

# Winter Masques™



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# Winter Masques™



*By Dawn Elliott, Ethan Skemp, John Sneed and Chuck Wendig*



# Shell Game

So close. So close that he could taste it. All the hounds of Day were bayin' like a brass band behind him and ahead — around the corner, across the crumbling overpass — lay Night.

Veles made a last, wild dash down the road as the sun broke the horizon behind him and he sprinted through the dyin' shadows. He darted across the street to a chorus of honkin' horns and squealin' tires as mornin' commuters slammed on their brakes and cursed in Spanish and English and Russian behind him. He heard glass shatter and yellin', and still the dogs were after him. He dared one wild glance back, seein' the copper-hided Beasts, their gold teeth bared, leaping from car to movin' car — a gan' of thugs to mortal eyes but terrifying monsters to Veles's more refined sight — and sweepin' up behind him like the sun at high noon. With a wail, he put his back to them, ricochetin' off a lamppost as he swun' around the corner of SW 8th, and longed for win's. Alas, win's weren't his style.

The Beasts of the Sun took him down 20 feet from Collos Ochos overpass. Twenty feet from treaty-sworn refuge. The pile of them tumbled. Veles shriekin' defiance, into a newspaper kiosk before the Guardian of the Found Path caught up to his fleet-footed hounds and dragged Veles into the nearest alley. The iron sides of a Dumpster rang like a gon' as Doco, the Day patrol's thugish guardian, picked Veles up like a rag doll and flun' him into it. The lid crashed down, and he was in temporary, reekin' darkness. Iron stun' like poison against his skin, and Veles struggled to his knees, pounding on the sloped lid and cursin' — in between his pleas — the Day patrol, and everyone they knew. The iron broke his curses, makin' them empty words. One of the Day patrol pounded on the side, makin' the whole Dumpster ring and Veles clutched his ears with a groan. The Dumpster rattled, trash rustlin' around him as his captors be-

gan shovin' it out of the alley and to some destination Veles knew he wouldn't like. He crouched on his knees and fished out a tiny beetle carapace from the linin' of his ragged jacket and tucked it — grimacin' at the bitter taste — into his cheek. Then he waited, crooked teeth bared, for opportunity.

They didn't take him far, and considerin' the run-down neighborhood they were in, Veles guessed his unlikely carriage had been wheeled into one of the many abandoned warehouses. Warehouses were good places to do bad things, and Veles knew that no mortal law would trouble themselves about any overheard screams around here. And his allies in the Night would not cross Collos Ochos overpass when the sun was in the sky. His livin', and dyin', would depend on his wits and the followers of the Sun. Perhaps he would throw himself on their mercy. After all, wasn't the Day Court a shinin' symbol of justice and forgiveness? Veles's lips stretched in a thin smile. He'd gamble on his own quick wits before he'd trust the Day for anythin' besides a kick in the ass.

"— and look what the Easter Bunny brought us today!" The lid flipped up, and blinded by the glare of mornin' sun, Veles was hauled up by his shirt collar by a hand easily the size of his head. It was Doco, of course, smilin' that long, long smile and holdin' Veles off the floor with those long, long arms. Veles fumbled in his jacket only to be shaken viciously by Doco until he sagged, dizzy and limp in Doco's chokin' grip.

"Yeah and you can kiss my fuzzy tail," Veles mumbled as his vision cleared again. He knew Doco, and the Day Court's top thug knew Veles, too. Not too well. That was key. Just well enough to say... recognize each other. Plus a jacket like Veles's, the Wayward Path stitched on the sleeve with the open pride that only a few of the Moon Court risked, that drew watchful eyes of the Sun Court. Veles knew that he was a little too cocky, but sometimes





that served him well. Not so well other times. The Beasts that had brought Veles down circled the warehouse restlessly, glancing over at Doco every now and then, to see if they'd get a chance to sink their teeth into a little Night-side flesh. Veles hung limply from Doco's hand and tried not too twitch too temptingly.

"Can't a guy be a little late on curfew?" Veles whined, dark gaze shifting from Doco to the rising light spilling through the dusty warehouse windows, to the Beasts and then to the long iron chain dangling from a second story beam. The hook on the end was mottled red with what he sincerely hoped was only rust. "A little drunk on good, sun-lovin' wine, maybe a little lost?"

"I might be better convinced if it wasn't the Night Court's spymaster wigglin' in my hands like..." Doco's unexpectedly cultured voice trailed off into a speculative hum. "A tender spring lamb."

When Doco grinned at Veles, he showed off every tooth, all of them filed to a point and gleaming with good care. Veles wondered how long the Ogre spent in front of his mirror, brushing and flossing and polishing those gnashing teeth. Veles couldn't help his flinch. "I'm tougher than I look," he said.

Veles twisted suddenly, seizing the moment that Doco looked complacent. Veles's shoulder joint popped as he slipped free of his coat and Doco's huge hands. He dropped to the floor like oil, crunching down on the bug shell in his mouth, then spat the crushed beetle onto the floor. The act was hidden by sudden, inky clouds. Veles was scrambling for the door and his knife, even as the goblin gloom welled up like an sudden tide, drowning the morning sunlight, stinging eyes and skin like biting gnats.

It more than stung the blessed idiots of the Sun Court.

"Damn the Night!" Doco bellowed like a sacrificial bull and stomped blindly on the ground, like he was crushing ants, cracking the concrete floor. Veles slipped like an eel between the Captain's legs, dashing for the nearest hope of freedom under the cover of the false night he'd thrown. The Beasts were bayin', wailin' as the false midnight stung their senses and tarnished their polished hides, but as Veles sprinted for escape, he outran his own sheltering dark and two of the Beasts fell on him like dogs on deer.

Veles screamed like a deer, too, when teeth and clawed hands tore his leg from hip to ankle, shredding his cheap polyester trousers and the skin beneath. He sprawled into a skid that kicked up dust and trash, leaving a trail of thin blood behind, then flipped onto his back like a beetle with an ink-black blade in his hands. The darkness he'd conjured continued to spread; he and the Beasts skirmished briefly in an unnatural twilight at the edge of the cloud. But, weapon or not, Veles knew he'd do no walking out of here — he couldn't even stand. So he lashed out with his narrow blade, tracing a line along the face of the nearest Beast, leaving a rising red streak of blood behind. The Beast howled at the pain, shaking away the blinding blood and snapping at

Veles as he tried to use the opening to dodge past the changeling. Two feints later, and it was too late. The dark had faded under the growing sunlight, and Doco was stomping over to the corner Veles was crouched in. He curled around his inadequate weapon and snarled.

"Not so clever for the so-called Shadow on the Wayward Path." Doco mused, staring down at Veles. He was hardly ruffled, camel hair coat smooth, tie — with the pearly mountain tie-tack — just slightly askew. His eyes were still red

and weeping from the irritating cloud though, as if he were crying

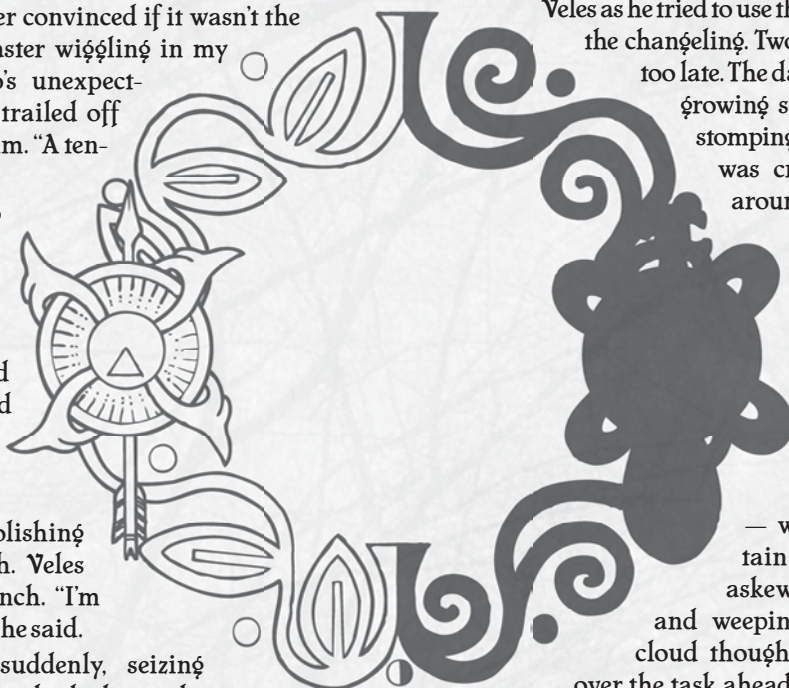
over the task ahead. For all that Doco was

a greedy-guts Ogre, he always dressed well, like an oversize over-the-hill football player turned used car salesman. Which was exactly what his mortal façade was: selling second-rate cars to stupid, unseeing people.

Veles sneered, despite kneeling in a pool of his own blood. His own mortal persona was less savory, and he had to be nearly as wary of mortal law as he did of falling afoul of the Day Court. But he'd chosen the life of a blackmailer over groveling at the feet of fat soccer moms and mortal salarymen, every time. But neither cars (unless there was a fast getaway just waiting for him, along with a few allies with Kalashnikovs) nor a few dirty pictures were going to save him now.

"Maybe because I'm not out and about to make trouble!" Veles snarled in desperate exasperation. "Maybe because I was out bouncing my girl and maybe lost track of the time and late to crawl back in my hole!"

"Maybe so," Doco said. "Maybe not. We'll visit that question again, in good time. String him up!" The last to the Beasts who closed in.







Veles's knife work was more suited to back alleys and sleeping throats than a half-dozen Lost with teeth like daggers and the instincts of rabid wolves. But a cornered rat doesn't complain or beg, he snarls and snaps and uses teeth and kicks and eye-gouges until he's pinned down with a knee in his back, his blade shattered on the ground and the rumbling growl of a Beast in his ear. Hot breath stirred Veles's lank hair. "You shoulda brushed your teeth this mornin'," Veles gasped, just before the Beast slammed Veles's head against the concrete — Doco shouted angrily at that bit of initiative — then dragged him over to the hook dangling from the ceiling.

It cast a sharp shadow in the bright sunlight. Doco had chosen well, exposure to the sunlight would add one more misery to Veles's really, very bad, terrible day. They bound his wrists with plastic ties — popular with torturers everywhere — then Doco lifted him like a doll and hung him on the hook. Veles' fingers immediately began to tingle as his circulation was cut off, he twitched a couple of times, testing the bonds. Too tight even for him. His glance fell on one of the Beasts, a carnivorous-looking woman with a cruel gouge across her forehead and her steady, predatory stare fixed on him. Veles got the impression that third time would be the charm. If that Beast caught him again, no yelling from the Sun Court's captain would stop her from ripping out his guts. Doco wiped Veles's blood from his hands fastidiously with a handkerchief. Veles found himself thinking that small mundane gesture was more frightening than the sotto-voiced growls from the Beasts around them.

"I hear tell that you've got no taste for iron," Doco said. He pulled a small travel case from his pocked, unzipped it and drew out a wedge of dull iron. It was true iron, not steel, and cold forged, kept from rusting only through Doco's tender care. Veles knew Doco's tools, and he knew what the Ocre could do with them, given time and inspiration. Doco handled the little tool — a fragment from an antique plow — with leather gloves and respect. Jokes aside, he fared no better than Veles under the touch of cold iron.

Veles hissed in real panic. "Kill me, and you've got a war on your hands!"

Doco smiled. "Who said anything about killing, little man? A little mutilation might *improve* your looks anyway. Do you want to start with the top or the bottom?"

Doco brushed the edge of the hand-sharpened blade along Veles's torn trousers. His blood smoked where it touched.

"No, no, nonono!" Veles keened, arching and flapping like a fish on the line. He'd not wanted to break so soon. He'd hoped to carry this game a little further, but he'd been promised — no cold iron. But here it was, someone else hadn't done *their* part of the job, and he hadn't signed up to be crippled. Nor could he afford to let the iron touch his flesh — it would cut through false seemings and goblin magics as easily as skin.



"No?" Doco murmured and he sounded disappointed. "No, *what*, my enemy?"

Veles spat at Doco, whose face flushed dark with rage as spittle marred his coat. "I'll spill my guts, damn you, but I won't call you *sir*!"

"Brave words for a black snake who blubbers like a baby before he's even been touched!"

Blood dripping from the toe of one shoe, hungr like game before a Lost who'd taken a taste of flesh a time or two in his past, and staring down the unmerciful enmity of cold iron, Veles snarled. He cursed his own oaths, which had put him here, and the whole chess game — pawns and knights, queens and kings — between the Sun and the devil-be-damned Moon that made his world go round.

"Ask me your questions," Veles demanded. "And I'll answer true, without tastin' iron. My name on it."

Doco frowned like a child denied his toy. Veles gritted his teeth on the insult on his lips. If he angered the big Lost too much, he'd lose this game.

"You break easy, little man." Doco rumbled.

"I'm savin' myself for a better torturer." Veles couldn't stop himself from sayin' and squealed when Doco stepped closer. "I swear! I swear on my name! God's blood, man, take the deal!"

Doco shook his head with a sigh. "You're not showin' much pride for the Moon Court, little man. Be sure I'll be sharin' this bit of cowardice back at the hold to everyone who cares to listen. Swear then, Veles Dubnov, on your name and earn a safe skin and mockery for it."

Veles would have shrugg'd, if he could. He didn't care what kind of reputation the Moon Court's spymaster had. He cared to get his job done and get out of here with his false skin intact. And he wasn't troubled about a name oath — for it wasn't his name he mouthed back to Doco in a promise as false as his current seemin'. "I swear on the name of Veles Dubnov, to be put to the question and speak the truth."

"So, were you out for a fine time with a girl?" Doco looked Veles up and down, lip curled, as if he doubted Veles could get a girl in the first place. Veles didn't think a man who filed his teeth had much room to comment.

"Oh, it was a fine girl I found on this night." Veles smirked as best he was able with a black eye bloomin' on his face and blood drippin' off his shoes. "Voice like honey, heart like steel, it's no surprise I was out too late." That suited the Queen of Mornin' well enough and even had the benefit of bein', in its own fashion, true. A little truth to sweeten the lie, that's what his Keeper had taught him and Veles had learned his lessons well.

"And so the Moon Court's spymaster was out late just to get laid?"

Veles was thin-lipped and silent.

"Answer me or answer to your name!" Doco bel-lowed, makin' the glass rattled in the windows.

"No," Veles said sullenly. "By my name, it's more than a girl that kept me out past sunbreak."

"And what, pray tell, brought you out from under your rock in the day?" Doco leaned closer. "In violation of the treaty?"

Veles tried a last, weasely smile but quickly let his tongue wag. He had a fine tale to spin for Doco, the up-standin' Guardian of the Found Path; lies like spider silk — fine and lovely and stron' as steel — to wrap around the O're who was too honest and too stubborn to please the Sun Court. Doco took his tasks to heart, and he'd sworn to uphold the treaty between the Sun and the Moon. He'd happily beat the Night Court's own spymaster — or so he believed Veles to be — to a bloody pulp. But Doco'd no more break the treaty than he'd eat his own thumb.

The Queen of Mornin', the woman who ruled the Day Court, wanted a war, and she wanted an army by her side to wage it. An army needs a captain, and no one — under either Sun or Moon — could deny that Doco was a military genius. But he could be a stubborn tool. The Queen hadn't been able to bring the O're to heel with sweet words, or bribery or commands. And so she'd called her spymaster, the dark man who lurked at the heart of the White Court, servin' in the shadows they disdained, loyal to the Sun Court and suspected by all.

When Doco was done with Veles, he left Veles hangin'. It took him more than an hour to free himself, and when he was done, his hands were blue, bloody and numb. He shed the goblin mask two alleys over, and the clothes he'd made in mockery of the real Veles Dubnov's cheap polyester suit was replaced by his normal innocuous jeans and Polo shirt. He washed the last of Veles down the drain, hair dye to hide his white locks and contacts to turn his eyes true black instead of blood red. Everyone knew that the Sun Court's spymaster had blood eyes, but the spymaster of the Moon Court's were black. Otherwise, many whispered snidely, they were much the same. Last of all, he slipped his wallet back into his clothes and took back his real name — Zoran Milchuk, Darklin' sworn to the Sun Court.

It had been easy enough, once the Beasts of Doco's patrol agreed to keep quiet about the Dayside taste of Zoran's blood, to mimic the actions, language and sarcasm of Veles. Zoran rubbed his face, where a rash much like Doco's had broken out when he was exposed to the goblin dark he'd bought to mimic the Night Court's powers. Findin' a way to imitate that had been quite a trick — and an expensive one, too. But darkness was the Night Court's way just as light was the Day's. If Zoran hadn't been able to mimic that, he'd have never been able to convince Doco he was truly Veles.

Zoran wondered, as he jogged back to the hold to let the Queen of Mornin' know her war was comin', if Veles Dubnov had felt Zoran lie in his name.



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## THE *Changeling*: The Lost LINE

**Autumn Nightmares**

**Winter Masques**

Rites of Spring

Lords of Summer

*The Equinox Road*

## IN MEMORIAM: THOMAS MANNING

In July of this year, we lost an artist and a gentleman.

Thomas Manning lived the life he wanted. He loved his wife, his work, his coffee, his friends, and he loved his games. He left many gaps but few failures. He was a good friend, a great cook, a pleasantly laid back host and handy around his house. He never tried to tell you about his character.

He is greatly missed.

— Greg Stolze



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# INTRODUCTION

*The winter is made and you have to bear it,  
The winter web, the winter woven, wind and wind,  
For all the thoughts of summer that go with it  
In the mind, pupa of straw, moppet of rags...*

— WALLACE STEVENS, "THE DWARF"

Winter is a season of concealment and revelation. When the snows come, they obscure the outlines of the land itself, providing a softer surface that conceals the many individual variations underneath. But at the same time, winter is a season of dead grass and leafless trees. Forests seem stricken to their skeletons, and are no protection against the cold wind.

The Lost are creatures of a similar duality. The Mask protects them at all times, and yet it doesn't conceal them from their fellow changelings. They see through the snows to the bare branches underneath, and what they see there is a collection of beautiful scars. The marks of their abduction and duration weigh on them all, and it is up to the changeling to decide whether to hide them when he can or to bear them proudly.

This is a book about those scars: the seemings and kiths of the Lost, and the near-infinite variety that marks them. **Winter Masques** is a book that emphasizes diversity. It should contain everything you need to show the Lost at their most beautiful and grotesque, and to capture whichever of the thousands upon thousands of stories from around the world suit you best.

## A MULTITUDE OF MASKS

The title of this book could easily have been **Winter Masks**, and it would have been about as appropriate. This book is about masks and masques alike, albeit in the metaphorical sense.

Where the first part is concerned, this book is about the multitude of faces that changelings may exhibit, each one different from the next. A seeming is like a mask that cannot be removed — it is the new and changed nature of a changeling, and in some ways her true face. But just as an old woman can look into the mirror and see the hints of the young woman she used to be, a changeling looks at her altered features and remembers the human that used to lie underneath. The choice to accept this new mask as her own true face or to pursue the face of the woman that lies

under it is the classic dilemma of the Lost. But the mask has its own ideas. It grants special blessings as well as claiming a certain cost.

Concerning the second part, this book is about masques, particularly in the definition of a masked ball or revel. A seeming or kith is not something spontaneously generated or worn in a vacuum. It bears with it a number of social ties by implication. Two Beasts attend a freehold gathering. Even if they know one another as rivals, they share a certain closeness that is possible only among members of their seeming. They have both been reduced to the animal-mind and fought their way back to a largely human mind. The kinship between changelings of a similar seeming is one of the basic blocks of Lost society. Where Court is a matter of choosing one's friends and allies, seeming is about the ties you possess that are beyond your control.

## VARIECATED SPLENDORS

The core goal of this book is variety. Variety keeps things fresh. It's why we are attracted to the exotic, even if the exotic is perfectly familiar to someone else. And thus there's a need for a large number of character options. Some of these options may be new rules options, such as new kiths or Contracts. These allow you to take a character concept and refine it more along the lines of what she can actively do; the Elemental who focuses largely on Contracts of the Elements will have a capability that is different from the Elemental who is more interested in pursuing Contracts of Communion. A new kith blessing may be just the thing to make a character concept pop. (And to cut down on potential buyer's remorse, there are optional rules for changing a kith provided here in case one of the new kiths really was perfect for an existing character concept.)

Other options are more cosmetic, but no less potent for affecting the story. They may be options to diversify a character's fae mien; certainly not all Gravewights look alike, despite their common thread of deathly characteristics. They may be further elaborations on the changeling's



durance and Keeper. They might involve ways to incorporate multicultural folklore into a chronicle. With the tools provided here, for instance, the Lost population of a city's Chinatown may become rather more distinct from the inheritors of a European tradition. Or not. It depends on what you feel works best.

Of course, variety is nothing without structure. If you don't have a framework for the many ideas that can take over a game, then nothing really has any ties to anything else. Kiths remain evocative of the seemings that spawn them, reaffirming the bonds between changelings who share those seemings. (Unless you decide to play around with that rule, but... well, more on that later.)

## MULTICULTURALISM

One of the core assumptions of **Changeling: The Lost** is that fae things work in much the same way around the world. The Others are the Others, even if one resembles an American urban legend when haunting the streets of Miami and another is reminiscent of a Tibetan demon when it goes hunting for prey at the roof of the world. The concepts of durance and transformation are the same, and a changeling must push his way through the Thorns in similar fashion no matter where his home may be.

This approach has a number of strengths. Not least among these is the idea that almost any legend can be made flesh if you see fit without actually having to come up with a new culture or race of supernatural beings, which allows you to tweak demographics as you see fit. If a player is interested in emulating a *leanhaun sidhe* in the relationship between a beautiful yet vampiric True Fae and the Leechfinger or Fairest she abducted, she can do so without the Storyteller having to worry about establishing a tradition of *leanhaun sidhe*. There's no need to figure out just how many there need to be in the world to be able to pass on their legendary ways: one is enough, and more can be added to taste. In fact, considering the psycho-vampiric nature of the True Fae, the presence of a changeling or Other that resembles a particular creature out of legend doesn't have to rule out other, non-fae variants appearing in the World of Darkness. A Beast and his Keeper could easily be akin to werewolves, even if they are very different from the actual shapeshifters who spawned the Gentry's fascination with wolves and the moon. The only limit is the preferences of the troupe, which is as it should be.

But things *can* change as you move from culture to culture. Much of the material on seemings and kiths emphasizes how to invoke that global flavor as you see fit. As the mechanic of the Runnerswift is a constant, the forms that Beast will take change, from simple changes of animal (a gazelle in Africa, a kangaroo in Australia) to inspirations out of folklore (the European unicorn and the Japanese *kirin*). Even the Court systems themselves can change to represent how the four seasons are not as important (or even

a meteorological constant) wherever you go. This book celebrates that variety as well. The world *should* be your oyster, and here we provide the tools to crack it open.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The **Prologue: Shell Game** is a story about Winter as the changelings see it — the time of deception and masks, only set in a land where other Courts rule.

**Chapter One: Six Masks** concerns itself with the six seemings, those core archetypes that showcase a changeling's experiences in Faerie. Each seeming is explored in more detail, with an eye for providing more plot hooks and background ideas. You'll find Merit and derangement tendencies, an exploration of how they fit into human and Lost society and more ideas concerning their durance and the strange realms of Arcadia that bred them. Each seeming also receives a new Affinity Contract list to play with — territorial Beasts can explore the Contracts of the Den, tinkering Wizeden may indulge in Contracts of Animation and more.

**Chapter Two: A Hundred Cousins** specializes in the kith. What does it mean to be kithless, and can the state be outgrown? What are the kiths like? How do you design your own? Here you'll find answers to these questions. Each of the core kiths receives more in-depth treatment discussing potential origins, problems, places in folklore and even frailties they might develop. A number of new kiths for each seeming are also provided to round out your chronicle. Finally, we present a number of optional rules for using kiths in your game — shedding them, changing them, even adding multiple kiths to a single character. The material here should be easy to work into existing chronicles as you go.

**Chapter Three: The Thousand Courts** goes even farther afield — literally. This chapter moves away from simple seeming and kith to discuss how different changelings can be around the world. The chapter opens by discussing the basics of mining myth and folklore to create multicultural **Changeling** concepts (and because we can't help ourselves, there are a few new sample kiths based on specific cultural myths as examples). Global variety of pledges and the Hedge are also discussed. This chapter also covers social variety as well: here you'll find discussion of alternate Court systems you can use in place of the rotating seasonal Courts presented in the core book. The two sample systems provided — the Asian directional Courts and the Eastern European Courts of Night and Day — can be imported into your chronicle as is, or you can tweak them as you see fit. Finally, three entitlements from various cultures are also provided, each one with the possibility to influence your game as much as you'd like to let it.

The orchestra has begun to play. The masquers are selecting their partners. Snow is falling softly outside. Won't you choose a mask, and join the dance?









fell in love with her when she brought around that baseball bat and cracked Mağgoty Jim right in the middle of his damn forehead. Yeah, some of it was circumstance. Anđel out of nowhere, coming to the rescue. But damn, what a woman.

Wouldn't have thought she was my type, not way back when. I had a thing for skinny little blondes, kind of a holdover from high school and all my "defile the cheerleaders" fantasies. Anđel here — tall and broad-shouldered, black hair, skin like coffee, only all bronze-like. Genie and the goblin, that must have been what we looked like.

Jim hit the ground, sort of bounced in this way you wouldn't figure a skinny guy like him would, and then he was running on all fours. She threw that bat right after him, and caught him on the shoulder, and then he was running on all threes. Fucking hilarious, only I wasn't laughing at the time, I was kind of just holding my arm.

She bends over me to see if I'm okay, and I had to be looking at her like she was some kind of goddess. She asks how my arm is, and I say I've had worse, and she helps me up. So like the giant dumb asshole I am, then I ask her why she did it.

She just looked at me and smiled, those gorgeous pearly canines coming down just the right length, and said, "Mostly because I've suspected Mağgoty Jim of privateering for a couple of months, and I've been waiting for an excuse. And besides... you're kin."

You want to know why I don't mind being called an Ogre any more? Because if that woman's an Ogre, then being an Ogre's as good as it gets. Fuck the so-called Fairest right in the ear. They don't hold a candle to my anđel.



# CHAPTER I

## *Six Masks* (Seemings)

*I prefer winter and fall, when you feel the bone structure of the landscape,  
the loneliness of it, the dead feeling of winter.  
Something waits beneath it — the whole story doesn't show.*

—ANDREW WYETH

## THE NATURE OF SEEMINGS

The six seemings and their various kiths define who a changeling is in much the same way that a mortal's appearance, physical capabilities and life experiences define who he is. Changelings' seemings determine the nature of the physical changes they underwent in Arcadia and how they interact with other mortals, Lost and the physical world. Almost all Darklings feel most at home at night, the vast majority of Wizeden enjoy working with their hands and many Fairest are attractive and good at interpersonal interactions. A changeling's seeming also obviously effects how others react to her, and this effect applies to other Lost and to ordinary mortals. Even mortals who cannot see what a changeling really looks like still notice that most Ogres tend to be large, muscular individuals and that the majority of the Wizeden are very good with their hands.

However, a great deal of the expectations mortals and other Lost have about the member of a particular seeming are based upon nothing more than stereotypes and generalizations. Despite being widely regarded as stupid, some Ogres are avid fans of opera and 16th-century English literature, just as a goodly number of Fairest have absolutely no interest in either gourmet food or fine wine. Many of these stereotypes are based upon assumptions that are often true, but that need not be so. Just because someone is a Darkling does not mean that she enjoys scaring people, just as the fact that someone is one of the Fairest has nothing to do with whether that person has the social and cultural training of a member of the wealthy or the upper-middle class. A loud, working-class party girl or a shy musician who only seems to come alive when he is performing can both be Fairest. Similarly, a gruff, assertive no-nonsense cop can be a Wizeden as easily as a shy computer geek.

Seemings are very like any other set of unusual physical capacities — just because someone is in a wheelchair doesn't mean that person cannot be a highly competitive athlete, and someone who is extremely tall and muscular need not be interested in athletics or disinclined to pursue intellectual pursuits. Seemings help determine what a changeling can do, but need not have anything to do with the choices the changeling makes in how to use these capabilities. However, even this generalization is only part of the complex truth about seemings. More than anything else, a seeming determines what a changeling's experiences in Arcadia were like, and these experiences usually have a profound affect on the choices the changeling makes once she is free.

