powers and the personal safety of every individual changeling within the freehold. It all sounds very dignified and righteous.

What these warriors do is noble, yes, but they don't do it for the sake of nobility. They do it for the fame and praise, for the vainglorious pleasure brought on by being the focus of tales and myths. The feats they perform are expected to be truly epic or legendary, and each Gilded Aspirant strives to outperform his last deed. Some rely on clever tricks: being a crack shot with two pistols, having a demeanor charming enough to convince some mirror-eyed monstrosity from the Hedge to turn tail and flee or making boastful gambles ("I can cut that child's shoelaces with a sweep of this fire ax") and attempting to make good on them. Others engage on massive quests to earn their favor: liberating a horror house of underage sex slaves from a neighborhood pedophile, hunting a famous serial killer (who happens also to be a Soulless changeling) or gathering together an army of his own warriors to hunt down the True Fae that's said to haunt that old stretch of swamp south of the city. But again, they don't do these things because they're *right* — while surely that's a consideration, what they're more interested in is being *praised* for their deeds. It's for this reason that some changelings see the members of this order as mighty champions and proud conquerors… while others believe Gilded Aspirants to be pompous braggarts and swollen-headed egomaniacs.

It's ultimately all about the legends, and being in them. The changelings of the Sacred Band love to hear their own names and stories recounted back to them. What's fascinating and perhaps contrary is how the order works to support its own word-of-mouth. While certainly the warriors are in some ways in a constant competition with one another, they also recognize that they are the first line of offense when it comes to giving good press. Rarely does one Aspirant slander the name of a fellow Aspirant in the order. Most do their best to champion their fellow warriors' exploits (at least until it begins to steal their own thunder, at which point any such advocacy ends rather suddenly).

An Aspirant is not immune to corruption, either. While many wouldn't dare besmirch their own honor, others would do it gladly — as long as they don't get caught. Some lie, inventing evidence to support false claims of heroism. Others have been caught orchestrating their own feats, such as cutting a dark deal with a Fae, thus allowing the warrior to "defeat" the Other and earn the praise, even though the defeat was little more than a well-played sham. A rare few turn to outright barbarism, realizing that if they can't earn a place in the stories as heroes, then perhaps they can earn it as monsters, instead. Certainly their desperation for glory is sometimes all-consuming; those who go too long without a "win" may find that they miss the fawning stares and whispered awe, and will do anything to reclaim it.

Titles: Gilded Aspirant (also, within the order they sometimes refer to themselves as "Standard Bearers")

Prerequisites: Wyrd 2, Presence 3

Joining: A changeling joins the Sacred Band of the Golden Standard in one of two ways. The first way is that he does something worthy of talk and awe among the other fae. Anything that gets the grapevine talking

— saving an infant, delving deep into the Hedge, executing his fetch in a bloody rooftop duel — thus draws the attention of other Gilded Aspirants. This order of legend-hungry warriors doesn't see this changeling as competition, but as *kin*. He belongs with them, for he is beyond capable, clearly worth the words spoken about him. In this case, the fae of the Sacred Band are the ones who extend the invite… and they fully expect all changelings to *want* to belong to their order. When a fae turns down the invitation to join such a "gilded legacy," be a part of the so-called Golden Standard, it's an insult of the highest order. Some Aspirants let such a slight slide, but many engage in bitter reprisals, spreading slander (or digging up nasty truths and spreading them, instead) and ensuring that the changeling won't be a part of any lasting legends. The Aspirants hate it when other changelings outside the order gain glory, and do what they must to stop that from happening.

The second way a changeling joins the ranks of the Sacred Band is by pleading to be a part of the order — and most Gilded Aspirants really do demand that a changeling begs. If they find that such entreaties are humble enough and appropriately self-deprecating, they ask the changeling to go out into the world and impress them. Some make this as ambiguous as possible, setting no single challenge beyond that vague charge. Others ask for a specific task to be performed: defeat a beast from the Hedge, steal an earring from a known loyalist or challenge another fae's fetch to a duel and win. Most are honorable enough about this, and completing the task as asked is usually enough to warrant entrance into the order. A few Aspirants play a changeling's eagerness or sycophancy, continuing to demand new tasks (usually ones that serve the Aspirant's own selfish interests), making the puppet dance while the strings are still connected.

It's worth mentioning that, out of the two ways to join, changelings of the first type are generally better regarded within the order than fae of the second. Those who begged to join must work to remove the reputation of being toadies and brown-nosers, even though that's what the order demanded of them to join in the first place.

Mien: Changelings of the Sacred Band like to appear impressive. They wear whatever clothes will earn them attention. They train to physical perfection — or, at least, groom themselves to grant that illusion. Even those Darklings or Wizened who join the ranks take care of themselves as best they can, standing tall and wearing whatever finery will draw others' gazes. Local styles are not

lost on them — a cadre of urban Aspirants might wear the newest sneakers, white suits and gold or platinum medallions. Those with a more medieval predilection might wear a breastplate burnished to mirrored bronze. Many, too, present their weapons of choice in an almost fetishistic manner. It is unsurprising to see an Aspirant with an expensive rosewood-handled dagger (inscribed with poetry or symbols of glory such as crowns, scepters or heraldry) or a gleaming nickel-plated six-shooter used by some famous Wild West showman. Their weapons are often nearly as impressive as they are, as much symbols as tools of war.

An Aspirant's seeming reflects some of his gilded glory, as well. Blemishes and scars fade away (unless they were a part of his seeming before). Teeth grow whiter, and the color or cast of his eyes deepens to a lustrous hue. The changeling's head or body also becomes wreathed in a halo of colored light — often a warm color such as saffron, crimson or the blaze of a righteous fire. Some, though, find that other colors frame them — auras of holy white, flashes of sky blue or the glinting nimbus of sun-splashed steel. An Aspirant with a particularly high Wyrd finds that he has an easier time impressing people, as they can almost sense the aura of a champion as he enters the room. This has a downside. Those of the Sacred Band who possess higher-than-normal Wyrd rarely go unnoticed, no matter when they might want to.

Background: Those within the order were usually of some notoriety in the freehold. Be it a Queen's Knight who saved her life from an assassination attempt or a deposed King undone by a nefarious pledge gone wrong, many of the Gilded Aspirants were known among the fae before they joined this order. Of course, the order also features those younger (or just plain untested) fae without a heroic or otherwise distinguished past preceding them. Some of them are bright-faced eager things, ready to "do good," but just as many were poor nobodies desperate to stand just once in the limelight and feel the fame that washes over the other knights and warriors.

Changelings within the Sacred Band obviously rely first and foremost on their Physical Traits, Strength and Dexterity in particular, but Social Attributes come in a close second (especially Presence). The noble order generally recommends that its members become particularly proficient at one thing — whether it's an unerring shot with a rifle, the ability to sneak into an enemy's territory unseen or the talent to rally armies of street thugs and vagrants behind him. This translates to a few particularly high Skill scores, which might mean that other Skills are left in the dust. (Some don't rely on Skills to earn them notoriety, though. Consider an Aspirant with an unusually high Defense score who "never seems to be where his enemy thinks," or a warrior whose weighty Health stat keeps him alive in even the must punishing of fights.) Those of the Golden Standard prefer to be known for one particular talent, and their stats tend to reflect this over-specialization. (Many also possess either the Fame, Inspiring or Striking Looks Merits.)

Organization: The fae of the Sacred Band stick together. Some form motleys, others simply make time for one another, but they generally don't act in direct competition with one another. As a network of grandstanders and glory-hounds, they lift one another up instead of tearing each other down, thus making the order its own public relations machine. This is why the Aspirants generally specialize in different things, thus helping to ensure that they aren't crossing paths too often with their exploits. If they do cross paths too often, the other warriors may step in and adjudicate, perhaps demanding that one of the two (usually the younger) finds a *different* talent or specialty with which to impress the masses. They also stand up for one another should anyone dare to disparage their legacy. Insult one Aspirant, and you've insulted the very nature of the Golden Standard — you've just called them *all* out. The wrath of these warriors is often humiliating on a public scale (some consider them bullies for this reason). The Gilded Aspirants bring their wrath down upon such offenders in as publicly humiliating a manner as possible — embarrassing them in front of their ruler is ideal, springing upon them whatever scandal or dirty secret could have the most deleterious social effect.

Once annually, usually toward the end of the calendar year, the fae of the Golden Standard gather at a "round table" affair to determine what kinds of epic exploits and minor feats they can perform either together or as individuals to earn glory for themselves. Does a corrupt Queen need to be toppled from her lofty throne? Is there a human gang or cult who has been causing trouble for other changelings and could use to be put into the ground with a show of the Aspirants' valiance? They come together to determine what actions will earn them the most respect and awe from their peers, and then they work on plans to milk the greatest drama from such events. These "round tables" are closed affairs, and performed wholly in secret. If the other changelings knew to what degree these supposed champions manipulated (or outright invented) their own success, the others would be displeased.

Worth noting is how the Aspirants take on epithets appropriate to their individual abilities and deeds. Generally, as one performs greater feats or illustrates his grandiose skills, one takes on new epithets that build upon the old epithets. One Gilded Aspirant might be "Bloody John of the Unerring Arrow" if he's an excellent shot with his compound bow and razor-sharp arrows. As he performs greater feats and builds a larger legacy for himself, his epithet lengthens. Killing his fetch and later freeing a changeling from the clutches of a True Fae might earn him a new, extended name: "Bloody John of the Unerring Arrow, Slayer of the Other and Liberator of Slaves." What other change-

lings don't necessarily know is that a Aspirant chooses his own epithets, with the approval of his fellow warriors.

Concepts: Arrogant jock, bogatyr, decorated police officer, *El Gran Luchadore*, ex-firefighter, famous stripper, heroic soldier, martial arts teacher, pompous pretty boy, renowned stripper ("dancer"), rodeo king.

Privileges

A changeling gains the blessing below upon joining the Sacred Band of the Golden Standard.

The Strength of One's Presence

The Gilded Aspirants generally represent a powerful physical presence — strong, tough, quick. This makes them impressive to most, and allows them greater social leeway than others may possess.

Once per scene, an Aspirant can spend a point of Glamour to add her highest Physical Attribute (whether Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) to any Presence roll she makes. This doesn't work, however, against those who have more cumulative Physical Attribute dots than the warrior herself possesses. For instance, if a target has Strength 3, Dexterity 3 and Stamina 3, that counts as nine Attribute dots total. If the Aspirant has only eight Attribute dots total (Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2), then this ability cannot be used on any Presence rolls invoked to affect that target. The only exception to this is if the Presence roll is meant to affect a crowd; then this fails to be a concern.

Rumors of the Sacred Band

These are rumors that characters may hear about the changelings of the Golden Standard:

• It's all one big conspiracy. Everybody knows it. The Aspirants have orchestrated a grand deception that places them as the heroes of the freehold, when in reality it's just another illusion fueled by the lies that are so common to the fae. But if you dig too deep in uncovering this conspiracy, they'll put you six feet under.

• They really *do* earn a kind of immortality from living inside legends. Truly old and renowned warriors develop a counterpart in the Hedge that looks just like them, built from the raw stuff of Glamour and the Thorns of that strange place. What's created is kind of an anti-fetch, a twin born of that world, not this one, and meant to live as a mad legend in the tangled weave of the Hedge. (Of course, what happens when that anti-fetch decides it wants to come into *this* world?)

• Every time a changeling of the Sacred Band hears his name, it's like a prayer to him, venerating the changeling as an idol. What the Aspirant doesn't know is, supposedly every time this happens, his fetch feels it, too. Some even say that the fetch gains just a little bit of power whenever its Aspirant counterpart is talked about in such a way.

Satrapy of Pearls

I vow to never turn down an offer to buy, barter or sell. Even happiness can be bought and sold, including my own.

The Pearl Satraps of the Spring Court believe that their happiness is paramount above all things. Not satisfied with mere contentment, the Satraps seek bliss whenever possible. Bliss, however, is rarely easy to come by, and never free. One always finds a cost associated, and the Pearl Satraps have chosen to not only accept that cost, but embrace it.

All things are up for purchase, sale or trade. That is the single overriding principle of the Satrapy of Pearls. But it's not just about cars, real estate, old books or new technology. They embrace such material wealth, absolutely. The Satraps are glad to possess and enjoy all the toys the world has to offer — and they are equally glad to offer those toys in exchange for other things. Money and luxury are the feathers in every Satrap's cap. But that's all wealth is: trifling feathers, mere ornamentation. The Satrapy's interest goes far deeper.

And that cuts to the heart of the matter: *everything* is for sale, not just objects and luxuries. Sex, love, hate, betrayal, sorrow… all lie waiting on the auction block, but only the Pearl Satraps believe themselves wise enough to see it and take advantage of it. Commerce extends beyond selling land or buying somebody's horse. A pretty girl's heart is for sale, always, but it takes more than money to get it (usually, at least). And every girl is different, her heart demanding a different price from different suitors. One requires a ready kindness, another asks for casual abuse. Her tears, too, are for up sale for those who know the costs. Her tears, scars, memories, desires — all available to those willing to see the value and pay the price. They can be bottled. They can be sold.

And so, this is what the Pearl Satraps do. On one hand, they please themselves above all others. They go out in the world and what they see, they want, and what they want, they purchase. It's a mad game to serve their vanity, but what else does one have if one is without the joy of conceit? One Satrap sees a silver locket around a woman's neck, and that locket holds the picture of her dearly departed husband. Oh, but the Satrap wants it, and the woman assures him that she'll never give it up. But she will. Maybe money will do the trick (people love money more than they'd care to admit, the Satraps say). If not that, then something else. The return of a lost child? A threat against her dear friend? Revenge against a cruel boss? She'll give the locket up when the Satrap sounds the right price. And he'll take it only when she's conceded to that price; no Satrap will accept something without first paying the proper cost. Nor will he ever steal, for thievery is anathema to this noble order. Nothing is free. To act as if it is means a willful refutation of those principles the Satrapy hold dear.

It's not just about one's own happiness, though. Many Pearl Satraps place themselves as procurators for others, be they changelings, mortals or any of the odd strangers that skulk around the edges of the freehold. Everybody knows that if you need something bad enough, the Satrapy of Pearls can get it for you. A draught of a child's blood? The heel from the left shoe of the Winter Court Queen? A simple apology whispered in one's ear beneath the last full moon of Autumn? Of course. What's desired can be purchased, the Satraps assure.

Titles: Satrap, Pearl Satrap

Prerequisites: Mantle (Spring) 2, Persuasion 2, Wyrd 3

Joining: One must belong to the Spring Court to join the Satrapy of Pearls. The noble order considers the other Courts to have missed the point, thus eschewing the potential of life and the magic that accompanies it. Life is meant to be enjoyed, and if one cannot understand that most basic of concepts, then one does not deserve membership of such noble standing.

One must still prove oneself worthy of the Satrapy of Pearls, however. The proof demanded is simple enough to understand, but often difficult to procure. One must first gain audience with a Pearl Satrap, which isn't difficult as most are glad for the conversation (and the possibility of commerce). In asking for acceptance into the Satrapy, one only needs the say-so from a single other Satrap. In obtaining that say-so, however, the changeling must accept a challenge of commerce as determined by the Satrap. The Satrap will demand that the changeling acquire something from someone: a love letter, a favorite brooch, an embarrassing memory, whatever. In obtaining this, the changeling cannot steal or inveigle it freely. It must be acquired by finding

a price and paying that price — which is what the Satraps do every day. If the changeling is incapable of playing that game and comprehending the give-and-take of universal commerce, then she doesn't belong among the Pearl Satraps.

Mien: Pearl Satraps dress well as an emblem to project their luxury. The Satrapy has no shared standard for style, and so one changeling might prefer the modern trappings of *haute couture*, while another might traipse about in a lavish (even gaudy) silken robe once worn by some ancient Persian governess. Ostentatious displays, while rarely tasteful, work to affirm a Satrap's commitment to wealth of some kind.



A Satrap's mien shifts slightly, too. Mostly, it simply reflects impeccable grooming: not a hair out of place, perfect nails, heavenly skin. The other change to a Satrap's mien happens to his eyes: they become pearlescent, as if they are not eyes at all but perfect pearls thrust into the sockets. It's difficult to tell when a Satrap is looking at you, as his pupils are lost in a sea of opaline white. As a Satrap's Wyrd increases, however, the mortal world begins to feel it. Those with Greed as a Vice have trouble resisting their own avarice, overtaken by a palpable hunger as the Satrap passes by. Mortals may believe that the changeling suffers from some kind of cataract, as well, seeing past the human guise and peering into those unnerving eyes.

Background: It's easy to assume that those who join the Satrapy of Pearls were always narcissistic power-mongers believing themselves to be the cream that floats so easily to the top. Certainly this is true for some, but not for the bulk of the order. No, most Pearl Satraps have had to claw their way up from the bottom, and that's how the Satrapy prefers it. Those who have been poor, destitute or otherwise outcast are the ones who know the true hunger necessary to wear the seeming of the Satraps. And, by proxy, those who know the hunger can therefore experience the true joy of feeding that hunger. It's not just about searching out the mad *joie de vivre* that comes with the purchase of 10 favors from nine women or about the sale of one old man's lifelong dreams, but it's about experiencing it wholly. It's about *appreciating* it.

Some Satraps even seek out those who lurk at the bottom of the food chain and offer a casual reminder that it merely takes the will to pull oneself out of the gutter and climb the ladder that leads to the stars. They don't offer any other help beyond those few words, because a future Satrap must claw his own way up from the underbelly.

Worth noting, too, is that not all Satraps end *up* wealthy. Yes, most do, as it's their bread and

butter (and a symbol of status within the order). But a Satrap can just as easily be a filthy beggar in a back alley, gleefully offering his strange services for a handful of coins or a curious bauble. More important than the status of wealth is evidence of one's conquests in this world of makeshift commerce. Few Satraps care to live without luxury, though, and a truly destitute member of this order is quite rare. (Therefore, most possess Resources 2 at the *bare* minimum.)

Obviously, what the Satraps do requires them to have a strong reliance on their Social Traits, with Presence and Manipulation usually being higher than average. Any Social Skill, with the exception of Animal Ken for the most part, requires attention; the Satraps can use any of these Skills to work out the parameters of a trade or purchase.

Organization: The Satrapy cares little for formal organization. Its members can operate alone or together, it matters little. Provided they uphold the oath given to the other Pearl Satraps, then any sense of unity is thrown to the wind.