Even if another member of the Lost knows nothing else about a particular changeling, the Lost knows that a Beast spent much or all of his time in Arcadia as an instinct-driven animal, in mind and likely in body, just as one of the Wizeden underwent torments that are difficult for anyone who did not experience them to imagine. Also, while some Fae realms were inhabited by a wide variety of the Lost, in most only members of a single seeming were present, and even where multiple seemings were present, their treatment and experiences were often quite different. Although humans who were transformed into Fairest and Beasts may have been abducted and taken to the same realm, the first served as the servants, squires and concubines to their inhumanly beautiful Fae mistresses, while the Beasts were housed in kennels and only let out as hunting animals when the Fae ventured out on their lengthy and exotic hunts.

The common experiences shared by members of the same seeming create a level of understanding that transcends



the differences in the details of their experiences and the nature of their kith. Both an Earthbones and a Fireheart know what it is like to become a force of nature in a way that is difficult or impossible for any other mortal or any Lost belonging to another seeming to understand. Similarly, all Fairest, regardless of why they were abducted or what they were asked to do in Arcadia, understand the power of the expectations that they perfectly perform their assigned roles and the terror they all felt when they failed to do so.

## THE NATURE OF THE SEEMINGS

One of the longest debates among theoretically inclined changelings is whether seemings and kiths are simply something imposed upon those who are abducted or if the Fae abduct people who already possess certain traits that make them especially suitable for transformation into one of the various seemings and perhaps even into a specific kith of that seeming. Most of the Lost prefer to think of their lives, personalities and actions before their abduction as having nothing to do with what happened to them, in an effort to avoid thinking that they may in some way be responsible for what happened to them. Unfortunately, to at least some degree, this is untrue. No one knows why a Fae abducts one singer or violinist and transforms her into one of the Fairest and ignores someone more skilled at either art, or what makes one large muscular person a suitable choice for becoming an Ogre and many others not. Most suspect that chance or the incomprehensible whims of the Fae have much to do with these decisions. However, more often than not, a person who is abducted and transformed into a Dancer of the Fairest is more graceful than average and had at least some skill at dancing or other movement before her abduction, just as a Gargantuan Ogre may have been somewhat taller than average or unusually muscular well before he was abducted.

Too often, such talk can lead to accusations where changelings blame themselves, or occasionally others who encouraged various behaviors, for their abduction. Some Darklings fear that the fact that they often dressed in black was the cause of their abduction, just as many Fairest privately blame themselves for some moment of overweening pride that the Fae observed, which caused the Darklings to be "chosen." The strong reactions many of the Lost have to any claim that they are "to blame" for their abductions has lead to a widespread policy among many changelings to avoid talking openly about this topic. When some new member of a Court or freehold asks about such matters, many polite changelings deny the truth of any such suspicions while also doing their best to indicate that it is best not to openly discuss such topics, because doing so can cause strong emotional reactions among many of the less stable changelings. Needless to say, this leads to the odd situation in which few openly discuss the fact that simply looking at photographs of changelings before they were abducted is occasionally sufficient to guess which seemings, and sometimes even which kiths, these individuals became.

Regardless of why a changeling is a member of a particular seeming, there is also a strong relationship between temperament and seeming. While some Ogres may enjoy various intellectual pursuits, when confronted with a difficult problem, most seek direct and highly physical solutions, just as even the most optimistic and cheerful Darkling automatically looks for solutions involving retreat, stealth and misdirection. Ultimately, the years or decades changelings spent in Arcadia mentally and physically molded them into representatives of their seemings and their kiths in ways that affect their bodies and their thoughts and choices.

## SEEMINGS AND KITHS

Although some, mostly newly escaped, changelings are more focused on the details of physical appearance produced by differences in kith, most Lost come to understand that the differences between the kiths of a single seeming are more and less important than the similarities shared by all members of a single kith. One reason for this belief is that many Fae realms contain changelings of different kiths who all belong to the same seeming who are all treated in much the same way. Such shared experiences are far more common among changelings of different kiths of the same seeming than among changelings of different seemings. To the Fae and the Beasts, the fact that all the Beasts in a single Fae realm were hunting animals who were kept in the same kennel and given the same rewards and punishments was far more important than the fact that many of these hunting animals were Hunterhearts, while others were Skitterskulks or Windwings. Similarly, many of the lovely and terrible Fae whom the Fairest served kept Dancers, Muses and several other Fairest kiths, each of whom served the Fae as a different sort of personal servant.

Some changelings joke about Firehearts and Waterborn or Hunterhearts and Runnerswifts being natural enemies, but the differences between these members of these kiths are usually considerably fewer than the similarities they share. However, just as all generalizations, this is not always true. Some Fae enjoyed pitting Lost of different kiths against one another in elaborate and brutally violent games. Changelings with experiences like these often harbor a lingering fear or hatred of a different kith of their seeming. However, such feelings are considered impolite and wrong by most changelings. The majority of changelings believe that actions taken under orders from the Fae were in no way the responsibility of the changeling, since refusing such orders was occasionally impossible and always carried exceedingly dire and painful consequences.

There are a few societies or gangs where membership is open only to members of a single kith, but most changelings look askance at such organizations. Changelings aren't numerous enough to have that many Lost of a single kith in an area without extenuating circumstances, and many consider anyone who joins such a group to be either narrow-minded or lacking important social skills. In contrast, while most changelings regularly socialize with members of other





seemings, some of the more timid or emotionally damaged greatly prefer the company of their own seeming. Single-seeming freeholds are not unknown, though they usually find it harder to remain exclusive and still muster the numbers to properly defend themselves.

## PREJUDICE, STEREOTYPES AND SEEMINGS

The Lost are just as prone to prejudice and bigotry as ordinary mortals, and just as with mortals, many of these attitudes and beliefs are based upon appearance. Differences in seemings are one of the more common sources of bigotry. Even in the face of evidence to the contrary, many of the Lost assume that all Ogres are stupid, all Fairest are amoral snobs and believe a variety of similar prejudices about other seemings. Although most changelings have sufficient tact and sense to only make such comments when not in the presence of members of the seeming being denigrated or stereotyped, bigotry rarely remains completely secret, and tensions can easily rise. Different freeholds deal with these issues in different ways — a few speak privately with offenders and publicly censure anyone making such comments, others consider such slanders to be offenses that require a public apology and the payment of a fine, while many simply ignore the issue and concentrate on problems they consider to be more serious and immediate.

The problem of seeming-based prejudice is compounded by the different curses suffered by the various seemings. Unlike different mortal races and ethnicities, members of a particular seeming are all somewhat less good at particular tasks. Ogres are slightly more gullible than other seemings, just as Elementals and Wizeden are less socially adept. These flaws may inadvertently give rise to all manner of other prejudices and lead some of the Lost to declare that seeming is the single greatest indicator of a changeling's physical and intellectual strengths and weaknesses. Some changelings regard such claims as obvious common sense, while other more egalitarian Lost acknowledge that seeming determines much about what an individual changeling can do but that a changeling's choices and determinations matter far more when considering what the individual will actually do. The most bitterly held prejudices have nothing to do with generalizations, though. A changeling may find herself meeting a vicious reaction simply because she resembles another changeling's Keeper, or a servant who played the tormentor back in Faerie. If one of the Lost suffered badly at the hands of ogrish fae, it may be difficult to get him to accept even the gentlest Ogre as a potential ally.

As with mortals, prejudices can and do change over time, resulting in everything from grudging respect or even joking friendships between members of different seemings whom circumstance forced to depend on one another, to the growth of the sorts of hatreds that lead to committing violence against members of another seeming. As in mortal society, most prejudices tend to become worse in freeholds

where members of one seeming hold all the positions of authority. Although violence caused by prejudice is relatively rare, jokes, insults and decisions being influenced by negative assumptions are all fairly common.

### *Inheritance*

As noted on p. 27 of *Changeling: The Lost*, it's quite rare for changelings to be capable of siring or bearing children, and in the rare instance that they can, the child is not a changeling like its parent or parents. Perhaps one in a hundred Lost retains some measure of fertility after their durance in Faerie, making the birth of a changeling's child a rare and often celebrated event in a freehold.

Those children born to fae parents are often a little... odd. Though their physical features aren't influenced by their changeling parent's seeming — the daughter of a Fairest is no prettier than she would have been if her changeling parent had never been abducted — their behavior often shows strange quirks that hint at their parent or parents' seeming. A Beast's son lapses from time to time into strange growling fits; a Darkling's daughter develops strange and irrational superstitions about the crescent moon.

The child of one of the Lost, by all accounts, would make a wonderful prize for one of the Gentry. Marked just a touch by their parents' blood, strange enough to draw the attention of an Other, they are said to be at great risk. Few things are more troubling than the paranoid fear a changeling parent feels when imagining her own child being abducted as she was.

## THE SEEMINGS

The following sections are designed to provide you with a greater wealth of potential ideas for playing a changeling of each seeming. Some of this material may flesh out a background, while some material may provide more inspiration for specific challenges and hooks in the mortal world.

Note that this material is as definitive as you choose to make it. None of the places listed in the "Memories of Arcadia" sections have to be exactly as described (a changeling's memories of Faerie are hazy and occluded anyhow), and while these places are geared toward a particular seeming, they can be used as background for another. There's no reason that the Diamond Castle can't engender Snowskins as well as Darklings, for instance. And, as always, a character can show as many or as few seeming-typical mannerisms as you feel is appropriate.



Note that of the new Contracts introduced, each is considered an affinity Contract for the appropriate seeming, but can be learned by changelings of other seemings. Thus, any changeling can learn the Contract of Oath and Vengeance, but only an Ogre gets it at reduced cost.

## BEASTS

The ecology of Faerie makes little sense. Plants grow where they shouldn't; things subsist on less food than is logical. Faerie is not a world that has evolved in accordance with how the mortal chain of life works. Yet, Arcadia has its rule of nature, even warped. Tooth and claw are still red here. Predator still hunts prey, though both may take strange forms and be born of mad origins. The Beasts were once lost to that cycle, their minds subsumed entirely by the animal instinct that was the only thing keeping them alive. Even upon their return, the savage time of Faerie has left its mark on them, body and soul.

## MEMORIES OF ARCADIA THE CHASMS UNDER THE WORLD

Somewhere deep in the Faerie earth stretches a network of chasms, near-bottomless gashes cut into earth and stone down in the darkness. Sun and moon never shine down there, and indeed those who live there almost forget that there ever was any such thing as a sky. There is only the black ceiling above, and the long jagged rifts below. But the darkness isn't silent in these depths: it hisses and chitters and writhes. The chasms are crisscrossed with massive webs, worm-eaten with burrows and tunnels where a multitude of creatures fight for survival.

The lords of these chasms are the Lights That Stride, nobles of the Gentry who navigate the steep chasm walls in luminous palace-sized chariots atop impossibly long, spidery webs. These strange vehicles provide the illumination for the crevasses, casting long sharp shadows whenever the chariots pass by. No changeling who has escaped the chasms can accurately recall whether or not the Lights are luminescent human-seeming nobles who recline in their silken tents atop these insectile walkers, or if they are glow-worm-like extrusions whose "chariots" are as much a part of them as anything. Those who are taken up to the lights are rarely heard from again.

The purpose of the chasms is horribly unclear. The Skitterskulks, Venombites and other changelings who find the scarce escape tunnels to the Hedge recall mute captors forcing them into the darkness, small warrens of abductees gathered together for survival and the occasional hunter-gatherer patrols descending on silken lifelines from the chariots of the Lights That Stride. One guess is that the chasm serves as a "training ground," altering its victims into something more saleable for Fae Keepers of peculiar

needs. Another is that it's a kind of alchemical farm, and that the Lights milk their captives of the various venoms they've evolved to survive. The Beasts who escape there don't question it all too deeply, though: to their minds, all that had to be understood about the chasm was the instinct to hide and skulk and hunt.

## THE SCREAMING JUNGLE

In one of the haphazard mountain ranges of Faerie, jagged peaks enclose a stretch of sweltering, brilliantly colored jungle on all sides as if they were attempting to keep it restrained. From one end of the jungle to another, the trees reverberate with the shrieks of bizarre fae birds and animals, and with the hunting cries of the changelings who fight to survive here.

Only one thing can make the jungle fall silent, and that is the approach of its master. When the birds stop calling and the hybrid hobgoblins no longer howl at one another, he is drawing near. Silence is the herald of the Great Multicolored Prince, a Beast among Beasts, equal parts ape and tiger and brilliantly plumed raptor. He constantly stalks the Screaming Jungle, pausing only after a particularly satisfactory kill to return to the palatial slave-borne litter that acts as his nomadic domicile.

The Great Multicolored Prince is fabulously wealthy and tremendously feared. Dozens of privateers are said to ply their trade for him, bringing him new prey for the hunt. Those captives brought to the jungle are given time enough to grow stronger and more cunning before the Prince decides they're worthy to hunt. He wants to hunt proper Beasts, not weak humans. And so his jungle is filled with Beasts of every kith. Some try to assist newcomers for a brief period of time, but few are willing to gather in groups for survival: the Prince always finds the groups first.

Those who are able to scale the peaks without the Prince noticing sometimes make it back home to the mortal world; various clefts and caverns in the mountains lead back into the Hedge. A Beast who remembers stalking and being stalked in the Screaming Jungle is often much happier in an urban environment than in the wild. In the city, it's never completely quiet.

## THE STOCKYARDS

Some Beasts curl their lips and lay their ears back when they enter a Goblin Market. It reminds them of the Stockyards.

The Stockyards may be one realm, or there may be many similar animal-markets littering Faerie. They are free markets for the Gentry to buy and trade faerie creatures, and indeed to trade in captured human stock. Neutrality is enforced by the Swineherds, hulking piggish giants that herd the "wares" to the auction block and thrash any unruly market-goers with their warped, thorny metal crooks. Some changelings spend only a little time in the Stockyards,





while others are left to languish in pens or kennels or cages until they have become bestial themselves.

While the Swineherds are usually able to keep a good eye on their captives, the Stockyards is a place full of potential distractions. The confusion inspired by an angry Fae noble, or by an impromptu stampede of black goblin-bulls, can cover an escape attempt. Since the Stockyards are held in neutral territory, a Beast — or a small group of escapees — could potentially reach the Hedge without crossing the paths of other Gentry. In fact, for some changelings, the Stockyards is the best chance they'll have to escape, before they're purchased by some True Fae lord who will pay much closer attention to them for the duration of their lives.

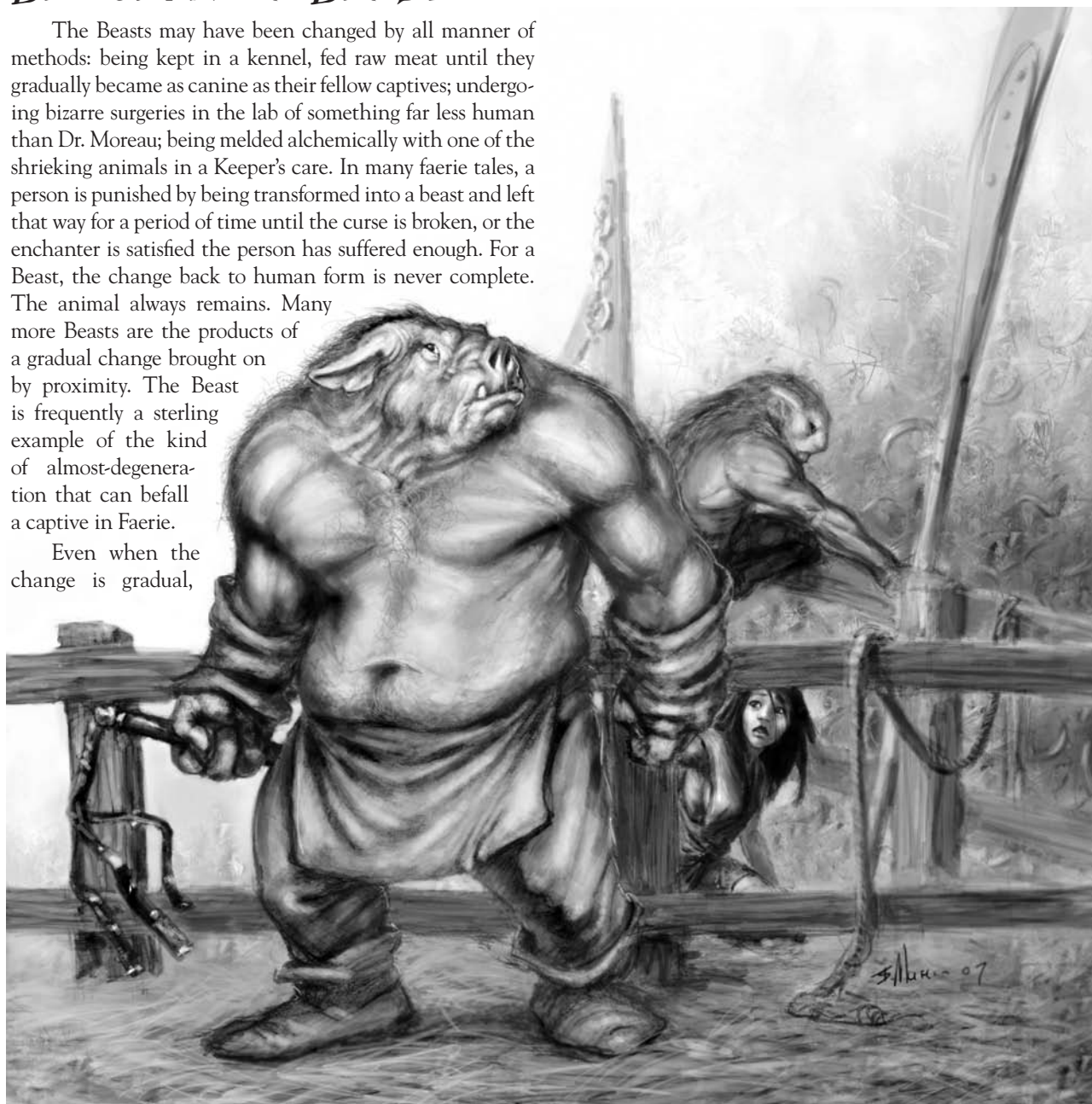
## BECOMING A BEAST

The Beasts may have been changed by all manner of methods: being kept in a kennel, fed raw meat until they gradually became as canine as their fellow captives; undergoing bizarre surgeries in the lab of something far less human than Dr. Moreau; being melded alchemically with one of the shrieking animals in a Keeper's care. In many faerie tales, a person is punished by being transformed into a beast and left that way for a period of time until the curse is broken, or the enchanter is satisfied the person has suffered enough. For a Beast, the change back to human form is never complete. The animal always remains. Many more Beasts are the products of a gradual change brought on by proximity. The Beast is frequently a sterling example of the kind of almost-degeneration that can befall a captive in Faerie.

Even when the change is gradual,

no other seeming can point as clearly to the point when the person had truly changed from human to changeling. The Beasts know, because the moment they became Beasts was the moment they lost their human reason. The loss of human thought isn't always complete, but it always changes the very fabric of a Beast's mind. The abstracted nature of Arcadian time becomes even more abstract and unimportant — the *now* has taken over.

In place of human reason comes instinct. The clear mind of an animal, guiding the Beast where abstract reasoning can no longer help them. The Hunterheart learns to hunt as though it's what he was born to do. The Windwing understands the play of air currents simply by feeling them around her fingertips. These instincts are a great comfort to the Beasts, given





the now even-more confusing acts of their Keepers. When a Keeper beats his hound, the animal doesn't understand why, even if the human he used to be might have been able to guess. But the pain goes away when the hunt begins, and the instinct of the chase becomes the greatest joy possible.

How does one resist the power of instinct and return to abstract thought? Most don't. The Beasts don't like to talk much about it with other changelings, but it seems unwholesomely possible that fae creatures such as briarwolves were once humans who never managed to pull themselves back.

Those who do recover their minds can usually point to some specific trigger that stirred their human memories. For most, it was a scent. The smell of a flower that grew in their backyard, the smell of a victim that reminded them of a beloved family member or pet — something triggered the powerful association of scent and memory. If not scent, then perhaps another sense memory. A Windwing sees a torn and fluttering red ribbon that reminds him of a scrap of red dress caught on the playground swing; a Venombite scurries across broken glass and suddenly remembers the back lot behind her apartment block. This potent flash of memory places a deep crack in the wall between instinct and reason, one that eventually gives way. Reason and instinct mix, and the Beast regains some measure of his human self. Memories of home return, and with them the possibility of escape. The instinct never really leaves, though.

Why were the Beasts taken in the first place? There doesn't seem to be any common answer. A pre-existing affinity for the animal one becomes is sometimes present, but far from necessary. A Keeper may take an already violent and half-wild human as a fighting dog for his kennel, but he might also pick a gentle and passive mother to transform into a vicious hellhound.

As the other seemings serve, so do the Beasts. A Darkling is taken for making the wrong trespass and brought up in darkness — and so, too, might a Skitterskulk or Venombite be taken. An Elemental was infused with the stuff of the land, but so, too, was a Beast, only bound to the instincts of animals rather than the essence of raw elements. The Fairest serve as decorations, playthings and entertainment; the same is true of birds kept in gilded cages and cats on silver chains. Ogres and Beasts may have been born of common violence. The Wizeden were defined by their purpose, and it's the same for a hunting falcon or dray beast. These similarities often express themselves in the different chattel of a single Keeper developing different seemings, which can lead to a powerful bond. If an Elemental rusalka and Swimmerskin selkie were both kept in the ice-lined moat of a glacial giant, they might retain a particular bond of shared burdens that keeps them close even in the mortal world. On the other hand, rivalries can develop from these associations as well. The Ogre who was raised as a pit-fighter may not get along so well with the leonine Hunterheart whose brethren savaged the Ogre every Arcadian night.

## THEIR SURROUNDINGS

Beasts are very aware of the world around them. The survival instinct that kept them alive in Faerie hasn't left them. When a Beast walks down the street, he keeps an eye out for alleyways, potential bits of hard cover or hiding places, doors that might serve as bolt-holes and other such things. Even though the Beasts were displaced from mortal society, they live more in the world than ordinary humans do — the Beasts know it's not just dangerous to overlook details of their environment, they know it's a waste. If anyone can recognize the smell of a particular open-air market or the laughter of a specific neighbor's child, it's a Beast.

Having the heart of a wild animal doesn't necessarily mean a desire to live in the wilderness. Some Beasts are uncomfortable in the city, and some find it far preferable to the empty spaces of a rural environment. Urban neighborhoods have a different ecology all their own, and a Beast can be quite comfortable as a part of it. A person who was raised in an inner-city neighborhood would be more comfortable hunting there than in the woods when the Wolf came into his soul.

Beasts tend to be very territorial. They don't like it when someone's been sleeping in their bed. This can cause some distinct awkwardness, because they also don't tend to mark their territories as clearly as one would like — after all, the Others have very good trackers among them. Even their friends can get a harsh reaction if they call on the Beast without fair warning. This tends to mean that most Beasts live alone. Even if they find someone whom they feel comfortable

### *The Animal's Skin*

The transformation into a Beast may grant a changeling many advantages, physical and otherwise. A Beast often gains heightened physical and mental acuity from his transformation. Many Beasts possess Danger Sense or Direction Sense, representing their intensified sensory abilities. Physical Merits of all sorts are common as well. Those with quick and agile animal affinities may favor Fast Reflexes, Fleet of Foot and Fresh Start. Iron Stamina, Natural Immunity, Quick Healer, Strong Back, Strong Lungs, Toxin Resistance — all these can represent the blessings of particular animals. Some even develop Giant, infused as they are with the nature of a bison or elephant.

A Beast's troubles with degeneration are often polarized into a variation on the "fight or flight" instinct. Those who fight might develop Fixation, Vocalization or Irrationality derangements. Those who flee are more prone to Phobia, Suspicion or Avoidance.



allowing into their den, becoming part of the “pack,” as it were, that person might not be as comfortable consistently sharing his space with an animalistic changeling.

Most Beasts have a nesting instinct. They like their territory to feel like a part of them. A Beast can't be comfortable in a spic-and-span apartment where everything must be returned to its proper place (excepting an orb weaver Venombite or a few others, of course). They are happier with tangled bedding, clothes strewn on the furniture and haphazard decorations that suit their aesthetic. Yet for all this untidiness, a Beast's home territory isn't necessarily *dirty*. It might be, of course; some Beasts think nothing of bedding down in roach-infested tenements if it seems safer from their perspective. But many others prefer to keep fairly well groomed and their dens relatively free of filth. Disconcerting though it may be for an immaculate Fairest or a fastidious Wizen to enter a Beast's untidy den, the place is likely to be faintly musty at worst, with the only lingering smell a faint trace of the Beast's own musk.

## INTERACTIONS WITH THE MORTAL WORLD

The trouble that all Lost have in establishing a new place within mortal society is magnified for the Beast. They have the same issues with potentially being lost in time, having to adapt to a world that has changed more than they expected. But they also have to deal with the mortal mind, something that's no longer intimately familiar with them.

Actually viewing things from another person's perspective is something that's always been easier said than done. People differ in their past experiences and personalities in ways that are very difficult for another person to understand completely. For the Beast, who has been submerged in an animal mind and fought his way back to sapience, other people are that much more distant. It's not that the Beasts doesn't quite understand others' mindset, it's that the Beasts often have trouble “blinding” themselves to achieve a fully human perspective. A human being doesn't understand the simple truths of animal instinct, much less balance them with higher reason. Few know what it's like to kill your meat or find a safe place to sleep. They're at least partially disconnected from the struggle for survival thanks to the protection society offers. To a Beast, this “ignorance” can be intensely frustrating and strangely comforting. It's hard to watch a human go about his business without actually really knowing what it is to be *alive*, without the kind of honed senses that result from the struggle for survival. But at the same time, the Hunterheart is glad to watch his children from afar, knowing — hoping — that they'll always remain a little more innocent than he is.

Despite this rift in perception, Beasts aren't surly hermits, shunned by those around them. A Beast has a potent animal magnetism, which helps him interact with humans rather better than one might otherwise expect. And just as most other

Lost with a reasonable measure of Clarity, the Beasts value their human perspective — all the more because it helped them escape when remaining an animal wouldn't have.

A Beast's sociability also depends somewhat on his animal nature. Beasts who have affinity with social animals are generally more gregarious, whereas those who mix a solitary animal's instincts with the social animal instincts of a human being are more divided. A canine Hunterheart bonds quickly and fiercely with a small group, while a spiderish Venombite may prefer to live on her own.

Given their experiences, Beasts are also prone to bond well with mortal animals if given the chance. A Hunterheart may never develop the kind of empathy with a prey species that would compel him to give up eating meat, but he understands more of what those animals' own instincts and perceptions are like. Most Beasts react very poorly to animal cruelty, and have been known to arrange... bad things for people who partake in dog-fighting or strapping cherry bombs to stray cats. People like that remind the Beasts of their Keepers, and the Beasts don't tend to show much sympathy for humans who demonstrate that True Fae-like lack of empathy for “lesser animals.”

## FREEHOLD ROLES

It's difficult to pigeonhole the Beasts into even a set of roles in a freehold, given the incredible diversity among them. They tend to go where their kith affinities would be the most useful. A Hunterheart or Broadback might make a fine soldier to call on in times of need, but a Skitterskulk is more likely to be useful as an information broker and spy.

Information gathering is more common than one might think at first among the Beasts, due in no small part to their Contracts of Fang and Talon. Beasts develop keen senses thanks to these Contracts, and can effectively eavesdrop from an otherwise impractical distance. A Hunterheart who can talk to dogs has access to an information network that, though limited in the amount of abstract knowledge it can convey, is quite widespread. If that same Hunterheart can actually transform into a dog, he can be an innocuous observer himself. The Skitterskulk who can take rat form or the Venombite who can become a wasp is even more effective. In some freeholds, the Lost in positions of authority take great advantage of this. In others, they fall prey to the assumption that Beasts aren't much good in situations that involve subtlety — which may give the Beasts access to some interesting freehold secrets.

Actual positions of authority may or may not interest Beasts. Many don't care for the over-niceties of the political game. Their nature compels them to cut to the heart of the matter, and they grow tired of having to appease the various factions within a freehold to get anything done. But others are quite suited to leadership. A Beast who mixes human experience with the instinct of an alpha wolf can be a strong and effective leader, capable of delegating lesser tasks to “betas” and making the most important decisions herself.



Some are even quite adept at playing a subtle game of politics — one would expect a spider-fanged Venombite to be able to spin metaphorical webs and wait patiently at their center.

Interestingly, Beasts can also make good liaisons with the mortal world, given the right circumstances. They aren't the ones to call on to navigate a legal system or orchestrate an information technology setup, of course. But their ability to project animal magnetism makes them useful in the social trenches. A Beast can be the beloved fixture of a blue-collar bar, the honest and forthright old man in the park, the dark and mysterious neighbor. Where all eyes are on the Fairest, the Beast is able to establish a quick bond of chemistry with a single person.

In some freeholds, Beasts are subject to an unfortunate prejudice. There, other Lost look on the Beasts' animalistic nature as more "base" than that of any other seeming. *They're just one step away from the hunting hounds they were in Faerie*, or so the whispers go. *They don't really remember what it's like to be human the way the rest of us do.* In these freeholds, Beasts are expected to keep to the fringes, where they won't become hopelessly lost in intrigues "they can't understand." Some Beasts take this in stride, and are glad to keep free of their cousins' entanglements. Others bide their time, waiting for just the right moment to show their so-called betters just how clever and dangerous Beasts can be.

## CONTRACTS OF THE DEN

A Beast knows the value of a safe home. The Contracts of the Den were struck with forces of cave and tunnel, of the womblike safety of the burrow. These Contracts allow the Beast to protect himself and those nearest and dearest to him — or to strike into the dens of those who were not prudent enough to sign a similar Contract.

### TRESPASSER'S SPOOR (•)

The simplest clause of the Contracts of the Den is a blessing of warning. The Beast who learns this clause is much harder to surprise in his own territory. His knowledge of the local terrain sharpens intensely, allowing him to sense threats almost before they're visible.

**Cost:** 1 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** No dice roll is necessary. For the next 12 hours, the character gains a number of dice equal to Wyrd +2 to all perception rolls made while inside his territory. For the purposes of this clause, "territory" is defined as something that is recognized by the local neighbors as belonging to the changeling, or that he is able to successfully enforce. A rented apartment is territory, but the whole building is not unless the Beast owns it or the residents look on the building as "his" — for instance, if the Beast is the head of a street gang that protects the building, and his word is accepted as law therein. Similarly, a stretch of woods that locals say is the haunt of the Red-Eyed Devil counts as the changeling's territory if the Beast is that same Red-Eyed

Devil. The clause's effects fade if the character spends more than five minutes at a time outside of his territory.

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The changeling writes his name on one of the entrances to the territory in chalk mixed with blood.

### TRAPDOOR SPIDER'S TRICK (••)

A Beast may have need to hide the entrance to his den. This trick allows the changeling to do so, and in some cases elude pursuit as well. When activated, this clause covers a door, window, opening or other access point within five feet of the changeling with an illusion, making it appear as though it is either impassable or isn't there at all. A fire exit seems to be a stretch of graffiti-marked brick wall, an attic window appears to have been boarded up for years, a man-hole cover just looks like a blank patch of worn asphalt.

**Cost:** 1 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Wyrd

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The changeling is holding a live spider in his mouth at the time.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The illusion begins to form, then snaps apart with an audible bang like a gunshot.

**Failure:** The illusion fails to appear.

**Success:** The illusion is successful. The door or window that the changeling passed through is disguised to appear as a normal section of wall. This strengthening of the Mask can't be pierced by casual fae sight, though a person running her hands along the wall can still feel the door as it is. The illusion lasts for a scene.

**Exceptional Success:** The illusion lasts for a day and a night.

### Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
-1	The changeling is in his enemy's territory.
+2	The door leads into territory that the changeling owns.

### CUCKOO'S RUSE (•••)

This clause is one of the dirtier tricks available to a Beast, as it allows him to violate the rules of hospitality by entering another person's house — including her Hollow. The Beast simply appears to be one of the home's residents to the home itself.

This clause does not function if the home Hollow being invaded belongs to a changeling who also possesses Contracts of the Den. She is under the Contract's protection, after all.

**Cost:** 2 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Wyrd (contested by the rating of Hollow Wards in the case of a Hollow)

**Action:** Instant





**Catch:** The character has openly invited the owner of the location over to his home within the last three days.

## Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The clause fails to activate, and any alarms are set off.

**Failure:** The clause fails to activate, and cannot be used on the location again until 24 hours have passed. The character must risk the security systems normally.

**Success:** The character “convinces” the building or Hollow that he is one of the residents. He can then bypass the security systems as if he owned the place. Recording devices will show him as one of the residents, no less. Mortal security guards and animals aren’t affected, though hobgoblin sentries in a Hollow will be.

This clause can only gain entry to a given location. It doesn’t remove barriers within that location. Thus, the changeling could open the front door of a mansion, and the security cameras would show him to be one of the family members who live there, but the clause wouldn’t open any of the locked doors inside the house for him.

**Exceptional Success:** Anyone accompanying the character is affected by the clause’s benefits.

## Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–1	The changeling has never set foot inside the location before.
+1	The changeling has visited the location before as an invited guest.

## BLESSING OF THE BURROW (••••)

This clause allows the Beast to make a safe den or hiding place in almost any location. The changeling calls on the power of Wyrd to excavate a burrow with astonishing speed. The opening of this burrow can be concealed with Trapdoor Spider’s Trick, thus allowing a Beast with Glamour to burn the ability to construct a useful hiding place in times of duress.

**Cost:** 2 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Survival + Wyrd

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The character is nude at the time of invoking the clause.

## Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The burrow collapses partway through excavation. The changeling is likely caught underground and must pull himself free.

**Failure:** The clause fails to work.

**Success:** The clause activates. The changeling can excavate roughly a five foot by five foot by five foot cube of earth, stone or concrete each turn, for up to one turn per success. A burrow dug into soft earth or sand gains hard-

packed walls, and will not collapse on its own. The tunnel dug is rough-hewn, and bears what appear to be claw marks around its edges.

**Exceptional Success:** The changeling can choose to conceal the claw marks if he so chooses, making the burrow appear more natural or human-made.

## Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
–4	Reinforced concrete
–2	Stone or concrete
+1	Packed earth
+2	Soft earth or sand

## COLLAPSING THE ENTRANCE (•••••)

The ultimate clause of the Contracts of the Den is self-sacrificing in nature. What had to be built must now be brought low. Similar to an animal collapsing the entrance of its burrow to prevent an enemy from reaching the heart of the warren, the Beast is able to bring down a section of a building or burrow. The changeling must be standing within or on the threshold of the building in question.

**Cost:** 3 Glamour + 1 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Wyrd

**Action:** Extended (one roll per turn, target number of successes needed is equal to half the Structure rating of the building)

**Catch:** The building to be damaged or collapsed belongs to the changeling using the clause.

## Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** All successes are lost. The changeling takes one point of lethal damage from the strain. The character must spend the cost again to restart the Contract.

**Failure:** No successes are gained.

**Success:** Successes are gathered. If the total number of successes reaches the needed amount, the character brings down a section of the building. The area of destruction may reach up to five feet in radius for every point of the character’s Wyrd, centered on the changeling. Depending on where the changeling is standing, this may bring down the entirety of the building. The Beast may make a reflexive Dexterity + Survival roll to avoid any incidental damage from the collapse, although he may still be pinned under debris if he couldn’t reach a safe place with a standard move action.

**Exceptional Success:** No additional effect.

Building Size	Number of Successes Needed
Trailer, basement-sized burrow	5
Two-story house, small cavern	10
McMansion	15
Strip mall	20
Skyscraper	40





## Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
-3	Nobody resides within the building.
+1	The building was designed as a residence.
+2	At least one family calls the building home.

## DARKLINGS

The darkness of Arcadia is not simple absence of light. It is nights that have hungers all their own, shadows cast in the bowels of impossible castles, the grasping fingers of carnivorous forests. The Darklings are changed by the living shadows of Faerie — indeed, Darklings have entered into Contracts with darkness itself.

This bond with darkness can't help but change them. Some become entirely comfortable with fear and loneliness, and discover that they dislike forging social bonds with all but a select few. Others fight against the shadows that fall over their souls, searching out pleasure and companionship. But no Darkling can shun the darkness entirely. Even if Darklings suffered torments in absolute blackness in Arcadia, the dark is still comforting to them. It hides them from sight, and perhaps aided their escape. It's something that few other Lost can completely understand.

## MEMORIES OF ARCADIA BLACK OAK WILDS

*Broken bones and blood will kill you. Cowardice can do worse. You've trespassed on my lands, will you take my challenge face-to-face? Or run and hope to escape the price of your curiosity?*

The trees of Arcadia are older than the world, darker than the night and as miraculous as a dream. There, a crooked path leads to crooked wood where the crow cries alarm and the dark knight guards the lonely bridge over a twisting stream.

The Iron Knight rules the domain where the black oaks grow. He catches the curious who stray from the proper path, chasing after will-o'-wisps or sweet Fae voices. He challenges mortals to single combat, and those who feel the better part of wisdom is flight he chases down and buries under the ensnaring roots of his forest domain. Most who come to such a fate die, food for the oak trees that groan and cry in the wind. Those who survive are changed, some core strength stolen





away. They are diminished, shadows of the mortals they once were. But, cocooned in the roots of the forest, those changelings learn the secrets of Arcadian night and shadows.

The Black Oak Wilds are never quiet. The trees themselves talk, some begging for mercy, others whispering secret names of power. Pale flowers bloom where bones are buried, and giant spiders haunt the upper branches of the Wilds, spinning webs and fishing for travelers below. Goblin fruits grow in abundance in the Black Oak Wilds, but harvesting them means braving the Knight, the great spiders and the malicious nature of the oaks themselves. There are many paths through the Wilds, but they change and shift — as if the trees themselves rise up and walk — making it impossible to map this domain.

Those who once fled the Knight's challenge now serve him as spies and pathfinders. They hunt down other fleet-footed trespassers, and bring them to their Keeper for judgment. When the Knight is bored or greedy, he sends his Mirrormasks out into the forest to tempt travelers off the paths by imitating fair maidens or lost children. The Knight has little use for treasure beyond his weapons, this armor and the Beast he rides but Archivists must keep careful record of the booty he takes from defeated victims nevertheless. Although the Knight may not use gold or silver, he is driven into a fury should someone lose the least copper penny of his hoard.

### The Hedge

The tangled branches and clutching roots of the Wilds are nearly as dense and confusing as the Hedge itself. The Wilds blend gradually into the Hedge, and it's easy to stray into its forbidden territory. Those who live in the Knight's domain like to believe they understand the woodlands well enough to give them an advantage when they try and cross the Hedge. Far too many bones are scattered along the Hedge for that boast to be true. Hollows created near this domain carry the smell of dank forests and the creaking, often hostile whispers of the black oaks into the dreams of the Lost who sleep there.

## THE WELL OF TEARS

*Once upon a time, pretty babies floated down to your arms, wrapped in swaddling, weighted with lapis and silver and gold. They cry but only once, and their voices rise in silver bubbles up to the other world. Then, they're happy here, and quiet. You rock them in your weed-draped arms, and they whisper their names to you. Memories are more precious than gold, if you can keep them from slipping away.*

Water is a chancy thing, even in the mortal world, but the silent wells and centoes of Arcadia hand out blessings and curses with equal ease. The Keepers of these wells are powerful among the Gentry, able to call rain, or banish it, able to swallow boats and rise in furious floods. They have no mercy.

The Well of Tears lies near the heart (if there is such a thing) of Arcadia. The Well is a huge, perfectly round

sinkhole with water as clear as air, a surface as smooth as glass and depths that hide horror and beauty.

The Old Man rules here, his great staring eyes always running with tears, his voice low as storm clouds and his payment for wishes granted seventh-born sons. The Lost who've made it back to the mortal world have found a name for him in books: Tlaloc, the Rain Singer.

His realm is far, far below the surface of Arcadia, in the sunken tunnels and water-filled caverns that hide from the pale Fae sun. He hoards treasures: Aztec gold, lapis lazuli carved like leopards and the bones of infants. Those who serve him in the black waters swim like frogs and fishes, and die like them, too, if dragged too quickly to the dry air.

The Darklings here guard his precious things, like the golden-eye fish of wisdom, and suffer terrible temptation for it is said that eating the flesh of the Rain Singer's fish will reveal the secrets of the Hedge, allowing safe passage back to the mortal world. The servants here take on the aspects of their masters: huge frog eyes, a gulping hunger for drowning victims or beautiful flowing hair that can entangle the unwary. Webbed hands and frogskin, iridescent scales and fishbone combs, jewelry made from Aztec treasures thrown down to placate the gods are among the trappings found among these fae. The sky is the distant, silver surface of the water, and their home the cool waters of Arcadia.

The fresh waters of Arcadia are all connected, bound together by underground tunnels, great subterranean caverns and pitch-black submerged passages. The Fae of the waters draw battle lines down beneath the surface world, fighting silent wars among themselves and using their Darkling servants as spies and assassins. Leechfingers slink along hidden paths, stealing life from their master's enemies while Mirrormasks hunt spies and traitors in Tlaloc's domain. Life in the Well of Tears is a silent one, sound muted by the weight of water and horror drifting on shifting currents.

### The Hedge

The Hedge grows deep down beneath the water, as thick and deadly as above. The roots are as thorny and dangerous as the branches above, and it is no easier to flee Arcadia through water than through air. White bones gleam in the dimly lit waters, lost souls trapped forever in the twining roots of the Hedge. Hollows belonging to Darklings who've escaped Tlaloc are often found in old wells, natural sinkholes or underwater caverns. Those who cannot breathe water or have Lie Under the Waves, cannot make use of these Hollows — which can be a point of safety and one more way to isolate a vulnerable changeling from her fellow changelings.

## THE DIAMOND CASTLE

*Everything has a name. The frost sketching its secrets on the windowpanes, the stars gleaming bitterly in the sky, a lover's last breath. If you look long enough, and deep enough, you can find every name here, written in the Lady's books. I'm looking for my own, but I can't read. Can you?*



Darkness is not found only beneath the earth, or in sul-  
len waters. It claims the highest peaks of Arcadia, where the  
stars shine in frozen splendor and the moon is a distant, blind  
eye. Night can last for years, and the cold, uncaring sky is  
reflected in the pale eyes of the Lady who measures the dark-  
ness and records every shed tear in her silver-bound books.

Rising from the highest peak of the coldest mountain  
in the lost lands of Arcadia is the Diamond Castle. A dead  
and desiccated vine twines to its gate, the failed escape route  
of some fool Jack. The walls shine under the sunless sky and  
freeze flesh on contact, the bones of princes come to rescue  
beautiful maidens litter the courtyard. Dark dungeons and  
twisting tunnels burrow into the roots of the mountain. The  
Keeper here weeps tears of ice and drinks sweet, warm blood.  
She knows the names of every Fae, it's said, and the details  
of every Contract are hidden away in her huge library. She's  
the Snow Queen, and no mistress of a Winter Court has even  
a fraction of her power. She treasures beauty in the form of  
young boys stolen from their beds and frozen statues still in  
her hallways and bedchamber. And she knows darkness.

Darklings in her thrall can find themselves chained to  
a single great book, set to tend it, guard it and stand, filed  
away and forgotten, in her library. Others dance and ca-  
per in her shadow, waiting for the command to spy upon  
her enemies or capture other mortals for her pleasure. Still  
others skulk about the walls, hidden in barren crevices or  
tangled amid the dead branches of frozen trees and lie in  
wait for those who believe foolish tales of endless wealth  
hidden in the Queen's frigid castle.

There is no warmth to be found anywhere in her domain,  
except in the blood and fear of those who stray uninvited onto  
her lands. Everyone is eager for a chance at those poor vic-  
tims, and Darklings haunt the lightness dungeons, hoping for  
a chance to lick blood from the fingers of their cruel Lady.

She keeps a stable of Antiquarians to maintain her  
library. Some find themselves physically bound to books  
— bonds they rarely find a way to escape — and others  
may be trusted with minor tasks of annotation. Sometimes,  
if an Archivist is willing to risk the Lady's wrath, he can  
find his own mortal name written in her books and thus  
a key to freedom. Leechfingers are set to tend the Lady's  
prisoners; often Leechfingers are former prisoners them-  
selves, now become the torturers. Stealing life from helpless  
captives is the first step to transforming the prisoners into  
Leechfingers, and the craving for life can kill the last shreds  
of humanity in a Darkling's soul.

## The Hedge

Here, the Hedge is razor-sharp, its Thorns sheathed in  
bitter ice. The merest brush can turn a changeling's flesh to  
snow. On the Lady's lands, the Hedge seems almost dead,  
leafless, brittle but also dense, and thick. Changelings de-  
feated by the Hedge hang like pitiable rags amid the thorns,  
helpless and hopeless; the Lady rarely bothers to collect  
strays who become trapped in the Hedge.

Darklings who creep along the ground claim the path  
is easier there. The lower you are, the better your chance  
of escape. Archivists draw painstaking maps, found in the  
Lady's books, on their own flesh with needles and hope the  
path they've copied is true and not some joke by the Lady.  
Leechfingers follow the warm trails left by the living, or tor-  
ture captives to uncover the path out. Hollows near this do-  
main are always bitterly cold; even fire burns blue and chill.

## BECOMING A DARKLING

Curiosity killed the cat, and satisfaction brought it back  
to life. Darklings know the joke. They look in the mirror  
and wonder what kind of life they've been brought back for.  
So many Darklings are taken by the Fae because the Dark-  
lings have gone someplace they shouldn't, they've opened a  
door that was supposed to remain closed or they've played  
tricks on folks who demand respect.

So it's the too curious — and the too careless — the  
Gentry transform to Darklings. The boy who goes through  
his grandmother's old attic finds a game meant for someone  
else. When he tosses those pearl dice, the Other he calls will  
be displeased to see who calls her. The Fae take trespassing  
and thievery very poorly as well, and what may seem to be  
an abandoned orchard to mortal eyes may very well be a Fae  
treasure. Stealing a single flower, or one fallen peach, can  
bring the wrath of the Fae down on a day hiker. Those who  
explore old myths too deeply, or supposedly deserted caves,  
may run across the Fae who are the source of the ghost stories  
or fairy tales — and they'll take their revenge on uninvited  
guests. Treasure hunters also fall afoul of the Gentry; trea-  
sure hunters may research old stories, hoping a myth will lead  
to far from mythic gold or antiquities. Unfortunately, what  
seems long abandoned may be anything but, and the Fae take  
poorly to treasure hunters pawing through Fae property.

Not all who are caught by the Gentry intentionally tres-  
pass but claims of ignorance or innocence are more likely  
to draw contempt than mercy from the Fae — who are not  
known for their mercy under the best of circumstances.

Once captured by the Others, mortals destined for the  
shadows quickly find themselves in a dark world where a  
creaking door signals an enemy and you can cast curses by  
spitting on someone's shadow. Many Darklings remember  
years that stretched lifetimes of imprisonment in total isola-  
tion and darkness, until that silence and darkness became a  
part of them. Others recall a world so full of treachery and  
deceit that they could trust no one and spent their durance  
looking over their shoulders and anticipating betrayal. The  
Gentry create Darklings by stripping away that part of mor-  
tal life that loves light.

They replace it with nothing.

Sometimes the way the Gentry do this is physical, using  
drugs or sensory deprivation, or strange experiments. Other  
times, they coax their captured mortal to make the neces-  
sary changes on her own, with lies, promises and — always





for the Darklings — fear. The Gentry may offer the Darkling a glimpse of her lost family if the Darkling consents to a potion made from ghostly blood. Other times, a lost bet means a young changeling must trade her eyes with those of a frog's. Bit by bit, Darklings trade, bargain or simply have stolen away pieces of what they were as mortals and learn to accept the strange things they receive in return. Though not all Darklings remember it, there is always one loss that is never replaced and that, they believe, is what makes them Darklings as opposed to some other seeming.

Light. There is something in mortals that Darklings can sense, but don't have, that turns toward light and life. It makes mortals what they are to Darklings; beautiful, tempting and... appetizing. It's ripped from the very spirit of a Darkling by their Keepers. Sometimes it's destroyed, sometimes it's locked away in a bottle or a hidden chest. But it's always gone.

That emptiness becomes part of what a Darkling is, stretched thin and hollow. Some Darklings try to fill themselves with the life of others, becoming Leechfingers. Others pursue knowledge, either to reverse what has been done with them or find something else — better — to quiet the soft murmur that reminds them that they are not what they once were.

### *Born in Darkness*

Darklings often possess Merits that enable them to avoid conflict. Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Fast Reflexes and Fleet of Foot are all appropriate, as are Merits that represent the privations of their durance such as Iron Stomach, Natural Immunity or Toxin Resistance. As a further means of keeping themselves safe, many attempt to gather Allies, Contacts or a Retainer upon their return.

When a Darkling starts to slide into madness, one of her first instincts is to retreat. Many suffer from Depression, sport a Phobia or Inferiority Complex or must struggle with Suspicion or Avoidance. When these derangements shift in severity, it can be difficult even to find the Darkling to offer her help.

## THEIR SURROUNDINGS

Many Darklings don't like to live with others, avoiding roommates, or group homes, even apartments. Even when necessity demands such things, Darklings often have a secret bolt-hole whose location only they know. Hollows created by Darklings aren't often shared among anyone else — even their own motley. They may give lip service to living in a freehold's mansion or estate (if the freehold has such things), but Darklings will almost always have another, secret room somewhere else.

Some Darklings are even leery of claiming they have a home, afraid that someone will see such things as a weakness, or try and take it away. However, they crave the stability a home represents and the conflict between their fears and their long-denied hunger for connection means many Darklings have two or more places they call their own — some are known, others remain private. On the one hand, this shell game can make other Lost feel mistrusted, but on the other it almost always means that a Darkling can come up with an emergency bolt-hole should it be necessary.

Getting inside a Darkling's home is a challenge on its own. Darklings favor goblin locks and entrances hidden behind sliding panels, or piles of garbage. Sometimes, traps are bought from fellow Wizeded, trap burglars. The paranoia surrounding Darklings' homes can reach ridiculous levels in some Darklings, particularly those who spy and steal and break into other people's houses. It's a classic case of no honor among thieves, an adage Darklings know well. Darkling homes are only subtly marked with their Court and affiliation, if at all. They'd rather risk being considered a loose cannon than stand out from the background clutter of mortal life.

Within their homes, Darklings reveal much of their inner, private lives. Whether it's pictures of the mortal family they long for, dioramas of their Keeper's domain, carefully marked for an invasion that will never happen, or a collection of weapons, a Darkling's home is patterned after the hidden heart of its owner. There aren't likely to be windows, and usually their homes are broken up into several small, and defensible, rooms, but beyond that, a Darkling's home maybe unexpectedly cheerful, or as gloomy and disturbing as the worst fables about them. Since Darklings rarely expect to have anyone else inside their homes, it's rare for them to have common things such as extra chairs or a spare bed. Just as many Lost, Darklings may hoard money, or food or something else they were horribly deprived of by their Keepers to ensure they never again suffer such want.

Other Lost who work closely with Darklings come to accept this physical secretiveness and recognize the honor done to them when they are invited into a Darkling's home. Darklings take their responsibilities as a host very seriously and are quite sensitive to any insults, no matter how slight, to their hospitality. Because they recognize the importance of home, they are surprisingly likely to stand up and help defend another changeling's home if her hospitality is insulted, though this help may not be overt.

Because Darklings are so inwardly focused regarding their personal lives and their homes, it doesn't matter so much where they live. They choose locations based on convenience, and defensibility, so they might be living in the new subdivision outside a large city, or in a long-abandoned sewer off-shoot. This can result in awkward meetings between a scruffy, skulking Leechfinger heading back to bed after a hard night harvesting fear and a mortal soccer mom taking her plump and oblivious children to school. It can



be equally difficult — intentionally so — for anyone trying to track down and capture a Darkling because there might always be one more hideaway to investigate.

## INTERACTIONS WITH THE MORTAL WORLD

Darklings have a bit more trouble adjusting to the mortal world. They've been twisted by contact with darkness and stripped of the natural human connection to light; this makes it difficult to connect with the world, and people in it, the Darklings once belonged to. This disconnect can be seen in everything from the rather furtive way they speak — as if they're sure spies lurk everywhere — to the secret passages, hidden doorways and complicated locks that riddle their isolated homes.

Darklings have lost, just as many changelings, a certain security about their place in the world. Unlike the mortals the Darklings hide among, they are very aware that more powerful and crueler minds exist — and they have an unpleasant interest in humanity. They can't help but be amazed and dismayed at the confidence most mortals have in their place at the top of the world. The result is that Darklings mistrust most mortals for their ignorance, and therefore come across as untrustworthy themselves.

Mortals are best viewed from afar, most say. Darklings are drawn to mortals, as most Lost are, long to touch their child one more time, see the love in their father's eye again, but they only have to catch sight of their scrawny, inhuman shadows to know that's impossible. So, they generally satisfy their impulses from a distance. Because Darklings are supernaturally skilled in thievery and night work, they may do things such as break into their mortal family's home while everyone's asleep and crouch over the bed to watch over them. Darklings might bug phones, or rooms, do background investigations on their son's girlfriend or their wife's new husband. Those mortals singled out for such 'protective observation' often feel a creeping sense of being watched or followed. It's risky for the Darklings, too. A bony old Antiquarian caught loitering around his daughter's playground can expect to be accused of stalking, at best.

Mortals who anger Darklings face long, terrifying nights when every shadow can hide a changeling whose natural home is the darkness. Just as a Darkling isn't likely to directly reveal himself to a beloved mortal, a Darkling is even less likely to directly confront an enemy. Darklings fall back on old fairy tricks, with a malicious twist. Money found on the street and spent is discovered to be forged, criminal evidence is planted at an enemy's workplace, child pornography is found on his home computer. Most mortals who gain the serious enmity of a Darkling never know who is systemically destroying their lives.

And it's that sort of destruction Darklings favor. They aren't interested in a quick kill, or a clean fight.





They want their victims — deserving or not — to suffer, to lose their family, their homes, the lives that they knew. The Lost, who'd had so much stripped away by the Gentry, try to repeat that torment on their own enemies.

## FREEHOLD ROLES

Suspicion never quite leaves Darklings. Somebody's eye is sure to fall on the Darklings when treachery or trickery bring harm to their freehold, and in return the Darklings often feel (and rightfully) they are not entirely trusted. Most Darklings are also aware they are prone to mistrust and paranoia, so are they really under constant suspicion or do they only think that?

It certainly doesn't help that Darklings are the ones the freehold turns to when they want someone to spy on or double-cross outsiders. If you need to do something while your back is turned, the saying goes, get a Darkling to do it for you. Their natural aptitudes, their innate Contracts and their servitude among the Gentry all combine to make Darklings natural at spying, thieving and assassination.

All claims of sunny innocence aside, the Spring and Summer Courts have as many Darklings as their gloomier opposites. Darklings may be drawn to those brighter Courts as a way to fill their own need for brightness in their lives, or they may imagine it will be safer to hide behind the brilliance of Summer in full power. Just because the Summer and Spring Courts may hide their Darklings behind smiles and song doesn't mean they aren't there.

There are often particular offices that Darklings are well suited to, with names such as "The Summer Queen's Left Hand" or the "Shadow on the Path." They act as spymasters, watching over possible enemies and making sure that their own Court is clear of turncoats and undercover agents. Left to their worst impulses, a Court heavily influenced by a Darkling spymaster resembles something from the old Soviet cold war era where shaking hands with the wrong person can earn a trip to the Court's hidden prison.

## CONTRACTS OF SHADE AND SPIRIT

At some point in the past, the Gentry apparently bargained even with Death itself. While changelings may not have access to the great boons of immortality and unaging eternity granted to the True Fae, changelings can access lesser boons agreed upon between fae and death.

### GHOSTLY PRESENCE (●)

The dead are among us, unseen and unheard by the living. This clause allows the changeling to see, hear and speak to any ghosts in her area (same room, or conversational distance outside) in Twilight for a scene.

**Cost:** 1 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Wyrd

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The ghost is someone the changeling knew in life, or the changeling is a Gravewight.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The clause fails, but the changeling thinks she is talking to a ghost and holds a conversation with empty air.

**Failure:** The changeling cannot see or speak to the ghosts.

**Success:** The changeling sees, hears and can speak to ghosts in the area as if they were living.

**Exceptional Success:** The nearest other living individual is also affected by the clause — whether the changeling wants him to be or not.

### DREAD COMPANION (●●)

Normally the dead are barred from any interaction with the living. This clause thins that barrier. With Dread Companion, a ghost is given the ability to affect one sense (sight, touch, hearing) of everyone participating in the clause for one scene. If Dread Companion is cast indoors, everyone in a single room is susceptible to the clause; if the clause is cast outside, everyone within sight of the changeling using the clause is affected.

**Cost:** 1 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Wyrd

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The changeling presses a drop of her own blood to the forehead of everyone participating in the clause.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Instead of giving the ghost the power to interact with the living, a minor, malicious spirit gains the freedom of sensory interaction for the scene. The spirit will act in as cruel and vicious manner it can, with the sense available, for the duration of the scene.

**Failure:** The ghost is unable to interact.

**Success:** The ghost is able to interact with the living for the scene.

**Exceptional Success:** The ghost can be seen as well as whatever other sense has been selected. If sight was the chosen sense, then touch is the one added for free.