Two exceptions to this *laissez-faire* attitude exist, both of which are events held annually by the Satrapy. Each event bookends the season of Spring. Within the first week of the season, the Pearl Satraps hold what's formally known as the Opal Auction of the Springtide Pearl, but most know it simply as, "The Auction." Every Satrap is expected to bring one or several treasures to the table and bid them off at a gala affair (catered to every strange taste, serviced by ensorcelled mortals). The Auction represents a time to show off, as well as a time to demonstrate the Satrapy's considerable skills at obtaining things people might want. It often leaves the changelings of the freehold talking for weeks. How did that Satrap secure a single night's worth of boot-polishing and floor-scrubbing from the Winter Court's second-in-command? Just what kind of creature waited within that blood-colored egg, twitching as it did on the silver platter? How *does* one keep grief in an oaken puzzle box?

The second event is reserved only for the Satraps themselves. At the end of the season, the Pearl Satraps come together for a kind of brag session and show-and-tell, talking about all their successes and failures. Every Satrapy does it differently. One might rent a yacht and sit upon its deck, breathing in the smoldering narcotic fumes of the seeds of strange fruits brought from the Hedge. Others might relax in club chairs in an air-conditioned room or gather in some poor human's penthouse suite (with the mortal bound up and made to witness the affair, his mind reeling with what he sees and hears).

After these events, the Pearl Satraps might go the rest of the year without even talking to one another, though certainly there exists an informal network of back-scratching and info-giving. Remember, though, that each Pearl Satrap represents friendly competition for every *other* Pearl Satrap. He who has the most toys, relatively speaking, wins.

Concepts: Acquisitions attorney, eccentric antiquarian, gleeful mammonite, high-price prostitute, Iago, procurer of pledges, snake-oil salesman, spider in the center of a web.

Privileges

What follows is the blessing available to all changelings of the Satrapy.

Avaricious Finesse

Performing the task necessary to join the ranks of the Satrapy earns the changeling two rewards (as joining the Satrapy is just another transaction with something purchased and something paid). The first and most obvious reward is entry into the Satrapy. The second reward is something to be learned. One of the Satraps will impart a bit of wisdom to a new member of the order, passing along a handful of the secrets she's learned over her time within the Satrapy.

Therefore, upon joining, a Satrap may take a new Social Skill Specialty. The only catch is that this Specialty must be possessed by one of the other local Satraps (for the character must be taught this Skill focus by another within the order.

Rumors of the Satrapy

During a story, changelings may uncover the following rumors regarding the Satrapy of Pearls:

• Somehow, the Satraps always have a small item from every Court's King or Queen except those of the Spring Court. The item is usually small — a single earring, a lucky coin, a knob from one of their dressers — but rumor has it that this small item gives the Satrap major power over the ruler. The Satraps must forge tokens from these items.

• Every Satrap has a secret treasure trove somewhere in the city, usually just outside the freehold's accepted borders. The boxes are usually fire-safe and locked with three different locks (usually padlocks). The Satrap buries the treasure trove or hides it. Each box is supposed to contain all manner of wonders and horrors. A Fairest from the next city over said she found a haunted money clip, a bullet in a jar tagged with a label that read 'magic' and a necklace made of seven severed fingers. After discovering it, she went missing three days later.

• The Satraps know Contracts that nobody else knows, though stories suggest they made terrible bargains to get them. They know some every old and very strange Goblin Contracts, as well. Remember that the Satraps have their price. They'll teach them, but the cost will be steep.

The Scarecrow Ministry



I become the ghost in the attic, the rats in the walls, the shadow in the trees. I remind them all that they can't be scared enough. Fear is my weapon. Better than any sword or rifle. Fear is my ally. Better than any friend or lover.

Bloody Mary. The Man with the Hook Hand. Mothman. These urban legends are pervasive, bled into the cultural consciousness and given a kind of life all their own. Everybody knows the stories. Say her name three times in a mirror in the darkness, and Bloody Mary will come. Sleep at the base of Black Agnes's grave and she'll scare you to death at midnight. That hitchhiker out on old Highway 78 actually died years ago. Urban legends are about fear, and more importantly, about keeping people in line with that fear. Implicit in every legend is a lesson: don't talk to strangers, don't court danger, don't sneak away to have premarital sex and so on.

The Autumn Court changelings of the Scarecrow Ministry seek to use these urban legends to convey their own lessons. They become the monsters in the tales, continuing the purportedly fictional work of the Hook-Hand Man or the Jersey Devil or whatever legend works in a given area. Many Ministers change their names to those of the mythic monsters, embodying fear in a way that most within the Autumn Court are afraid to do.

How do they do this? Some Ministers go farther than others. Some are glad to use illusion and rumor to suit their needs. One changeling might spread tales about having seen the Mothman out by the old paper mill. There the Minister sets up an elaborate ruse with a black sheet on a dark cord that he can whip over an incoming car like the creature from Fortean myth. He pelts the car with bird bones and allows two weak-bulb flashlights to appear as eyes in the darkness. Other Ministers don't think that such artifice goes far enough. A demented Minister choosing to embody the Hook-Hand Man may go find a couple up at the old make-out bluff, and begin to play out the entire myth: scratch on the door with a hook, when the boyfriend does the boyfriend-thing to get out to see what the noise is, the fae kills him, hangs him from a tree above the car and lets his feet scrape *just enough* across the roof so the girl gets scared. For an exclamation point upon the horror tale, maybe the Minister leaves the bloody hook hanging from the driver's side door before fleeing into the night. It's a depraved act, and most Ministers hope they only have to do something like that once in a very long time. Of course, some start to like it, and make opportunities to continue their shift into true monsters of urban myth.

So, *why* do they do it? Humans, and even other changelings, aren't scared enough. The world is dangerous, what with the Gentry out there, snatching lost souls through the Hedge or setting traps for the unsuspecting. And it's not just the Others, either. All kinds of terrors exist out there in the night — bloodsucking fiends, Soulless changelings with hell on their minds, men who steal the skins of animals and become feral things hungry for raw meat. The Ministers work to scare people *away* from such evil. If they know where a gateway into the Hedge lurks, one or several will focus their attentions on that area, keeping the people there scared enough so they don't go exploring. If the Ministry uncovers an old subway station that acts as home to a nest of monsters lives, or an old house where the rats in the walls sometimes swarm and steal the neighborhood children, then the Ministers endeavor to make sure people are properly scared of those places and monsters. See, the Ministers know that evil is insidious. The old legends aren't true because monsters don't want you scared of them until it's too late. But the Ministers *do* want people scared. And they take on the guides of urban legends, Fortean sightings and hauntings to do so.

The Scarecrow Ministers face two prominent dangers. The first is a physical danger: keeping people away from the other horrors sometimes puts the Ministers in direct confrontation *with* those horrors. Monsters don't take kindly to poachers or those who'd make trouble for them. The Ministers know that part of the risk is making enemies out of such wretched beings, but that's part of the oath, isn't it?

The other danger is to their Clarity. They become fake monsters to keep people away from the real monsters — but, in doing so, it's very easy to lose perspective. Sometimes, to enforce the old legends and keep people properly afraid, real blood needs to be spilled and people get hurt. The Scarecrows walk a thin line that sometimes is hard to see — at what point do they become exactly what they work against?

The school kids whisper about the alley they once used as a shortcut when walking home from school, saying how if you go down that alley alone even during the day, hands will pull you into a doorway and you'll never be seen again. Parents tell

another story, about how they heard that someone's been putting AIDS-infected needles in the coin return slots at the old arcade down the block. Even the cops are getting in on it, whispering about how someone's been putting poison in the Halloween candy, or how every time they find a corpse in a house — even one that's died from natural causes — they find a broken mirror somewhere on the premises.

Scary stories and urban legends. Are they real? Most times, no. Sometimes, though, they're real — or real enough to matter, with seeds of truth buried within the tale. This noble order of the Autumn Court takes unto itself great pride in *making* such urban myths a reality. The Ministers give truth to those that already exist in the local consciousness, and they invent others out of whole cloth. Fear is their tool: blunt as a cudgel, sharp as a scalpel.

Why do they do it? First, fear is the way of the Autumn Court. It is what resonates most intimately with the Court's ideals and practices. The Scarecrow Ministry simply chooses to embody that by acting as monsters.

Ultimately, though, the reason they give most often for their actions is that humanity isn't scared *enough*. The world is a bad place, and one misstep into the wrong doorway or down the wrong hiking path might invoke a lifetime (or more) of misery. The Ministers believe they are doing humanity a profound service in keeping them scared, and thus, keeping them safe. Of course, the trick is, it requires the changelings of the Scarecrow Ministry to be proactive. The Ministers accept that humans are fools, just as likely to choose the dangerous road as the safe one — unless they're given sufficient evidence to travel the straight and narrow. Severed fingers, harrowing chases, bad dreams — whatever it takes to keep alive the idea that *Here There Be Monsters*.

How do they do it? Every motley has its ways, some crueler than others. One Minister might use his own capable storytelling to spread a few proper lies caged as true stories. ("Didn't you hear? The meat from their hamburgers contains roach eggs. They incubate in your salivary glands. A friend of my brother's lost part of his face that way. I wouldn't eat there.") Another might use illusion or dreamshaping to ensure the persistence of local myths (in a dream, the changeling might vilify one of the local entrances into the Hedge, thus helping to ensure the dreamer will go nowhere near that place). Others still act out the legends they hope to create, doing whatever grim and grisly act is necessary to keep a tale living long past its first telling (if a dark forest road is known for the misfortune it brings upon those who walk there, a Minister might wait there and, upon finding



a hitchhiker, capture him and slice his Achilles' tendon as a reminder of the myth's potency and truth).

Fear is the goal. Sustaining and creating the tales of fear is the task. The Ministers take it very seriously. Some changelings suggest the Ministers take it *too* seriously. (Worth noting is that the Ministers do not limit their fear-making to mortals alone. Sometimes, the changelings of the freehold must learn to be scared, too, and the Ministers often act as an invisible hand crafting such horror at a distance.)

Titles: Scarecrow Ministers (or just Scarecrows)

Prerequisites: Manipulation 3, Mantle (Autumn) 2, Wyrd 3

Joining: A changeling doesn't choose the Scarecrow Ministry. The Ministry chooses *her*. In fact, for the most part, the Ministry remains secret, known only to a select few within the Court of Fear. The Ministers, once a year (usually Halloween or the Day of the Dead), go through the ranks of the Autumn Court and see if any belong within their order. If they find a worthy candidate, they begin an odd campaign of fear and paranoia against that changeling, testing him at a distance to see how well he handles fear (for one cannot cause fright if one is easily frightened). Maybe they break open the lock on his front door and see how he reacts. Maybe they spread whispers about how that changeling's Keeper has been seen in the skies above the freehold. Over time, they gauge the changeling's reactions and try to break him down to see what he's made of. If they find him capable enough, they extend an invitation to join the order. Refusing the invitation is fine the first time, and fine the second time, for the order always extends the invite three times. The third rejection, however, earns the ire of the Scarecrows. They may do nothing except deny that changeling's friendship — or they may continue their campaign of fear against him.

It's not universally true that the Ministry chooses *all* of its Scarecrows. Certainly some have uncovered the existence of the order, which is impressive all on its own. Some who discover their presence have begged to be in the order, and have are been chosen for if their talents at manipulating fear and generating terror are up to par (or at least have the potential to be) — but that is the exception to the rule, not the rule itself.

Mien: Many Ministers dress at least in part like the legends they hope to embody. A Scarecrow who wishes to become a sorrowful or vengeful ghost may wear gauzy gray wisps of clothing, even painting her face with kohl or ash. A changeling hoping to appear as the Hook-Hand Man might wear a long coat and a face-concealing hat, with a rusty gaff hook concealed on his person, of course. Some eschew such melodrama and prefer instead to wear the nondescript rags of the homeless or simple blue-collar garb; whatever it takes to remain hidden until the time is right to drive home the horror.

Generally, a Scarecrow of the Ministry appears in the guise of the Autumn Court, revealing the bloody reds and pumpkin oranges so common to the season. A Minister does find that his miens changes upon joining this noble order, with various elements possibly appearing (and often without the character's choice) as part of her flesh. Most such changes are minor, and evocative of an actual scarecrow: black button eyes, flesh raised in some places with the texture of a burlap sack, various one or two limb joints marked by rope stitching, pits a few bristles of sharp hay and straw sticking out of sleeves and, pant legs. Upon joining, most only show one such element in their seeming. But as time goes on, with Wyrd increasing and Clarity dropping, other elements manifest into one's being. Particularly old or potent Ministers appear as iconic scarecrows with mean jack-o'-lantern grins painted onto their sack-flesh faces, all shadowed beneath the ratty brims of farmer's old hats. Most only have one such element added to their seeming, though these can increase with Wyrd gain. Higher-Wyrd changelings sometimes begin to adapt their seeming to whatever monstrosity they've chosen to mimic (imagine a changeling whose hand literally becomes a hook or whose eyes glow the flickering yellows and reds of the Mothman). If for some reason they don't mimic one legend over another, they may simply appear as a more iconic version of a terrible scarecrow, with jack-o'-lantern grins and skin formed of rough-hewn bags. Mortals tend to feel weak and frightened around any Minister with higher-than-normal Wyrd scores, often needing success on a Resolve + Composure roll to even remain in the character's presence.

Background: Invoking fear often comes from a very real place, born out of a Scarecrow's own buried horrors. Most Ministers experienced an abduction by their Keepers that may have been even more horrifying than what other changelings experienced — dragged through a broken mirror and suffering many cuts, stolen by a pack of dogs with human faces or tortured for hours before being drawn slowly and painfully into the Hedge. Many have horror in their lives even *before* the abduction. Maybe the Minister witnessed her father shoot her mother just before painting the walls with his brains. Perhaps she was locked in a dark closet for hours every time she slighted her stepmother. Or maybe the fear is born of something more primal: almost drowning, a bloody car accident, a haunted house. The point is, most Ministers start out as victims, intimately familiar with the nature of fear. Joining the Court, and then this order, helps them subvert their own fear and turn the table on their victimization (and ensure that others are not so easily abused).

Most Ministers have an affinity for Wits and Manipulation, and are often capable with Skills such as Expression, Intimidation, Persuasion and Occult. Some, too, have high Resistance Traits, as one must be a bulwark against fear as much as a maker of it. Obviously, Contracts with Darkness are common among the Ministers, though many also possess Artifice Contracts because some drive their fear and become the legends by means of their clever works.

Organization: Some Ministers are intensely organized. They form whole motleys devoted to bringing specific fears to the local community. Together they decide on what people should fear, and how best to evoke that reaction. If the house at the end of the block is home to a seemingly kind man with a nice smile who is also a secret child molester, the Ministers might begin to tell terrible stories about that "haunted" place. Alternately, they might manipulate one of the child victims to come forward and relay the horrific story to his parents or the authorities (and this kills two birds with one stone — creating fear of sexual predators and eliminating one particular predator). Others might tell stories to stir secret fear about the Hedge, the Fae, vampires or other supernatural threats to humanity. The Ministry tends to be well organized, meeting regularly and forming motleys whole cloth.

The purpose of such organization is that enforcing horrific legends new and old takes concerted effort — it's not something one does half-heartedly, requiring Scarecrow changelings to become someone different than they were previous to entering the order. They draw out plans, pick victims who would best ensure that a story lives on and share in the illusory artifice of fear-making.

The Scarecrow Ministry, as noted, is a secret order. How the entitled changelings keep the secret is different for every changeling. Some maintain their old identities in front of public view, an act of "play-pretend" that goes by the wayside when it's time to don the guise of whatever frightening legend the changeling has chosen for himself. Others drop off the radar entirely, pretending to leave the freehold for one reason or another and becoming their new dreadful personas entirely. These changelings associate only with other Ministers or Court members, hidden away from all others. While obviously devoted, these fae are also the ones who risk Clarity loss — they start to believe the stories they're spinning, becoming true monsters.

The Ministry has no love for those who fall to their own monstrosity, however. Much as it scares everyone else, the Ministry endeavors to scare its own members, too, ensuring that a serious of brutal punishments await those who "go too far" in their tasks. The Ministry offers little sympathy for the Ministers who cross that line, having an entire book (known simply as the Black Book) detailing hundreds of potential punishments for low-Clarity changelings. Some punishments are meant to help steer a changeling back toward his sanity. Other castigations are meant only to cut short the lives of those who cannot turn back — often in bloody, grotesque ways to ensure maximum effect among the other Scarecrows.

Such organization is generally only in places where the Autumn Court has strength of numbers. In places where the Court is underrepresented, or where the Ministry itself is without many members, organization usually falls by the wayside. In such cases, the individual Scarecrows are left to their own devices, allowed to make fear as their cruel and capricious whims demand.

Concepts: Conspiracy nut, bully, dreamshaper, master storyteller, out-of-work actor, prodigal dreamshaper, reluctant government spook, schoolyard bully, urban legend personified, special effects guru, victim of abuse.

Privileges

Below is a token that the Scarecrows of the Ministry use. Upon joining this so-called noble order, one is allowed to pick out his own mask (either from a local store) or from another Minister's potentially egregious collection. From there, the pledge to become a Minister and create fear infuses the mask with Glamour and forms from it the token found below.

Bugbear's Mask (•••)

This token appears to be like any rubbery Halloween mask that one could buy for $10 down at the Wal-Mart or corner store. Whether the mask is the visage of a bandage-swaddled mummy or the angry face of a Frankenstein monster, the resultant supernatural effect is still the same. When the mask is worn, the changeling chooses a single target and meets the victim's eyes. The victim gains the Phobia derangement (mild), with the mask-wearer as the focus of the derangement's dread (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 97, for the effects of this derangement). The victim literally sees the mask as real flesh and actual bone, its grisly countenance appearing as wretched as the human's imagination can make it (often manifesting as something the person was already afraid of, whether that be a face of crawling spiders or the countenance of a violent alcoholic father). The derangement lasts for the rest of the scene. This token can only be used once per day.

Action: Instant

Drawback: The changeling who uses this token suffers his own mild derangement for the rest of the day: Narcissism. (A character who already possesses the Narcissism derangement sees it become the severe version, Megalomania.) This derangement lasts until the changeling sleeps.

Catch: A mortal or any other character who uses the token without paying the proper cost (Wyrd roll or Glamour point) finds that the mask is particularly stubborn to remove. The rubbery fringe at the bottom of the mask seems to literally bond with the flesh of the neck. Removing the mask also removes a layer of skin, conferring one lethal point of damage.