### HAUNTING INTERCESSION (●●●)

There are those who desperately wish for one more night with the departed: enemies seeking final vengeance or forgiveness, lovers hoping for one more embrace, mothers who did not get a chance to say goodbye to their sons. A changeling who invokes this clause gives a ghost one more chance to speak and be seen by the living.

**Cost:** 1 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Wyrd

**Action:** Extended (one success per target)

**Catch:** The changeling has set up a "dead supper": a complete meal served on never-used plates and silver, with a



place for everyone who wishes to participate in the intercession, including the ghost.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The ghost is not made manifest to the living; severe poltergeist activity is generated instead. For the duration of the scene, the location is full of loud roaring noises and horrible smells, hair and clothing are pulled and the like. The dishes are thrown and shattered; fragile objects are particularly subject to the poltergeist activity.

**Failure:** The ghost is not made manifest.

**Success:** The ghost materializes fully for the scene. The ghost can be interacted with as if it were alive, from conversation to lovemaking to violence.

**Exceptional Success:** The ghost remains material from sunrise to sunset, able to move freely and interact with whomever the ghost chooses.

### WAKING THE DEAD (....)

The dead tell no tales. Most of the time. Invoking this clause allows the changeling to call up a non-sentient echo of the dead and communicate with it. This ghostly shadow is not a true ghost but an echo without self-awareness or intelligence; the echo fades at the end of the scene.

**Cost:** 2 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Wyrd

**Action:** Extended (one roll per turn, target is four)

**Catch:** The changeling “feeds” the shade by wounding herself and offering her blood, taking one point of bashing damage per question.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The information provided is incomplete or incorrect in some significant way that is not immediately obvious to the changeling.

**Failure:** No shade appears.

**Success:** The shade appears, as if standing on top of its grave and will answer one question per success precisely and honestly. The shade will not provide any information beyond what is requested.

**Exceptional Success:** The shade will provide any important additional information that the changeling might not have known to ask for, or knew she needed.

### OPENING THE BLACK GATE (.....)

There is a barrier between the living and the dead, which can only be crossed at great risk. This clause creates a doorway between the mortal world and the Underworld. This passage cannot be created in the Hedge, or Arcadia; attempts to do so are quite likely to draw the attention of the Gentry.

**Cost:** 2 Glamour, 1 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Wyrd

**Action:** Extended (five successes; each roll represents one turn)

**Catch:** The clause is invoked at midnight in a mausoleum, and the changeling invokes the laws of hospitality while the clause is in effect.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The passage is one-way. Those who take it will be trapped on the wrong side. The living can only pass to the Underworld — but not back — and the dead can only enter the mortal world, not return.

**Failure:** No passage is created.

**Success:** A passage, the size of a normal door, is created between the land of the dead and the world of the living for one night. When the sun first breaks the horizon in the mortal world, the door shuts forever, and those on the wrong side of it will be trapped unless they find, or make, another exit.

**Exceptional Success:** The passage lasts for a lunar month. The dead and living can cross over in this location for as long as the location remains intact. If a changeling has used the catch to invoke this clause, she has to maintain the laws of hospitality only for that first night. The changeling has no mystical control over who uses this door; she can only control access in the usual fashion, by guarding it, locking it, bricking it up, etc.

### *Visiting the Underworld*

The Underworld is a highly dangerous place; a changeling with the strength to open the door has no guarantee of being strong enough to survive a visit. The entry point to the Underworld appears in different ways — a cavern with a black river flowing through it, a massive mausoleum, a long hallway or empty mansion. Many exits lead from this initial point deeper into the Underworld. The shades that reside here wait on the other side of the doors — mostly.

Most Darklings would grow even paler at the thought of setting foot in the Underworld. This dread clause is something they use either as a means to send a restless shade home or as a potential way of tricking an enemy into a terrible fate.

## ELEMENTALS

Elementals are the most diverse of any of the seemings and also, on average, the one least connected to the human world. Other than this lack of connection, it is difficult to make generalizations about Elementals, because they can be so different from one another. Elementals associated with radically different elements often have radically different physical and mental traits and similarly divergent attitudes about the world and their places in it. The only thing



they all share is the profound and deeply alien experience of being an intelligent force of nature.

While the Beasts had the minds of animals in Arcadia, almost all Elementals retained their thoughts and consciousness, but temporarily lost their humanity, and in some cases, all traces of their physical forms, as they became living lightning bolts, contemplative boulders or excitable and talkative brooks and streams. Many had the experience of completely losing themselves in these experiences and temporarily becoming utterly inhuman animate elemental manifestations. However, all of those who escaped Arcadia managed to retain their awareness and spent most of their time as living elements who knew they had once been human.

## MEMORIES OF ARCADIA

Of all the Lost, Elementals' memories of Arcadia are the most confusing and foreign. In addition to fragmentary glimpses of strange landscapes with castles of fire or forests of living lightning, most Elementals can also vividly remember the experience of being a living element. They were one living breeze amidst a huge wind consisting of hundreds of such breezes harnessed together by ethereal reins or a bolt of living lightning that flickered from place to place at the whims of its mistress. These memories are considerably more alien than even the profoundly strange experience of using the clause Become the Primal Foundation to become an element in the mortal world.

The most terrifying parts of most of these memories are the times when the Elemental vividly remembers forgetting her humanity, if only for a short while. For an Elemental, all memories of Arcadia, good and terrible, are filled with sensations and experiences impossible to experience in the mortal world. Some Elementals seek to recapture their memories in a much-diluted form by using the clause Become the Primal Foundation as often as possible, others either refuse to learn this clause or only use it in times of dire necessity, but all Elementals experienced Arcadia as a place immeasurably alien to their mortal lives.

The realms Elementals dwelled in are more varied than those of any others of the Lost. Elementals associated with each element come from entirely different portions of Arcadia. There are many dozens of elemental realms in Arcadia; three of the more common ones are the City of Brass, the Shining Network and the Flying City.

## THE CITY OF BRASS

Inside a circular wall of solid red hot solid brass stands a vast city that is a strange mixture of the modern and the archaic. In this city, modern-looking apartment complexes and futuristic official buildings many dozens of stories high stand next to minarets of red glass and exquisitely carved and gilded towers made of jasper. All of the buildings rise above black basalt streets inlaid with signs and sigils of polished brass.

This city is a realm of fire and earth. The fire Fae rule over the earth Fae, but all Elementals must obey both. It is also exceptionally hot, with much of the city near the boiling

point of water. The city contains decorative fountains of fire, swift and shining metal vehicles designed to look like predatory birds and other fierce and dangerous animals and bustling streets that rival those of Manhattan or Hong Kong.

Fire Fae, including sturdy *Ifrits* with faintly glowing scarlet skin as well as tall and stately beings with huge wings of brilliant yellow flame, are served by earth Fae who appear to be made of roughly carved stone or are scaled reptilian beings with scales of polished obsidian or bloodstone. Some fire Elementals become body servants or swift messengers, while others are transformed into decorative features, becoming fountains or sculptures of living fire for the duration of their time in Arcadia. Earth Elementals range from the lowest of laborers to guards, gladiators or workers in half-remembered smoke-filled factories.

Escape from the City of Brass always involves fleeing through one of the gates or in a few rare cases, over the wall. Beyond the city, the escapee's memories become chaotic and jumbled, and include images of islands of stone surrounded by rivers of glowing lava.

## THE FLYING CITY

This city is a realm of air, inhabited by Fae who are contained swirls of air surrounded by a dozen or more wings. The Lost brought here have their heavy flesh lightened with swirling currents of air and are given wings and feathers. Once fully transformed, most serve as messengers, body servants and toys for their inhuman masters, while some are or set to work maintaining the structure of the city. Treated more as machines than intelligent beings, Elementals who escaped from the flying city frequently have difficulty talking because the Fae may not have given the Elemental a chance to communicate with any other being for the entirety of the Elemental's captivity.

The Flying City rests in the center of a vast whirlwind. Similar whirlwinds can be seen in the distance, as can vast clouds and huge perpetual thunderstorms. The city itself is an ethereal creation of brightly colored glass, like a city made from the fragments of thousands of vast stained-glass windows. Some portions of the city are literally held by one or more Elementals, who spent their time in Arcadia as living, intelligent building materials who held the structures together with their clawed fingers and toes. Over time, some of these Elementals became fully incorporated into the fabric of the city and ceased to be separate beings.

Escape always involves a prolonged flight downward toward the distant, barely visible ground. Those who reach it often escape, but most Elementals who attempted to do so were either ripped apart by terrible attacking whirlwinds before they come close reaching the distant ground or captured and made into part of the city.

## THE SHINING NETWORK

While many Elementals associated with either electricity or light have memories of this place, only ones especially skilled with words or art have any real chance of conveying the strangeness that they experienced here. The Shining



Network is a realm composed of ribbons of mirror-bright metal that twist and curve in a complex three-dimensional array similar to a vast and overwhelmingly beautiful tangle of ribbon. The Fae and the Elementals are either swirls of light or crackling and jagged figures of living lightning that can traverse vast distances in seconds.

The tangles of metal ribbon are interrupted by even more complex constructions of metal and solid light that seem to simultaneously be vast sculptures, public buildings and arcane magical devices. Most Elementals are messengers, valued for their speed and skill at navigating the tangled ribbon-streets, while the easily bored Fae order others to race or battle strange beasts or one fight one another to the death.

Periodic doorways open to other, even stranger realms; most who pass through such doorways never return or are brought back only to be forcibly transformed into a portion of the fabric of the city. However, everyone who escaped eventually dared one of these portals.

## BECOMING AN ELEMENTAL

Although many Elementals hotly debate the question of exactly who is chosen to become an Elemental, most agree that the process of selection is far from random. Individuals abducted by Fae associated with various elements frequently seem to share certain features in common. However, the exact nature of these features is difficult to precisely determine, since they seem to consist of everything from details of temperament and physical form to utter ephemera such as what color clothing the person was wearing when she was abducted.

Common Lost folklore holds that everyone abducted and transformed into an Electricity-aspected Elemental was

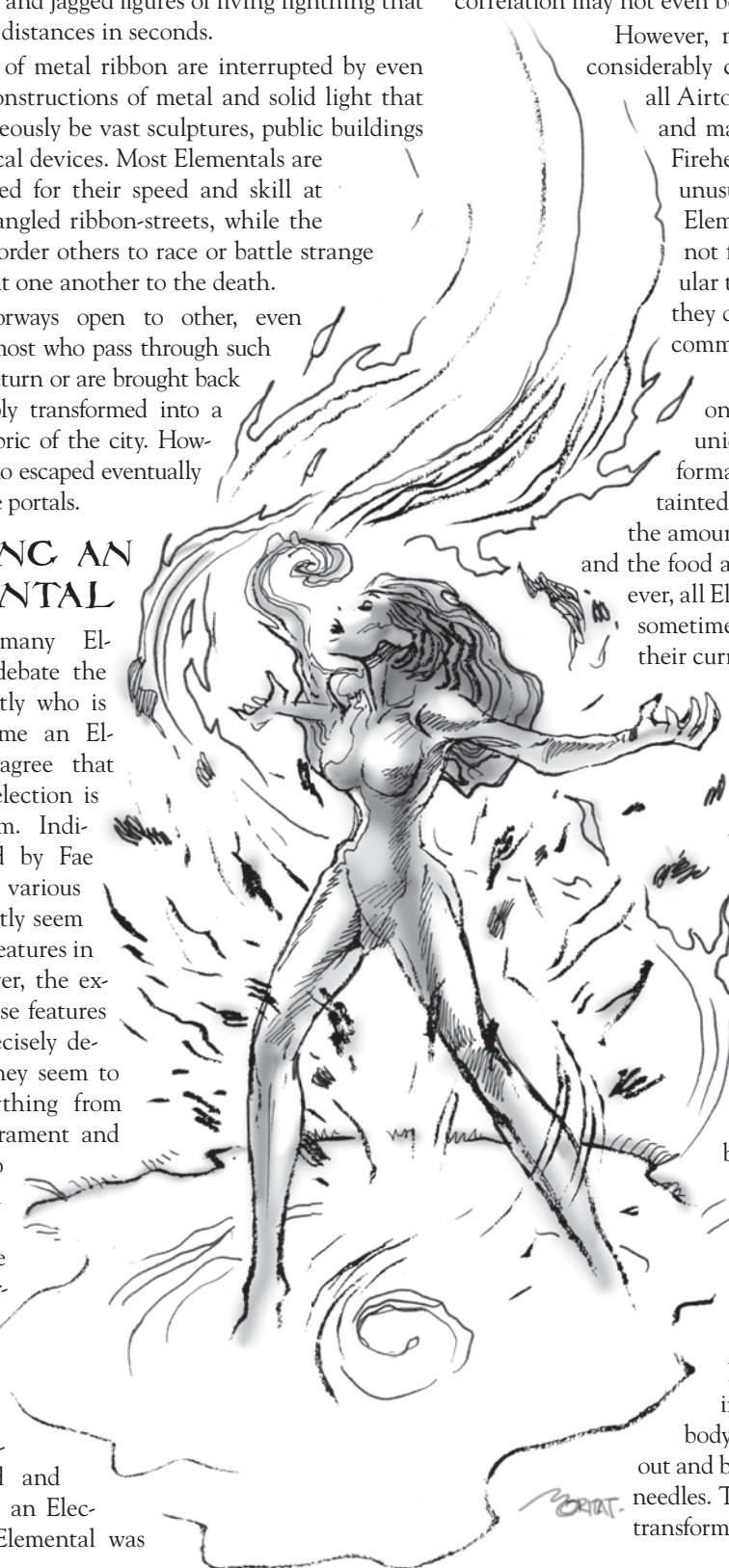
abducted while wearing or carrying some item of conductive metal such as gold, silver or copper. However, the list of possible items includes everything from silver rings to a roll of copper wire forgotten in a jacket pocket, and so this correlation may not even be true.

However, many of these correlations are considerably clearer and less trivial. Almost all Airtouched are relatively lightly built and many enjoy singing, just as many Firehearts have quick tempers and unusually swift reaction times. Most Elementals of a particular kith were not freakishly endowed with particular traits before their abduction, but they did often share a set of relatively common tendencies.

All Elementals also share one experience that is largely unique to their seeming: their transformation. The other Lost usually attained their present form as a result of the amount of time they spent in Arcadia and the food and drink they consumed. However, all Elementals were dramatically, and sometimes violently, transformed into their current states.

These transformations are wildly diverse and often exceptionally strange. For some, it was an agonizing process as their humanity was literally burned away while they were roasted over slow fires that burned with all the colors of the rainbow and gave off exotic smelling smokes. For others, their transformation was an utterly painless but horrifying process as they were immersed in vats of strange liquids until their bodies literally, but painlessly, dissolved away into living pools of water.

For many, it was presented as a horribly voluntary choice — the person could either slowly starve to death or he could eat the delicious-smelling fruit that gradually caused his body to grow bark and his hair to fall out and be replaced by leaves or evergreen needles. The Fae performed some of these transformations using futuristic devices





similar to those used on some of the Wizened. In particular, many of the Manikins were placed in strange machines similar to those used on a few of the Wizened, and some were operated on by small and twisted beings similar to the Grays who tormented many of the Wizened. In these cases, the Elementals were often taken apart like the Wizened, but were then reassembled using an assortment of new and different parts made from elaborate brass and steel clockworks, smooth flesh-toned plastic or perfectly molded bits of glass.

In many ways, the most terrible transformations were also the most passive. Most of the Earthbones were buried in Arcadia's earth or covered by piles of rocks and stones, while the Snowskins were simply stripped naked and exposed to the frozen elements. In both cases, the Elementals were left for as long as a few weeks, while their bodies slowly and painfully transformed into the element around them. For many Snowskins, their transformation was an experience filled with mixed emotions as the attainment of their Elemental nature removed much of their humanity but also allowed them to endure the bitter cold without discomfort. Similarly, many Earthbones first learned of their transformation as their new form allowed them to dig their way out of the earth they had been buried in.

As a result of the extreme transformations they underwent, many Elementals feel a distance from their bodies even greater than that experienced by the rest of the Lost. Some avoid looking in mirrors and consider their bodies to be foreign and fundamentally wrong. For the most troubled, attempts at plastic surgery, substance abuse and occasionally self-mutilation are all possible reactions.

Others have learned to embrace their new forms and consider themselves superior to mere mortals, but even these Elementals cannot forget that, regardless of the pride they take in their transformed and its unusual capabilities, the process of transformation was something inflicted upon them against their will.

Not all Elementals were forced to transform. A few initially welcomed their transformation as an escape from their humanity or their lives. These Elementals are some of the only members of the Lost who entered Arcadia of their own free will. The Fae told these changelings that they would replace their human forms with something new, alien and supposedly far more wonderful. Some of these eccentrics hated themselves or their lives or already felt deeply uncomfortable with or alienated from their own bodies. Others were so filled with grief or other negative feeling that they thought the only escape was renouncing their humanity, and a very few were so in love with the element that they jumped at the chance to truly become a part of it. Unfortunately, the Fae never tell the entire truth about anything. In addition to watching their bodies irrevocably change in deeply alien and often horribly painful ways, these unknowing volunteers also did not understand that the price of this transformation was an eternity of servitude to cruel and uncaring masters.

Only a very small number of Elementals willingly agreed to their transformations — certainly only a few of them returned to the mortal world. The vast majority of these changelings will never admit this fact to anyone but their most trusted companions, because most of the Lost look upon anyone who willingly gave up her humanity as either an utter fool or a vile abomination who is likely still in league the Fae.

### *Physical and Mental Relics of Transformation*

Many Elementals return to the mortal world with profoundly different bodies. As a result, Physical Merits are quite common. The particular Merits depend upon the element the changeling is associated with. Airtouched and Firehearts often possess Merits such as Fast Reflexes, Fleet of Foot or Quick Draw, while Earthbones often possess Merits such as Giant, Iron Stamina or Strong Back, Woodblood often possess Iron Stomach or Toxin Resistance and many Waterborn possess the Strong Lungs Merit.

Their experiences in Arcadia often distance Elementals from humanity in especially profound ways. Among Elementals, Irrationality is especially common as they briefly lose contact with reason and the logic of the human world. Fixation and Obsessive Compulsion are also common among Elementals who have lost at least some degree of emotional understanding for human life and ordinary human reactions. These unfortunates attempt to precisely mimic what seem to be appropriate reactions and behaviors and become exceedingly distressed whenever they fail.

## THEIR SURROUNDINGS

Elementals are in the odd situation of having profound ties to humanity and to the elements. Although Elementals have the same human drives to social interaction and companionship, they also possess a strong attraction to their associated element. Even Elementals who remember their time in Arcadia with nothing but hatred or fear feel an unconscious attraction to their element. During a windstorm, the vast majority of the Airtouched feel exhilarated and more alive, and many will have at least brief flashes of memory of being a living breeze, just as a Fireheart associated with electricity usually has similar reactions during thunderstorms or when in the vicinity of an electrical substation.

Elementals are unconsciously drawn to colors, textures, sounds, scents and other sensory input associated with their element. The apartments of most Airtouched can most easily be described as light and "airy" with mobiles and gauzy hang-



ings that move in the breeze, lightly built furniture and thin curtains instead of doors. Naturally, most Elementals recognize the origins of their preferences, and some consciously and deliberately resist these urges, consciously choosing to live in surroundings that are as antithetical as possible to any desires associated with their nature. However, even these sad and uncomfortable Elementals have not escaped from the influence of their nature; they have merely intentionally made themselves unhappy in an ultimately futile attempt to refute the transformations they have undergone.

## INTERACTIONS WITH THE MORTAL WORLD

Elementals often have a difficult time relearning life in the mortal world, especially those who spent their entire time in Arcadia as a sculpture of living flame or some in similarly alien existences. Some remain profoundly quiet as they relearn the desire for speech, while others explode into bursts of often rather awkward conversation after it was been denied them for months, years or even decades.

Regardless of their immediate reaction to freedom and return to the mortal world, Elementals are the most alien of any of the Lost. The Elementals' essential nature is now in part that some inanimate substance such as stone, fire or even plastic. When a mortal or one of the Lost who is not an Elemental looks at a crackling bonfire or a rushing river, he may feel various emotions and sensations based on what these scenes means to him, but he will never be struck with memories of once being a crackling bonfire or a current in a rushing river. Elementals stand between the world of humanity and the inanimate world. No matter how much some of them wish to deny this fact, their connection to their associated element is as important to their psyche and their existence as their connection to humanity.

One of the most important aspects of the existences of all Elementals is how they choose to deal with the fact that they partake of an elemental nature and a human nature. Some deny it; others attempt to use and express this connection through various forms of art or performance. Although often socially awkward, some Elementals are consummate artists or performers using the subtle languages of sculpture, dance, writing or music to attempt to express sensations and reactions to the physical world that no human has ever experienced. Those who succeed in conveying these impressions are often widely acclaimed as unique visionaries.

Others attempt to spend time with humans who have a close connection to their element. Airtouched may seek out the company of hang-glider enthusiasts or high-altitude construction workers, just as Firehearts spend time with experts in pyrotechnics special effects or firefighters and Manikins tied to metal may look for bronze sculptors or people working in a factory that casts or forms huge quantities of metal. Because of their connection to their element and their powerful elemental Contracts, Elementals often excel at working with

their element. As a result, they can often either find employment in professions related to their element or excel at a hobby connected to it. In this way, they often find a community of mortals who at least to some degree share the Elementals' fascination and understanding of their element.

Elementals who lack some way to attempt to bridge between their Elemental and human nature can easily drift apart from humanity, becoming increasingly isolated and eccentric as they spend more time talking more to the fire in their fireplace than to any of the mortals around them. Other Elementals grow deeply troubled by how far they became removed from humanity while they were in Arcadia and spend much of their time and effort after their escape attempting to refamiliarize themselves with human life. These Elementals often initially reject all contact with other changelings until it becomes clear that they can not simply return to their mortal lives. Even once it becomes clear that they cannot fully return to their previous lives, they attempt to look and act as normal as possible, seeking to deny on an unconscious level the fact that in a very profound way they are no longer fully human.

## FREEHOLD ROLES

Elementals are so diverse and their connections to humanity are sometimes so tenuous that other Lost rarely have expectations about what role an Elemental will take in a freehold. The most common assumption is that Elementals will be among the freehold's most eccentric members. However, because of some mixture of their outlook and general manner, and the aura of elemental power that surrounds them, many changelings get along well with Elementals. Among many of the Lost, Elementals have a reputation for being solid members of any freehold, and for usually having much to offer to it.

In many cases, Elementals are especially prized because their Contracts can be exceedingly powerful and are some of the most effective at dealing with the inanimate world. However, not all Elementals excel at such Contacts or wish to use the most powerful manifestations of their elemental connections at the beck and call of others. More than any other seeming, Elementals are taken on an individual basis because they are so exceptionally diverse. However, their differences are also a source of the reason they are often liked or at least easily accepted by most of the rest of the Lost. Their distance from humanity often means that they have a similar degree of distance from the petty rivalries and infighting that is the hallmark of so much of changeling society.

Unless they are obviously involved in a particular disagreement, many changelings consider Elementals to be neutral parties in most minor social conflicts. Not infrequently, everyone involved in such a conflict is willing to listen to the opinion of an Elemental who knows of but is not involved. Other changelings do this on the assumption that the Elemental will have the most even-handed and impartial view of the situation. As an extension of this practice,





many Elementals also end up as advisors who work with the freehold's planners and strategists, providing a unique point of view on various issues. Sometimes their lack of connection to humanity limits their understanding of various situations, but at other times, Elementals can see the obvious truths and the best solutions to a problem more clearly than anyone else because of their unique nature and unusual perspective.

## CONTRACTS OF COMMUNION

Instead of commanding or becoming an element, changelings who choose to pursue Contracts of Communion learn to communicate with the element and can eventually relate to their chosen element on a deeply personal level. As with Contracts of Elements, Contracts of Communion are purchased separately, each Contract attuning itself to one particular element. For example, a character assigning all his beginning five dots in Contracts could purchase Communion •• (Water) and Communion ••• (Ice), or Communion • (Fire), Communion •• (Earth) and Communion •• (Metal). Similarly, learning new versions of already known clauses is half the cost (round down) of learning a new Contract.

### SENSE ELEMENT (•)

The changeling first learns to precisely sense her chosen element. The results of this differ from one element to the next, but in all cases, she can sense the precise location and form of the element.

**Cost:** 1 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Wyrd

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The changeling sits and meditates for at least 10 minutes and makes a successful meditation roll.

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character's perceptions become confused, and she experiences a -2 penalty to all Wits rolls involving perception for the next full scene.

**Failure:** The Contract does not allow the character to perceive the element.

**Success:** The character can precisely locate all instances of the element within Wyrd x 10 yards of her. She knows where all of these instances are and their precise shape. Sensing metal allows the character to sense all knives, guns or other metal weapons within range as well as learning whether the guns are loaded or have their safeties on. Sensing electricity allows the character to determine the exact location of all wiring behind the walls of a house or other building. When using this clause in conjunction with an appropriate talent (sensing metal while picking a metal lock, for instance), success provides a +1 bonus to all appropriate rolls to work with the element.

When sensing fluid or intangible elements such as water, air or shadow, the character learns the location and

general shape of anything surrounded by these elements. Sense Element (Air) allows the changeling to clearly perceive the shape of every person and object within range, just as Sense Element (Water) allows the character do to the same with anything and anyone who is underwater. This does not allow the character to detect entities concealed by supernatural power, though; the power interferes with what is, after all, a rather basic trick. The changeling must still make perception rolls where appropriate; a character hiding from the Elemental usually still gets the benefit of stealth, as remaining close to cover can deceive the clause.

The clause's effects last for one scene.

**Exceptional Success:** The character can sense the element at a range of Wyrd x 25 yards.

#### Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
-2	The character's senses are either restrained with blindfolds or similar items or overwhelmed with loud noises, bright flashing lights, intense smells or other distractions.
+1	The character speaks to the element and asks it questions at the volume of a normal conversation.

### PRIMORDIAL VOICE (••)

The character can talk to the element and ask it about past events that it may have sensed. The character can only learn about fairly recent information, but otherwise the element tells the character what she wishes to know. However, the character can only ask the element about events that occurred near where she is asking the question.

This clause can be used once per scene.

**Cost:** 1 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Socialize + Wyrd

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The character makes a minor offering to the element — polishing metal she is going to talk to, sweeping flagstones, singing for the air, adjusting the lights to make shadows larger, etc. In addition to the effort involved, such efforts also take at least a few minutes of time.

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character receives false or misleading information from the element.

**Failure:** The character learns nothing from the element.

**Success:** The character can ask the element about anything that occurred within the last day. Each additional success rolled allows the character to ask about events that occurred another day before. Rolling three successes allows the character to learn about events three days ago. For the next five minutes, the character can talk to every example of the chosen element that is within Wyrd x 3 yards.

The information the element provides depends upon the particular element the changeling is talking to. Light pro-



vides visual images of the past, air provides sounds, including speech, while solid objects can provide details of how and when they were used, including images of the fingerprints or handprints of anyone that touched the objects. The elements can also answer general questions such as if anyone touched or walked through them in the last 12 hours as well as the number of people and when such events occurred. Details are typically inexact; the air in an office will probably differentiate between “worker” and “visitor,” but may not know the difference between “male” or “female.”

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to being able to reply to questions about events up to five days in the past, the element is helpful and talkative, possibly offering potentially useful information without being asked or volunteering details about a situation that the character might not have otherwise asked about.

### Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
-1	The character is brusque and hurried when asking her questions.
+1	The character chats with the element before using the Contract and is friendly and polite.

### DISTANT CONNECTION (•••)

The changeling can share the senses and experiences of distant examples of her element. In addition, with additional effort, she can ask these distant examples of the element to perform actions for her.

**Cost:** 2 Glamour and (optional) 1 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** Wyrd + Persuasion

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The character wishes to share the senses or ask a favor of an example of the element she is extremely familiar with, such as the wood of or air in her home or the metal in her car.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character temporarily loses connection with her element and suffers a -2 penalty to all Contracts of Communion and the Elements for the next scene.

**Failure:** The changeling cannot communicate with the element.

**Success:** The changeling is able to share the senses and experiences of manifestations of her chosen element beyond the range of her senses. For ubiquitous elements such as air, earth or water on a lake or ocean, the character can sense the element and all major disturbances in it at a range equal to Wyrd x 30 yards. For elements that are not ubiquitous, such as fire, electricity or metal, the character has a range of Wyrd x 300 yards.

A character using this Contract on air or on water while out on a lake could sense any large relatively rapidly moving objects such as cars or trucks, boats, large fish or submarines. Similarly, a character sensing fire could locate

every lit match, candle, campfire or cigarette within range, and a character sensing water in a city could sense every pipe full of water as well as every drinking fountain, fire hydrant or tap that was in use.