Rumors of the Ministry

What follows are a number of rumors characters might hear of the elusive Scarecrow Ministers:

• There's a rumor going around the freehold that a Scarecrow's heart changes inside of his chest. It becomes a contorted gourd, filled with seeds, mush and blood. Everybody's afraid to try it, and it seems too horrible to even contemplate, but it's said that other strange items can be found inside a Minister's heart: teeth, coins, rings, pieces of hematite or quartz. Only one such item lurks inside the heart. It's also said that getting this item out of the heart — while still keeping the Scarecrow alive, of course — gives you intimate power over him and his fears.

• The Ministers know dreamshaping Contracts that no others possess. Such powers allow them to linger inside the dream, even live there, carving out strange hollows inside the sleeping consciousness of foolish mortals. From there, the Scarecrows can spin new fears from nothing but the raw stuff of dreams.

• Why is it that a Minister always seems to have some kind of tense alliance with his fetch? Some Ministers work in tandem with their fetches to bring fear to the freehold. Some supposedly even switch places with their fetches for a while, going back to so-called normal lives to regain some of that lost Clarity. Some say that the Ministers' fetches change when their changeling counterparts take the oath to join the order. The fetches become darker, more twisted. The story goes that some become serial killers given over to odd compulsive habits (killing in symbolic patterns drawn on a map, writing weird poetry on the walls in victims' blood, using unusual weapons as the means to murder), almost becoming "human" legends such as Dahmer, Gacy or Manson.

The Tolltaker Knighthood

I give my word to break legs, crush skulls and snap necks. I'll put a bullet in your head and a sword in your heart, provided someone pays me to do so and proves to me why it should be done.

The word around the freehold is that the Tolltaker Knights are the foulest mercenaries found among changelings. With blood-blemished blades tucked into their belts and snub nose revolvers strapped to their ankles, they offer up a single purpose in this world: to hurt people for payment. The rumors are that they're particularly good at it, too, as precise or as inexact as one needs them to be. If one person pays the toll, another person ends up in the hospital — either in a bed, or in the morgue. They're louts, drunkards and murder-for-hire jackboots… or at least, that's what everybody believes.

The rumors are true, mostly. They're mercenaries, yes. They're good at what they do, indeed. But there's one clause to their order's oath that most people seem to forget or ignore, and that's the nature of *proof*. The Knights won't go after a target unless they agree that the cause is justified — and proof must be supplied toward this end. Now, justice is in the eye of the beholder; one Knight may be a tad more lenient regarding what "injustice" deserves meting out the order's trademark brutality, while another may refuse to give into such monstrous opportunism.

The way around this is that the local order is shepherded by a single figure, the Knight Banneret. The Banneret heads the local Knights, and is the only one who can accept bounties. When he accepts a bounty on behalf of the Tollhouse, he also helps to set the price of that bounty. Once assumed, the entire Tollhouse is expected to work toward a given task, whether it's hunting and executing a fetch or stringing up a lecherous changeling in front of all to see.

Of course, what this means is that the relative morality of the Tolltaker Knights is set by the Knight Banneret. If he's a genuinely honorable man who believes in the cause of justice, then the Knights better be, too. If he's a depraved glutton, glad to have blood on his hands, then there waits the watermark for the rest of the Knighthood.

What tasks tend to universally draw the order's approval? Some obvious trademarks of inequity include broken pledges, egregious slights at Court in front of the rest of the freehold, unseemly violence toward another changeling and other broaches of freehold decorum.

It's worth noting that, unless the Knight Banneret is particularly pitiless, the Knights rarely accept a bounty that requires the death or prolonged torture of another. Shattered knees, concussions or merely the powerful threat of violence usually does the trick. They'll assume bounties of bloody vengeance when appropriate, but the standards for such murderous missions tend to be more severe than for other tasks.

What kind of payment can a Knight expect? Money is often an obvious choice, but a bounty may also be paid out in favors, tokens, pledges or the teachings of new Contracts.

Living life among the Knights is bloody and brutal, and many changelings within the order do take to drink or drugs to wear off the blood-curdling screams and bone-breaking crunches that haunt their thoughts and dreams.

Titles: Knight (sometimes called "Tolltaker" by those outside the order)

Prerequisites: Mantle (Summer) 1, Wyrd 2, either Brawl, Firearms, or Weaponry at 2 dots

Joining: Enlisting with the Tolltaker Knights is an often harrowing affair. Most "squires," as they're called before they actually gain entrance into the order, are put through rigorous tests and trials to determine their "salt." First come the physical trials, which range from tests of martial skill to running gauntlets composed of many Knights wielding bats and batons (meant to test the "hardiness of the meat," as some Knights say).

After that come the moral tests. One cannot stand with the Knights if he holds his own ethics in particularly high esteem. While certainly some Knights Banneret adhere to more strident moral codes, most are middling, at best. Their function in the freehold demands it — going out and busting heads and shattering kneecaps is rarely seen as precisely "ethical." And so, a squire is dragged through various tests and trials meant to wear down any reliance on his own code of morals. For some, this isn't too hard, as in joining the Knights they recognized that a deficit of certain principles was probably necessary. Others attempt entry while woefully unprepared and find the tests rather traumatic.



The moral tests vary from freehold to freehold. In one, a squire might be expected to dig up some dirt on a loved one, and then act upon it with some measure of violence. In another, the Tollhouse might simply assign him a small bounty and see just how efficiently he carries out the necessary brutality.

Note that, in many cases, the moral test also looks for those who are *too* debased. A bounty to break the first finger of a pledge-breaker's hand is no good if a zealous Knight enters into the fray and gleefully starts shooting. *Some* moral code is necessary. But so is a measure of ethical "flexibility."

Mien: Tolltaker Knights generally appear physically threatening, with spartan garb, steel-toe boots and flesh stained with grime and blood. Changes to their mien go a long way toward this effect, as well — their flesh grows tough with erratic scars, and streaks of dried blood grow deep and red (and never to be washed away). If a Knight's Wyrd increases to abnormally high levels, he may find that he leaves bloody wet fingerprints or boot prints wherever he goes — prints that, just as the marks on his skin, do not scrub away easily.

Background: It's true that this noble order sometimes acts as a haven (or last resort) for exiles, criminals and other depraved sorts. Some such changelings are truly selfish, concerned only with their own security and sanity — all else be damned. Others see this as an opportunity to forestall their own degeneration. While, yes, the tasks performed by the order are less than moral and require a willingness to carry out unpleasant chores, it at least provides a plateau for some. Here, they can assert their own notions of justice, convincing themselves that by enforcing pledges or intimidating unscrupulous changelings that they are — in the long run, at least — doing the "right thing." It's worth mentioning that the Knight Banneret's own background goes a long way toward explaining the aggregate backgrounds of all the Knights within the order. If he comes from the maggoty underbelly of the city — a street gang, a crime syndicate, a rotten betting ring — then he may recruit from the same source. If he acts more as some tarnished paladin on a crusade to do what's right no matter the cost, it's likely that others with similar experiences will find a home here.

On the character sheet, a Tolltaker Knight is likely to have his Physical stats highest of all, with a reliance on combat-related Skills (the prerequisites to enter the order

demand some martial training or promise). A liberal helping of Intimidation and Stealth doesn't hurt, either. That's not to say that a Mentally-focused or Socially-focused Knight isn't out-of-the-question. The order is happy to have its strategists or liaisons, but by and large, it's about brute force and fast hands.

Note that the order's Knights are likely to use Goblin Contracts; as evidenced by their very purpose, these changelings don't mind getting their hands dirty for the quick and easy payout.

Organization: As has been mentioned, the Knight Banneret acts as the head of the order and, much as a king sets the tone his kingdom, the Knight Banneret does the same for his Knighthood. He determines what bounties and jobs the order takes. He negotiates who deserves what and what kind of payment is appropriate for various tasks. He even determines how the payment is divvied up between his soldiers: does the Knight who actually performed the deed gain the lion's share of the payment? Or do all share part of the reward?

That's not to say he can rule as he sees fit without considering the wants and needs of his mercenaries. While some have the temporal power and supernatural wherewithal to rule the order with an iron fist, most are fully aware that a revolt of angry brutes will get them deposed or worse, decapitated. It is in the Knight Banneret's best interest to keep the order's fae content (which is the highest he can aspire to, for such bitter curs are rarely *happy*).

That said, each Knight works as something of an independent within the order. While some Knights might have contact with one another or form motley-level brute squads who go out and do the order's perpetually dirty work, the Knighthood doesn't require its members to have contact with one another. They meet only when the Knight Banneret declares it necessary, and otherwise the Knighthood is as likely be composed of several lone wolves as of a handful of oathbound motleys.

Concepts: Club bouncer, corrupt cop, ex-con, greedy gangster, mob legbreaker, naïve brute, neighborhood watch member, opportunistic rogue, sociopath, street gang vigilante, Summer Court enforcer.

Privileges

What follows is a privilege available to any who join the Tolltaker Knighthood.

Bounty's Curse

When a Knight Banneret accepts a bounty for a target, that target is marked no matter where in the world he lurks. This curse isn't obvious; not at first, anyhow. It becomes clear, however, if the target engages in combat with one of the Tolltaker Knights.

At that time, the victim of the bounty feels… sluggish. Imprecise. Even a little clumsy. Attacks land with greater frequency. His feet don't propel him forward as fast as they should.

Assume that, only while in combat with another Tolltaker Knight, the victim of a current bounty finds that his Defense is halved (round down), and his Initiative modifier is one less. This can, in many instances, grant the Knight a measure of advantage against his marked foe.

This ability does have its limits. First, the target of a bounty must be identified by the Knight Banneret, and seeing as how some investment of Glamour is usually necessary for this to occur, it's not easy for a Tolltaker to abuse this power. Also, upon entering into combat with an extant bounty, the Knight must first spend a Willpower point to gain access to this blessing (well, blessing for *him*, curse for the other guy).

Rumors of the Knighthood

Below are rumors about the Tolltaker Knighthood that characters may catch wind of during the course of the story:

• No Knight has ever confirmed this, but some say that joining the Tolltakers features a steeper requirement than the order suggests. It's said that the ultimate toll must be paid to join the ranks and reap the mercenary rewards: a loved one. It might be a loved one from before the abduction, sure, but loved just the same. An ex-wife, a daughter, a best friend, a beloved uncle. It doesn't matter. The loved ones must be brought to the Knight Banneret, and what he does with them — well, nobody exactly knows. Some say he simply ensorcells them, adding to his already vast stable. Others say he sacrifices them according to a powerful old pledge. Darker rumors, though, suggest that he delivers them into the hands of the True Fae. Why would this be? Nobody knows that, either.

• They don't like to talk about it, but once in a blue moon, the Knights will accept a bounty against one of their own. It's never a soft bounty, and always involves the death of the offending Tolltaker. And the price is always through the roof, impossible by most to even consider paying. But therein lies the danger of being a Tolltaker Knight — they commit sins against others, sins that may come back to haunt them one day.

• Some have seen the Tolltakers with odd hobgoblins unique to the order. These odd beasts look like little spiders — orb spiders, if biology is to be believed — each wearing the face of the current Knight Banneret. The only time anyone has seen such a hobgoblin is when a Knight unsheathes or unholsters his favored weapon. Some see the spider dancing up the flat part of a sword's blade or down the length of a revolver's barrel (before disappearing within). Nobody knows what these hobgoblins do, or what they're for — but some suspect that they act as spies for the head of the order.

Creating an Entitlement

Storytellers and players should feel free to create their own entitlements. The following section offers suggestions for doing so.

Forging the Noble Order

A changeling may choose to band together with other fae and form her own entitlement. Doing so requires her to possess Wyrd 4 as well as at least four other changelings who wish to join this new noble order (whether five is some kind of sacred number, or a number keyed to the vagaries of fate and time, nobody knows). The founder of this new entitlement must spend one Glamour point and a full Willpower dot to forge the supernatural compact that binds the entitled fae together.

In determining the fate and nature of the new entitlement, players or Storytellers should keep the following elements in mind:

Theme

Is the order founded around a particular theme? The characters may not recognize the theme, but it's useful if the players do. A simple one- or two-word theme goes a long way toward helping establish a deeper identity for the entitlement. A theme could be something as broad as "redemption," or "deception," or as focused as "freehold anarchy" or "courtly love."

Oath and Purpose

An order is always founded with some key purpose in mind. This purpose can be lofty ("restore the Spring Court to its full glory in the freehold") or base ("drink, fuck and be merry"). It's good to have a goal in mind whose completion isn't easy. If a noble order's single goal is to assassinate a corrupt queen, then once it's done, what purpose does the entitlement serve? Most goals are either long in the completion ("destroy the four-Court hegemony and create a freehold for the people, by the people") or ongoing ("protect and monitor the known gateways into the Hedge").

Note that the oath should reflect this primary purpose, and may also detail out any of the minor principles that guide the ennobled changelings, as well. This oath is magically binding, a supernatural pledge between the forswearing changeling and the entitlement. Therefore, feel free to write it out — or at least portions of it — in the founder's own parlance and slang. Note that despite any medieval trappings, changelings don't usually speak with such purple patois, avoiding any medieval, Renaissance, or Elizabethan style in their spoken tongue. An oath generally reflects modern language. Some orders may prefer more serious, turgid language — like what one might find in a legal briefing — while others may instead express a more poetic pledge (and thus, one that may be more open to interpretation than what was originally figured upon).

Title

The title that all members of the order share should mean something. While one could choose a random title, remember that a title actually gives some indication of purpose and theme, helping to reinforce the entitlement's flavor. A knight, for instance, indicates a fighter, potentially even a leader in war. A duke or duchess, on the other hand, invokes images of middling nobleman, reigning over a certain territory (or purpose) that is less grand than what a king or queen would possess. A margrave (or *markgraf*) is the governor of border provinces, and so you might end up with an order similar to the Margravate of the Brim. Historically, a landgrave or count had sovereignty of his own people, answering not to any duke or governor, but directly to the emperor or king (and so you may have an entitlement whose changelings are given wide authority by a reigning monarch of one of the four Courts, allowed to operate unbidden).

More sample titles can be found in a sidebar at the end of this appendix.

Prerequisites

Consider any and all prerequisites necessary to join the order. Is the order devoted to one Court over another? Perhaps then some measure of Mantle with that Court is necessary (or, at least, a high degree of Court Goodwill). While this book provides no such examples, an entitlement could allow only changelings from certain seemings or kiths into its ranks.

Trait prerequisites can be as modest or as strict as one prefers. Assume that the more specific and potent the order's purpose, the stricter the Trait-based prerequisites become. A basic, free-for-all entitlement that provides a wide umbrella purpose (such as a "civilian" army that can be called upon to stave off incursions of vicious Fae keepers) may have a prerequisite of Wyrd 2 and nothing else. However, an order whose purpose is far more explicit may have need of more unique changelings. For instance, a group of marauding highwaymen fae riding around on choppers whose express goal is to empty the Court's coffers at every turn may require Wyrd 3, Crafts 2 (to fix up their bikes), Larceny 3 (to pilfer money and goods) and Brawl 2 (to beat down any idiot who'd stand in their way).

Any Trait can be a part of a prerequisite. A band of ascetic changelings might demand its members possess a high Willpower. An order whose goal is to integrate into and help human society may demand high Clarity, while an entitlement of lunatic terrors may ask for Clarity *below* a certain point.

Initiation

A noble order likely has a roleplaying prerequisite as well as the aforementioned trait prerequisites. Some allow entry to any who desire it, keeping a constant "open-door" policy. Others develop vast trials and tribulations, running potential members through a hard gauntlet before allowing them to swear the oath. Once again, initiation should reinforce theme and purpose. An entitlement of Court-serving knights won't ask that a changeling prove his mercantile skills or how talented he is a painter or a poet. Such an order will ask for a display of martial skills, or may ask the changeling to perform a series of small favors for the Court that the entitlement serves.

Privileges

For the most part, privileges remain at about the same power level across most orders, with some small variance between them. Generally, an order has a prerequisite of Wyrd 2 or Wyrd 3, and maybe a few other small Skill or Attribute prerequisites. Since privilege should be loosely tied to the weight of the prerequisites necessary to join the entitlement, you can assume that generally, a privilege follows a few basic guidelines.

If the privilege provides a blessing, it's usually either a small blessing (+1) or Skill specialty granted across the board, or is a slightly larger blessing (+3) that's applicable only in more unique (and thus, rarer) situations. The Rectors of the Wrench, a noble order that's perhaps devoted to fixing and building things, might either have a persistent +1 to Crafts rolls, or may instead have a +3 to Crafts rolls applicable *only* when fixing engines.

Alternately, some orders gain tokens upon joining. Generally, these tokens are of two or three dots, and come with the normal drawbacks and catches associated with magical items of that level.

However, should the prerequisites to join an order become abnormally high (more than Wyrd 3, plus a smattering of other Skill or Attribute requirements), the bonuses may grow accordingly. The entitled changelings may gain more powerful tokens, or may gain larger blessings that offer more potent dice bonuses. In some cases, the level of privilege remains lower, but the privileges themselves increase in number — in other words, an entitlement with high prerequisites may offer a token *and* a blessing to its ennobled members.

Pick a Title, Any Title

As noted earlier, the title available to entitled changelings of a given order should mean something in regards to that entitlement's theme and purpose. Noble titles can be pretty far-reaching, and don't necessarily need to be strictly noble in origin — feel free to look through religious titles, or titles of gentility or modern government, for inspiration. Below you'll find a handful of potential titles from which you may want to choose. Note that only rarely will an order claim a title on the standing of king, queen, emperor or empress; doing so is anathema to those within the Courts, as they already have figureheads with those titles. Some like to snub the Courts, of course, but as noted, this is rare.

The sampling of titles below offers male and female titles when appropriate, as well as the general name of the order or territory possessed by those of given titles.

baron/baroness (barony), bey (beylik), caliph/calipha (caliphate), count/countess (earldom, county), count palatine/countess palatine (palatinate), daimyo (clan or province), earl/countess (earldom), emir (emirate), governor/governess (governance), grand duke/duchess (duchy), khan (khanate), lord/lady (lordship), marquis/marquise (marquisate), prince/princess (princedom), raja/rani (rajanate), sultan (sultanate), viscount/viscountess (viscounty), voivoid (voivodship)

It's also possible to choose from variant strains — military (sergeant), hereditary (father), religious (episkopos) — if need be.