In addition to sensing the element, the character can also focus her attention on a specific manifestation of the element. She then extends her senses so that she can see an area around a specific lit cigarette or running faucet or see any specific location containing a ubiquitous element, such as air. The character can see and hear everything occurring within a radius of (Wyrd) yards, centered on the manifestation of the element.

If the character spends a point of Willpower and makes another Wyrd + Persuasion roll, she can persuade a single manifestation of the element to briefly become more powerful and direct its power. The character could make a lit cigarette burst into flame and potentially set anything within a few inches on fire. She could also cause a light bulb to explode, a running tap to surge with water and splash everyone within a few feet of it, an electrical socket could shock someone a foot or two away or air to blow papers off a desk or a hat off someone's head. None of these elemental manifestations can be stronger than the element could theoretically do on its own — a cigarette cannot suddenly flare up into a campfire, and none of these bursts of power last more than one turn. The character can affect the element as often as desired, but each attempt costs one point of Willpower.

**Exceptional Success:** The character can affect a manifestation of the element that she is looking through for an entire scene by spending one point of Willpower and can affect any manifestation of the element she is perceiving. Exceptional successes on either the initial roll or the roll to affect the element have the same effect.

### ELEMENTAL SERVITOR (••••)

The changeling can call up the element to act as her willing ally.

**Cost:** 3 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Wyrd + Persuasion

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The changeling performs a significant favor for the element, such as thoroughly cleaning a public fountain, spending an hour or more polishing a large stone statue or hanging up ribbons and bits of paper for a wind to blow immediately before using this clause.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The servitor animates (see below) for two turns, but it reacts in a wild, unpredictable and dangerous fashion and will attack anyone nearby, including the changeling.

**Failure:** The character fails to animate the element.

**Success:** The changeling successfully persuades the element to become animate and act as his ally for the next full scene. The element becomes an intelligent elemental being





capable of obeying the changeling's commands and observing the world. The elemental being is approximately as intelligent as an especially smart dog. The elemental being can obey any relatively simple command and notices obvious threats or dangers to the changeling or itself. The changeling must touch, or at least place her hand within a foot or so of the portion of the element she wishes to animate. The amount of element the changeling can animate is equal to five square yards of volume per point of the changeling's Wyrd.

In addition to any advantages granted by the element (such as fire being able to burn flammable objects), these elemental beings also gain Power, Finesse and Resistance Attributes similar to ghosts or spirits. The elemental being's Power and Resistance equal the changeling's Wyrd, and the elemental being's Finesse equals the number of successes the changeling rolled when using this Contract.

However, the changeling can only animate the amount of the element present. If she can animate water and is in a room with only a single glass of water, then the glass of water is all she can animate. In addition, all three of the servitor's traits are also limited by the amount of the element that is present. A two-pound rock will not, if animated, demonstrate four Power and Resistance. The changeling gives the elemental being basic commands when invoking the clause and can issue other commands as desired. As a result, a servitor can fight alongside the changeling, while allowing the changeling to fight, run or otherwise act independently. The elemental being remains animate for one scene.

**Exceptional Success:** The servitor remains active for a number of hours equal to the changeling's Wyrd.

## Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
-2	The changeling asks the elemental being to do something that will harm or diminish itself.
+1	The changeling asks the elemental being to do something that will allow it to increase, such as asking a fire to spread.

## ELEMENTAL ALLY (•••••)

The changeling can imbue an element with intelligence and animation. The element can only become animate for a single scene, but the elemental ally retains intelligence and awareness of its surroundings for several days.

**Cost:** 3 Glamour + 1 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Wyrd

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** When first using this clause on the element, the changeling negotiates with the element, promising some service or other payment in return for having the element as a temporary ally. Successfully bargaining with the element and paying its price are the catch for this clause. The favor asked is invariably hazardous, arduous or expensive.

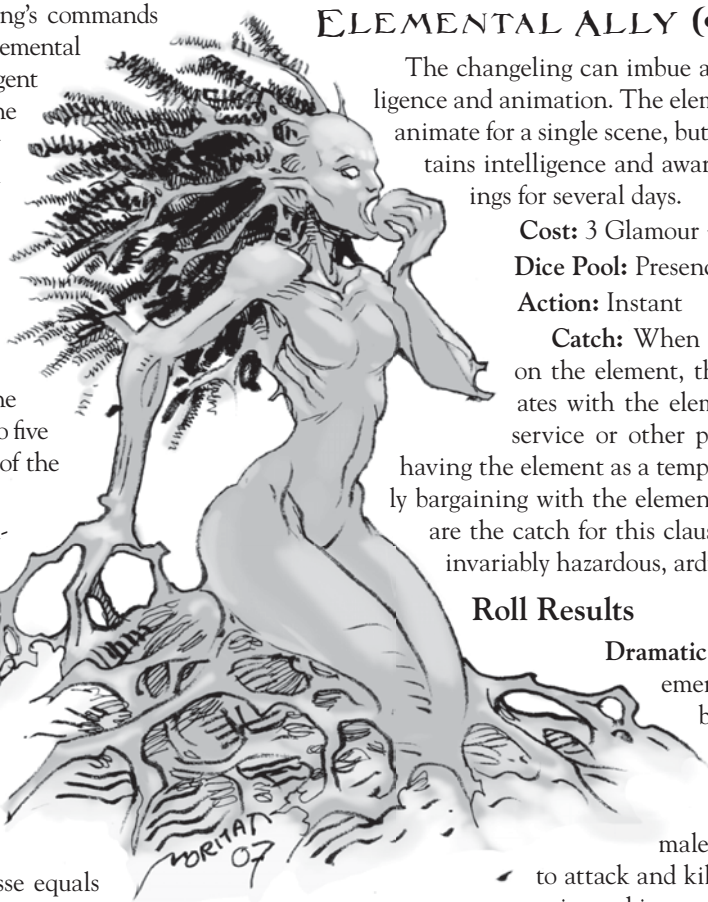
## Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The elemental animates (see below) for a number of turns equal to the changeling's Wyrd but is wholly malevolent and attempts to attack and kill the changeling who animated it.

**Failure:** The character fails to animate the element.

**Success:** The changeling successfully imbues the element with intelligence, awareness and the ability to become fully animate. The element remains intelligent and aware for one week. However, the element can become animate for only one scene. While animate, the element has all of the physical capabilities of the elemental being described in the Elemental Servitor clause. When the elemental is animate and when it is merely intelligent and aware, the element is as intelligent as a human and can clearly sense the environment around it with sight and hearing as keen as a human's. These senses extend to a range of up to the changeling's Wyrd x 10 yards, unless blocked by some obstacle. For the duration of this Contract, the element is well disposed to the changeling and obeys any request that will not result in the element's destruction. The element cannot, however, leave the immediate area of its animation, whereas an Elemental Servitor could follow the changeling as far as possible before the clause's effects expired.

The element is perfectly willing to keep watch over the surrounding area and report any activities to the changeling. In addition, the element is willing to animate itself in response to some event indicated by the changeling. These events can be anything from a command issued by the changeling when





he is in range of the element's senses to some event such as a person attempting to break into a nearby building, a specific individual that the changeling has shown the element a picture or video of coming within range or simply at a specific date and time. As long as the element does not have to seriously endanger itself, it will obey any command by the changeling.

**Exceptional Success:** The elemental ally remains aware and intelligent for an entire month, although the element can still remain animate for only one scene.

### Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
-2	The changeling asks the element to do something that stands a good chance of harming or destroying the element.
+1	The changeling has previously used this Contract on the same manifestation of the element, without causing any harm to the element after animation.

## THE FAIREST

The life of a Fairest is often a mixture of pride and regret. Most suspect that the reason they were abducted by the Fae is that they had some especially impressive quality or talent. For most Fairest, their abduction and transformation served to enhance these talents, and now they take pride in being the most beautiful and talented of the Lost. However, this pride is mixed with an awareness that they would not have been ripped away from their lives and their loved ones and subjected to various horrors if they had not been as special or perhaps as prideful as they were. Also, for some the fact that they now have more talent or beauty than before their abduction means that their talents or beauty are no longer truly part of them. Balancing the natural joy and pride in being accomplished and acclaimed for their skill and beauty with the awareness of what these talents cost them is one of the central paradoxes of the lives of many Fairest.

## MEMORIES OF ARCADIA

For the Fairest, one of the most difficult things about their mangled memories of Arcadia is the illicit pleasure of some of them. While most of the Lost remember either endless fear and torment or at best endless drudgery punctuated only by occasional punishments and at most brief moments of reward, many Fairest experienced a greater mixture of pleasure and pain. They were rewarded with ecstasy beyond mortal comprehension when they pleased their masters or mistresses and punished with ghastly torments when their efforts were considered less than satisfactory. In a few cases, these punishments only consisted of an interruption to a series of otherwise endless and vastly addictive pleasures — or so the stories go. In the instances of changelings who claim to have left such places, one can never be sure just how true their “recollections” are.

Most of the Lost talk about how the Fairest dwelled in the loveliest and most wonderful portions of Arcadia,

but these realms were almost always as terrible as they were wondrous. Three of the more memorable are the Shining Metropolis, the Garden and The Menagerie Dome.

## THE SHINING METROPOLIS

Stories of this realm sound like decades-old visions of the wonder-filled high-tech future. The city is a glorious construction of shining granite and exotically colored and brilliantly polished metal, with walkways and sky bridges of transparent polished glass. Along these streets walk tall noble beings in shining robes, while above them fly streamlined flying cars that are vehicles and mobile works of functional art. The residents lead elegant and pleasure-filled lives, where their every need is taken care of by shining machines that hover in the air and speak in soft mechanical voices. When the residents move against rivals — and the Gentry are quick to move against rivals — they make war from comfortable tower rooms, where they can watch their constructs and servants spill out blood in perfect detachment. And when the wars are done, for entertainment the Fae seek out skilled performers and beautiful concubines, whom the Fae control using special metal circlets welded to the flesh of the performers' foreheads.

These circlets allow the Fae to reward performers who please them with sensations of indescribable pleasure. Those who fail to entertain instead receive “lessons” combining excruciating pain with mental images of their failure. Neither reward nor punishment leaves any mark upon the performer's flesh. Body-servants or concubines are rewarded and punished in the same manner. Other than the necessities of their jobs, the inhabitants of the Shining Metropolis never touch one another, and expect their servants to behave in a similar manner.

These Fairest have complete freedom of movement, but if they ever step outside of the areas permitted to them, the metal in their flesh fills their bodies with intense agony. Escape either involves the Fairest finding some way of destroying or cutting out this band of metal or summoning the strength of will to overcome the pain until they are out of range of the Shining City's agony projectors. The hardest part of this escape is that last few hundred yards before they are out of range, the pain is always instantly replaced by equally intense pleasure.

## THE GARDEN

This realm is a vast beautiful garden perpetually in late Spring, where huge, brilliantly colored flowers abound and never fade. The buildings are living plants where every leaf and stem are perfectly arranged for the comfort of their inhabitants. The Fae and the Fairest who inhabit this realm all have green and brown skins and often have flowers or leaves instead of hair. The Fae here breed various animate plants, including elegant attack plants with a variety of cunning thorns, venoms, caustic nectars and strangling tendrils. These plants allow the Gentry to stake out their own domains within the garden, with kaleidoscopic topiary labyrinths keeping their rivals at bay. The changeling captives





here are often set to tend the homicidal plants and the Fae who enjoy them; while Woodwalkers and Woodbloods make up some of the enslaved gardeners, the Fairest are expected to tend particular plants on the grounds of aesthetics. If a Fairest would look attractive standing next to a particularly prized blossom, then it becomes his job to care for the flower as if it were his own child, no matter how badly it savages him in the process. Punishment with thorny whips and worse awaits any whose neglect leads to torn or wilted leaves.

Life has its fleeting moments of tranquility for those who perform their duties well. The Fae reward excellence with the taste of the sap of iridescent poppies that bring mind-numbingly wondrous hallucinations. The Fae make certain that all changelings here receive this sap at least occasionally. For most, the lack of these draughts is the worst punishment they can imagine. Only the strongest-willed ever escape the garden.

## THE MENAGERIE DOME

This realm is a gigantic dome made of ivory and jade set in an ornate and carefully tended meadow ornamented with decorative walls and a multitude of sculptures. Inside the miles-wide dome are exquisite pavilions of precious stone, brilliantly colored scented woods and vast expanses of silk where the Fae and their attendants dwell. The Fae here are fond of chimerically monstrous forms, beautiful in strange ways — opalescent patchwork semi-dragons, kingly manticores with a plurality of elegantly envenomed tails, vulture-cockatrices with majestic plumage. Most of the Fairest here are Draconics, kept to tend to the Fae who cannot abide the touch of anything or anyone who does not partake of their primal nature. Draconics who please the Fae are rewarded by receiving vividly real memories of being actual monsters of immense power and majesty — those who fail the Fae are given equally vivid memories of humans who are slowly devoured alive by terrible creatures. The customary infighting between Fae is surprisingly low here, as none of the grand beasts choose to leave their domains. Regrettably, that typically means that when a great wrath passes over their mercurial moods, there are no better targets at hand than servants.

The only other Fairest here are typically Muses, who are all the most flawlessly beautiful humans the Gentry's hired hunters can find. The elegant monstrosities have a curiosity for the human form, particularly the strange configurations it can be pulled into. Muses reside in delicate cages that intermittently fill them with such intense pleasure and joy that they are happy to assume various postures or even to deliberately injure themselves to better illustrate the absolute limits of the human form. The Fae do nothing to prevent the escape of either type of changeling except to reward any Draconic who captures an escapee with especially vivid and lasting memories, letting the Fairest police the actions of others of their kind.

## BECOMING A FAIREST

The Fairest are the Lost who are most certain of the reason for their abduction. Although the exact reasons differ (and some have been forgotten), each had a particular

talent — a unique beauty, an exquisite voice, an unusual degree of skill with a musical instrument or some similar gift. Before their abduction, some of the Fairest worked and honed their natural talents to the best of their ability, while others simply accepted them as interesting quirks, and sought a different direction for their lives, but all were well aware that they had something that most people lacked. Unfortunately, the Fae also noticed these gifts.

The Fairest often experience less dramatic physical changes than most other Lost. The Fairest's appearance transforms, and some of these transformations may be significant, but their bodies often remain much as they previously were, so as not to impair their abilities. In addition, one of the hardest parts of readjusting to life in the mortal world is realizing just how much many have gained from their experiences in Arcadia. Performers usually become significantly better after enduring years or occasionally decades of torment at the hands of masters who punished them for any imperfection in their performances. Similarly, individuals who were already noted for their charisma, beauty or sensuality have often had their bodies and their behaviors sculpted and refined by the Fae so that mortals and the other Lost see these Fairest as even more persuasive, striking or seductive than they were before.

These "improvements" are often in qualities or abilities that the Fairest valued highly before their abduction, but the suffering they endured to attain them and the fact that they were forced to improve by cruel, inhuman beings who cared about nothing except these traits make the results a very mixed blessing. Many of the Fairest occasionally feel conflicted or afraid when praised for their skill or beauty. Too often, this praise either reminds them of the praise they received in Arcadia or of the fact that one reason for their prowess is the torments they endured.

A few of the Fairest react to such thoughts by doing their best to either never perform their skill or to dress and act in ways that deliberately detract from their beauty or charisma. The rest of the Fairest look upon such individuals with pity, but nevertheless understand the reasons for such drastic decisions. Many Fairest are haughty and overbearing regarding their beauty or skill. While many mortals and Lost regard such Fairest as overly vain and proud, most who affect this manner do so because they firmly believe that the high price they paid for their beauty or skill means that they should do their absolute best to obtain whatever benefits they can, to attempt to balance the scales of their lives.

In many cases, Fairest are transformed to resemble the Fae who abducted them, which often makes looking in a mirror a disturbing reminder of their captivity. It seems to reflect the solipsistic vanity of the True Fae that a Keeper's idea of beauty often matches his self-image (though it's also true that other seemings may arise in the same way). Bright Ones share kinship with ephemeral Fae who can switch between faintly glowing forms of inhuman beauty



and elegantly glowing balls of light, and are often transformed merely by dwelling for a while within these Fae's softly glowing realm and partaking of their food. Similarly, the Flowering may have been abducted by gloriously lovely plant Fae who infuse the changelings with draughts distilled from special transformative saps.

Draconics often faced the most difficult transformations because their masters and mistresses were monsters of vast and terrible beauty whose methods of transformation were particularly ungentle. In some cases, a dragon Fae literally swallows the newly abducted person whole, transforms her within its body and then lays an egg with the newly formed Draconic inside. Conscious and aware during most of this process, Draconics must claw their way from their eggs and then serve their new masters well or risk being devoured again.

Many Muses had the most terrible experiences in Arcadia, although some of them return with their bodies largely unchanged. Most Fairest are abducted to serve the Fae — either as performers, lovers or simply especially lovely servants. However, Muses are abducted solely because of their decorative value. In some cases, this just means that Muses are given no duties beyond always looking beautiful and are horribly punished whenever they move in a way that is at all clumsy or graceless. However, often the Fae make certain that the Muses will have no chance to ever appear imperfect or ugly. The Fae literally freeze these Muses in place. The Fae turn some Muses into living stone, but simply render most completely immobile. These Muses remain conscious and aware of the world around them, but cannot speak or act in any way. Some are kept in one position for eternity and never have a chance to escape. However, most are owned by more fickle Fae who regularly free them, order them to wander around to be admired at a party or simply to move to another location or change the position of their limbs and then freeze them in place again. These periodic periods of mobility allow the Muse to maintain his sanity and eventually provide a chance for escape.

## THEIR SURROUNDINGS

All Fairest endeavor to surround themselves with beautiful things, but their definitions of beauty vary wildly. Some collect fine antiques or valuable works of art, while others amass extensive and exquisite collections of seashells, butterflies or leaves. However, there are also many Fairest who collect kitschy decorative figurines, dolls, or even beer cans. Such collections serve as touchstones to the physical reality of the mortal world as well as a chance to display their perfect collection and their expertise to others.

However, whether they collect anything or not, Fairest are also well-known for seeking out things that make their daily lives more pleasant. When possible, Fairest are frequently willing to spend extra money on especially pleasant soaps, soft towels and other minor pleasures as well as

## Traces of Arcadia

In Arcadia, Fairest often gain Merits that reflect the way the Fae honed their talents. The most obvious is the Striking Looks Merit, but Ambidextrous, Fast Reflexes and Inspiring are also all relatively common among Fairest whose minds and bodies were altered to maximize their grace or charisma.

The results, expectations and demands placed on the Fairest by their Fae masters also often remain well after one of the Fairest has escaped into the mortal world. As a way to reassure themselves that they truly mastered their lessons, some Fairest fall prey to Narcissism or Megalomania. However, contrary to many of the expectations and stereotypes of other Lost, Inferiority Complex and Anxiety are both equally common maladies. Many Fairest continually doubt that even their best efforts have any worth or still fear that their best efforts are insufficient to spare them from punishment. Fairest performers often suffer from either Fixation or Obsessive Compulsion associated with their performances, as they agonize and obsess over even the most minor imperfections in their art.

fancier and more expensive items such as gleaming espresso makers or fine food. After years of alternating pleasure and pain, many seek comfort and beauty in their lives and surroundings because they grew used to the pleasures of Arcadia and also to help banish fears of punishment.

The Fairest are the Lost most likely to live with others. Even when Fairest are not living with their families or with others of the Lost, Fairest often have roommates. The close presence of humans or changelings helps to keep Fairest happy and connected to the mortal world. After having the constant company and all-too-intimate attentions of the Fae, many Fairest find that they become seriously depressed and sometimes even begin to doubt their own reality if they are alone for too long. Living with humans or other Lost helps remove such fears. Living with others also allows Fairest the chance to continually prove their freedom by negotiating the rules for their shared dwelling, demonstrating on all levels that they no longer need obey the orders of their mistresses.

## INTERACTIONS WITH THE MORTAL WORLD

One of the challenges most Fairest face after their return to the mortal world is that their life in Arcadia contained almost as much wonder, joy and ecstasy as horror, pain and suffering. Fairest whose mortal lives become un-





pleasant or even tedious and unrewarding may look on the hazy fragments of memories of Arcadia with an almost wistful longing. Those who do not recognize such thoughts as warning signs sometimes wander into the Hedge and do not return. As a result, the vast majority of Fairst attempt to make certain that their lives in the mortal world remain enjoyable and intense.

The most common stereotype among the Lost is that the Fairst are all sybaritic hedonists. While regularly indulging in intense sensory experiences is one way to maintain a strong connection with the mortal world, it is far from the only answer. Some Fairst work with people. Muses often find the interactions and the joy they require in the brilliance of the artists they inspire. Similarly, many Fairst performers find great pleasure in working with other performers and joy and meaning from their connection with their audience and their passion for their art.

Other, more idealistic Fairst find their connections to the mortal world in either the causes they embrace or the people they aid. Regardless of the particular methods they use, most Fairst who wish to remain in the mortal world make a particular effort to take an active part in the world and to find an abundance of joy and pleasure in their lives. Although some embrace solitary pursuits, and occasionally lose themselves in legal or illicit intoxicants or solitary challenges such as extreme sports or carefully planned robberies, most find more satisfaction in pursuits involving other people, in part because Fairst are used to the attentions of others and the vast majority enjoy the praise, adulation or even just the acknowledgement of others.

All Fairst remember the glorious praise and inhumanly wondrous rewards of their masters, as well as the terrible punishments that awaited those whose efforts failed to please. Human praise and recognition serve to fill the need for acclaim that most Fairst now possess, as well as help to reinforce the fact that the range of human reactions to the Fairst's actions is considerably safer and less devastating than those of the Fae.

Many other changelings assume that the Fairst consider themselves to be above everyone else. While some do, and many adopt this manner as a way to gain much-needed self-confidence, in truth this haughty manner just as often conceals a continual fear of censure and an overwhelming desire to please that most Fairst desperately suppress out of a mixture of shame and pride. The most terrible moments for many Fairst are those when some chance comment or situation too closely mimics the orders or reactions of their Fae masters. In an instant, a proud Dancer can assume an expression of cringing fear, or profound and desperate longing that other Fairst instantly recognize. After



particularly extreme reactions, Fairest can have intense reactions ranging from binges of intoxication lasting several days to performing all manner of reckless stunts or occasionally attempts at suicide.

Of course, not all of the Fairest are proud and flashy. The years or decades of often-painful instruction they obtained in their appearance, behavior or art means that many know far more about learning and teaching various skills or behaviors than ordinary mortals. While the Muses are the most obvious example of such Fairest, some members of other kiths also turn their attention to teaching or inspiring others. These Fairest are often far less outgoing and noticeable than their fellow Fairest who concern themselves with displaying their own talents. Instead, these Fairest become demanding teachers and exceedingly determined sources of inspiration. Some are cruel and emulate the Fae who "taught" them, but most Fairest are carefully avoid making those whom they teach or inspire suffer, and remain strict perfectionists who give unqualified praise only to the most perfect of results.

## ACE AND THE FAIREST

Regardless of what the Fairest do, age is often crueler to Fairest than to others of the Lost. Although the Lost are rendered somewhat resistant to the ravages of time, beauty and certain physical skills still fade with age. As Fairest grow older, many must face the reality that the qualities that they are most renowned for grow gradually less striking and impressive. Most accept their mortality and seek to become teachers, Muses or critics. In this way, they maintain a connection to their beauty and talent they no longer possess. These Fairest cease being models, dancers, acrobats or gymnasts and instead begin the equally demanding work of training or otherwise aiding other younger individuals who share these pursuits and passions.

### *The Price of Life*

One of the more persistent stories some of the older Fairest tell one another is that the Fae can restore someone's youth in an instant. Unfortunately, they never do this without a high price. The most common tale is that in return for either returning a single specific individual to their clutches or simply returning a certain number of changelings to them, the Fae return anyone who works with them to the prime of that person's youth. There are sufficient stories of Fairest maintaining their youth far longer than anyone would expect them to be able to that these stories may contain some truth. However, it is equally true that their fellow Lost would certainly kill any of the Lost who were discovered to have done this.

However, others refuse to let go of their fading glory. Instead, they seek out obscure magicians, rare artifacts, little-known Goblin Contracts and a wide variety of other methods in increasingly desperate attempts to retain or regain their youth and beauty. Unfortunately, such methods are costly, difficult, fraught with risk or exact a terrible price on the user or possibly on others.

## FREEHOLD ROLES

One stereotype among the Lost claims that every Fairest wishes to become an autocratic and lionized leader. However, while some do, there are a great many Fairest who have no interest in public power. Some Fairest would greatly prefer to become the power behind the throne of a freehold, rather than having to deal with the many difficulties of being the public face of power and authority. Also, despite what they might want, a great many Fairest never attain positions of leadership in a freehold, in part because many other changelings worry that Fairest are the ones most likely to abuse their power and neglect or ignore the needs and desires of other changelings. Also, all Fairest must contend with the fact that a substantial minority of the other Lost consider the Fairest's seeming to be composed of stuck-up posers whose captivity was far less onerous than that of other changelings.

However, all of the Lost freely admit that when they need to deal with mortal authorities or complex social situations, no one is as skilled at either activity as one of the Fairest. Their natural talents and the various abilities and Contracts associated with their seeming make them the ideal members of the freehold to do everything from explaining a potentially problematic situation to the authorities to attempting to resolve conflicts with mortals and other freeholds. Many of the vainest and most self-important Fairest are perfectly happy to represent their freehold to the rest of the Lost. The fact that such Fairest aren't the ones actually in charge of their freeholds is a minor and tedious detail, easily overlooked.

The Fairest's skill with diplomacy and deception can also easily lead some of the less socially adept members of a freehold to fear that negotiations by the Fairest ultimately serve the interests of the negotiator over those of the freehold. Also, some changelings are jealous of the Fairest's beauty and feel a mixture of shame and anger when they compare the Fairest's physical perfection with their own imperfect bodies. As a result, Fairest can have an especially difficult time winning the trust or the friendship of the more grotesque or paranoid members of their freehold.

Often the best way to dispel such feelings is for the Fairest to offer freely their services to help other members of the freehold deal with various social complexities, such as helping other changelings sort through various problems in daily life, including dealing with hostile landlords, suspicious family members or unhappy employers. Serving as a



source of advice and an unofficial advocate for changelings who have particular trouble dealing with the complexities of daily life is neither glamorous nor often particularly enjoyable, but those Fairest who do this typically earn the devoted friendship of their fellow changelings, and sufficient amounts of such generosity can overcome almost any amount of suspicion or prejudice.

Another way in which some Fairest can serve their freehold is financial, because artistic skill is often far more timeless than other forms of career training, and more importantly because attractive people with good social skills always have an easier time finding well-paying jobs than those who lack either of these traits. As a result, Fairest are often the wealthiest members of their freehold and end up being asked to loan money, provide job references for or even lend out spare rooms to other changelings. However, well-off Fairest, just as all other well-off changelings, must balance the goodwill their efforts generate with a certain level of acumen. They don't want to be so open and giving that they are taken advantage of and their wealth and possessions start becoming seen as the common property of the freehold.

## CONTRACTS OF SEPARATION

One of the deepest truths about the Fairest is that they are at least somewhat removed from the realities of the physical world. The sense of superiority many feel sometimes extends to the mundane details of life and the rules that govern the physical world. This Contract, alternately said to be struck with tools such as scissors, axes or scythes, allows a character to draw upon and enhance this separation in ways that allows her to circumvent many of these limitations.

### TREAD LIGHTLY (●)

The changeling can partially remove herself from gravity's influence. She cannot fly or even jump further than normal, but she takes only bashing damage from falling, regardless of the distance. In addition, she can walk or run over any solid surface even if it would not normally support her weight, such as tissue paper or thin panes of glass. She can also walk across mud, dry sand or any other surface without getting her feet even damp.

**Cost:** 1 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Wyrd

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The character is wearing fancy and delicate footwear that would be ruined if she did not use this clause.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The changeling trips and falls, landing prone. She must take one full turn to regain her feet.

**Failure:** The clause has no effect on the changeling's movements.

**Success:** The changeling can move across any solid surface as if she weighed no more than a few ounces. She leaves no tracks, can run across snow without breaking through the surface and also takes only bashing damage from falls. Anyone attempting to track the character suffers a -2 penalty, due to the light impressions her footfalls make. The character can also climb up surfaces too fragile to support her normal weight, but cannot run, jump or climb any better or faster than normal. The effects of this clause last for the scene.

**Exceptional Success:** The character can jump twice as far and climb twice as fast as normal for the duration of this scene.

### Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
-1	The character is running or jumping.
+1	The character moves at a normal walking pace.

## EVASION OF SHACKLES (●●)

The character can automatically slip out of any handcuffs, straightjacket or other restraints.