STAWICKI
2007



don't have any idea what band is playing. At present I'm not sure what day of the week it is.

Whatever Mel paid for this stuff, it was *totally* worth it. I need to find her later and buy a few more hits, because my cousin would cream himself over this stuff. I've got one hit left, though, and I'm saving it for someone special.

I find her dancing in a big group of people. I don't know her name, but I think I've seen her here before (then again, just at the moment I'm a little too fucked up to say for certain). I dance my way over and yell, "Hey, you like apples?" at her. If she knows what that means, she'll follow me outside. If not, she'll just think I'm an idiot, and I can live with that.

She follows me out, and the bouncer nods at me because he knows I'll hook him up later if he lets me back in. The girl follows me into an alleyway and says, "Now, what did you say?"

OK, that's weird. Why'd she follow if she didn't understand me? "You like apples?" I ask again.

"Sure," she says.

Now, the end of that particular pickup line is, "Me, too. Wanna fuck?" but normally the exchange doesn't go that far because it's just a quick way to see if someone wants a hit. She doesn't seem like she knows that, but if she's a narc she's got me fooled, so I hand her the pill.

She looks over her shoulder, and says, in a whisper that barely makes it through my haze, "Is that Ecstasy?" Who the fuck calls it that outside of health class?

"Yeah," I say. She reaches for it. And then something really strange happens. She goes flying backwards like somebody yanked on her belt. And I get this dull *thud* in my gut, and my pants are all wet. The pain catches up with me a second later, and I'm on the ground gasping.

This big, muscular bleach-blond dude is standing over me with a pipe in his hands. "Tell you what, dipshit," he says. "You tell your buddies to stay the hell away from Princess Maria, and I'll only hit you one more time."

Appendix 2

The Freehold of Miami

Nature rejects the monarch, not the man;
The subject, not the citizen; for king
And subjects, mutual foes, forever play
A losing game into each other's hands,
Whose stakes are vice and misery.
— Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Queen Mab*

Decadent, sun-drenched Miami, the Gateway to the Americas, is a city that epitomizes both the beauty and the darkness at the core of **Changeling.** From the neon-bedecked skyscrapers of downtown to the art deco finery of South Beach and its endless nightclubs, Miami is one of the most beautiful cities in North America. And yet all that bright color hides a heart as dark and fetid as any city in the World of Darkness. Drugs flow in from South America, and the authorities are powerless to stop them. Poverty and crime are at obscene levels, and in the weird candy-colored light of the neon, things alien and antithetical to humankind lurk. In the nearby Everglades, paths twist and wind between the mangroves, folding in on themselves and trapping the unwary in a swampy Hedge inhabited by ancient, crocodilian nightmares.

This is not the Miami you may know. This is the Miami of the World of Darkness, where all the problems of the real world are magnified and layered atop an ever-shifting foundation of madness and the occult. The surface details are similar, but like a funhouse mirror, the World of Darkness reflects a distorted reflection of the world we know. This is a city of excess in all respects: the rich are richer, the hard partiers party harder and the desperate full of even more desperation.

Bienvenidos a Miami.

Theme

Miami is a city on the brink of war. The Summer Court holds control of the freehold and refuses to relinquish it, and the other Courts grow more dissatisfied every day. The True Fae have been reported skulking at the edges of the city, looking for an opening to descend and drag their wayward servants home. Even within the Courts themselves, schisms and power struggles set camp against camp as influential courtiers seek to gather as much power as they can to themselves, even as they undermine any chance of throwing down the tyranny of the King of Endless Summer.

The theme that predominates in Miami, then, is one of conflict. The Trident is a prime example of a freehold that does *not* work as a freehold should; the cycle of the seasons is broken, and that failure is tearing the structure of changeling society apart. Neutrality is all but impossible, if only because there are so many factions at work; everyone must take a side, or the rumor mill will choose one for them. Rivalries can spring up at a drop of the hat, and the schisms within the freehold can turn old allies into enemies without warning.

This isn't to say, of course, that the only stories that can be told in Miami are knock-down drag-out brawls; conflict takes many forms. Political rivalries, interpersonal conflicts between motley members, even pursuing a romance when another is also interested in the target of your affections are all conflict-driven stories. Even internal conflicts can serve to draw this theme to the forefront, such as agonizing over whether to reveal your return to your former family and friends.

Mood

Going along with the theme of conflict, the mood of Miami is one of a gathering storm. The freehold is poised on the brink of a precipice, and unless someone steps up and does something about it, there's going to be one hell of a fall, with the likely end result of a civil war between the Courts or a full-scale invasion by the True Fae — or possibly even both. Stories told in Miami should have that vague

but palpable sense of dread hanging over them, reminding the players that life in Miami isn't all fun on the beaches.

Inspirations

Miami has been depicted in films and television countless times, especially its heyday during the 1980s. The following are a few sources you might look to for inspiration in capturing the feel of the city.

Scarface: The iconic Miami movie. Al Pacino plays a *Marielita* (a Cuban refugee who came to Miami on the Mariel Boatlift) who works his way from nobody to a drug kingpin — and ultimately is the architect of his own downfall. An excellent look at Miami at its most decadent, and excellent fodder for a Winter Court story.

Nip/Tuck: A look into the lives of two Miami plastic surgeons and the sick, sick people who surround them. Features decadence of a different kind from *Scarface*, but no less quintessentially Miami.

Dexter: A television series about a serial killer operating in Miami, but who kills only other serial killers. Based on the novel *Darkly Dreaming Dexter* by Jeff Lindsay, the title character's isolation and sense of otherness from those around him makes him excellent inspiration for a changeling.

Miami Vice: You knew it had to be here. The TV series definitely looks dated in a lot of ways today, and there were several elements that bordered on the farcical, but the extensive on-location shooting in Miami is what made many of the city's famous landmarks famous. The more recent movie adaptation modernizes the setting and removes the camp, but also largely omits the great locations.

A History of Miami

Although the region now called Miami was first settled some time around 10,000 years ago, there is no indication that there was a sizable changeling society until the current Court structure was created shortly after World War II. Old stories from Spanish explorers and the Native American tribes of the area have hinted that there may have been fae activity throughout the area's history, but it wasn't until the latter half of the last century that the population boom allowed the formation of a proper freehold. Despite the relative youth of the freehold, a rich culture and history have already sprung up among the city's changelings, and an understanding of that history is vital to understanding the state of the city today.

Ancient Times

Little is known of the history of the Miami region before Juan Ponce de León arrived in 1533. Some 10,000 years ago, a tribe of Native Americans built several villages on the banks of the Miami River, but those peoples left behind only a scattering of tools and weapons made from shells. By the time the Spanish arrived, the area was inhabited by the Tequesta peoples. The Tequesta were hunters, gatherers and fishermen who practiced no agriculture, but who possessed a curiously developed religion that worshiped a stuffed deer as a manifestation of the sun and a "god of the graveyard" in the form of a bird's head carved from pine. Reports of human sacrifice may have been exaggerated by Spanish missionaries, but there was certainly an element of morbidity to the Tequesta practice of stripping the flesh from the bones of dead chiefs and then presenting the larger bones as gifts to the chief's relatives. Changeling historians have suggested that these practices may have been designed to placate or ward off the True Fae, but as the only records surviving from the period come from Spanish missionaries, who were somewhat understandably biased in such matters, it is difficult to gauge with any real certainty.

The Miami Circle

The Miami Circle is believed to have been created by the Tequesta approximately 1,900 years ago. Popular archaeology states that the holes were likely post-holes for the supports of a large building, either communal housing or a ceremonial lodge of some sort. Naturally, the changelings have other theories, and many link the Miami Circle to the theory that the Tequesta people worshiped or at least made offerings to the Others and claim that the circle was a gateway to Faerie itself. Others claim that it was not built as a gate at all, but as a prison, and that an ancient and powerful lord of the Fae lies entombed within the limestone bedrock.

Colonial Era

The Miami region was largely ignored throughout the Spanish colonial period. From the mid-16th century to the early 18th century, several attempts were made to establish missions in the area, but they never took hold. What *did* take hold was smallpox and a host of other European diseases brought by the explorers, which largely decimated the Tequesta people. By the time Spain ceded Florida to Britain, the Tequesta were all either dead or relocated to Cuba. Shortly thereafter, reports of mysterious disappearances began to surface among the various attempts at British colonization. At least one attempt at founding a plantation was defeated by a rapid series of several strange vanishings — first slaves and vagabonds, but later respectable white settlers as well. The colonization attempt was deemed cursed, and under the pretense of "difficulty obtaining finances," promptly abandoned.

Story Hook: Empty Villages

Changelings coming into Miami from the Florida Keys have reported seeing ethereal ap-

paritions of Native American villages alongside desolate stretches of the Overseas Highway. Courageous travelers who exited their vehicles and attempted to interact with the ghostly inhabitants of the phantom village claim that the spirits do not react to the presence of earthly beings save to mutter that the Grandfathers of the Glade will soon grow displeased with the lack of offerings given to them. Invariably, the specter and the entire village vanish after imparting this warning.

Throughout most of the 1800s, the population of the Miami area was largely composed of squatters, adventurers and treasure hunters seeking the precious cargo of ships wrecked on the treacherous Great Florida Reef. Miami itself was officially founded in 1842, but largely thanks to the Seminole Wars it would be another 50 years before there were more than a handful of people living there. The construction of the railroad in 1896, and along with it railroad magnate Henry Flagler's resort hotel, saw the population finally begin to grow. The city of Miami was incorporated on July 28, 1896, with exactly 444 citizens.

Modern History

The early 20th century was a time of tremendous prosperity and growth for Miami. By 1900, the population sat at around 1,600 souls. By 1910 that number jumped to 5,400, and by 1920 the population had skyrocketed to almost 30,000 and showed no immediate sign of stopping. Unfortunately, as any changeling seer can tell you, signs and portents can be deceiving. Construction delays and railroad difficulties brought the development boom to a crawl, but it took an act of a wrathful god to end the boom.

The Great Miami Hurricane

In September 1926, the Great Miami Hurricane made landfall. The inhabitants of Miami, largely thanks to extremely short warning and the immigrant population's lack of familiarity with the power of such a storm, made few preparations and, by and large, did not evacuate. In total, the storm inflicted $100 million in damages (an astronomical sum in 1926). The official death toll is recorded at 373, but the precise number may never be known, as many victims were simply reported missing and never recovered.

Popular changeling lore asserts that the "Big Blow" was, if not caused by, then certainly influenced by the Others, who rode the shrieking winds on maddened steeds and snatched up hundreds of unfortunates to be borne away to Faerie. Scattered records, mostly in the form of journals and letters written by artists, poets and other "sensitives" report gargantuan figures dancing in the storm winds or galloping horsemen in the chaotic whirl of debris. Some changelings dismiss the stories as superstition, but the more paranoid (and some would say wiser) shudder at the thought that one day those storm-riders will return with thunderous hooves and howling gales of mad laughter.

The Depression and World War II

Not long after the hurricane, the Great Depression hit, driving the city into further decline. Despite the economic ruin, this period saw the birth of Miami Beach's famous Art Deco district, and the city's generally lax enforcement of Prohibition laws and legalized gambling made the city a popular tourist destination. Today, the Spring Court gives one of their own credit for influencing the city government into "letting folk have their fun," but for the most part, the only changelings who accept this story are the courtiers of the Antler Crown. The '20s and '30s were a time well before the Courts were established in Miami; even if a changeling was involved, there is no way to directly link that historical changeling to the Spring Court.

During World War II, Miami became a major training center for U.S. troops, with a half a million enlisted men and 50,000 officers going through training in Miami. After the war, many of those troops returned to the city, providing a population and economic boom.

The Founding of the Courts

Throughout the early 20th century, there were scattered individual changelings or small motleys operating in Miami, but it wasn't until the postwar population boom that the changelings arrived in larger numbers. Some of them were American servicemen who were taken in Europe and returned home after the war, while others were taken directly from the growing population of Miami itself. Initially, this burgeoning population was scattered and disorganized, but in 1946 three charismatic visionaries came together to attempt to forge order from the chaos.

The first of the three was a U.S. Army sergeant who had been abducted in the Bastogne in late 1944. He returned not long after the end of the war, calling himself Tom Hood, the "Headsman's Ghost." In France, he was initiated into the Autumn Court and brought the idea with him when he returned home to Miami. Tom contacted two of the most personally powerful changelings he could find in Miami: Grandfather Thunder and Rose Thorne, who, to Tom, exemplified the ideals of the Summer and Spring Courts, respectively. A changeling to represent Winter could not be located, and many modern changelings of the Silent Arrow consider this snub to be the principal reason their Court remains low in prominence.

Tom, Thunder and Rose met in Miami Beach one moonlit night, and Tom outlined his plan to create a freehold of Miami. He offered the other two access to ancient books he had brought with him from Paris, books that described the philosophies and the mystical theories behind

the changeling Courts. In return, Tom himself was guaranteed a place of prominence in the freehold, regardless of the season and current ruler. Thunder and Rose agreed, and at midnight on September 23, 1946, the first pledges of the Trident, the freehold of Miami were sworn.

With the Courts now established in name, the three leaders of the freehold began to spread their teachings, recruiting many of the city's formerly Courtless changelings and establishing their power bases. Even to this day, the original territories of the Courts hold, more or less. Rose Thorne and her Spring Court claimed South Beach and the nightclub district, Grandfather Thunder and the Iron Spear solidified themselves in Liberty City, and Tom Hood took his Autumn Court and fortified himself in downtown Miami.

The Founding of the Winter Court

There was no Winter Court in Miami until the middle of the 1960s. For the first 19 years of the freehold's history, the year was simply divided three ways instead of four. The precise origin of the Winter Court in Miami is subject to a good deal of hearsay and speculation, but the official story goes that the Silent Arrow was founded when a Courtless changeling called La Llorona managed to steal the original texts Tom Hood brought with him from France. La Llorona learned from them the secrets of the Winter Court and chose to make her own pledge with Winter. She brought her new teachings to several of the disenfranchised Courtless of the city, especially those living in the high-poverty, high-crime areas. In a surprise move, the Winter Court seized much of Liberty City from the Iron Spear and established a presence in the freehold.

The problem with this story is primarily that, by 1965, the Summer Court was already the largest and most powerful Court in the city, and it seems doubtful that an upstart Court could unseat Grandfather Thunder. Many changelings suspect that Grandfather Thunder was even then laying the seeds of his eventual takeover of the freehold, and that he introduced La Llorona to the teachings of Winter himself in order to place a wedge between Spring and Autumn.

Recent History

Once the Winter Court established itself and its rightful rule over one-quarter of the year, the freehold settled down for the most part. The Summer Court won back a major victory against Winter in 1980, when the Liberty City Riots erupted in territory controlled by La Llorona and created a tremendous influx of wrath that fueled the Summer offensive. La Llorona herself was killed in the riots (although many Winter Court changelings continue to insist that a Summer Court assassin struck the killing blow) and was succeeded by Jeremiah Sleet, who holds the title of Winter King to this day.

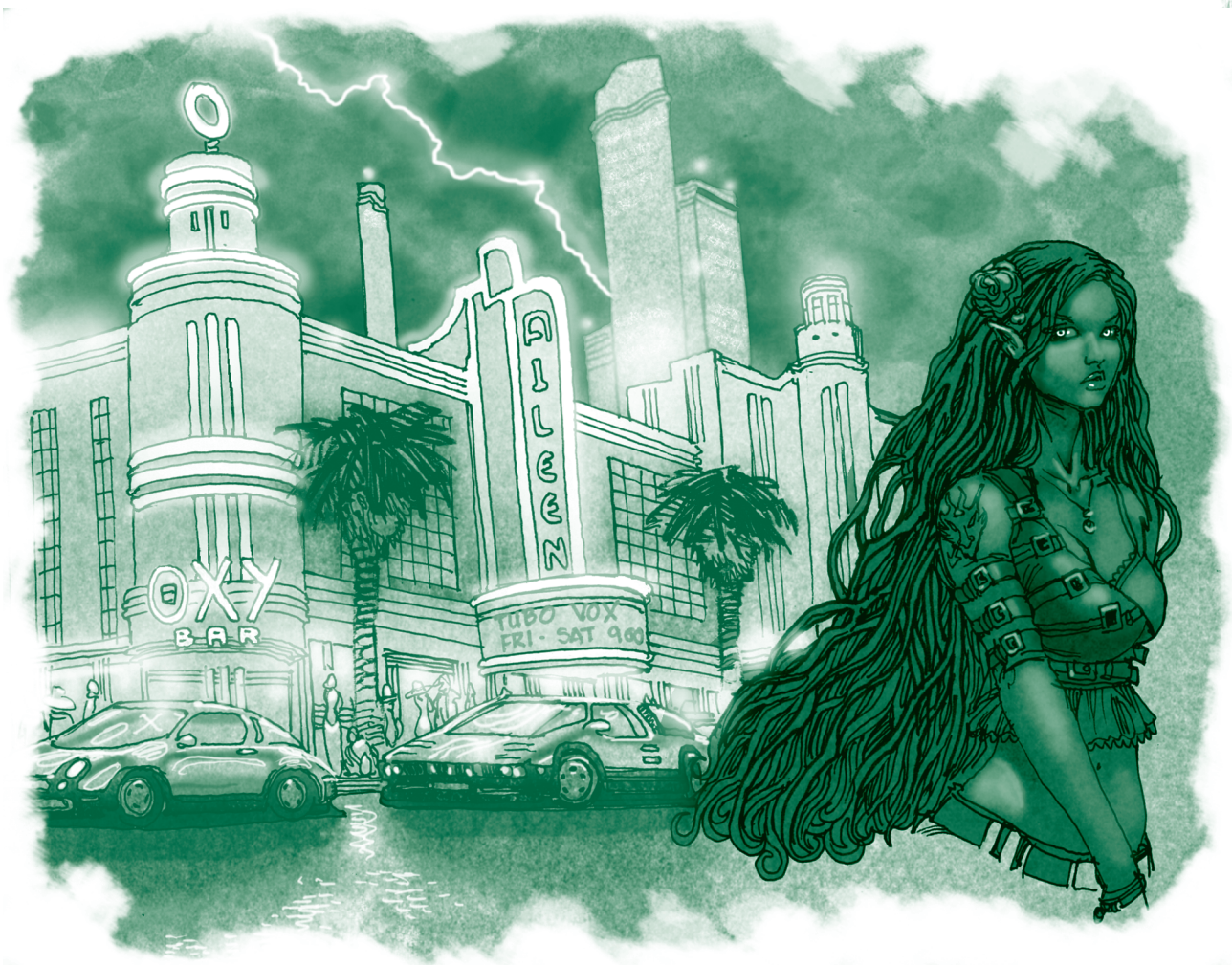
The 1980s are often looked back on as the golden age of the freehold of Miami by many changelings. The decade started off joyously, as the Mariel Boatlift brought 125,000 Cuban refugees into the city. In what the Courts called an incidence of Wyrd creating sympathetic vibrations, concurrent with the Boatlift nearly 100 changelings arrived in the city, freshly escaped from Faerie. Many of these changelings (dubbed *Marielitos* even though they were not part of the Mariel Boatlift) chose to settle permanently in Miami and bolstered the freehold 's power.

As the decade wore on and Miami became the principal point of entry into the United States for South American cocaine, Jeremiah Sleet and his Winter Court established themselves as major players in the drug trade, feeding off the sorrow it generated. Keeping pace with their rivals, changelings of the Summer Court rode (and at least partially influenced) the violent crime wave that came along with the influx of drugs and money. Meanwhile, the Spring Court increased its hold on the city's pleasure districts and rode the high that came with Miami's increasing reputation as America's decadent tropical paradise. Tom Hood kept his own counsel, as he always had, but even the Leaden Mirror was flush with Glamour as the mortals grew to fear the encroachment of drug addiction, the criminals running rampant and even the immigrants taking their jobs.

If the '80s were the golden age, the '90s were the proverbial fall of the Roman Empire. In 1992, Hurricane Andrew ripped through Dade County just south of Miami, sparking panicked rumors of the return of the Great Miami Hurricane and its alleged True Fae masters. The rumor ultimately proved unfounded, but the storm's earthly damage was no less severe. The city's economy was devastated, and subsequent financial scandals earned the city the dubious honor of fourth poorest city in America. The drug wars continued to escalate, feeding the Summer Court's wrath and allowing Grandfather Thunder to make his most audacious move yet.

The Coup and the City of Endless Summer

On June 21, 1999, at the height of Grandfather Thunder's reign, the King of Endless Summer announced that, by virtue of its climate and the general essence of the city's character, Miami would henceforth be known as the City of Endless Summer and that the seasonal governance of the Courts was dissolved. He would still allow the other Courts to hold their current territories, and even to recruit new members, so long as all changelings swore an oath acknowledging the primacy of the Summer Court.



Unsurprisingly, the freehold exploded, with several prominent members of the Spring Court vowing instead to see Thunder's head on a spike. Tom Hood likewise condemned the action and mobilized the Leaden Mirror to force the King of Endless Summer to abdicate and name a successor. Jeremiah Sleet was the only leader to agree to Thunder's terms, as long as Jeremiah and his Court were not required to take sides in the dispute.

Had Tom and Rose combined their forces to deal with Thunder, the whole affair might have been nothing more than a footnote in the freehold's history. As it was, the Antler Crown and Leaden Mirror each made their own play, and were soundly defeated by the knights of the Summer Court. In the shadows and the half-light of neon and street lamps, an invisible war was carried out, masked by gang violence and swept under the rug by a jaded, overworked police force.

It is difficult to say which Court got the worse end of the battle. Tom Hood was killed by Grandfather Thunder's chief enforcer, Deathless Ivan, and the forces of Spring were utterly routed and driven out of the city by the Iron Spear. Rose Thorne and her closest advisers have regrouped in the Everglades, but their numbers are severely diminished. Recently, a semi-independent Spring Court has returned to Miami Beach. Derisively called "Vichy Spring" by Rose's loyalists, this branch of the Court is led by Maria Thorne, Rose's "daughter." The Autumn Court, meanwhile, has withdrawn to its holdings in and around the University of Miami in an attempt to deal with their grief at the loss of the father of the freehold of Miami. In 2003, the Autumn Court finally chose a new leader in one of Tom Hood's protégés, the Autumn Queen Naamah.

The Winter Court has stayed out of the struggle so far and, despite repeated entreaties from the Spring Court's envoys, shows no sign of changing that in the future. Many changelings feel that Jeremiah Sleet is drunk on his own sorrow, and that nearly a quarter century of nurturing the drug trade like a gardener nurtures his plants has utterly consumed the man's soul.

Miami Today

The freehold of Miami, formally called the Trident, has been a seething, bubbling pot of tension since Grandfather Thunder's coup. Thanks to the extended lifespan afforded to changelings, the city has many residents who still remember how Tom Hood brought their city to order and created the seasonal Court that has helped to ward off the lords of

Faerie. The large part of the resistance to the City of Endless Summer has originated with these venerable changelings and those younger idealists they have brought over to their cause. Even within the Summer Court, there are those who would like to see Grandfather Thunder brought down. So far, the dissent has largely been restricted to rabble-rousing and polemic in the coffeehouses and nightclubs the changelings frequent; no one wants to risk yet another civil war so close on the heels of the first, and truth be told, few of the dissidents feel confident in their ability to take on the power of the Summer Court. Thunder's free hand with festivals and revels have likewise kept many of the younger changelings quite content with the present arrangement.

Outside of freehold politics, the city of Miami fares little better. Poverty and crime are rampant, with the city ranking as the third poorest city in the country, the second most dangerous and the city with the second-largest population of adults without a high school diploma. Gang violence is especially high, and the vast amount of drugs that flow into the Port of Miami all but guarantee that organized crime has its fingers in city politics. All of this sorrow and apathy draws the Fae like flies to honey; missing persons reports are astronomical, and even the wisest changelings can't be sure how many are runaways or murders or abductions and how many are taken by the Others.

The following overview of the Trident is broken down by Courts, but remember that membership in a Court is not the end-all and be-all of a character's allegiances. Beyond Court membership there is the overarching matter of the City of Endless Summer and where the character stands on that issue.

The Spring Court

The Spring Court is on the verge of self-destruction in Miami. Completely exiled from the city until quite recently, the Antler Crown has at last reestablished its presence in the city. Maria Thorne's "Vichy Spring" has regained a portion of the Court's former holdings in Miami Beach, but the majority of the Spring Court remains in hiding outside the city. Rose Thorne herself has gone completely underground, fearing that the King of Endless Summer will have her killed should she surface publicly. Her exact whereabouts remain unknown: along with three of her fiercest and most loyal knights, she operates out of the Everglades, relaying messages to her Court by courier. At present, Rose lacks the manpower to attempt a move back into the city, and the death of Tom Hood during the coup, and his subsequent replacement by Naamah, has soured any real chance of an alliance with the Autumn Court.

All this isn't to say that the Spring Court is inactive in the city itself; far from it. At any time, Rose Thorne has at least a half-dozen agents provocateur moving among the city's changelings, frequently disguised as Courtless or flighty party animals with "Vichy Spring." The duties of these agents range from espionage to sabotage to backroom overtures of alliance to the Winter and Autumn Courts. As yet, there has been no move toward overt violence, but if no better resolution can be arrived at, it is not inconceivable that Rose might step up to a campaign of assassination.

Vichy Spring

Two years ago, a small, ragtag band of Spring Court changelings emerged from the Everglades and requested asylum from the King of Endless Summer. Their leader called herself Maria Thorne, and she claimed to be Rose Thorne's daughter. She announced that she had grown tired of her mother's erratic behavior and obsession with restoring the seasonal Court, and that she wished to reestablish a Spring Court in Miami on her own. Quite to the surprise of the movers-and-shakers of the City of Endless Summer, Grandfather Thunder acceded to her request and granted Maria Thorne the title of Duchess of Spring (Maria herself refused to be named Spring Queen until her mother was lawfully deposed) and control of several nightclubs in South Beach formerly owned by the Court of Desire.

The sad truth is that Maria Thorne isn't half the leader Rose was. Maria's attempts to balance recognition of the City of Endless Summer and the rightful rule of Rose Thorne have been, rather than a delicate political balancing act, an exercise in capitulation and weak compromise. Maria's faction is branded traitors by the exiled Spring Court for rolling over for Grandfather Thunder's regime, and at the same time is mistrusted by the City of Endless Summer for its refusal to openly denounce Rose Thorne and her rebellion.

The Summer Court

Miami is the City of Endless Summer, and if the Summer Court has anything to say about it, it will stay that way for a long, long time. Ruled by Grandfather Thunder, an old and wily changeling and one of the only surviving founders of the freehold of Miami, the Iron Spear has established itself not only as the dominant Court in the city but as the only ruling body of Miami's changelings. In the years since the coup, Grandfather Thunder and his followers have waged civil war, survived two successive rebellions and pushed an outlaw Court almost entirely out of the city. And that was just the external politics.

Within its own ranks, the Summer Court has had to deal with a growing rift of discontent, primarily between younger changelings who support Grandfather Thunder and their elders, who tend to remain wary of upsetting the balance created by Tom Hood and his compatriots. Grandfather Thunder's charismatic and forceful leadership has kept this dissent quiet thus far, but as the Others are sighted with greater and greater frequency and the freehold spirals steadily toward anarchy, the carefully constructed façade of a unified Summer Court risks crumbling. The other Courts are held in check by the belief that any attempt to oust Thunder must overcome the full strength of the Iron Spear;

were the level of dissent within the Summer Court widely known, it could bring down the City of Endless Summer.

Internal strife aside, the Summer Court is unquestionably the most powerful Court in Miami. The Iron Spear is easily twice as populous as the Leaden Mirror, the next largest Court, and unlike the Autumn and Winter Courts, the Court of Wrath has firmly entrenched itself in the politics of the City of Endless Summer and thus holds the majority of political clout in the city. Coupled with the abundant wrathful Glamour that hangs over the city and the mystical potency afforded by Miami's perpetually torrid climate, the Court of Wrath has dug itself firmly into the position of primacy and shows no signs of letting go any time soon.

The Summer Court has a cool but civil relationship with the mystics and scholars of the Autumn Court, which Grandfather Thunder has tried consistently to improve, if only to remove the largest potential threat to his rule. So far, his overtures have had little success, but the Iron Spear can be patient when it must. The Court typically looks on Maria Thorne's Spring Court with a mixture of distrust and wry amusement, while Rose Thorne's renegades are considered the worst of traitors; among the Summer Court, the story that Rose has gone mad and allied herself with the Fae has gained more credence than with the other Courts. Relations with the Winter Court are more strained; Jeremiah Snow keeps his small band of misfits mostly clear of the rest of changeling society, but there has been a long rivalry between the Courts stemming from territorial overlap.

The Autumn Court

The Autumn Court is just beginning to find its feet again after the death of its leader. Tom Hood quite literally *was* the Autumn Court, having led it since it was founded in the late 1940s. His murder at the hands of Deathless Ivan threw the Court into chaos, effectively decapitating any further attempts at revolution against the self-proclaimed King of Endless Summer. Reprisals against the Leaden Mirror were brutal, but mercifully brief: three of Tom Hood's oldest and closest advisers were executed for their treason, and four more were exiled from Miami for "as long as summer shall endure." Only now, years after the coup, is the Autumn Court re-emerging as a force within the city.

Tom Hood left no choice of successor when he died (or if he did, it was left with one of the other dead or exiled changelings), and the aftermath of the coup left no one with a clear position of seniority to step forward and claim the throne. Those who made their bids all the same rent the Court of Fear into several internal factions and a quagmire of shifting alliances and broken oaths. Perhaps ironically, the Leaden Mirror was ruled by fear: fear of being on the losing side, fear of betrayal and, most of all, fear that whoever claimed the throne in the end would be unable to live up to the legend of Tom Hood.

The recent emergence of Naamah, one of Tom's youngest and most zealous disciples, as the Autumn Queen has helped to bring the Court back to some semblance of stability. The internal strife has been subsumed, but not forgotten by any means. The Autumn Queen has decreed that there shall be no continuation of the vendettas from previous years and that the Court must now focus on the future and the restoration of the freehold (tacit condemnation of the City of Endless Summer) — which of course means that subtle vengeance and shadowy intrigues are the order of the day.

The Leaden Mirror feeds on fear, and there is much to fear in Miami. From the stories told by homeless children about Satan and his demons driving God out of Heaven to the very real possibility of mugging, rape or assault, from fears of academic failure among the students at the university to fear of expulsion from the in-crowd in the trendy club districts, there is so much fear in Miami that one hardly need cultivate it. The courtiers of the Autumn Court, though, does just that: they whisper in the ears of children that monsters will bear them away if they look into the window of a black Jeep at night, and they follow lone individuals walking home — always at a distance, but always close enough to be noticed. They invent weird stories about sorority house murders and spread barbed lies about who is secretly sleeping with whom. Naamah has seen her Court pass through its own fear after the death of Tom Hood, and she has seen the power that fear can bring. One day, perhaps sooner than anyone expects, that power will be turned like a knife at the heart of the City of Endless Summer, and Tom Hood will have his revenge.

The Autumn Court holds little in the way of actual "territory." Most Court members live in the same general vicinity, with a high concentration in and around Coral Gables and the University of Miami campus, but the Court does not claim any part of the city as "theirs" the way the Summer and Winter Courts do. Naamah claims that this is because the city of Miami should be freely open to all changelings, while the pundits of the other Courts suggest that the Queen of Autumn is afraid of her inability to enforce such a claim. All the same, changelings of the other Courts tread lightly when they visit the university, especially at night. There is a reason why so many campus horror stories begin with "a girl was walking home alone one night, when…"

The Court of Fear holds itself apart from the others, and has done since the death of Tom Hood. Save for the envoy to the Court of the King of Endless Summer, the Court as a whole avoids most contact with changeling society. The Courts of Autumn and Spring share many of the same goals in Miami, and together they stand a good chance of throwing off the yoke of the King of Endless Summer and restoring the processional Court of the season. Any alliance between the two is marred by the immense personal enmity between Naamah and Rose Thorne, an enmity that sometimes trickles down into the rank and file. The Leaden Mirror is almost universally united in its hatred of the Summer Court, either for Grandfather Thunder's abolition of the seasonal Court or the murder of Tom Hood. The Win-

ter Court is given little thought to; if Jeremiah Sleet wants to play gangster and deal in drugs and sorrow, the Autumn Court says let them. They can be brought back into the fold when the more pressing threat is dealt with.

The Winter Court

By all rights, the Winter Court should be one of the most powerful Courts in Miami. The Court's heavy involvement in the drug trade gives them not only wealth and power, but a steady source of sorrow stemming from the lives destroyed by their trade. Never a populous Court, Winter's children are a tight-knit bunch, more like a street gang than a royal Court. Jeremiah Sleet, the Court of Sorrow's King since the late 1970s, has forged his Court into a well-honed machine, growing steadily in temporal power even as it poisons the city around it. And yet, for all of that, the Winter Court remains the weakest of the Courts that remain in the city. The smallest of the Courts (with the possible exception of Maria Thorne's faction of the Spring Court), the Silent Arrow has been marginalized and pushed to one side in matters of freehold politics since the Court was founded.

With a talent for stealth and hunger for the sorrow of mortals, the Winter Court has established a niche for itself in the Miami underworld. The Winter Court is by no means the largest or most powerful group operating in the narcotics trade — wealth and power attracts exactly the attention the Winter Court doesn't want — but word on the street is that the "Snowmen" are a quality operation with an uncanny knack for staying under the radar and worming their distribution network into any neighborhood. Sleet runs his Court like a street gang: new recruits serve as mules, runners and lookouts, while the more established members handle the manufacture and distribution of the merchandise. Initiation rituals are said to be a harrowing experience; being jumped in by a gang of Ogres and Beasts is a process even the toughest might quail at.

Story Hook: Fairy Dust

A new drug has been hitting the streets in recent weeks. Known by the street names "fairy dust," "Tinkerbell" or just "D," the dealers say it's like combining the best of acid and Ecstasy in one hit; you'll see things both wonderful and terrible, and it'll open your mind to things you've never thought possible.

At least, that's the sales pitch. Rumor has it that the Winter Court created the stuff out of goblin fruits and strange psychedelic mushrooms found in the Hedge, and the drug opens your eyes to the wonders of Faerie. The downside, of course, is that when you can see the Others, the Others can see you.

Despite the Winter Court's reputation as nothing more than a gang of thugs and drug dealers, there are several members who try not to involve themselves in that lifestyle. By and large, the Winter Court accepts these changelings and their choices, but even the most adamantly "out of the game" courtiers dread that late-night phone call asking them to do "a favor for a friend." Jeremiah Sleet isn't a man you say "no" to lightly.

The Winter Court holds its seasonal brethren in generally low esteem when it thinks about them at all. The only real exception is Maria Thorne's Spring Court — the Court's party animal lifestyle and links to the South Beach club scene makes the Court an excellent funnel for designer drugs. Some members, particularly older ones, hold a grudge against the Summer Court for the death of La Llorona, but are careful not to beat their breast over it too loudly, lest mourning for the previous monarch be taken as regret over the current one. Likewise, much of the Winter Court has never quite forgiven the Autumn Court for Tom Hood's perceived bias against their Court.

The Gateway to the Americas

The city of Miami is located in the northeastern section of Miami-Dade County (originally just Dade County), on the southeastern tip of mainland Florida. The city rests on a broad plain between the Everglades and Biscayne Bay, with the Miami River draining out of the Everglades and running through downtown Miami to Biscayne Bay. The bay also contains several hundred barrier islands, some natural and some artificial, the largest of which is the location of the famous city of Miami Beach.

The entire Miami region was originally part of the Everglades, a vast swamp of sawgrass and mangrove that covered most of south Florida. As settlement in the area has grown, and particularly the population of Miami, the Everglades have been steadily reclaimed for human use. Still, Miami bears the hallmark of its heritage: the average elevation is about three feet above sea level, with the highest elevation barely cresting 15 feet above sea level. The Biscayne Aquifer rests just below the surface; in most places, it is impossible to dig more than 15 feet before hitting water. This makes underground construction all but impossible.

Miami at a Glance

Climate: Miami has a humid, subtropical climate, verging on a true tropical clime. Although technically the city has only recorded triple-digit temperatures once in its history (July 21, 1942), the humidity often pushes the heat index up to 110 degrees Fahrenheit. The city does experience cold fronts from November through March, and even recorded snowfall once in 1977.

Rain is abundant, with roughly six feet per year. Miami is statistically the most likely of any major city to be hit by a hurricane.