**Cost:** 1 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Wyrd + Larceny

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The changeling has been unjustly imprisoned for some crime or offense she did not actually commit.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Knots grow tighter, locks jam and other attempts to remove the restraints suffer a -2 penalty.

**Failure:** The clause has no affect on the changeling's bonds.

**Success:** The character is instantly freed of all restraints such as handcuffs, straightjackets or shackles. This clause can open locked doors only if the character is in a small compartment, such as a steamer trunk or trunk of a car, that significantly restricts her ability to move her body.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to removing all restraints on the character, the door of any room the character is locked into automatically unlocks.

### Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
-1	The character has previously struggled against these bonds.
+1	Since she was bound, the character has remained calm and not attempted to struggle or free herself by force or dexterity.

## BREACHING BARRIERS (●●●)

The changeling can walk through any closed or locked door or window that he could fit through if it were open.

**Cost:** 1 or 2 Glamour



**Dice Pool:** Presence + Wyrd

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The character has been deliberately imprisoned by another changeling.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The clause fails, and the portal lets out a loud bang or thump as if character had tried to batter it down and failed.

**Failure:** The changeling does not succeed in walking through the closed portal.

**Success:** The changeling walks through the portal as if it weren't there. The door or window doesn't open, but the changeling simply moves instantly and effortlessly from one side of it to the other without disturbing it or setting off any alarms. This clause also leaves no marks or traces on the door.

**Exceptional Success:** If the changeling wishes, she can spend an additional point of Glamour and take along one other individual, as long as she holds this person's hand while walking through the door or window. The changeling cannot take along more than one person in this fashion.

### Suggested Modifiers

**Modifier Situation**

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| -1 | The changeling has no idea what is on the other side of the barrier.     |
| +1 | The changeling can clearly see what is on the other side of the barrier. |

### ELEGANT PROTECTION (....)

Attacks swerve to avoid the changeling. While using this clause, the changeling always looks elegant and poised when using her Defense or even while dodging.

**Cost:** 2 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Wyrd

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The changeling is unarmed and not attempting to attack anyone. If the clause is invoked while using this catch, the clause will instantly end its effects and burn away three of the changeling's Glamour if she attacks anyone while it is active.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character suffers a -1 penalty to her Defense for the remainder of the scene as all weapons swerve toward her.

**Failure:** The clause has no effect on the character's Defense.

**Success:** The clause adds the changeling's Wyrd to her Defense. The changeling does not lose this bonus even if she is restrained, immobilized or unconscious, since attacks naturally swerve to avoid her body. This bonus applies to all attacks, including firearms attacks and attacks made when the changeling cannot normally use her Defense. In such cases,

this bonus serves as the changeling's only Defense. Otherwise, it is cumulative with the changeling's normal Defense and is also added to the doubled Defense characters gain by dodging. In addition, even when dodging, the changeling always appears to be moving in an elegant and carefree and manner, and can use her Defense or dodge without spilling the cocktail she is holding or wrinkling her gown. This bonus to Defense lasts for two turns per success.

**Exceptional Success:** The Defense bonus lasts for the scene.

### Suggested Modifiers

**Modifier Situation**

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| -3 | The changeling is wearing armor.           |
| -1 | The changeling is ill dressed.             |
| +1 | The changeling is especially well dressed. |

### PHANTOM GLORY (.....)

The changeling temporarily becomes completely intangible. In this state, she is immune to all physical attacks and can pass through all physical barriers.

**Cost:** 2 Glamour + 1 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** Wyrd + Persuasion

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The changeling carries no weapons and wears no armor. If the changeling picks up or dons either while using this catch, the clause instantly ends.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The changeling becomes slightly less solid than usual, temporarily reducing her Stamina by one for the remainder of the scene.

**Failure:** This clause has no effect on the changeling.

**Success:** Becoming intangible requires one turn, during which the changeling can do nothing else. However, doing so does not cause her to lose her Defense. Becoming tangible again is a reflexive action.

While intangible, the character cannot be affected by any physical attack. She is effectively in a state of Twilight, like a ghost, and can attack or be attacked by ghosts or other immaterial entities as if they were both solid. Everything the changeling wears and carries also becomes intangible, but the changeling cannot make anyone else intangible, even if the changeling picks the person up and carries him (at that point, the other person would fall through her arms). While intangible, the changeling can freely walk or stick her head through walls, drawers and all other objects. She cannot walk on air, though she can walk on still water as if it were solid ground; moving water may require a Dexterity + Athletics check to successfully navigate. She might also be able to leap partly through a ceiling and pull herself up to the next floor.

If the character becomes tangible while part of her is embedded in solid or liquid matter, she takes three points of aggravated damage and is expelled to the nearest open space.





**Exceptional Success:** The changeling can pick up small objects (anything small enough to fit into her closed hand) while remaining intangible. The object becomes intangible once her hand closes around it. This may allow her to retrieve small objects from locked boxes.

## Suggested Modifiers

### Modifier Situation

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| -1 | The changeling is intent on attacking someone.                       |
| +1 | The changeling is being pursued and is not attempting to fight back. |

## OGRES

Not all fairy tales are things of delicacy. Some are downright brutal. The Ogres mirror that brutality, and indeed inspire it from time to time. Though they may be handsome or hideous, kindly or cruel, the Ogres embody a single unfailing precept: hard places breed hard people. They enjoy a reputation as stalwart friends and monstrous enemies, and it's not undeserved. No Ogre managed to become what he is without having to face violence. And it's a rare Ogre who isn't willing to face — or embrace — violence again to get what he thinks is important.

## MEMORIES OF ARCADIA

### THE FARM

*There's a shortcut through the farm but never take it. Take the long road, the hard road, the tired road. Take no rest in the farmer's fields. And never, never stop for a sausage and a drink.*

The fruit and fodder of Arcadia do not come from this land. Here, Mother Pick harvests nightmares and tears. Her rolling fields are beautiful to look at, from the far side of her fences; workmen tend the red-eared pigs, labor in the slaughterhouse or plow the fields. The farmhouse with its red-painted shutters looks inviting and warm. There's always ale and sausage set aside for guests and weary travelers. The farm's owner, Mother Pick, has a crown of braided hair as red as hearth fire, twinkling blue eyes and a silent, sunken-cheeked husband. Her hands are calloused from work and brutality, and her smile is everything a weary traveler looks for in a friendly hostess.

The slaughterhouse is most active at night. Pigs are driven, screaming, to the wicked knives of Pick's lump-shouldered servants. They work hard, knives rising and falling all night long because Mother Pick hates laziness. Lazy folk end up heels-high and dangling from hooks beside the pigs. Foolish folk end up on the griddle, and the blood of those who try fleeing is sticky on the floor of the slaughterhouse. Every one of Pick's workers has tasted her special sausages. None forget the flavor.

Ogres here are hardworking, dutiful folks, with nothing but kind words for their Keeper. She'll have it no other way. Gristlegrinders work in the slaughterhouse, wearing high rubber boots and with throat-cutting knives in their hands.

Sometimes the beasts beg for their lives, sometimes a fellow worker ends up on the butcher's line. Knives flash bright, and blood coats the floor like wine. Cyclopeans herd and farm, and keep watch for stragglers along the road to add to the supper pot while Stonebones stand as sentinels at the edges of Mother Pick's lands, watching for trespassers and fleeing prisoners.

### The Hedge

The Hedge is neatly trimmed along Mother Pick's back fence, a straight wall of glossy green leaves and sweet-smelling flowers all Summer long. It's tall here, taller than the greatest giant, and the pigs that root desperately for freedom at its base carry scars along their backs from its red tipped thorns. Hollows near this domain are usually found in farmland, or former farmland.

## HARDSCRABBLE HOME

*This once, this once believe when someone rescues you from the blizzard, from the rock-fall, from certain death. This once, the fairy tale has a happy ending.*

Arcadia is full of singing brooks and rolling hills, birds flying blue, cloudless skies and soft Summer breezes. Then there are the hard dry deserts, the trackless wastes and the hard roads through them. All of these lands are dangerous, and a refugee may never know whom he will meet when he flees through the unclaimed spaces.

Long-Arm Jack collects the Lost. He wanders one stony edge of Arcadia, huge sack tossed over his shoulder and detailed knowledge of every crack, cave and goat path on his land. His domain is a harsh one, with few inhabitants, but he's caught many new residents over the years. The isolation of his realm keeps away his neighbors — few Fae trouble themselves with Jack's barren kingdom. Hunting parties must ask his permission to catch prey, and he takes trespassing by other Gentry very poorly. He's a peculiar one among the Fae — not kind, but bound by his word, and not as hesitant to give his word when it suits him.

Many of his servants are changelings fled from crueler masters. Those who plead mercy from Long-Arm Jack, and swear seven years of service to him, are promised refuge from Fae hunters. Those who serve him well, and loyally, may find themselves gifted with tokens of endurance or, better yet, be released from their oath at the end of seven years. Long-Arm Jack thinks nothing of extending seven years into seven times seven, or then taking that another sevenfold... but sometimes he stops at seven. Those who try to shirk this duty and leave early, though — they go into Jack's bag, and that's the last anyone hears of them.

Farwalkers patrol the high mountains of Jack's domain, searching for other Lostlings, giving them shelter, leading them to Jack. Cyclopeans maintain Jack's prized fruit trees, and may have a chance to shake off their old habits of cruelty and cannibalism under his rule. It's a risky service; those who wander the Hardscrabble lands for Long-Arm Jack make enemies as well as friends. The work is backbreaking,



and ultimately they're at the mercy of a pitiless Other for their freedom. But those who serve Long-Arm Jack can still hope for freedom someday.

## The Hedge

Jack's realm is not close to the Hedge, but he knows some of its secrets nevertheless. He's been known to murmur a few of those secrets when he sleeps, or at least when he approximates sleep as best he can. Hollows maintained by Jack's former servants are usually basic but secure and welcoming in their simplicity.

## THORNS HOLD

*A vow is more precious than gold and when the Gentry fail their word, the great iron bells of Thorns ring. None can forget the noise, none can escape it and, it's said, none ever defy the Thorn Prince and his justice. So they say... and what fool believes any truth in Arcadia?*

The Thorn Prince marks his domain with a great jade and silver palace, where he keeps his armies, tends his politics and raises the blood red hounds that hunt by the scent of broken oaths. The great Fae depend on vows and Contracts, and when a vow is broken, their vengeance is harsh and inescapable. The Thorn Prince serves as their hammer.

The Stonebones, Gargantuans and Gristlegrinders of Thorns Hold are fearsome shock troops. The Prince takes only the strongest, the most ruthless, those of iron will as well as iron flesh. Farwalkers hunt fleeing oathbreakers, elusive, unshakable and unwavering. Water-Dwellers search out the smallest pond, or most secret sea cave for those who hope the trackless waves of Arcadia will hide them.

The Thorn Prince prefers mortal oathbreakers for his servants, and hunts them as well, traveling to the mortal world on dark nights seeking those who have broken their word, defied their

position in society or betrayed promises of love. With no more mercy for mortal failings, he twists those he captures into tools to punish others of their kind. Those brought to the Prince's heel because of broken oaths are always marked by iron manacles, dug so deep into their flesh that they cannot be removed and etched with the twisting thorn sigil of his domain. Even if the changeling manages to escape her Keeper, she remains forever marked by his mastery.

## The Hedge

The Thorn Prince patrols the Hedge. It's said that his armor and his weapons are made from the same Contracts that give life to the barrier between Arcadia and the mortal world. Those in his service, therefore, often know the Hedge fairly well and may be able to shed their Keeper and flee into its depths more easily than those serving under different masters. Hollows created near the Thorn Prince's domain are at high risk of discovery, for he knows the Hedge well, and hunts its paths often.

## BECOMING AN OCRE

Strength attracts strength, especially among the Fae. So, the Gentry seek out those who reveal powerful inner or outer strength — or crave such strengths — when they want to sculpt a monstrous Ogre.

They often choose mortals who have a finely developed sense of gluttony or rage: the bullying child who always wants to be king of the hill, the eternally hungry man who haunts the all-you-can-eat buffets. Fighters past their prime and bitter about it, parents who rule their children with fists and thrashings: these also interest the Others who are searching for a brutal pet (or the brutal Others who are searching for a pet). Sometimes, though, the Gentry will search





out those who are consumed with envy for strength, rather than already possessing it. So, the frail and weak who would give anything to be strong and powerful may be offered a deal they don't want to refuse by the Fae. Anorexics obsessed with food may find their worst nightmares come true, as they grow huge, when they fall into the hands of the True Fae. And, of course, the Gentry are always delighted with mortals who are willing to sacrifice themselves to save others; the clever younger sister who offers to take the place of her thuggish brother is as precious as gold to the Fae.

The Gentry may coax a mortal victim to their service by offering a greedy child a "special sweet" if they come to the Fae's home at twilight. They will give a broken-down brawler one more chance to beat down a younger, stronger opponent if the brawler promises seven years of service. They may simply whisper in the ears of a temperamental mother, over the years, until she becomes a hammer-fisted, fearful figure and is drawn naturally to her Keeper through years of subtle manipulation. Lost, starving travelers are a common victim of the True Ogres, as fodder for the stew pot and as likely candidates for service.

It's impossible to survive becoming an Ogre without a strong will (or stubborn streak), along with a powerful will to survive in the face of the worst miseries. Ogres' bodies may be broken and re-shaped, but their wills have to remain firm — especially if they ever hope to escape their Keepers.

Ogres are transformed by physical brutality, hard work and often the constant twin fears of more abuse and of ravenous hunger. A man may be chained to millwheels, hooks dug into his flesh and anchoring him to his endless task, grinding bone into flour for his Keeper. In turn, the horrible bread baked from such flour transforms him into a Gristlegrinder, with terrible, terrible teeth and a craving for human flesh he must battle upon his return to the mortal world. A young woman is brought to the base of a jade mountain by her Keeper; she's promised her freedom only if she moves the mountain out of the way of the Fae's favorite view. No kindly ants or mice come to help her so she toils for an endless Arcadian day, moving blocks of jade until her hair trails gray in the dust and her bones are the same jade as the stone she works.

A Water-Dwelling Ogre may be chained to a half-sunken ship, guarding a treasure of bones and gold. His only food is the raw fish he can snag from the sea, and the chain is just barely long enough to allow him to keep his head above water — sometimes — when the tide rises. Over time, eavesdropping on the Fae who sail the waters around him, he learns how to Lie Under the Waves and grows webbed feet and a slick, armored hide to protect himself. A rancher's brutality toward his own herd draws the attention of a Fae, who brings him to the endless plains of Arcadia where he is brutalized in the same fashion as the beasts he is set to guard. As helpless as the cattle he once mistreated, he becomes scarred, crippled and savage. Only after years of beatings by his Keeper does he long to rise above the cycle of violence he's trapped in, and begins to dream of freedom.

A captured teenager may be re-shaped and mutilated in a giant vat by the Fae who mimic mortal dreams of UFOs; conscious and horrified by the transformations done to her, a Gargantuan Ogre is helpless while massive muscles are grafted onto her flesh and her very bones are stretched until she towers over the tiny gray Keeper who uses her as a gladiator in bloody, alien games. After every victory, some part of her defeated opponent is grafted onto her body; flesh-tearing fangs, blunt horns and reptilian armor mark her battles. Sometimes, she is sure she hears the voices of her dead opponents, whispering to her at night.

Almost all of the transformations done to create Ogres are painful, brutal and prolonged. Some are torn to shreds, only to be re-built by their Keepers. Other Ogres change due to the constant grind of some heavy, hard work. The intensity of the situation is as painful for the mind and will as it is for flesh and blood, and many Ogres simply surrender to the monstrosities that are being done to them, and become willing servants of their Keepers. Even those who escape, becoming Lost, have probably spent years or decades struggling to recover their battered humanity well enough to find a path through the Hedge.

It's true that many Ogres are slow to speak and are accustomed to using their fists before their minds. That doesn't mean they're unintelligent. The Fae don't consciously bother to damage the minds of Ogre changelings, so whatever intellect and skills the changeling had as a mortal remain, buried under whatever habits and fears the changeling has learned in Arcadia. Of all the changelings, the Ogres are possibly at

### *The Brute's Scary*

Ogres tend toward Physical Merits, particularly those that focus on physical strength and endurance. Giant is a common Merit among them, representing a "growth spurt" undergone in Arcadia. However, the Mask can't hide such remarkable size; the Ogre appears mostly like the person he once was, but now considerably more immense. Some Ogres develop Danger Sense as a means to cope with the constant threats they faced, and some develop leadership skills during their durance or escape that would justify the Inspiring Merit.

An Ogre can suffer from any manner of derangements brought on by the savage challenges he's faced. They tend to begin with Narcissism, Suspicion, Vocalization or Irrationality. There's a distressing trend for Ogres to develop Multiple Personalities as a coping mechanism, in which the changeling's psyche splits into a vulnerable, almost childlike persona and a truly monstrous "protector" persona.



most risk of becoming like their brutal Keepers: cannibals, ham-fisted monsters, lurking trolls and deep-sea daemons that drag sailors to their deaths. Ogres have lost their bodies to the Gentry long ago; it's the Ogres' minds and hearts they seek to protect when they regain their freedom.

## THEIR SURROUNDINGS

Ogres are not in general creatures of incredible delicacy or refined taste. Their lives in Arcadia, which they recall with sometimes painful clarity, were lives of hard labor, physical want and brutality. As part of some Fae's foot guard, or wandering barren wilderness in search of trespassers, they rarely had goods to call their own.

Ogres retain this physical simplicity in their homes. They usually prefer either wide-open spaces — lofts and open floor plans or deserted warehouses, or they seek out dark, dim safe spaces with defensible entrances and the comfort of nearby walls to ensure they have no hidden, uninvited guests. Ogres are often physically odd looking, even with their seemings hidden, and do not generally spend a great deal of effort in creating homes that mimic mortal ones or welcome normal humans.

Some Ogres were craftsmen in Arcadia, though not as skilled as the Wizened, and if these Ogres are going to decorate their homes at all, they do it with the work of their own hands. For one thing, such work proves — to themselves, at least — that they are more than blunt clubs good for nothing besides fighting and eating. The work they often do is simple and large scale: masonry and furniture building (often necessary due to their unusual weight or size), iron work and building construction. In a surprising number of cases, an Ogre's home is spotless, either due to service as a Gentry's floor scrubber or in response to captivity forcibly spent wallowing in filth.

Though Ogres don't often own many goods, they are very territorial regarding home and neighborhood. The old woman with the oversize dentures may not be an official part of the neighborhood watch, but any drug dealers or pimps who move into the neighborhood may find themselves with broken kneecaps or missing fingers thanks to a Gristlegrinder who doesn't welcome that sort of business near her home. Just as many Lost, Ogres mark their homes and territory, letting others who can read their marks know who lives here and how to approach them. Even Ogres who've chosen to live in the wild, as many Farwalkers do, leave precise piles of stones or a living branch tied in a knot to mark what they consider their domain. They despise trespassers and can smell thieves and stowaways by their blood. If caught, a severe beating is the least a thief can expect from an angry Ogre.

Because of this, those who visit Ogrish homes know to respect their dwellings, no matter how rude or bare they seem. On the good side, Ogres eat — a lot — and they usually have huge stores of food and drink, sometimes of stunningly good quality. Being a glutton doesn't mean you have to eat bad food.

Ogres don't like to move. Once they've settled into homes and neighborhoods, they want to stay there, often for decades. They also resent changes to the area they live in; developers hoping to gentrify a neighborhood that an Ogre lives in may be faced with more than petitions when they try and tear down old housing for new condominiums. Ogres who live in rural areas may vandalize road-building equipment or tear down new subdivision houses every night after the building crew goes home for the day. Even reclusive Farwalkers, who may look as if they roam remote wilderness without rhyme or reason, usually have a central campsite or snug cave they return to repeatedly.

## INTERACTIONS WITH THE MORTAL WORLD

Though Ogres often look very odd to mortal eyes, Ogres often find it relatively easy to interact with normal humans. There is always work for people who can lift heavy things, are willing to take a few punches and won't ask any questions. Ogres can fill that role easily, sometimes too easily. It's a role they learned at the hands of their Keepers and dangerously easy to fall back into.

Generally, those Ogres who fall into the worst habits of their captivity do not seek to return to Arcadia, or the care of their Keepers. Instead, such Ogres are much more likely to set up their own little kingdoms, where their fists are the strongest. Combined with their territorial tendencies, this can result in an Ogre who rules a remote village with an iron fist, and a ravenous demand for fresh, newborn calves. Ogres who become cannibals may haunt abandoned campgrounds or deserted quarries, hunting campers like deer and stringing them up in smokehouses for Winter meals.

Even at their best, Ogres don't concern themselves overmuch with mortal law, or wrong or right — once they've agreed to a job, they see it through. In turn, they expect to be treated with the same dedication by their mortal employers; trying to double-deal an Ogre usually ends up in bloodshed. Water-Dwellers who fished and hunted find work on fishing trawlers or may work with the Sea Shepherds or Greenpeace, protecting the mortal world, which seems so fragile to them now. The same is true for those who end up on the wrong side of the law; a Cyclopean finds work as a fearfully battered thug who break knees for Russian drug dealers, the Farwalker who poaches brown bears and sells their gallbladders to Chinese herbalists or the Gristlegrinder who... well, who indulges her taste for child-flesh while pretending to be a friendly old woman who lives down the street.

Ogres can be good, loyal friends, even to ignorant mortals. Ogres don't make friends quickly; it often takes years for them to trust a stranger for more than gruff "hellos" and "get out of my way"s. However, once that friendship is gained, it's unwavering. They value courage, having seen so much cowardice in their lives and often have an undeniable soft spot for tenderness. They've often lost the capacity for tenderness themselves, and they value it in others.





Those who make enemies of Ogres know it, usually immediately, as Ogres use what they know best, their fists and brawn, to defend themselves or defeat opponents. Ogres aren't likely to use subterfuge to fight enemies, preferring to let them know exactly who is out to get them and why.

Ogres, similar to other Lost, often seek out their old homes and families; this drive is frequently what gave them the strength to flee Arcadia in the first place. And, once home, Ogres realize they cannot simply step back into their mortal lives. They must content themselves with watching their friends and family from afar, or by making new connections, becoming friends with their own families under new names and identities. While few are entirely content with pretending to be a friend to someone who was once a lover, this at least allows the changeling to be close to those she loves.

## FREEHOLD ROLES

A common thought that crosses any freehold leader's mind when she first sees an Ogre is *another thug to handle the rough work*. Of course. The result of that knee-jerk reaction is that many Ogres have little opportunity for anything beyond breaking bones and bashing doors when they work for their freehold.

Because they often speak slowly and are not quick with an opinion, Ogres are often compared unfavorably to the quicksilver minds of the Wizeden. Ogres are used to hard labor with little reward and have no habit of complaining, so they frequently end up doing the miserable, menial tasks that no one else in the freehold

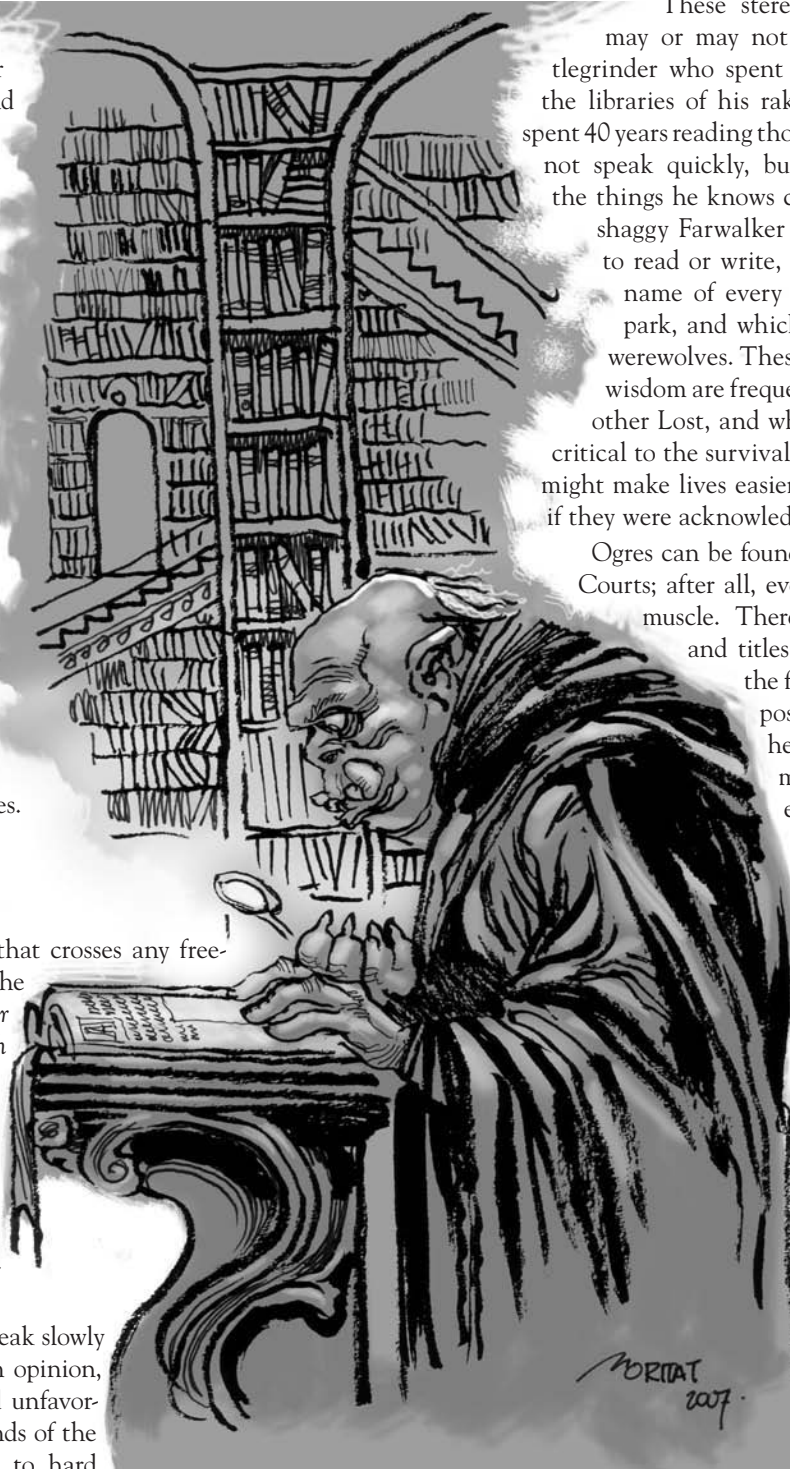
wants to bother with. Sometimes ungainly and sometimes oversize, they can be perceived as clumsy by the quick-moving Darklings and predator-graceful Beasts. And the Fairest are often polar opposites of the Ogres in almost every way.

These stereotypes, of course, may or may not hold up. A Gristlegrinder who spent 40 years guarding the libraries of his rakshasa Keeper also spent 40 years reading those tomes. He might not speak quickly, but given a chance, the things he knows can save lives. The shaggy Farwalker might not be able to read or write, but she knows the name of every plant in the local park, and which are poisonous to werewolves. These bits and pieces of wisdom are frequently overlooked by other Lost, and while they rarely are critical to the survival of a freehold, they might make lives easier or more pleasant, if they were acknowledged.

Ogres can be found equally in all the Courts; after all, everyone needs extra muscle. There are clear offices and titles for the soldiers of the freeholds, and these positions are often held by Ogres. They might be the "Oak-en Hammer of the Autumn Prince" or the "Shield of the Sun," and these offices, held with honor, can bring deep respect and admiration from the others in the freehold.

Even those who fit the ingrained archetypes perfectly are well worth cultivating as friends and allies, for the strength of an Ogre's will matches the strength of his body. When

Ogres give their friendship and trust, they'll move mountains — literally — for the sake of their friends.





## CONTRACTS OF OATH AND PUNISHMENT

The Gentry depend on their word, but even in Arcadia there are those who will break bread then betray their host. There thus develops a certain need for Contracts that allow a changeling to sense, pursue and punish oathbreakers. It's little surprise that these Contracts are most frequently taught to Ogres, who have something of a... gift for punishment.

### PURSUER'S SEVEN-LEAGUE LEAP (●)

A changeling who invokes this clause can leap truly prodigious distances. This allows the changeling to jump ravines or leap over buildings as well as long leaps over open ground for one action.

**Cost:** 1 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Athletics + Wyrd

**Action:** Reflexive

**Catch:** The changeling is pursuing an oathbreaker.

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The clause fails to activate. The changeling suffers a -2 penalty to make the jump roll.