Economy: Despite Miami's reputation as a city dependent on tourism, the city is a major financial center, and a prime location for international commerce. Many corporations who do business in Latin America have regional headquarters in Miami, and the city's airport and seaport are among the busiest in the country. Despite this, poverty is a very real problem in Miami, with almost 30% of the population below the poverty line.

Government: Miami is governed by an elected mayor and a council of five city commissioners representing the city's five districts.

Population: The population is just over 350,000 in Miami proper, with 2.3 million in the larger urban area. The majority of the population is Hispanic, and Miami has the largest percentage of individuals who speak a language other than English at home. English, Spanish and Haitian Creole are the city's official languages.

Media and Culture: The *Miami Herald* is the city's primary English-language newspaper, with *El Nuevo Herald* and *Diario Las Americas* serving the Spanish-speaking population. The city has several professional sports teams, including the Miami Dolphins (football), the Miami Heat (basketball), the Florida Panthers (Hockey) and the Florida Marlins (baseball).

The Urban Sprawl

Miami sits along the shore of Biscayne Bay, with the Miami River bisecting the city on a roughly northwest to southeast line. The city occupies an area of about 55 square miles, making it one of the smallest major cities in the country. Miami is connected by several major highways, with I-95 running north-south along the eastern part of the city, I-75 running the same direction through the western portion before turning west into the Everglades (a lonely, desolate stretch of road called "Alligator Alley") north of the city. U.S. Route 1 connects most of the major cities on America's East Coast; the highway passes through Miami and becomes the Overseas Highway through the Florida Keys.

The following section provides a brief overview of several of the most prominent districts in the city of Miami. Obviously, this appendix can only scratch the surface of a city as diverse and fascinating as Miami; Storytellers and players are encouraged to research areas of interest either on the Internet or in travel guides and almanacs if a more accurate and detailed look at Miami is your cup of tea.

A Brief Note on Terminology

For simplicity's sake, the word "Miami" is used to refer collectively to the freehold of Miami and its environs. Several of the locales described below are actually their own independent cities, and are only associated with Miami because of geography, culture and economy.

Downtown Miami

Miami's central financial and business district runs from South 10th Street to North 17th Street, and from I-95 to the bay. The Miami River divides the neighborhood into two sub-districts: north of the river is the shopping and government district most popular with tourists and the terminally trendy, while south of the river is the Brickell financial district. Downtown also hosts several large venues, including the AmericanAirlines Arena (home of the Miami Heat) and the Carnival Center for the Performing Arts, which includes an opera house and a concert hall. Downtown likewise hosts a sizable club district, though one that doesn't compare with Miami Beach. Still, some members of the Spring Court prefer the downtown scene, and changelings of all Courts who fancy themselves more cultured take in attractions such as the Bayfront Park Market and outdoor shows at the AT&T Amphitheater. The Summer Court, unsurprisingly, attends athletic competitions regularly at the arena.

Downtown Miami is renowned for its unique skyline, with many of the buildings decked out in brilliant greens, pinks and orange neons that sometimes make the city look more like Las Vegas in Florida. Urban folklore holds that angels eat the light from those neon-lit buildings; whether or not angels find it palatable is open to debate, but changelings, at least, can gain a point of Glamour once per night by plucking a shard of neon light from the air and eating it.

Of more interest to most changelings, though, is the Court of the King of Endless Summer located in the abandoned Freedom Tower at 600 Biscayne Boulevard. This 255-foot skyscraper was used as a processing center to document and provide medical and dental care to Cuban refugees in the 1960s and '70s. The building was sold off in 1974, after the first major wave of immigration, but the hope and joy of all those people for whom the tower was the first taste of a life of freedom left an indelible imprint on the building. When it was eventually abandoned, the building became a haven for squatters and the homeless — still a place of refuge, albeit in a different way. Homeless children refer to it as "the big pink haunted house," perhaps a reference to its mystical activity.

The upper floors of the building contain a Hollow; if one makes three right turns through three doorways on the top floor, one enters a space reminiscent of the building's

cupola, only considerably larger and decorated in the rich livery of the Summer Court. Thunder's Courts are typically held in the early afternoon, with the sun at its peak and the city at its hottest. On his fiery throne, he hears grievances, settles disputes and addresses problems within the freehold. Lately, and distressingly, this has focused more on responding to alleged sightings of the Others and the disappearance of more than a few changelings.

Coconut Grove

Once an independent city in its own right, Coconut Grove stretches from N. Prospect Avenue in the south to the intersection of U.S. Route 1 and Brickell Avenue in the north, and from Le Jeune Road in the west to Biscayne Bay in the east. Coconut Grove is one of the trendier and wealthier areas of Miami, famous for an annual art festival and the huge variety of restaurants in the district. Coconut Grove has a very Caribbean atmosphere, and hosts many festivals celebrating Caribbean lifestyle, cuisine and music throughout the year.

By night, Coconut Grove comes alive, with an ample selection of bars, nightclubs and shows that cater primarily to a younger crowd: students from the University of Miami, young professionals fresh off work in the financial district and the like. In keeping with the neighborhood's styling, many of these venues feature Caribbean music such as calypso or reggae.

In recent months, a peculiar story has begun circulating among the children of Coconut Grove; specifically among students at St. Stephen's School, a private school for children up to sixth grade. The story came to the attention of a scholar of the Autumn Court while researching the childhood concept of fear, and she spread it to the rest of the Court of Fear, from whence it spread throughout the city.

The story goes that if a child is left unattended on school grounds and admonished to behave (specifically, to *not* engage in a specific behavior or activity) while the adults are away, a terrible fiend called the Great Tall Tailor-Man will burst through the nearest door and horribly mutilate the misbehaving child. Often, the punishment is said to relate to the mandate the child broke: a child who peeps in a filing cabinet after being told not to look around has his eyes sewn shut, a child who sucks her thumb against the teacher's authority has the digit snipped off and so on. Sometimes, the stories say, the Tailor carries the naughty child away to some unknown and grim fate.

Coral Gables

Called the "City Beautiful," Coral Gables is an independent city often lumped in with Miami due to the presence of the University of Miami. Coral Gables is very much a college town, with plenty of student housing, shops and restaurants, and a pedestrian-friendly layout. The city is famous (or perhaps infamous) for its strict aesthetic regulations, covering everything from mandatory bicycle racks to requiring that all buildings, even parking structures, maintain architectural styles that complement their neighbors.

Without a doubt, the University of Miami is the city's most prominent landmark, with its 240-acre campus and several satellite campuses around town. The Autumn Court is thick on the ground here, with quite a few of its members either enrolled or ensconced in staff positions (mostly security, janitorial and similar menial jobs, but at least one Darkling has tenure in the psychology department), and they vigorously defend their "turf" against encroachment. Naamah, the Autumn Queen, holds court on every gibbous moon in the John C. Gifford Arboretum on campus, and several of the younger courtiers are known for putting on a very impressive (and exclusive) Halloween party, complete with "haunted" house (which actually winds into the Hedge in one or two instances, if the stories are to be believed).

Little Haiti

Between 36th and 85th Streets, bordered by U.S. Route 1 and Miami Avenue, lies Little Haiti. Little Haiti (or *La Petite Haïti*) began life as Lemon City, a small agricultural town known for its lemon groves. Lemon City was annexed by Miami in 1925, and over the years, a steady stream of Haitian immigrants gave the district its new name.

Haitian markets and restaurants abound in the district, and voodoo is practiced prominently (albeit usually in secret for fear of discrimination). Thanks to the efforts of several prominent citizens, Little Haiti is gradually experiencing an urban rejuvenation, including the development of the trendy Miami Design District in the southern tip of the district, but crime and poverty still remain very real problems. The Winter Court, in particular, has worked against the renewal process, as Little Haiti is one of the Court's pre-eminent markets in the drug trade.

Recently, the neighborhood has been the site of several violent vigilante attacks on drug dealers; at least three have been beaten to death and dumped at the feet of the statue of General Toussaint L'Ouverture on the corner of 62nd Street and Miami Avenue. One of the victims was an ensorcelled ally of the Winter Court, and several members of the Silent Arrow suspect the Summer Court's involvement.

Little Havana

Little Havana was once one of the largest Cuban neighborhoods in the state. Ironically, despite the neighborhood's name, recent years have shown a trend toward an exodus by Cuban Americans and an influx of immigrants from Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala. Part of the neighborhood is actually referred to now as "Little Managua." Nevertheless, Cuban culture remains a prominent part of the neighborhood and draws many tourists.

The neighborhood is best known for its annual Calle Ocho Street Festival, a part of Carnival. The massive cel-

ebration takes place on 8th Street (hence the name "Calle Ocho") between 27th Avenue and 4th Avenue and attracts more than one million visitors each year, including a sizable portion of the city's changeling population. Calle Ocho has been a tradition among all the Courts, but especially the Antler Crown, for 15 years, and is generally treated as an excuse to cut loose and enjoy the wild side of life.

Miami Beach

Assumed by many to be a neighborhood of Miami, Miami Beach is actually an independent city, albeit closely linked to Miami. Miami Beach occupies the largest of the barrier islands in Biscayne Bay, and is linked to the mainland by three causeways: I-195, the Venetian Causeway and MacArthur Causeway. Famous for its Art Deco district, Miami Beach has been a popular tourist destination for decades; the famous South Beach district in particular has been greatly revitalized by the tourist trade. Before the area was made world famous as a primary shooting location for *Miami Vice*, much of South Beach was home to retirees living in small tenements and to the famous "cocaine cowboys," the entrepreneurial early smugglers of cocaine into the United States.

No mention of Miami Beach would be complete without a discussion of the clubs, bars and nightspots that make the city famous. South Beach (composed of the southernmost 23 blocks of the island) is the most prominent nightclub district on the island, and "exclusive" barely begins to describe it. Typical covers range from $20 to $60, and if the door staff doesn't like your look, you won't get in even with the money. The clubs themselves are mercurial and ever-changing; one might even suspect them of being owned by the Others. A goth industrial club that was all the rage last season might become a hip-hop club that no one would be seen dead in this season; obviously, one must be extremely astute to navigate the South Beach social scene.

Maria Thorne and her faction hold the deeds to three clubs in South Beach: one on Ocean Drive and two more on Washington Street. Currently, they are called Kim's, the Condor and Born, though they may well change at a moment's notice. Vichy Spring claims no actual territory, though, and South Beach is a common haunt for changelings of all Courts. The clubs are popular places to get a Glamour-buzz, negotiate backroom deals or just hook up and get laid (mortals don't have a monopoly on drunken debauchery, after all).



Overtown

Directly north of Downtown Miami lies Overtown, one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city. Created in 1896, the same year Miami was incorporated, Overtown was born out of the Jim Crow laws of the day. The law restricted where blacks were permitted to live, and so the land west of Henry Flagler's railroad tracks was given over to the (mostly black) rail workers and became known as "Colored Town." In its early years, the district was a vibrant and active part of the community and a popular tourist destination, frequently featuring entertainment by the era's most prominent artists, including Billie Holliday, Cab Calloway and Ella Fitzgerald. Over the years, though, as the discriminatory laws were repealed and many residents moved out, the area became one of the poorest places in all of southern Florida. Today, Overtown is a violent, gang-ridden neighborhood with one of the highest murder rates per capita in the country.

Overtown is a bastion of the more aggressive members of the Summer Court, and at least a few of the street gangs in the neighborhood are either led by or composed entirely of Iron Spear soldiers. The close proximity to downtown means easy access to the Court in the Freedom Tower as well.

Liberty City

Along with Overtown, Liberty City is Miami's largest African American community, with more than half of the city's African American population. The neighborhood runs east from 27th Avenue to I-95, and from 97th Street south to 41st Street. Liberty City was named for the low-income Liberty Square Housing Project built in the late 1930s to relieve crowding in Overtown. In the 1960s, Liberty City achieved notoriety as the location of the first fully interracial congregation of the Presbyterian Church in the American South. In 1980, the neighborhood again came to prominence, though for a less noble reason: the acquittal of five white police officers involved in the fatal beating of a black motorist touched off a three-day riot that could not be quelled even by the deployment of 1,000 National Guardsmen and earned Miami a "disaster area" label by the federal government.

Today, Liberty City fares little better than the neighborhood it was founded to help. An extremely poor neighborhood, Liberty City has a high index of violent crime and gang activity; in 1998, a drug war between rival factions of the John Does street gang served as a smokescreen for a skirmish between the Winter and Summer Courts, with the Silent Arrow retaking a sizable chunk of the territory the Court had lost in the riots 18 years earlier.

The Hedge

The Hedge around Miami takes on a semblance of the Everglades that once covered the area: dense, swampy paths wind through impossibly tangled mangroves, and sawgrass lashes thirstily at anyone foolish enough to leave the path. Closer to the mortal world, the detritus of the city bleeds through: used needles, spent shell casings and other relics of the sordid side of life litter the Hedge. In some places, the "path" is not a path at all, but a waterway navigable by barge or raft. Several changelings have reported encountering strange, Charon-like beings poling roughly made barges along these watery trods, witch-lanterns glowing on the ends of their poles. Supposedly, these boatmen will ferry a changeling through the Hedge for a pledge of Glamour or a small token.

The Goblin Market

Every Saturday from the witching hour till dawn, the Bayside Marketplace becomes a haven for nightmares. Goblin barges, poled by strange creatures from the depths of the Hedge, dock along the deserted quays to hawk their wares. Most weeks, the Market is fairly small and consists mainly of a dozen or so barges and boats tied up along the pier. Every new moon night, though, dozens, perhaps hundreds, of goblin watercraft converge on the bay, lay anchor and run gangplanks from dock to dock. In this floating warren of mazelike walkways, an innumerable bounty of goblin fruits, tokens and dreamscapes are bought and sold, alongside wares even stranger and more surreal.

Despite being tied so intimately to an earthly locale, the Goblin Market actually takes place in the Hedge, albeit very close to the mortal realm. On the smaller market nights, each barge sets up a simple, empty doorframe on the dock; patrons walk the pier in the mortal realm and step into the Hedge at each market stall to inspect the wares. On the nights of the grander market, those who know the key can enter the Hedge by passing under an archway near the water while holding a finger bent like a shepherd's crook over the heart. These larger markets are a dizzying affair to navigate. One urban legend among changelings holds that part of the Goblin Market's Contract is that the Others may take any unfortunate who gets lost amid the shifting mass of decks, planks and rope bridges. Prudent changelings hire an experienced guide, or just avoid the Market altogether on those nights — just in case.

Denizens of the Freehold

Miami is home to approximately 100 changelings, not counting the exiles of Rose Thorne's Spring Court. The following characters are among the most prominent: Court leaders, up-and-coming players and just those who have gained a reputation.

Rose Thorne

Quote: *"We have been thrown down, but we will rise again. We have been turned out, but we will return. No matter how stubbornly it clings to the year, no Summer lasts forever."*

Background: One of the three original founders of the freehold of Miami, Rose Thorne was the most fervent sup-



porter of Tom Hood's vision of a changeling society. Taken in 1939 by a Fae Knight of Flowers, her durance was a half-recalled nightmare of crawling through the Hedge on her belly, torn and bloodied by the Thorns as she hunted for the rare blue roses her master fancied. She escaped more by luck than anything else, her long years of wriggling through the tiniest gap in the Hedge to pluck out the precious blossoms allowing her to find a path her Keeper's dogs could not follow.

Rose is one of the oldest changelings in Miami, and with that age comes a great deal of respect. Within her own Court, Rose has attained an almost mythical status, especially since she vanished into the Everglades. Now stories of her circulate like a kind of changeling Robin Hood — if the stories are to be believed, Rose Thorne has done everything from appear to homeless children to protect them from gang violence to drive off a hunting party from Faerie that had cornered several young changelings.

Of course, the official position of the City of Endless Summer is quite different. Officially, Rose Thorne is a madwoman skulking in the swamp, having abandoned any vestige of Clarity and made deals with the Others to assure her eventual return to power. Within the Spring Court, these rumors are the subject of numerous crude jokes, but outside of the Antler Crown, Rose's sanity, at least, is not exactly considered rock-solid. Rumors about Fae complicity are mostly accepted as political rhetoric — but the paranoia that lurks so often in the changeling heart can't help but wonder.

Description: Rose is a striking woman who appears to be in her late 30s. Once, she was invariably dressed in the latest fashions and projected an image of serene self-confidence, but these days her exile has worn on her greatly. The few who have seen her have said she is haggard and drawn, with age and the weight of her struggle lining her face and clad in the travel-stained and ragged remnants of her finery.

To mortal eyes, Rose is a tall, statuesque woman with long, blonde hair and strikingly bright blue eyes. She has full, naturally deep red lips and skin as soft as rose petals. In her fae mien, her skin takes on a slight bluish tinge, and her lips deepen to a dark midnight blue. Rose stems twine around her limbs like green wire, but somehow the thorns never seem to prick her. The Mantle of Spring enfolds her in life; the air around her always smells of fresh-mown grass, and flowers spring up at her feet when she walks. A crown of twined roses chased with silver and glass shines on her brow, marking her as the true Queen of Spring.

Storytelling Hints: Rose is fiercely devoted to her Court and her cause, and will not hesitate to take actions that others might consider extreme in her quest to throw down Grandfather Thunder's regime. She stops short of knowingly sending members of her own Court on suicide missions, but she certainly would not have a problem sending cat's-paws from the other Courts into harm's way if doing so will further her ends.

Years in the Everglades, living like a fugitive (and sometimes like an animal) has worn on Rose's Clarity. The constant press of the wetlands reminds her uncomfortably of her time in Faerie, and her self-control is beginning to crack. Sometimes she dreams that she never left her master's garden, and that her life in Miami has been a cruel trick. Sometimes, she dreams that she has been chosen as a kind of messiah, fated to deliver Miami from the tyranny of Summer. As these delusions gain hold on her mind, there's no telling what she might try.

Seeming: Elemental

Kith: Woodblood

Court: Spring

Entitlements: None

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Occult (Fae) 4, Politics (Freehold of Miami) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl (Thorny Limbs) 1, Stealth 3, Survival 3

Social Skills: Empathy 4, Expression 2, Intimidation 1, Persuasion (Rhetoric) 5, Socialize 2, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Allies (Changeling Revolutionaries) 3, Harvest (Protecting Street Children from Harm) 3, Hollow 8 (Size 2, Amenities 2, Wards 3, Doors 1), Fame 2, Mantle (includes Crown) 5, Retainer 4

Willpower: 8
Clarity: 4
Virtue: Justice
Vice: Pride
Initiative: 5
Defense: 2
Speed: 9
Health: 8
Wyrd: 5
Contracts: Mirror ••; Smoke ••; Elements ••••• (Plants and Thorns), Eternal Spring ••, Fleeting Spring ••
Pledges: The Reaper's Pledge (protect children from harm in exchange for a large palm frond left in a cemetery), Good Neighbors Pact (Maria Thorne)
Glamour/per Turn: 14/5
Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Range*	*Dice Pool*	*Special*
Brawl	0(B)	–	3	–

Maria Thorne



Quote: *"What? I can't hear you. Can you say that — oh my God, I* love *this song! You wanna dance?"*

Background: Maria Thorne claims to be Rose Thorne's daughter, and the Spring Queen has never publicly denied the claim. Whether the claim should be taken in the literal, biological sense or a more metaphorical one has never been clarified by either woman. Maria remembers (or claims to remember) little of her time in Faerie or of her life before; she emerged from the Hedge in Miami Beach in the late 1990s, shortly before Grandfather Thunder's coup. At the time, the Spring Court had a strong presence there, and when a motley of Broadback satyrs in the middle of a bar-crawl of epic proportions found her and saw her resemblance to their Queen, they immediately took her to Rose. Neither has spoken about what transpired in that meeting, but Maria was formally brought out to the Antler Crown as "Maria Thorne." It wasn't until some years later, after the coup and the Spring Court's exile, that she began to expressly call herself Rose's daughter, a claim that rallied several discontented courtiers to join her in her return to Miami.

It is widely speculated, especially amongst Rose Thorne's loyalists, that it was only the Thorne name that lent any weight to Maria's exodus; had her name been Maria Bramble, they sneer, she would have been lucky to convince even one changeling to return with her to the city. While this theory may be a slight exaggeration, it certainly is not entirely without merit.

Description: Maria is a short, slender Latina woman with full, luscious features and tightly curled hair that reaches her shoulders. In her mortal guise, her skin is the color of light coffee, contrasting with her dark, almost black eyes and cinnamon hair. To the eyes of the fae, her hair takes on an iridescent quality, shifting between blue and red and all the colors in which roses can be found. Her ringlets tighten up and twist into more complex patterns, making her hair resemble a flowing mass of roses in various stages of blossom. Her scent is that of a rose garden in the height of bloom.

However others see her, Maria is always dressed in the trendiest and most revealing outfits on the South Beach club scene. She favors blues and reds and blacks, and is almost always accompanied by one or two hangers-on, whether mortal groupies or changeling cohorts.

Storytelling Hints: Maria fancies herself a savvy politician and skilled leader like her mother, a delusion bolstered by the fact that she "persuaded" Grandfather Thunder to give her and her followers South Beach, but in truth she is more akin to the queen bee of the high school clique: she leads by sheer force of personality, good looks and the reputation of her name. Maria is more interested in being left alone to dance and party her life away in whatever club happens to be the hot spot of the week than in forging any sort of real political entity. Unless she savvies up rather quickly, she may well find herself forcibly pushed out of the top spot by one of her more ambitious hangers-on.

Seeming: Fairest
Kith: Flowering
Court: Spring ("Vichy" faction)
Entitlements: None
Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 1
Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 4, Composure 2
Mental Skills: Academics 1, Computer 1, Occult 2
Physical Skills: Athletics (Graceful) 3, Firearms (Pistols) 1, Larceny 2, Weaponry 1
Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression (Dance) 5, Socialize (SoBe Club Scene), Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2
Merits: Barfly 1, Contacts 3 (South Beach Rumor Mill, Bouncers, Designer Drug Dealers), Court Goodwill (Summer) 1, Mantle 3, Resources 3, Retainer 2, Striking Looks 4
Willpower: 3
Clarity: 5
Virtue: Charity
Vice: Lust
Initiative: 7
Defense: 4
Speed: 11
Health: 8
Wyrd: 3
Contracts: Dream ••; Vainglory ••, Fleeting Spring ••
Pledges: The Motley Pledge, Pledge of Horn and Bone, Good Neighbors Pact (Rose Thorne)
Glamour/per Turn: 12/3
Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Range*	*Dice Pool*	*Special*
Knife	1(L)	–	3	–
Light Pistol	2(L)	20/40/80	9	–



Grandfather Thunder

Quote: *"I'm very sorry you feel that way. Perhaps we can find an… alternative way to resolve your grievance."*

Background: A longshoreman named Juozapas Tirva was one of the people reported missing and never found after the 1926 hurricane. When the howling storm reached its peak, the Lithuanian immigrant was speared by a lance of white lightning, wielded by a laughing giant made of wind and rain. Juozapas was not seen again for nearly a decade, and when he returned, he was a different man. The storm lived in him, and he in it; during Miami's notoriously bad thunderstorms, he would often walk the piers alone, drinking in the fury. Some said he actually missed his captivity, and longed to return to the endless maelstrom of his Keeper's palace. Others said the stubborn old bastard was after revenge, and that he walked those docks screaming his Keeper's name until he was hoarse, a cold iron hammer clutched under his coat.

Even without a unified Court structure in Miami, Thunder quickly rose to prominence. He had a reputation for being able to solve other people's problems, usually in a forceful, even brutally direct fashion. Within a month of his return, he had tracked down his fetch and beaten it to death with a claw hammer, and rumors circulated in those days that he had even beaten down an exiled Fae. When Tom Hood arrived with his knowledge of the Courts, Thunder (already called Grandfather by then) readily swore to the Iron Spear and spent the next decades building his power base.

Grandfather Thunder may well be the oldest and most personally powerful changeling in Miami. Certainly he is the most temporally powerful, and the oldest changeling known to be active. Already a respected figure in Miami even before Tom Hood returned from Europe, Grandfather Thunder was initially a strong supporter of the seasonal Court. It was only as the years wore on, and the respect and awe he'd held in the days before the freehold of Miami lessened, that he began to grow discontent with his lot. The coup came as a brutal shock to the entire city, and it was in large part that shock that allowed him to seize control so completely. Now he just has to hold it.

Description: Grandfather Thunder is a wiry, imposing man who looks to be in his late 60s. He has long since shed his image as a rough-around-the-edges dockyard worker, trading in oilskins and steel-toed boots for tailored suits and Italian leather shoes. He tends to dress in dark colors with a single, striking accent — a charcoal suit with a sky-blue tie, for example. In his mortal mien, he has a thin fringe of gray hair and a deeply lined face with dark brown eyes.

His fae guise is similar, but his hair deepens to the bruised black of a thundercloud, and lightning flashes in

the deeps of his eyes. A phantom smell of ozone surrounds him, and the fiery crown of Summer hovers over his head. Whenever Grandfather Thunder enters a room, the temperature seems to rise by several degrees — perceptible even to ordinary mortals, as his powerful Wyrd cannot be entirely contained by the Mask. When he grows angry or is in the presence of sufficient wrath, a faint halo of St. Elmo's Fire flickers around him, leaking through the Mask as well.

Storytelling Hints: For all that he projects the image of an invincible, all but infallible ruler, Grandfather Thunder worries about the legacy of his reign. Changelings are not immortal, after all, and he has lived a long life even by the standards of the fae. Moreover, recent reports have begun to suggest an alarming increase of sightings of the True Fae, and it cannot be denied that a number of changelings have gone missing over the past few years. In the darkest parts of the night, Grandfather Thunder wonders if perhaps his actions have damned his city.

Thunder's rulership takes a page from the Caesars of old: give the people bread and circuses to placate them, give them largely free reign to do as they will, but punish any dissension with brutal efficiency in the hopes of discouraging any repeat performances.

Seeming: Elemental

Kith: Fireheart

Court: Summer

Entitlements: None

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 6, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 6, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Investigation 3, Occult (Fae) 4, Politics 5

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl (Thundering Fists) 3, Weaponry (Hammers) 4

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression (Oratory) 5, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 6, Streetwise 2

Merits: Danger Sense 2, Eidetic Memory 2, Fast Reflexes 2, Iron Stamina 2, Allies (Local Government) 2, Contacts (Occult, Changeling Society, Neighboring Freeholds) 3, Inspiring 4, Resources 4, Retainer 5, Status (Freehold) 5, Harvest 4, Hollow 13 (Size 4, Amenities 5, Wards 4), Mantle (includes Crown) 5

Willpower: 8

Clarity: 4

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Speed: 11

Health: 7

Wyrd: 7

Contracts: Hearth ••; Elements ••••• (Thunderstorm), Vainglory ••; Fleeting Summer •••, Eternal Summer •••

Pledges: Commendation (liege for all sworn changelings of the City of Endless Summer), The Knight's Oath (liege for all sworn knights), Good Neighbors Pact (Jeremiah Sleet)

Glamour/per Turn: 20/7

Frailties: Cannot sleep in a room without at least one open window (minor taboo), pained by skin contact with copper (minor bane)

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Range*	*Dice Pool*	*Special*
Brawl	0(B)	–	6	–
Maul	4(B)	–	12	–

Deathless Ivan

Quote: *"Ha! That was funny. Try that again."*

Background: Russian folklore tells tales of Koschei the Deathless, a cruel and vicious man who could not be killed because he kept his soul bound up in a needle, which was hidden inside an egg, which was in a duck, which was in turn in a hare, which was in an iron chest buried under an oak tree on a distant island. While Deathless Ivan might not have gone to quite those lengths to ensure his immortality, he is certainly nigh-impossible to kill, and the presence of his soul is something to be disputed. The huge Ogre serves as Grandfather Thunder's personal bodyguard, chief enforcer and, rumor has it, assassin.



Description: However one sees him, Ivan is massive. Almost seven feet tall and topping 350 pounds, the man is a hulking wall of ugly muscle and sadistic grin. Unless attending a Court function (in which case he crams himself into a tuxedo), he tends to dress like a drifter: layers of frayed, torn and dirty clothes, sturdy boots and a wool cap pulled down over his head. In his mortal guise, Ivan is ugly; in his fae mien, he is horrendous. Skin the purplish shade of a new bruise and a face that looks like it's taken a trip through a meat grinder are shocking enough, but the most unnerving aspect of his mien is the ragged tear in his chest that seems to show the empty space where his heart should be. The reds of his Summer Mantle only seem to further discolor his flesh away from any living hue.

Storytelling Hints: Deathless Ivan rarely speaks, and when he does it is in a voice utterly devoid of passion or life. Those who have seen him smile have reported that they would rather face down the Wild Hunt with not even an iron nail for self-defense than see that smile directed at them. That his sanity is eroded is not in doubt, but how he got that way and how Grandfather Thunder came to control him are subjects of considerable debate.

Seeming: Ogre

Kith: Stonebones

Court: Summer

Entitlements: None

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Investigation 2, Occult (Fae) 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (Overpowering) 5, Drive 2, Stealth (Ambushes) 2, Weaponry 4

Social Skills: Intimidation (Torture) 4, Streetwise 1

Merits: Brawling Dodge 1, Danger Sense 2, Fast Reflexes 2, Fighting Style: Boxing 3, Giant 4, Iron Stamina 3, Iron Stomach 2, Strong Back 1, Mantle 2, Status (Freehold) 3

Willpower: 7

Clarity: 3

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Gluttony

Initiative: 6

Defense: 2

Speed: 12

Health: 10

Wyrd: 4

Contracts: Smoke •; Stone •••; Fleeting Summer •• ; Goblin — Trading Luck for Fate, Delayed Harm

Pledges: Commendation (Grandfather Thunder), The Knight's Oath (Grandfather Thunder)

Glamour/per Turn: 13/4

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Range*	*Dice Pool*	*Special*
Brawl	0(B)	–	10	–
War Axe	5(L), 9 again	–	14	–

Naamah

Quote: *"I've got a better idea. Why don't you shut your mouth, do what I tell you and start spreading the rumor of a spree killer on campus?"*

Background: Queen Naamah rules the Autumn Court with an iron hand that belies her seeming youthfulness. She took power after several years without an Autumn monarch, and while her supporters say she was chosen by the shade of Tom Hood himself, her opponents prefer to think that she was settled on simply because the Court as a whole was tired of infighting, and the other hopefuls thought she would be most easily controlled from behind the throne. As it turns out, they were wrong. Headstrong and stubborn as only a teenager can be, Naamah backed that willfulness with a razor-sharp mind and a zealous devotion to the ideals of Tom Hood. After forcing all of her subjects to pledge fealty to her and forswear any continuation of grudges left over from the interregnum, she turned the wisest and most fearsome members of her Court to the task of focusing and harvesting the ambiance of fear that hangs over the city of Miami. Fear, Naamah believes, is a weapon as sharp as any sword and baneful as the coldest iron. When the city's fear is sharp enough, it will be the key to destroying Grandfather Thunder.

Description: Naamah is a tall, willowy girl who appears to be about 16 years old. Her skin is the pale of a china



doll, made to seem even paler by her jet-black hair and deep green eyes. She wears round, wire-rimmed glasses and favors sheer, simply cut dresses in blacks and midnight blues.

In her fae mien, her black hair takes on a richness mortal eyes have never dreamed of, with layers of different shades of black that somehow all seem to be the purest black imaginable. Her skin becomes almost pure white, and her eyes lose any definition between white, iris and pupil. Her figure seems impossibly thin, as though she might snap in half like an autumn twig at any moment.

Storytelling Hints: Naamah is a quiet, calculating young woman who seeks to emulate her teacher in all things. She tries to lead the Autumn Court the way Tom Hood did, but the infighting and chaos since his murder have weakened her Court. In order to regain a foothold of power, and to muster the fear she believes will allow her to destroy Thunder, she is quite willing to make life a living terror for the mortals within her domain.

Seeming: Darkling

Kith: Antiquarian

Court: Autumn

Entitlements: None

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics (Research) 4, Computer 2, Investigation 3, Occult 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Larceny 2, Stealth (Blending with Crowds) 3, Weaponry (Swords) 2

Social Skills: Empathy (Fears) 3, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Subterfuge (Careful Omission) 3

Merits: Eidetic Memory 2, Encyclopedic Knowledge 4, Meditative Mind 1, Allies (University of Miami Faculty) 2, Contacts (College Students, Bad Neighborhoods) 2, Mantle 3, Hallow 4 (Size 2, Amenities 1, Wards 1)

Willpower: 7

Clarity: 5

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 6

Defense: 2

Speed: 9

Health: 7

Wyrd: 3

Contracts: Hearth •; Mirror •; Smoke •••; Artifice •; Darkness ••; Fleeting Autumn ••; Eternal Autumn •

Pledges: The Motley Pledge, Pledge of Horn and Bone

Glamour/per Turn: 12/3

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Range*	*Dice Pool*	*Special*
Brawl	0(B)	–	1	–
Rapier	2(L)	–	7	Armor Piercing 1

Story Hook: Bloody Mary

In the homeless shelters around Miami, children tell stories of a wicked spirit called Bloody Mary who murders children in their beds. According to the story, this Bloody Mary is not summoned by a silly party game in a dark bathroom; she hunts children through the night, and once she's seen your face, she can find you anywhere. The children ascribe her various origins — she is the Devil's wife, or she is an angel gone bad or she is a mother who killed her own children — but what the stories don't tell is that Bloody Mary is the invention of the Autumn Queen, Naamah, as an early experiment in honing extant mortal fears into something greater and more focused.

Or at least, she *was*. Lately, the stories have become more frequent and varied, and they are being told by more than just children. Adult mortals, changelings and even other supernaturals have begun to tell of sightings of this supposedly fictional entity. Have the stories of Bloody Mary actually come to life? Have they attracted the attention of one of the Others, who has taken the guise of Bloody Mary for its own purposes? Or did Naamah not in fact invent Bloody Mary as she'd claimed?

Cerastes

Quote: *"Look, you didn't hear this from me, but…"*

Background: Leon Fame (almost certainly an assumed name, but the only one anyone's gotten him to admit to) has always been good at duplicity. Before he was ever taken to Faerie, he made a respectable living as an attorney, chasing ambulances for fun and profit. He was married to a pretty girl he'd met in high school, but that didn't stop him smooth-talking his way into every bed that caught his fancy. He bilked his clients out of most of their settlements, and he wasn't exactly forthcoming with his taxes. Perhaps it was his knack for deceit that drew the Serpent to him, or maybe he just happened to look enough like a bright, hot mouse to catch the Fae's attention. How long he spent in Faerie he can't say — his captor enjoyed toying with Cerastes's perception of time and fate. At least once, he thought he had escaped his slavery, returned home a changed man and began a happy life anew with his wife — only to see her dissolve into the Serpent's form, laughing at him, and cast him back into his cage.

Cerastes escaped for real a year ago, and found his way back to Miami. He fell in with the Autumn Court, and despite private doubts that this is anything more than another of his Keeper's jests, Cerastes allied himself with the faction that promoted Naamah as Tom Hood's successor. Thanks in large part



to his manipulations of rival factions, Naamah now sits on the Throne of Autumn, and Cerastes enjoys a prestigious, if not exactly risk-free, position in the City of Endless Summer.

Cerastes is Naamah's envoy to the City of Endless Summer. He ensures that the Court's interests are maintained, and also watches Grandfather Thunder's courtiers for any sign of weakness, which Cerastes dutifully reports to his Queen. Just as the serpent he resembles, Cerastes is subtle, diligent and clever — and also mistrusted by his own Court and the others alike. He is seldom seen at gatherings of the Leaden Mirror, spending almost all of his time in the Freedom Tower with the influential and powerful Summer Court. His own Court suspects him of "going native," while the City of Endless Summer cannot help but suspect the solitary member of the Autumn Court so regularly in their midst is a spy.

Description: Cerastes is a tall, slender man with smooth, artificially tan skin and green eyes that run to jaundiced yellow in the right light. He is prematurely bald, with small ears and thin lips often twisted into a sly smile. In his fae mien, his skin is finely scaled, and his facial features almost nonexistent. Sharp teeth glint in a serpentine smile, and small, scaly horns jut from above his eyes.

Storytelling Hints: Cerastes isn't entirely convinced that any of this is real. Sometimes, that uncertainty paralyzes him with fear, and sometimes it makes him excessively reckless — after all, if he's still trapped in his Keeper's den, what does he have to lose? Paranoia aside, he tends to look out for number one first and foremost. He is loyal to his Court, in his fashion, but he has no qualms about screwing over anyone else if it will benefit him.