**Failure:** The clause fails to activate.

**Success:** For every success, the changeling can jump 15 feet horizontally or eight feet vertically.

**Exceptional Success:** The clause additionally increases the character's Defense score by two for the turn.

### SENSE TAINTED VOWS (●●)

With this clause, the changeling can determine by touch if the subject has broken any oaths. The taint of a broken oath fades after a year and a day except for severe violations (such as a formal fae pledge) or a broken law of hospitality. This will also include violations that would not fall under the modern legal system, such as adulterers who violate their marriage vows (if their marriage vows included a pledge to forswear all others) or violations that seem minor, such as breaching a Terms of Service agreement for software.

**Cost:** 1 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Wyrd vs. Composure + Wyrd

**Action:** Instant, contested

**Catch:** The subject is swearing, or has sworn a pledge with the changeling.

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The changeling receives the wrong impression.

**Failure:** The changeling can't tell if the subject is an oathbreaker or not, and is aware the clause failed.

**Success:** The changeling is able to sense the most significant oath or vow broken by the subject that still lingers on the subject. "Significant" is determined by the subject's general understanding of the oath's importance, though the changeling

can still sense a broken vow even if the subject did not believe it was at all important. The clause tells the changeling the general nature of the broken promise, such as "marriage vow."

**Exceptional Success:** The changeling can sense any and all broken vows that still hang about the subject, and gets a faint impression of the details surrounding the most significant violation. For example, a changeling might know sense that an adulterous husband cheated with an alluring brunette in a sordid-seeming bedroom, even if specifics aren't revealed.

### INEXORABLE PURSUER (●●●)

Invoking this clause allows the changeling to resist attacks on her Clarity or any Court-derived emotional effects for the duration of the scene.

**Cost:** 1 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Wyrd

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The changeling has successfully resisted a Court-based emotional manipulation or attack within the past day.

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The changeling suffers a two-dice penalty to Resolve or Composure checks made to resist emotional or Clarity manipulation.

**Failure:** The changeling suffers mental and emotional attacks as normal.

**Success:** The changeling gains a two-dice bonus to any attempts to resist emotional or Clarity manipulation for the scene.

**Exceptional Success:** The bonus rises to five dice.

### RELENTLESS PURSUIT (●●●●)

This clause gives the changeling a general idea (direction and rough distance) of where his subject is, so long as they are under the same sky. The clause lasts from sunrise to sunset or sunset to sunrise. "The same sky" is defined as being in the same realm (Arcadia or the mortal world, for example), and the subject and caster are on the same day-side or night-side of the planet.

**Cost:** 2 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Wyrd

**Action:** Extended (number of successes equals every 50 miles between the changeling and the subject)

**Catch:** The changeling never stops to rest for more than 15 minutes in his pursuit of the subject. The changeling can ride cars or planes but must be the one driving or otherwise controlling the vehicle.

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The changeling is given a completely wrong direction.

**Failure:** The changeling cannot sense his subject.

**Success:** The changeling is able to sense the distance and direction of his subject.





**Exceptional Success:** Not only does the changeling know where his subject is, but the changeling gets a flashing vision of what the subject is doing at the very moment the clause is first invoked.

## CRUEL VENGEANCE (•••••)

Invoking this clause demands that the changeling publicly accuse her subject of oath-breaking. The changeling must also describe the oath or pledge the subject has broken for this clause to take effect. If the subject has, in fact, not broken this vow, the clause does not take effect. If he has, the clause grants him a brutal ability to punish his foe.

**Cost:** 2 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Wyrd vs. subject's Manipulation + Wyrd

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The subject of the clause is a member of the changeling's freehold.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The changeling suffers a two-dice penalty on his attack rolls on that specific subject for a month's duration.

**Failure:** The clause does not take effect.

**Success:** The changeling's damage is upgraded from bashing to lethal, or from lethal to aggravated, when attacking the target. In addition, his subject's Defense rating is reduced by 2, and the target suffers a -3 penalty to any dice pools made against the character.

**Exceptional Success:** The target's Defense loss is increased to -4 (to a minimum of 0), and the penalty to dice pools made against the character is increased to -5.

## WIZENED

The Wizened are often believed to be the least fortunate of the Lost; their time in Arcadia was a period of loss and malice ranging from backbreaking labor at best to unending, maddeningly pointless tortures at worst. For some of the Lost, the mere presence of one of the Wizened can serve as a disturbing reminder of events they would far rather forget. However, the Wizened's various abilities make them much in demand in various freeholds and Courts. Often, the Wizened end up being the ones who keep a Court or freehold running smoothly, even if others do not always notice the Wizened's efforts. Much as it was in Faerie, the Wizened get the toil and others reap the glory.

## MEMORIES OF ARCADIA

The Wizened's most vivid memories are of their torments and tormentors, but even for the Wizened, Arcadia was not without some beauty. Although their treatment was universally horrid, their surroundings were often wonderful beyond compare. Some remember fabulous clockwork houses; others dream of alien, but strangely compelling mecha-

nisms and vehicles popularly known as flying saucers. A few were imprisoned in exotic gardens or forests where their only company or solace was beautiful but poisonous flowers, trees of living glass or ferns that sang beautiful melodies.

Because the Wizened's surroundings were often the only element of their captivity that was not horrific or actively malevolent, most Wizened have especially clear memories of how the area of Arcadia they were confined in looked and felt. All of the realms of Arcadia are deeply alienating to anyone raised in the mortal world, but many are also strangely compelling, especially to anyone inclined to examine them with great care. Although Wizened spent time in many dozens of different portions of Arcadia, some of these realms appear in the memories of multiple Wizened, suggesting that some of the Fae make a frequent habit of capturing mortals.

## CITADEL OF THE GRAYS

From their strange citadels made of crystal and fungi, the Gray-skinned Others periodically venture forth in their peculiar chariots to torment mortals and to take the choicest back to their citadels for extended tortures. These citadels are separated from each other and the rest of Arcadia by a huge expanse of nearly lifeless desert lit by a large dim blue sun that never sets. The citadels that rise from this dismal landscape are vast mushroom-shaped masses of glittering rainbow-colored crystal.

Each of these small cities is an exotic mixture of elaborate constructs of brightly colored crystals and pallid fungi-like growths. These two materials form the structure of the citadels and are also part of the mechanisms used inside it. The fungi are all living machines, flexing and extending tendrils at the whims of the Grays, while the glowing crystals project beams of force that can do everything from incinerating the enemies of the Fae to pinning a captive to a wall with glowing manacles of force.

Some Wizened escape by stealing one of the Grays' chariots, which inevitably crash in the Hedge, forcing the occupants to flee on foot into the mortal world. Others flee into the nearly lifeless desert and find a way into the Hedge before they starve or the desert's deadly radiations slowly kill them. Those who escape from here often retain some of the features of the Grays, including large featureless black eyes, slight builds and pallid, hairless skin.

## THE MECHANICAL FOREST

The Lost who find themselves here are captured by beings resembling huge mechanical insects, with shining, razor-sharp mouthparts. None remember their journey to Arcadia, but a few recall awakening as the hulking metal insects cut the captives out of strange cocoons of fine silvery wire. Wizened taken to this portion of Arcadia find themselves in a realm halfway between a huge heavily automated factory filled with insectoid robots and an enormous forest where the plants and the insect-like inhabitants are entirely



mechanical. Everything except the Wizened is composed of shining jointed metal, colorful wires and arcing electricity.

Many Wizened return from here with strange silvery scars, complex lines of metal inlaid into their flesh, limbs missing or jointed metal limbs that work as well or better than the originals. Some are put to work, servicing and repairing the mechanical trees and smaller mechanical beings, including some who are Elementals with bodies of electricity and jointed metal. Because of the horrors the Wizened face whenever they make the slightest error, these Wizened often become exceedingly skilled in their work and learn to use their knowledge of the forest to enable them to escape.

Memories of escape often include being chased by mechanical spider hounds, dodging the talons of robotic trees that attempt to bar their path and sometimes escaping alongside Elementals whom the Wizened grew to know during their captivity. The most difficult portion of this escape is when the Wizened leave the mechanical forest and must cross a plain filled with huge and jagged metal shards before stumbling into the softer embrace of the Hedge.

## THE CAVERN WORLD

Near some of the dismal realms where Darklings dwell are a series of huge caverns. They are lit with glowing clouds of mist hovering high in the air. The caverns are inhabited by a multitude of twisted and spindly goblins. In some caverns, the goblins are divided into a few distinct types, each of which has a different function and status, but in most each goblin is horribly unique, with distorted features, extra limbs and occasionally limbs that divide into a forest of strong and nimble tentacles. Here, most Wizened are captured to serve as menials. They are forced to work as Chirurgeons, Brewers, Smiths, Soldiers and other less definable professions. Their goblin overseers horribly punish any failures and rarely acknowledge success with anything more than the absence of torment. Here, Wizened sometimes come into contact with either Ogre laborers or Darklings who carry messages or goods for masters dwelling in the deepest and most forbidding caverns.

Memories of escape from the cavern world are quite varied. Some played dead during one of the various goblin riots and snuck off when their bodies are thrown on refuse piles, while others gained a tiny measure of their masters' trust and were sent on errands from which they never returned. The only ways out are tunnels down into realms inhabited by Darklings or up through narrow tunnels inhabited by the hungriest and most desperate goblins. Those who survive these tunnels emerge into the Hedge, and thankfully find that only a few of the most powerful goblins could endure the sunlight and open air.

## BECOMING A WIZENED

Although the common perception is that literally anyone can be abducted and transformed into one of the Wizened, in actuality, many people who become Wizened

often share a few common features. Most were not particularly well connected to the world around them. A few were recluses, homeless people or social outcasts, but most were simply somewhat disconnected from the people around them. Some had few friends or relatives; others had both but were always on the outskirts of their social circle. Although the Fae left behind fetches after most of these abductions, more Wizened lack fetches than any other seeming. Because many Wizened were somewhat detached from the world around them, they were more likely to end up in precisely the wrong place at the wrong time. However, many were simply incredibly unlucky. Also, while many Wizened were somewhat isolated before they left the mortal world, others left behind loving families and dear friends who usually never even knew the person was gone.

The widespread observation that Wizened are either smart, good with their hands or at least clever and highly skilled at thinking on their feet has far more to do with which Wizened managed to escape than with whom the Fae chose to abduct. Wizened who were continually tortured almost never manage to escape. However, after months, years or occasionally decades of abuse, even the immortal Fae eventually begin to grow bored with their latest victims. At this point, there are several possible options for the Wizened. The Fae simply kill some of their captives in particularly artistic or bizarre ways. Others vanish for "special treatment" and are never seen again. However, any who seem as if they might potentially be useful to the Fae are released and ordered to perform various useful tasks. These tasks range from serving the Fae directly to repairing and servicing the various devices the Fae use to, on a few horrific occasions, assisting in the torture of new victims. Any Wizened who refuses or fails too often at any of these tasks faces a return to their previous existence of endless torment and are usually soon either killed or transformed into mindless burbling horrors.

Of the lucky and skilled individuals who are released from their torments and set to serving those who abused them, only those who are especially clever or dedicated manage to escape. Unlike the other Lost, Wizened must sufficiently impress the Fae to be freed from torment and put to work and then be clever enough to escape from this servitude. As a result, those Wizened who make it back to the mortal world are the best of the best. However, most Wizened know at least a few other, less clever or less fortunate victims who either died, suffered horrific transformations or are simply still serving the Fae.

Some of the Wizened who attempt to search for meaning in the horrors inflicted upon them believe that they were originally abducted to serve some specific purpose just as the rest of the Lost. These Wizened feel that, just as for the Elementals and many Beasts, the initial purpose of the Wizened's torments was to transform them into a member of one of these seemings. However, for some unknown reason these transformations failed and instead of simply destroy-





ing or freeing them, their captors decided to use these failed changelings as helpless toys. Although there seems some evidence for this in that the relatively brief transformations undergone by some other changelings seem similar to the prolonged torments of a few of the Wizened, it's impossible to know the full extent of an Other's intention.

The process of actually becoming one of the Wizened is ultimately a process of loss followed by attempts to find compensations for this loss. Some Wizened are transformed physically and mentally solely to satisfy the pleasure or curiosity of their captors, others are remade into forms their captors consider more useful, but in all cases, this transformation removes something from the Wizened.

The details of the tortures the Wizened endure are exceedingly variable and limited only by the vividly twisted imaginations of the Fae who captured them. Some Fae inflict pain and altered bodies using exquisitely made glass knives and beautiful tools carved from gemstones that are works of art as well as instruments of pain. Others use exotic-looking machines whose strange blinking lights and multi-colored crystals disguise the fact that they can be used to inflict torments well beyond human endurance. A few Fae use a more "natural" approach and have exotic carnivores lay the eggs of their ravenous young in the bodies of the Wizened.

The only common factors of these varied forms of abuse are the techniques used to sustain the Wizened during their ordeals. One of the most terrible things about the torments the Wizened undergo is that there is literally no escape. For ordinary mortals, torture eventually results in unconsciousness, often soon followed by death from shock as the victim's body proves unable to endure what has been done to it. Unfortunately, the enchantments and mechanisms of the Fae sustain their helpless victims well beyond ordinary mortal limits. Even when their beating hearts are removed from their chests, Wizened captives remain alive and conscious. The fact that so many Wizened have undergone torments that are literally unendurable for others is one of the facts that most disturbs many changelings and puts some degree of distance between the Wizened and the members of the other five seemings.

The other half of becoming and being one of the Wizened involves finding ways to make up for this loss and for their more general loss of freedom. Wizened were not abducted because of their skills or natural talents, but most were either put to work in Arcadia, or at least had a chance and often a great deal of time to closely examine and understand their surroundings.

Part of the essence of being Wizened is the process of learning to find joy, beauty and ultimately some sense of satisfaction in their new lives. Most learned to find satisfaction in the tasks they were given by their captors. Although their jobs were often completely new to them, these tasks also gave the Wizened something to think about, study and ultimately care about beyond the grim facts of their captivity

and torment. Also, for most, even onerous drudgery was a joy because it replaced conditions that were far worse.

Wizened learned to study their surroundings and learn from them, examining the details of how the objects around them were constructed and used. This knowledge served as a distraction and as a tool that they could use to eventually free themselves from their captivity. Most Wizened who make their way back to the mortal world do so because of their cleverness and careful observation.

These traits persist once they are back in the mortal world. They continue to observe the world around them, noticing the details of how everyday objects and devices are constructed and finding these observations useful and enjoyable in their own right. Similarly, the tasks the Fae put the Wizened to work doing often continue to be important to them after their escape. Many Wizened all know far too well that they were put to work largely because their captors tired of or grew bored with tormenting them and found work for them as an alternative to either disposing of them outright or finding new and creative ways to abuse their bodies and minds. As a result, the work the Wizened had in Arcadia is often seen as their salvation, and many

### *Relics of Torment*

The years or occasionally decades of torture they endured changed the Wizened. The Iron Stamina or Quick Healer Merits are common among Wizened who have retained some of the enchantments or mental endurance that helped them remain sane and whole in the face of what was done to them. Also, many possess the Meditative Mind Merit, having learned through bitter experience to ignore their surroundings and their bodies. However, Wizened do not just learn from the horrors inflicted upon them; many of them also broke. Avoidance and Fugue are especially common derangements among the Wizened, as they panic or their minds shut down to avoid confronting anything that reminds them too closely of their experiences in Arcadia. Phobia and Hysteria are also prevalent and are similarly associated with either the specific torments the character experienced or the appearance of her captors.

A few Wizened either never fully learn to understand that they are now free of their captivity or expect to be returned to the Fae at any moment. These changelings often suffer from Suspicion or Paranoia and either suspect that every misfortune they experience has some deliberate cause or that even the most innocent seeming behaviors might mean someone is planning to turn them over to the Fae.



Wizened continue to pursue these tasks with a passion once they have returned to the mortal world.

## THEIR SURROUNDINGS

Wizened are almost universally fascinated by the physical world. Although their memories of the Fae consist only of horror and abuse, many Wizened were able to find some small solace in Arcadia by working with their hands, or at least by interacting with the world around them. As they attempt to fit into a world that has become alien to them, this attraction to the physical world continues. The Wizened love beautiful things. Some, both wealthy and not, collect items specifically because of their beauty, but most are specifically attracted to beauty and elegance in the tools of their trade and in the everyday items of daily life. A Wizened who works as a chef will almost always attempt to acquire the best-made and most beautiful pans, knives and similar items, just as Wizened leatherworkers seek out the finest leatherworking tools and Wizened assassins only use the most exquisitely made guns and knives.

Many Wizened also frequently unconsciously touch objects, especially their personal possessions. When they are upset or nervous, most either hold or run their hands over their most valued and precious possessions, which are usually also the central tools of their chosen trade. Although this is seen by many as a nervous habit, Wizened find touching objects to be comforting because the ability to freely do so reminds them of their freedom and also helps demonstrate to them on an unconscious level that they are back in the mortal world.

Their close connection to the physical world is easily apparent in their homes and places of work. Some Wizened live in cluttered den-like homes and have a tendency to hoard objects, while others live in elegant simplicity. However, regardless of their other habits, their houses and workplaces are almost always clean and well kept. They also meticulously maintain all of the objects they care about or use regularly. A Wizened whose house or office is unkempt or whose tools and everyday possessions are dirty or damaged is one who is deeply troubled and possibly on the verge of a serious mental breakdown.

When most Wizened experience serious stress in their lives, they become more obsessive in their attention to the physical world, repeatedly polishing silverware, cleaning their firearms or tinkering with a machine to attempt to remove any hint of imperfection. Some Wizened also regularly talk to inanimate objects, even if they only do so in whispers or when others are not around. This is especially common when they are using, making or repairing an object. When stressed or upset, Wizened are more inclined to retreat in this manner.

Most Wizened also have considerably more difficulty interacting with people and other living things. Many work well with plants, and some become experts at gardening,

bonsai or similar hobbies or professions. However, all too often people or animals remind the Wizened of the terrible beings that used to torment them. As a result, Wizened often have trouble sharing their space with others. Most have the greatest trouble sharing a bedroom, but can often live comfortably with others as long as they possess a room of their own that they are free to retreat into when they are troubled or afraid. Their discomfort with others also frequently extends to animals. With the exception of tropical fish or other attractive pets that require no direct interaction, very few Wizened own pets. Highly demanding and interactive pets such as large dogs or affectionate cats are especially rare, and many Wizened become nervous or upset when they unexpectedly confront an animal. Not all of their tormentors were humanlike in mien. Occasionally, seeing a cat or dog summons up memories of being stalked or toyed with by a large and hungry predator.

## INTERACTIONS WITH THE MORTAL WORLD

Of all the Lost, the Wizened are the ones most likely to show the social scars of their time in Arcadia. For all too many of the Wizened, a casual touch can sometimes feel like a threat. In a manner similar to the responses of autistic people, touch and close observation can be too emotionally “loud” for comfort. The frequency of such reactions has given the Wizened their reputation for being solitary and socially awkward. In practice, most Wizened soon find ways around the worst and most obvious of their negative reactions. However, often doing so means that they must manage the details of their lives more carefully than ordinary mortals. Large crowds and situations where the Wizened are forced to frequently come into contact with large numbers of jostling strangers are problematic and are something that many Wizened do their best to avoid. As a result, they soon learn to set their schedule so that they can avoid crowded streets and bustling shops. Some work the swing shift or night shift; others find ways to work at home or do most of their shopping via catalogs, delivery services or online. However, even the most reclusive Wizened is still (mostly) a human being who requires contact and social interaction with others. The paradox for many Wizened is attempting to find a way to be close to others but not *too* close.

## FREEHOLD ROLES

Wizened who seek positions of leadership are uncommon. Many have little patience with politics or games of power and status and would much prefer to either choose or be assigned a job and to then earn praise and reward if they do it well. As a result, in freeholds where Wizened are especially numerous or otherwise have significant status, they typically seek to have at least their positions, and if possible, the entire freehold organized as a meritocracy, where everyone is assigned tasks based on his skill and not his





popularity or political power. Most Wizenend find meritocracies to be the most comfortable form of government and also prefer freeholds where the laws, rules and responsibilities are all clearly delineated. Many Wizenend find seemingly random or ad hoc forms of authority threatening, because it reminds them too well of the ever mercurial temperaments of the Fae and of the arbitrary rules and random abuse the Wizenend suffered.

Wizenend also have one little-mentioned role in freeholds. Although they rarely speak of it, the other Lost know many Wizenend suffered more than other changelings and that any who are recaptured by the Fae certainly face more of the same. As a result, many Wizenend are particularly fierce in their opposition to the Fae and especially determined in the lengths they will go in order to prevent the Fae from recapturing any changeling.

Often soft-spoken and unassuming, these dedicated Wizenend frequently form the core of the freehold's defenses. They are widely trusted in this role, even by changelings disinclined to trust others, because the Wizenend are so dead-set against returning to Arcadia. Unfortunately, their fear of what awaits them at the hands of the Fae can also sometimes lead them into terrible betrayals. Some Wizenend who are captured by the Fae agree to almost any bargain to avoid returning to Arcadia. As a result, the most desperate betray other members of the freehold or even of their motley to the Fae in return for an often-broken promise that they will be spared.

Because of their various talents, Wizenend often find their services to be much in demand. Each of their kiths offers talents that almost any freehold finds valuable. In particular, Chirurgeons are always in demand, for changelings too poor to otherwise obtain high-quality medical care and for changelings who wish to avoid having their more unusual injuries examined and recorded by hospitals.

Given the laws about reporting gunshot wounds, Chirurgeons are essential for keeping some changelings from coming to the attention of the authorities. Similarly, Smiths can always find work repairing and enhancing other changelings' vehicles, weapons or even occasionally their consumer electronics, just as Artists are often asked to do everything from making exquisite clothes for one of the Fairest to swiftly and discreetly repairing a changeling's home that was damaged during an attack by her enemies.

However, while their labor is often vital to the smooth functioning of the freehold, it is also far too easy for many of the Lost to overlook how important the Wizenend are. Trained by their years or decades in Arcadia to strictly avoid drawing attention to themselves, many are also too timid to speak up and demand the respect and notice they deserve. Instead, some settle into sullen and resentful silence. Others complain to their motley and other close companions, while never speaking up to members of their freehold who benefit from their efforts but clearly do not appreciate them.

## CONTRACTS OF ANIMATION

Most Wizenend prefer dealing with their tools and creations simply as ordinary objects that they can use to shape the world to their desire. However, some Wizenend see inanimate objects as having just as much spirit and personality as living beings and prefer to talk with them and request their assistance, rather than simply ordering them around. All of the Contracts of Animation require the character to touch the object she is communicating with.

### KNOWING TOUCH (◉)

The character talks to an object or device and learns of any damage it has suffered and the location and nature of all of its weak points. The object also tells her about any hidden spaces or secret compartments within it. To use this clause, the character must handle, examine and talk or whisper to the object or device for at least half a minute.

**Cost:** 1 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Wyrd + Crafts

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The owner of the device asked the changeling to examine it. This catch does not function if the changeling owns the object in question.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The changeling misunderstands the device and for the next scene gains a penalty of -2 to any roll to repair or modify this device.

**Failure:** The clause provides the character with no information about the object or device.

**Success:** The character understands the details of the object's construction. She gains a bonus equal to her Wyrd to repair or modify a damaged object or device. In addition, she knows what piece to remove to most effectively disable a device, or exactly where to hit an object to do the most damage. She can halve the object's Durability (round down) for any attack she makes on it during the next scene.

**Exceptional Success:** The character also automatically learns of any hidden compartments or spaces within the object she is examining.

### Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
-1	The character is distracted and not concentrating entirely on the object. Burglars who keep an ear out for guards or the owners of a house they are breaking into suffer this penalty.
+1	The character examines the object for at least five minutes.

### INSTANT EXPERTISE (◉◉)

By touching a device and listening to its spirit, the changeling gains an instinctive knowledge of how to use it.



This clause allows characters who have no idea how to use a particular device to use it without penalty and also provides characters trained in its use with additional expertise. To use this clause, the character must touch and fiddle with the device for two full turns before using it. This clause can be used on weapons, vehicles, scientific instruments, individual computer programs or any other device or tool. Changelings can even use this to gain bonuses at picking locks or disarming security systems.

**Cost:** 1 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Wyrd

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The character has at least 10 minutes to talk with the device to learn the secrets of its use.

## Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character misinterprets the device's suggestions and suffers a -2 penalty when using the device for the next scene.

**Failure:** The clause does not affect the character's use of the device.

**Success:** The character gains a temporary specialty with the device she is touching. This supernatural benefit manifests as a bonus to dice rolls made to use the specific object equal to the number of successes. Thus, if the player rolled three successes to have his Wized learn to ride a particular motorcycle, the Wized would gain three dice to any Drive rolls made to drive that specific vehicle. This bonus lasts for three turns per point of the character's Wyrd. It also counts as temporary dots in a Skill for the purpose of eliminating untrained penalties.

**Exceptional Success:** The bonus lasts for the entire scene.

## Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
-2	The character refrains from even whispering to the device.
+1	The character speaks to the device in a normal conversational volume.

## INANIMATE COMMUNION (•••)

The character directly senses and experiences events that happened to the object or device he is handling. The changeling experiences these events from the point of view of the object he is touching. While doing this, he hears and feels how the object was used and who used it.

**Cost:** 1 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Wyrd + Empathy

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The object has not been used or handled for at least a year.

## Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character gains a few vague and utterly incorrect impressions from any object he touches.

**Failure:** The character gains no impressions from the object.

**Success:** The character can touch or handle an item and learn about the last few times it was extensively used, moved or handled. This clause works equally well on a bottle opener that was used a few hours before and an ancient Roman necklace last worn 2,100 years ago. The character learns who used the object, gaining a clear impression of the user's appearance and manner. The character also learns where and how the object was used. One of the major limitations on this clause is that the character can only see and hear people and objects that actually touched the object. The character will know who or what a melee weapon was used upon, but not who a gun was fired at, unless the gun actually touched the target. The character requires only a minute or two to learn the past of any single object.

**Exceptional Success:** The character can clearly see and hear a greater number of the events surrounding the object or device as it was used or handled. Her vision includes people who were not in physical contact with the object, up to a radius of five yards from the object.

## Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
-2	The character does not touch the objects with both hands.
+1	The character polishes, cleans or performs minor maintenance on the various objects.

## ANIMATE DEVICE (••••)

The character can cause any device to operate on its own. Cars drive themselves, guns fire while sitting on a table, doors open or close and locks unlock themselves.

**Cost:** 2 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Wyrd

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The character owns the device and has regularly used it for at least a month.

## Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The device briefly malfunctions and cannot be used in any fashion for the next three turns.

**Failure:** The clause has no effect upon the device.

**Success:** The device obeys any single simple command by the character — the locked door of a safe unlocks itself and swings open, a car starts and drives in the direction the character indicates, a drawer opens or closes or a gun tucked in an opponent's belt fires. However, devices cannot move in any way that is outside the normal range of their operation. A car can drive itself and a gun lying on the ground can fire, but the gun cannot aim itself.







The efforts of anyone attempting to use the device normally automatically supersede the effects of this clause; the item cannot wrest control. Also, unless the normal function of the device is sufficiently forceful to harm someone, such as a car hitting someone or a gun firing, this clause cannot cause the device to operate with sufficient force to harm anyone. This clause causes the device to obey a single command by the changeling. The changeling can command any single device within Wyrd x 3 yards that he can see clearly.

**Exceptional Success:** The changeling can control the device for an entire scene, causing the device to operate as he desires, within the limits of this clause.

### Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
-3	The character uses only gestures to direct the object to do what he wants.
-1	The character can see only part of the device, such as being able to see only the grip of a pistol in a holster.
+1 to +5	The character gains an additional +1 to this roll for every success he rolls on a Manipulation + Persuasion roll to convince the device to do what he wants. The character must spend at least half a minute convincing the device to act as he wishes and must speak audibly to gain this bonus.

### COMMAND THE INANIMATE (•••••)

The changeling commands an inanimate object and imbues it with temporary animation. This clause enables a table to hop across a restaurant floor, a broom to sweep a floor, a knife to hurl itself across a room or a gun to aim and fire itself. These objects can all move swiftly and, if desired, with lethal force.



**Cost:** 2 Glamour + 1 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Wyrd

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The object's owner is a stranger to or enemy of the changeling, and mistreats or does not take adequate care of the object.

## Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The object briefly animates for one turn in a violent and uncontrolled fashion, in which the object attempts to harm the changeling who commanded it. If this is not possible, it attempts to destroy itself.

**Failure:** The object remains immobile and unaffected.

**Success:** The desired object becomes animate for the entire scene. Objects act as if they were controlled by a living being with Strength and Dexterity equal to the changeling's Wyrd and (if appropriate) a skill equal to the changeling's Presence. For example, if the changeling orders a drawer to open so as to hit someone standing nearby, it would do damage like a brawling attack using Wyrd + Presence instead of Strength + Brawl.