Seeming: Beast

Kith: Venombite

Court: Autumn

Entitlements: None

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics (Trivia) 3, Computer 1, Occult 2, Politics 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl (Bite) 2, Drive 1

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Reptiles) 3, Intimidation 2, Persuasion (Hypnotic) 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Court Goodwill (Summer) 1, Mantle 2, Meditative Mind 1

Willpower: 4

Clarity: 5

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Greed

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Speed: 10

Health: 6

Wyrd: 2

Contracts: Mirror •; Smoke •; Fang and Talon ••• (Snakes); Fleeting Autumn ••

Pledges: The Motley Pledge

Glamour/per Turn: 11/2

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Range*	*Dice Pool*	*Special*
Brawl	0(B)	–	4	–
Bite	0(B)	–	5	Toxicity 2 poison

Jeremiah Sleet, the Winter King

Quote: *"I can move seven keys in from Colombia by this time next week. The question is: can you pay what I'm asking?"*

Background: The inner-city ghettos of Miami have always been a breeding ground for crime. In many ways, it's expected; one can't grow up in an environment like that and *not* develop a heart as cold and hard as stone. Jeremiah Sleet — he has long since forgotten his original surname — was born into one such place. He doesn't remember which neighborhood was his; maybe Overtown, maybe somewhere else. He ran with his first gang when he was 13, and by 16 had already earned a reputation as a good one to have on your side in a fight. In early '77, while Jeremiah's gang was embroiled in a turf war with the Kings of the Glades, a rival crew, Jeremiah crossed paths with one of the Kings at a local cemetery where



both had buried fallen gang members. The King was ready to rumble, but Jeremiah, cold and methodical, pulled a gun and shot the young man dead. On that night, snow fell for the first and only time in Miami. On that night, Jeremiah disappeared. Two months later, a man who might once have been Jeremiah dug his way out of a grave and fled into the night, where a Winter Court motley found him. When La Llorona died during the Liberty City riots, Jeremiah Sleet took over operations of the Winter Court. The Silent Arrow very likely owes its continued existence to his leadership and ability to unify the disparate courtiers of Winter.

Sleet has watched for too long as the Court tried to earn its place in the freehold of Miami, only for courtiers to be ridiculed, pushed down and hunted like animals when it amused the more powerful Courts. Let Spring and Autumn lick their wounds and nurse thoughts of vengeance, let Summer stick its collective neck out and draw the ire of the Others. Jeremiah will do what the Winter Court does best: disappear, survive and wait. Let them all forget that the Silent Arrow even exists. When the Cousins come and carry them all away, then Winter will truly reign in the City of Endless Summer.

Description: Jeremiah is a blade-slender black man in his mid 40s, with close-cropped hair already faded to stark white and eyes so pale they look rheumy. He tends to dress stylishly but not ostentatiously, favoring shades of white and cream. In his fae mien, he resembles a days-dead corpse: ashen skin with a bluish undertone, blank, clouded eyes and a cold, clammy touch. A still, icy patch of cold hangs around him at all time, and colors seem to mute to gray in his presence. The bone and pewter crown of winter sits heavy on his head, and when he speaks, all other sound nearby seems muted as though by a heavy snowfall.

Storytelling Hints: Jeremiah Sleet runs his crew with a firm, guiding hand and a ruthless pragmatism that befits the heart of Winter. Loyalty is tested frequently, and failing a test means a severe beating if the offender is lucky. Outright traitors (more to the cops rather than another Court), by order of Sleet himself, are never so much as touched by the Court of Sorrow's enforcers. Invariably, before the next new moon, the traitor's body is found frozen stiff, with a rictus of agonized horror etched forever on its face.

On the other hand, Jeremiah Sleet looks after the loyal members of his Court as if they were family. The rest of the Courts turned on them, he reasons, so all the Silent Arrow has to depend on is itself.

Seeming: Darkling

Kith: Gravewight

Court: Winter

Entitlements: None

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Investigation 3, Science (Pharmaceuticals) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Firearms (Pistols) 3, Larceny (Breaking and Entering) 4, Stealth (Keeping Still) 2

Social Skills: Intimidation 3, Streetwise (Drug Gangs) 3, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Danger Sense 2, Fleet of Foot 3, Quick Draw 1, Allies (Criminals) 2, Contacts (Police, Longshoremen) 2, Mantle 3

Willpower: 6

Clarity: 4

Virtue: Temperance

Vice: Greed

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Speed: 14

Health: 7

Wyrd: 3

Contracts: Mirror ••; Smoke •• ; Darkness ••; Fleeting Winter ••, Eternal Winter •••; Goblin — Shooter's Bargain, Fair Entrance, Diviner's Madness

Pledges: The Motley Oath, Good Neighbors Pact (Grandfather Thunder)

Glamour/per Turn: 12/3

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Range*	*Dice Pool*	*Special*
Brawl	0(B)	–	6	–
Light Pistol	2(L)	20/40/80	9	–

Brer Spider



Quote: *"No, I'm sure we've never met before."*

Background: To the Autumn Court, Johnny Shanks is a Leechfinger sleep researcher, studying the medical side effects of night terrors on mortals even as he harvests Glamour from his subjects' fears. He's eccentric, but harmless; if anyone asked, they'd quickly learn that no one seems to know when he joined the Leaden Mirror, but no one ever does. To the Winter Court, Black Jules is a shadowy Skitterskulk lurking in the abandoned tenements in the bad part of town. If you're having troubles with an enemy, he can brew you up a poison that no magic can detect and even the heartiest constitution can't resist. All he asks in payment is a stray cobweb from your dreams. To the mortal inhabitants of Little Haiti, Old Ti is an *houngan* of considerable power and wisdom. When you're troubled by bad dreams, he can sell you a charm he learned from an Ojibwa medicine man that will give you the sweetest dreams you can imagine.

In truth, all three are the same man. The changeling who calls himself Brer Spider wears many faces, and it's a rare individual who knows more than one of them. No one knows where Spider came from or how long he's been here, but those few who even know he exists know him as the pre-eminent oneiromancer in Miami. He has studied dreams as few others before him, from the mystical aspects to the psychology and the physiological aspects.

Description: Brer Spider wears so many faces it's hard to even guess which one might be real. He has been tall and short, fat and whip-thin, white, black and everything in between. He's been a Beast and an Elemental, a goblin soldier and a fair demon lover. He's even been male and female.

The face he shows most often, at least to those who meet him in his identity as Brer Spider, is a middle-aged man of indeterminate Haitian or West African origin in an old-fashioned zoot suit and fedora. He smiles readily, but even when he's smiling at you he seems to be enjoying a private prank at your expense. To those with eyes that truly see, his eyes are beady and black and sometimes seem to come in quantities greater than two. Sometimes, out of the corner of an observer's eye, she'll swear she saw a mandible briefly unfold from his cheek, but Spider never seems to notice or acknowledge it. On the rare occasions he stands in an area bright enough that he casts a shadow, he appears to have eight limbs.

Storytelling Hints: Brer Spider is mostly interested in continuing his studies in peace, but if a fellow changeling offers Spider an interesting enough price, he can be persuaded to put his considerable skills in another's employ. He uses his numerous identities to get whatever he needs from the Courts without the fuss and bother of actually joining one, and beyond that he leaves the politics to the politicians. Always interested in acquiring rare and exotic dream-relics from the Hedge or from the minds of dreamers, he can be a useful (if fickle) ally or mentor if placated with gifts.

Seeming: Wizened

Kith: Artist

Court: Courtless

Entitlements: None

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 5, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 1

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 5, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Computer 1, Occult 5, Science (Dream Study) 3

Physical Skills: Larceny 2, Firearms 2, Stealth 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Spiders) 2, Empathy (Cold Reading) 4, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 5

Merits: Meditative Mind 1, Harvest (Mortals Who Use His Dreamcatchers) 3, Court Goodwill (Autumn) 2, Court Goodwill (Winter) 2, Hollow 9 (Size 1, Amenities 1, Doors 5, Wards 2), New Identity (Johnny Shanks) 2, New Identity (Black Jules) 2, New Identity (Old Ti) 2

Willpower: 4

Clarity: 5

Virtue: Prudence
Vice: Envy
Initiative: 6
Defense: 4
Speed: 10
Health: 6
Wyrd: 2

Contracts: Mirror ••••; Smoke ••; Artifice •••; Fang and Talon • (Arachnids); Dream ••••
Pledges: Pledge of Horn and Bone
Glamour/per Turn: 11/2
Weapons/Attacks:

Type	*Damage*	*Range*	*Dice Pool*	*Special*
Heavy Pistol	3(L)	30/60/120	9	–

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Changeling: The Lost

Name: | Concept: | Seeming:
Player: | Virtue: | Kith:
Chronicle: | Vice: | Court:

Attributes

Power	Intelligence:	●OOOO	Strength:	●OOOO	Presence:	●OOOO
Finesse	Wits:	●OOOO	Dexterity:	●OOOO	Manipulation:	●OOOO
Resistance	Resolve:	●OOOO	Stamina:	●OOOO	Composure:	●OOOO

Skills

Mental
(-3 Unskilled)

Academics OOOOO
Computer OOOOO
Crafts OOOOO
Investigation OOOOO
Medicine OOOOO
Occult OOOOO
Politics OOOOO
Science OOOOO

Physical
(-1 Unskilled)

Athletics OOOOO
Brawl OOOOO
Drive OOOOO
Firearms OOOOO
Larceny OOOOO
Stealth OOOOO
Survival OOOOO
Weaponry OOOOO

Social
(-1 Unskilled)

Animal Ken OOOOO
Empathy OOOOO
Expression OOOOO
Intimidation OOOOO
Persuasion OOOOO
Socialize OOOOO
Streetwise OOOOO
Subterfuge OOOOO

Other Traits

Merits

_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO

Flaws

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Contracts

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Pledges

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Health

O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O
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Willpower

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□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Glamour

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Wyrd

● O O O O O O O O O

Clarity

10 _____ O
9 _____ O
8 _____ O
7 _____ O
6 _____ O
5 _____ O
4 _____ O
3 _____ O
2 _____ O
1 _____ O

Seeming Blessing: _____

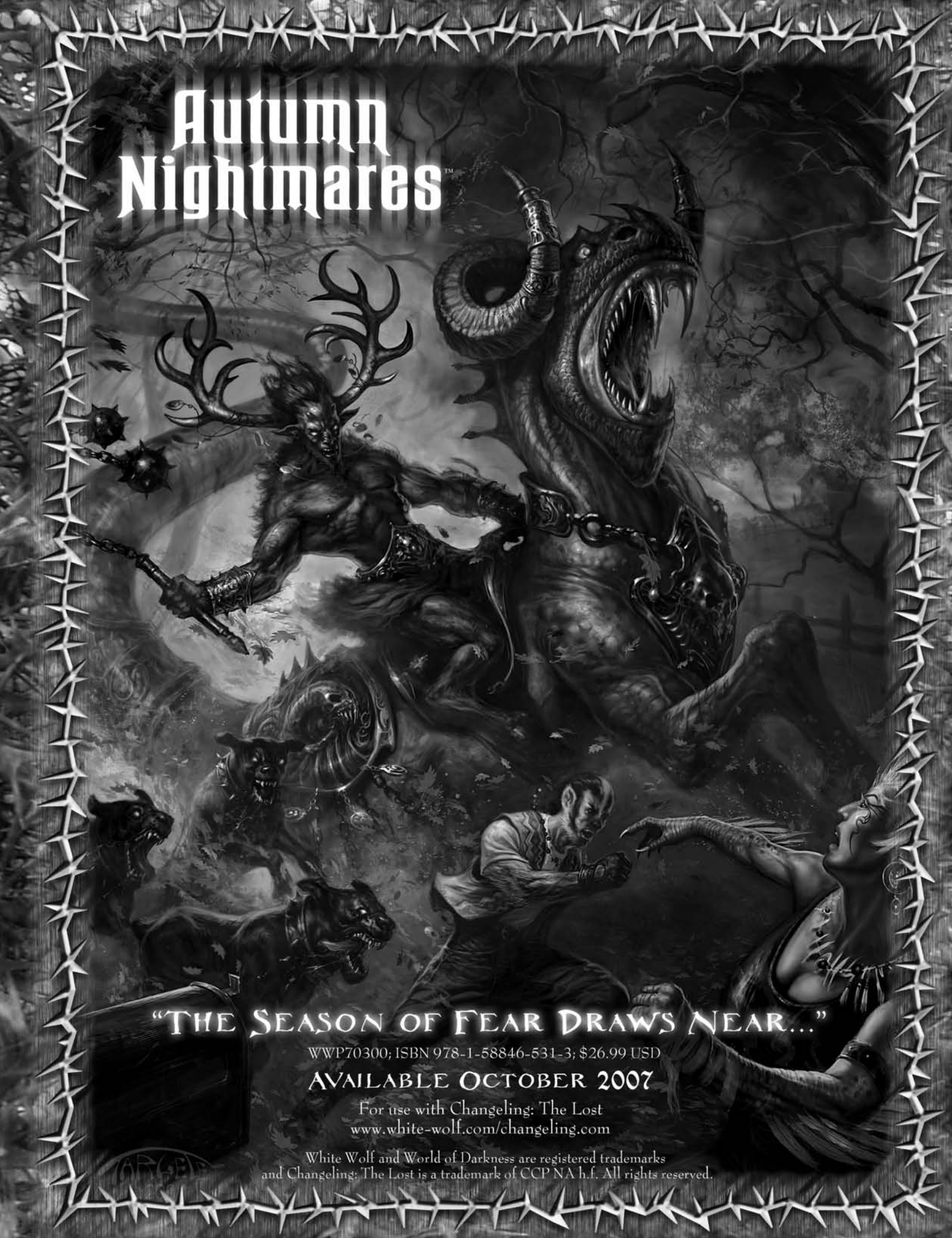
_____

Seeming Curse: _____

_____

Size: _____
Defense: _____
Initiative Mod.: _____
Speed: _____
Armor: _____
Experience: _____

Attributes: 5/4/3•Skills 11/7/4 (+3 Specialties) • **Seeming**: Choose 1 free Skill Specialty in Athletics, Brawl or Stealth; Record Blessing and Curse • **Contracts** 5 dots • **Merits** 7 • (Buying the fifth dot in Attributes, Skills or Merits costs two points) • **Health** = Stamina + Size • **Willpower** = Resolve + Composure • **Size** = 5 for adult human-sized • **Defense** = Lowest of Dexterity or Wits • **Initiative Mod** = Dexterity + Composure • **Speed** = Strength + Dexterity + 5 • **Starting Clarity** = 7 • **Wyrd** starts at 1 dot • **Glamour** starts at 1/2 maximum (determined by Wyrd).



WWP70300; ISBN 978-1-58846-531-3; $26.99 USD

Available October 2007

For use with Changeling: The Lost
www.white-wolf.com/changeling.com

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Light in Shadows

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
1	f	l	u	x	d	c	f	a	l	l	f	x	l	x	d	e	s	h	s	i	t	e	f	a
2	n	x	x	a	r	f	h	e	d	r	a	a	x	a	n	t	r	x	s	g	a	u	r	u
3	x	e	e	s	i	e	r	a	e	n	n	t	n	o	o	f	e	a	e	g	d	o	l	s
4	t	v	k	t	n	g	w	e	n	c	o	s	r	r	r	o	t	i	n	e	g	o	r	p
5	a	n	i	a	n	o	c	o	e	g	e	c	m	o	m	r	s	d	k	s	x	d	q	i
6	w	a	a	a	s	o	l	a	t	m	e	l	l	y	m	s	a	a	r	u	m	e	u	c
7	c	o	g	n	u	r	s	a	a	h	o	l	s	o	x	w	m	c	a	h	s	r	i	e
8	o	x	r	n	e	a	o	c	t	r	c	t	i	s	g	o	n	r	d	t	a	d	e	x
9	t	r	c	r	n	v	a	f	d	d	e	t	u	n	h	r	o	a	n	n	t	n	s	e
10	l	i	a	c	a	b	o	s	a	r	o	p	a	h	g	n	r	l	i	a	n	i	c	c
11	l	a	t	c	r	e	r	c	i	n	e	o	r	w	o	u	i	l	s	c	a	k	e	o
12	u	u	h	e	l	u	n	u	l	r	a	e	l	r	a	e	b	n	r	a	h	i	n	t
13	m	s	t	c	o	e	m	i	n	a	d	c	d	b	v	o	e	r	e	s	p	t	c	e
14	s	a	r	m	s	e	r	a	t	d	b	o	r	e	g	a	l	a	t	e	a	h	e	r
15	r	i	a	e	i	e	t	a	a	n	d	a	h	a	i	v	l	i	n	e	a	g	e	i
16	c	l	t	u	t	u	n	l	p	r	a	t	c	n	o	i	t	c	u	d	b	a	e	e
17	g	t	q	n	r	s	r	e	a	p	f	m	l	s	w	o	d	a	h	s	e	n	o	b
18	n	e	p	a	a	e	n	c	s	o	r	l	d	w	s	o	g	i	t	s	a	m	t	k
19	r	o	l	a	v	l	u	o	s	a	o	e	o	a	u	h	u	m	o	u	r	s	c	n
20	m	t	i	l	r	l	t	n	m	d	n	w	n	u	t	a	m	m	u	z	i	e	h	a
21	o	a	i	t	e	a	a	a	d	u	e	u	k	t	c	v	i	t	a	e	r	t	m	i
22	d	s	s	g	i	i	d	o	o	r	b	s	l	a	i	l	e	b	g	h	s	y	e	h
23	a	i	a	q	d	r	o	o	e	e	e	o	a	r	v	c	n	r	c	e	p	l	k	t
24	d	c	a	r	u	l	a	w	x	i	x	b	i	e	n	e	e	s	x	a	c	o	h	r
25	y	t	a	b	b	e	o	p	i	r	o	r	v	f	i	t	t	a	t	a	g	c	e	a
26	h	u	o	t	l	l	r	x	p	e	r	i	e	s	l	o	r	h	t	o	z	a	t	c
27	g	i	f	t	f	e	x	a	x	a	c	m	x	o	r	c	e	n	t	i	m	a	n	i
28	d	l	o	h	e	e	r	f	d	f	i	o	p	n	h	l	e	n	i	t	n	e	s	x
29	a	l	c	h	e	m	y	i	x	e	s	s	y	b	a	p	r	i	m	o	g	e	n	x
	e	l	y	s	i	u	m	x	e	x	m	x	f	i	r	s	t	b	o	r	n	x	x	x

COMING NEXT YEAR