In addition to a broom being able to sweep a floor on its own, drawers can open with sufficient force to harm someone nearby, and bottles can roll or hurl themselves across a room. When performing this clause, the changeling must

issue a single command to the object. The object continues to perform this action for the entire scene. If the character wishes to change this instruction, including ordering the object to instantly stop, he must take a turn to deliver the new order and make a successful Presence + Wyrd roll. As long as this roll succeeds, the object immediately begins performing the new action. If the roll fails, the object continues performing the previously ordered action, but the changeling may attempt to repeat the new order the next turn. Ordering an object to change what it is doing does not cost any additional Glamour. The changeling can command any object within Wyrd x 5 yards that he can see clearly.

**Exceptional Success:** The object remains animated until the sun next rises or sets (whichever comes first), and the changeling can order the object to change actions without needing to roll. As long as the object is within Wyrd x 5 yards away and the changeling can see or hear it clearly, it will instantly obey the changeling.

## Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
-2	The character asks the object to do something that will harm or destroy it.
+1	The character asks the object to perform its normal and expected function.











It's funny how the snow can make you feel.

I should probably be angry. We both should. It's cold and snowing, and I can tell that reminds Jacob of her as much as it does me. The endless Winter, the fur, the feathers, the steam rising from meat in the snow ... all that, and so much to hate.

My heart feels numb around the edges, though. It's like that Robert Frost poem everyone quotes, the one that I can't remember even though I should. Right now, all I can think of is how much I've missed, how much I could have seen and done if they hadn't made this ... this deal.

I wouldn't have thought it possible. For two people to actually trade their only child away to the Others ... nobody else had heard of such a thing. It shocked the Winter King, too, and he's the one who came up with the information in the first place. I thought that we'd be told to wait on this, not to see it through until Summer came and the Summer Queen got to indulge her feelings of righteous wrath. If we'd waited until Summer, maybe I'd be angry now.

So. Here Jacob and I are, waiting for my parents to come home. We have a lot to talk about.



# CHAPTER 2

## *A Hundred Cousins*

### *(Kith)*

*I cannot spare water or wine, Tobacco-leaf, or poppy, or rose;  
From the earth-poles to the line, All between that works or grows,  
Every thing is kin of mine.*

— RALPH WALDO EMERSON, "MITHRIDATES"

## KITH AND KIN

Those who are changed by their durance in Faerie can be of almost infinite variety. Though the Lost generally recognize the broadest groupings of seeming, speaking generally about differences between a Wizeden crone and an Ogre hag, there are thousands of variations within a seeming. Changelings recognize these variations as running in "family" bloodlines, and refer to these kin groupings as kiths.

The concept of "kith" is recognizable among changeling society, and even among certain sapient hobgoblins. To the fae themselves, though, a kith doesn't necessarily mean the specific game term. Kiths can be drawn along different lines socially, rather than just subsets of a seeming. It's not uncommon for a Water-Dweller to call a Swimmerskin and Water-born "cousins." In regions where local mythology is viewed as more central to fae identity, "kith" may mean a specific sort of figure from folklore that changelings identify themselves as, even if they come from different seemings. For instance, the directional Courts (p. 121) may recognize a "Gandharva" kith that is associated with those kept as artists, poets or musicians in Faerie. Wizeden Artists, some Elemental Airtouched, and Fairest Dancers and Muses are all perceived as sharing the Gandharva kith, should they seem the part.

So although the basic concept of kith is understood, changelings don't define it in terms of the specific blessing. This is particularly true as some blessings are harder to distinguish than others. The passive bonuses provided by the Dancer's Impossible Counterpoise don't require an investiture of Glamour, and are difficult for onlookers to perceive as anything other than remarkable grace (which might just be a trait of the character, not a kith blessing). The Dancer is revealed partly by that grace, but also partly

by her background and what she remembers of her durance. So although characters may be able to determine where they fit into the complicated kinships of kith and seeming, they don't have to have their kiths tattooed on their heads for anyone to see.

It's uncertain who first coined the phrase "Snowskin" to refer to those Elementals of ice and snow, but the term is kept alive by hobs and other denizens of the Hedge. A rather gaunt and deathly changeling from a city where only a few other changelings are known, and none of them have ever even seen a Darkling like him before, is likely to still be greeted as "Gravewight" the first time he finds his way to the Goblin Market. The actual term for a kith may vary with the local language, of course, but they remain remarkably consistent within that language, likely due to the reinforcement given by hobgoblins.

As the name implies, "kith" means family. It's appropriate. Even if Gravewights aren't close to one another, two Gravewights are still cousins, in a sense. They both understand what it's like to be able to see ghosts, and they may have comparable stories of a durance in Faerie. At a freehold gathering, they're likely more likely to introduce themselves to one another than to other seemings or even other Darklings, all other things being equal. Kiths that were defined by a similar function may be the same way; two Chatelaines may see one another as fellow professionals in a brotherhood that's part guild, part bloodline. The same extends to some degree with similar kiths of different seemings. A Waterborn may feel a faint relation to a Swimmerskin and a Water-Dweller; they do find that their durances and natures have some significant differences, but the similarities are a



strong connection. These bonds aren't quite the same as the deliberate ideology ties of a Great Court, but they're one more potential thread in weaving the complicated social bonds of Lost society.

## GROWING INTO A KITH

You don't have to begin play with a kith. And if you don't, you might not be stuck with that choice throughout your character's life. It's possible for a changeling to come back from Faerie changed enough to possess a seeming, but without the kind of specialized form or talent that manifests itself as a kith blessing. But that doesn't mean that the specialization can't be attained.

If the Storyteller's willing, the process can be very simple: a kithless character develops a kith at an appropriate point in the narrative. A Wizeden finds a purpose working at a mundane job as a mechanic, and the Storyteller lets the player add the Smith kith after a few weeks on the job. That's certainly the easiest way to let one of the Lost evolve a specialty.

However, it's more appropriate for things to come at a cost. The gifts of a changeling were hard-won, and so, too, might be adding a kith to a character. The following system is recommended for allowing characters to pick up a kith during play, instead of at character creation. (Note that this is meant to allow kithless characters to gain a kith, not to allow a character to pick up the blessing of a second kith. For more on the possibility of dual kiths, see p. 98.)

## FINDING ONESELF

If this were a fairy tale, the ideal way to undergo the transformation would be a quest, in which ordeals are faced and hopefully overcome. The nature of the ordeals implies what strengths are gained: by showing mercy to a small animal, for instance, the animal then is able to aid the protagonist in a surprising way later on.

Thankfully, this is a fairy tale. One of the darker-hued ones with no guarantee of a happily ever after, of course, but a fairy tale all the same.

The path to develop a kith leads through the Hedge. There the laws of reality are bent just enough to unlock the fae potential in a character. The psychoactive nature of the Hedge is in fact a tremendous key. As the Hedge can reflect the changeling who enters it, following the right paths becomes akin to following the right aspects of one's own essence. If a Beast chooses the dark and shadowy path over the light path, he may be attuning himself to be receptive to a darker, more nocturnal nature.

Unfortunately, the hunt can't be performed with others. The assistance of a motley would color the Hedge too much, leading more toward the motley's own goals rather than to those of the kithless. A hunt for a kith might best be staged in a one-on-one story session, or in a series of cut-scenes interspersed with the activities of the other players.

The ordeals involved should be difficult, testing the changeling's skills to the utmost. Changelings may have to rely on untrained skills, or push their area of specialty to the limit. A good guide for adjudicating these ordeals is making them difficult enough that the changeling would be strongly tempted to spend Willpower to succeed rather than trusting entirely to his abilities. If the changeling runs out of Willpower over the course of the hunt, each point spent in a difficult task, then you know he's laid himself bare.

The frame of the quest depends on seeming. Some ideas include the following:

- The Beast's search for a kith involves forging bonds with a specific affinity animal. The quest likely begins with a glimpse of that animal: a white stag, black dog or other questing beast. Ordeals center on the pursuit, and what catching that animal may entail. The Beast may have to fight his way to the alpha position of a pack or herd, and temporarily lose himself once again to the pure animal mind. Once that's done, he must again call himself back to human reason. This may be easier than it was the first time, when he escaped Faerie — or may be much harder.

- The Darkling is given a journey into night. The journey is a question of navigating the darkest portions of the Hedge, attempting to find the safest passages and moving quietly enough to avoid drawing the attention of the things that lurk in utter blackness. The kith she develops reflects those choices: Will she go to ground in a plot of grave earth, lying patiently until she can see a ghostly guide out? Or will she stalk the things that stalk her, feeding on their warmth and color until she's strong enough to walk out on her own?

- The Elemental must find his way to a place that is pure in an element, and survive the rigors of traveling to that place's heart. Doing so may involve entering a volcano or forge to invite fire into himself, or being pulled down to the bottom of a maelstrom. It's a test of survival against the elements, usually involving physical ordeals, though social and mental ordeals are also possible (riddling with a water-nix or attempting to impress a sentient clock tower are bizarre but feasible options).

- The Fairest may face classical fairy-tale tests of virtue. Being polite and gracious in the face of danger, offering to share what little food you have with an animal, being respectful to the hideous and grotesque — these are all potential ways in which a Fairest may begin the journey to unlock a specific form of beauty. By treating kindly with monstrous hobgoblins, the Fairest may be taken under their wing to become Draconic. Undergoing tests of dexterity such as walking a sword blade or combing out nettles might impart a Dancer's grace. Interestingly, these tests of virtue don't require the Fairest to actually be virtuous at heart — it's enough that she's kindly to the withered hag even if the Fairest feels contempt and revulsion at her core. Manipulation and deceit are, after all, very fae indeed.





- Ogres have a brutal and violent road ahead of them. They have to face conflicts that are rarely avoidable with fast talk or stealth. The journey into the heart of an Ogre's nature involves facing avatars of savagery and might. Sometimes bloody combat with monsters pushes the Ogre to define himself further. Sometimes the raw physical challenge of the environment — swimming a pounding stair of rapids, rolling aside a series of ever-increasing boulders. The Ogre has to find the core of his strength, and let it transform him further.

- The Wizeden must quest to learn a trade. This may involve shaping the landscape around them as they travel, mounting giant sculptures or walking through a massive surrealist painting come to life. Practicing this trade may be the only way back out of the Hedge: the Wizeden must paint a gateway back to the mortal world so realistic that she can actually walk through or forge an axe to cut down the briars. She may also find the path to a strange and intelligent hobgoblin's home and persuade the creature to take her on as an apprentice. Convincing the hobgoblin to teach her is likely one ordeal, the apprenticeship is another and the return home a third.

### *Everything for a Price*

There's always a shortcut, for a price. In this case, the blessing of a kith might be found at a Goblin Market. Stranger things have been bought and sold there. A marketer might have the distilled essence of an animal in a bottle, ready to coil around the brainstem and blood of the first person to remove the stopper and inhale. A musty old book might contain oracular wisdom such that it has a transformative effect on the Wizeden who strives to master the book's knowledge.

What would such a thing cost? Just as anything bought at a Goblin Market, such a thin may seem cheap at first and reveal itself as expensive later. It may cost an abstraction such as the color of one's eyes or the memory of a fine Summer day. It may cost a small sacrifice, such as a finger or a dot of Wyr'd. And it may cost a grueling ordeal, or something precious fetched from a dangerous section of the Hedge. Though the character might wind up somewhat unhappy with the cost, the player gets an important roleplaying milestone and the group gets a new dramatic story hook — it's a deal worth considering.

## DESIGNING NEW KITHS

You may have already done it. It's not a terrifically difficult process, and there's plenty of motivation — an idea

for a character that is exciting, yet none of the kiths seem to match perfectly. A rationale for a new kith is easy enough to come by; it's just another variation that might not have yet been seen. (A "new" kith is almost never actually new, after all.) The description was probably the first thing on your mind. The only thing that remains is figuring out what the kith's blessing is, and there you have it.

In general, consider making kiths as open-ended as is feasible. (The exception may come if designing kiths to represent very specific fae creatures, as described in Chapter Three.) A really good kith is something that will inspire different types of changelings when different players get a hold of it. Metal is a good potential starting point for a new Elemental kith; copper is probably too specific.

The blessing, of course, is the hard part. Too strong, and you can make all the other players unhappy with their own kiths. Too weak, and the kith isn't any fun to play. So what are some guidelines for designing blessings?

- A blessing isn't a Contract. A blessing is a neat trick or a particular affinity, not a showy supernatural power or a dramatic full-body modification. There are exceptions to the rule, of course, but a blessing should mirror the fact that the kith is for a changeling, not a True Fae. Changelings haven't been fully changed into the stuff of Faerie. A particularly dramatic change such as a Gargantuan's ability to grow should probably have a tradeoff as dramatic.

- Consider how often the blessing will come up. A blessing that affects Dexterity rolls will likely affect every physical or action scene that the character gets involved in. On the other hand, a blessing that adds to Carousing rolls isn't likely to be anything but flavor; it's not often that the outcome of a Carousing check will dramatically affect the story.

- Is the blessing easily duplicated by mundane equipment? The Razorhand's blessing (p. 73) may seem a little extreme at first, but it's really no stronger than an ordinary knife. The blessing is more about being able to conceal this weapon, and to be honest, to present a creepy visual. It's not going to give any advantages in a fight that carrying a knife wouldn't, and carrying a knife is still competitive given the Razorhand's bonus Melee specialty.

- Consider the blessing's strength. A 9 again to a particular Skill is fairly weak; it should affect at least two Skills, and the kith should probably also have access to another minor bonus. On the other hand, kith blessings aren't meant to be reliably stronger than a one-dot Contract.

A notably strong blessing should probably be balanced by some sort of limitation or drawback. In some cases, strength can be balanced by opportunity. An Earthbones's ability to boost his Strength would be a potent advantage, if not for the limitation that it can't be done in combat. In other cases, a blessing can have a more potent drawback, such as the Gargantuan's self-injury when reverting from huge size.

In some cases, a weak blessing can also be enhanced by increasing the opportunity. The Steepsrambler's bonus



of +3 to climbing checks seems at first fairly weak. However, it's boosted by increased opportunity: the Steepscrambler can attempt to climb surfaces that other people would find impossible. It's often best to start on the conservative side and then see what you can add if the blessing seems weak. Not only is it easier to find small bonuses to stack onto a blessing, but it even feels better to wind up increasing the kith's strength instead of finding out ways to take said strength away.

## THE KITHS

The following section deals with specific kiths, both those presented in the core book and new kiths making their debut here. They are grouped by seeming, with some discussion of what the kithless of each seeming might be like.

Each of the kiths presented in the **Changeling** core book receives some extra detail, in the interests of having no two Firehearts or Soldiers exactly alike. A general overview of the kith mentions possible distinctive features and the general role of the kith.

The folklore section discusses what existing legends might make good inspiration for a changeling of this kith. Note that this is by no means a definitive source of what

myths might fit what kiths; not only is there multiple ways to interpret each legend, but Chapter Three of this book also provides ample inspiration for processing those legends in ways that may or may not influence choice of kith.

The *durance* section provides ideas for the many ways in which a member of the kith might be shaped by her time in Faerie. A number of sample frailties are also provided. These are of course not the only frailties available to the kith, and many changelings have frailties that have no connection to their kith. They are simply a smattering of suggestions that might help a Storyteller decide on some frailties for a background character, or inspire a player to do something similar. Some are distinctly more limiting than others, which may help players looking for frailties at a given severity.

Finally, a number of new kiths are presented for each seeming, in order to flesh out more character options. These new kiths aren't necessarily off-limits even to experienced characters; if the Storyteller's willing, the optional rules at the end of this chapter may be used to let an existing character shed his current kith for another, or even add a second kith to himself.





# BEASTS

Beasts are among those changelings who define themselves practically as much by kith as by seeming. They do feel a strong kinship to their fellow Beasts, and are prone to think in terms of family bonds. A sample Hunterheart's perspective might be as follows: "The Lost are all my blood, and the Beasts are my extended family. The Hunterhearts are my cousins and aunts and uncles — my brothers and sisters are wolves." Beasts make loyal friends and allies, but are much more cognizant of kith than some other seemings may be.

A Beast's kith may reflect classic qualities of animal folklore rather than mortal animal instinct — a spiderish Skitterskulk may be a trickster as easily as an emotionless hunting machine. However, this only adds to the potential confusion, rather than making it easier to predict a Beast's behavior. Expecting a leonine Hunterheart to behave nobly is a dangerous and often futile gamble.

## KITHLESS

Without any kith, Beasts are an indefinably wild and bestial sort. They possess clear animal features that are undeniable but not easily connected with specific creatures. They often have light fur, elongated and sharper teeth, ears or eyes just larger than humans'; these vary, since Beasts can have broader, flatter teeth as herbivores do, smaller eyes as some creatures do, the lightest feathers rather than fur. Whatever form of body covering Beasts possess is typically indistinct, so light and consistent that it's impossible to tell between fur, feathers and very soft, flexible scales. Beasts' teeth border just between an herbivore's and a carnivore's (similar to a human's, but oddly... off) but are more pronounced in both regards. They are animal, but which?

## BROADBACK

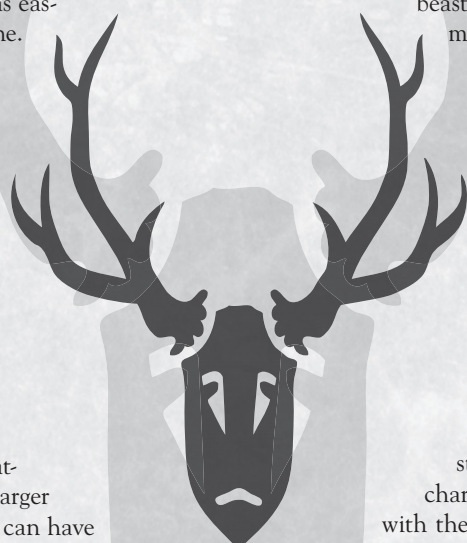
Laborers and sometime tricksters, Broadbacks have endured much to return home from Faerie. They are a stoic kith, often willing to accept a greater burden or more dangerous challenge simply because it seems necessary. As most developed some form of herd instinct to match their shifted miens, they also get along well with most other changelings, and other Beasts in particular — with the exception of Hunterhearts, who just sometimes rub Broadbacks the wrong way.

The Broadback's ties to his animal half tend to manifest most often in the ears, in hooves where feet would be and with horns or tusks where appropriate. Many are unnaturally broad of shoulder, befitting the name, and could pass for linebackers even when covered by the Mask. They often have large hands and thick, callused fingers that reflect the heavy labor that was their Arcadian lot. A Broadback may be quite handsome, if his aspect is akin to a sacred bull or favored horse. Some still bear scars or stranger marks from where the Others' tack and harness bit into their skin.

**Durance:** The Broadback's name implies a beast of burden, and that's the most common use Broadbacks were put to in Faerie. Broadbacks may have pulled obsidian plows through fields of skulls and bleeding roots, or they may have carried stone to build the latest monument to their Keeper's vanity. Most Broadbacks were deliberately shaped for their purpose; the number that took on animalist traits from being left among Faerie animals is lesser. Those that were among animals tended to be lost in vast herds of oxen, or kept in crowded Augean stables and fed the same mash as their charges. A stolen slave might be charged with the care of a prized herd of animals, and punished when any escape by having to spend time in an animal's skin.

**Folklore:** Just as all Beast kiths, the Broadback draws as much inspiration from animal folklore as from humanlike animal-hybrids. Storytellers typically paint beasts of burden such as oxen and horses as stoic and supportive, befitting the kith's blessing. However, they may be sagacious as well, such as the wise horse Falada from "The Goose Girl" or mischievous as an Each-Usige. In other circumstances, they are prizes to be fought over (such as the Brown Bull of Cooley).

Greek satyrs may well be Broadbacks at their more seductive. The cow-tailed *huldra* of Scandinavian folklore is much the same way, in turns lustful seductress and devoted wife. The *huldra* was noted as distinctly strong, though her powers could be affected by a Christian priest or church. Broadbacks might have run alongside a rampaging herd of drunken centaurs, or stood guard at the temple of an African bull-god.





**Frailties:** Cannot eat meat, repelled by recitation of wedding vows, must aid those who ask for help by name, repelled by the corpse of an affinity animal, suffer greater injuries from spurs, cannot resist sexual advances made by a white-haired person

## HUNTERHEART

Ever since the Cro-Magnons huddled around their fires and told stories of the Wolf outside their caves, the True Fae have reveled in their hunts. The Hunterhearts are those who were caught up in those hunts, yet managed to escape before they became beasts irrevocably. They are a kith of near-infinite variety, drawing on affinities with all manner of predatory beasts and even the more abstract nature of the animalistic hunter.

All Hunterhearts share the aura of the predator, something that can bleed through the Mask and make humans uncomfortable. Sometimes, though, it comes across as a vibrant sexuality, which can be either intimidating or attractive. Beyond that, Hunterhearts show the expected variety for a kith with many possible animal aspects. Ears, teeth and eyes are some of the most frequently altered physical features, and some display small claws or patches of fur along the shoulders, forearms or shins. Those Hunterhearts who are imbued more with the spirit of the hunter than any particular beast may take on features akin to multiple animals, or feral traits akin to old legends — antlers, pitch-black skin, long nails, shaggy hair and the like. The most common feature is that their teeth, claws or horns are always more distinctly dangerous than those of other Beasts.

**Durance:** These Beasts were absorbed into the wild hunts of the True Fae. Some Hunterhearts were kept as hunters themselves, running before the horses of their Keepers to catch a scent, flush prey from the bushes and finally to fall on the quarry with tooth and nail. Other Hunterhearts were the hunted, developing their bestial traits as a survival response. Breaking the chain of predator and prey was the most difficult thing, but it was also the gateway for human reason to return.

Not all Hunterhearts actually had to hunt, of course. The kith includes those Lost who were kept as vicious animals without knowing the limited freedom of the chase. These were the lions and bears kept for pit-fighting, the shackled guard dogs, the monsters in the labyrinth. They may not have learned how to hunt, but they developed a vicious streak all the same.

**Folklore:** Fairy tales abound with the intelligent predator: the Big Bad Wolf, Puss in Boots and Tom Tildrum, Reynard the Fox and Old Man Coyote and so many more. Practically every known culture has some tales about the predatory animals that were closest to them. Sometimes they're the foolish animals that are undone by the clever tricksters, but these animals can also be the ones playing the tricks.

The demonic huntsman is also a common element in folklore. The most famous example is of course the Wild Hunt, particularly appropriate because those humans the demonic huntsmen hunted were often said to be forced to join the hunt themselves. In some cases, the huntsman was said to seek human or animal prey; in other cases, he hunted other fae, such as Odin pursuing the *huldra*.

**Frailties:** Repelled by cockerows, cannot cross running water at night, repelled or injured by monkshood, cannot harm dogs, must eat raw meat, immobilized by a ribbon tied around the neck

## RUNNERSWIFT

The Runnerswifts ran from Arcadia and never looked back. They know the power of speed, the lure of the pounding heart. They were the game animals of the Gentry — deer and hares and unicorns pursued by the Wild Hunt. Though their first instinct when confronted with trouble is to run, it would be a mistake to take the Runnerswifts for cowards. True cowards could never have raced back home through the Hedge and all its dangers.

The kith's totem animals range widely: deer, antelopes, hares, horses, cheetahs, greyhounds, unicorns and more. There's no such thing as a fat Runnerswift. They develop runner's builds quickly in Faerie, or they get caught by their pursuers. Many have long feet or delicate hooves, and among those with particularly high Wyr, it's not uncommon to see digitigrade legs. Their ears often match their animal cousin, and deer or antelope Runnerswifts tend to manifest small horns or antlers. Some are more unicorn or *qilin* than anything else, with white or red hair and a small jewel or nub of a horn on the forehead. Some greyhound-blooded may seem almost like Hunterhearts, only built for the exultation of the chase rather than the savagery of taking the prey down.

**Durance:** Runnerswifts were often kept as messengers, sent to deliver messages across deadly terrain with dire threats of punishment if they lagged. Some were used as racers, with the Gentry betting bizarre abstractions made material on them like greyhounds. Some Runnerswifts were simply prey, encouraged to run all the faster so that their hunters could have greater sport.

**Folklore:** Human myth respects animals with speed, particularly if they're elusive. The White Stag of mythology is a guide that leads its pursuers to important crossroads, even if they think all they're doing is going on a hunt. The unicorn is a symbol of virtue, attainable only by the purest — or those who use the purest as bait. The Chinese *qilin* and Japanese *kirin* are sometimes heralds of wisdom. Some American Indian nations tell stories of antelopes that take human form to marry good men.

Rabbit's a trickster. Runnerswifts with the blood of the White Hare will steal the sun and moon if they get the opportunity. The same's true of the African antelope, who used shapeshifting to get revenge on the leopard. Some Runnerswifts may resemble horned rabbits, as much jackalope as



anything else. Rabbits and hares are often seen as harbingers of bad luck, the rabbit's-foot superstition aside; Contracts of Hearth are highly appropriate for their Runnerswift kin.

**Frailties:** Cannot eat meat, repelled by spitting over one's left shoulder, rhyming compulsions, may not kiss a pretty girl or boy, must stop to pick up a golden ornament, may not set bare foot on bare earth

## SKITTERSKULK

The Skitterskulls occupied the lower portion of the Arcadian food chain. Their lot was to hide in dark places or scurry under rocks when the monstrous predators of Faerie came hunting nearby. Skitterskulls are goblins that have grown too close to their pet beetles, snakewomen of reclusive nature, rat kings and sun-blind worms. Upon return to the mortal world, Skitterskulls were among the quickest to find a way to live. A Skitterskulk is a valuable asset to a motley, able to contribute his skills in finding hiding places and scrounging food or tools.

Skitterskulls come in a particularly wide variety, as they may develop traits that are alternately mammalian, reptilian or even arthropod. Skitterskulls tend to be small, though, leaner than they were at the time of abduction and sometimes smaller than they should be. They're comfortable crouching or squatting or wriggling through tight spaces. If arthropod in affinity, their skin might have small chitinous plates over the joints, or their eyes might be lidless and insectile. Some have vestigial bugs' wings. Mammalian Skitterskulls tend toward long fingers and somewhat distended teeth, and sometimes have tails. Those with reptilian aspects may have scales, whether dull or brightly colored, and a lean, whip-like build.

**Durance:** Skitterskulls were treated like vermin, and so they became vermin. Some were deliberately made what they were, to serve better as a Gentry crone's familiar or to amuse a feral catlike lord. Theirs was a particularly cruel durance, as their Keepers transformed the Skitterskulls precisely to bring them low or to laugh at their fear.

Others became bestial by virtue of their environment. A concubine who failed to please or, worse, was unpleasantly resistant to her role may have found herself cast into the dark labyrinths below her Keeper's palace. There she could survive only by scavenging like her fellow mice. Another escaped his bonds by gnawing through the weirdly braided gut, and had to live as a scavenger in a misshapen bog until he found a way home. By surviving these experiences, Skitterskulls developed the skills that would allow them to wriggle through the Thorns and find their way home.

**Folklore:** A number of Skitterskulls may have trickster aspects to them, particularly those with rat or spider aspects. The African Anansi and American Indian Iktomi are both spider-tricksters, and the kith blessing of Impossible Counterpoise would serve such a troublemaker well. In China, the rat won its place at the head of the zodiac through trickery (sometimes conveniently displacing the cat at the same time). The trickster aspect can be malevolent, as in the case

of spider-people who seduce and then devour humans, or it can be benevolent.

A Skitterskulk is also a strong possible extrapolation of the many stories of people being transformed into small, harmless, often unpleasant animals. They might be frog princes, great warriors transformed into mice or worms who ran afoul of a hag. Such transformations are typically a lesson in humility, one that the Skitterskulk might or might not have learned.

**Frailties:** Fear of bright lights, cannot eat liver, cannot refuse an offer of alcohol, must shed their skin on a full moon, bane of human saliva, must wear clothes of their own manufacture

## STEEPSCRAMBLER

Where the geography and architecture of Faerie skew toward the impossible, more specialized servants may be in demand. The tangled parapets of a mountaintop castle are alive with the movements of long-armed, agile servants who can shimmy up and down the chains and leap from spire to spire. Walls that buckle and sag without falling require sure-footed sentries. The Steepscramblers are the product of these environments, having been made into animals that could navigate these heights far better than clumsy humans could.

Steepscramblers often have a bit of difficulty adapting to the more mundane environments of the mortal world. The ground is just so... close. They find it comforting to have somewhere to practice their athletics, be it the neighborhood fire escapes, a forest with plenty of strong branches or a deep quarry with lots of sheer rock faces.

Similar to the Skitterskulls, Steepscramblers may be mammal, reptile or arthropod. They tend to be lean and wiry, and their grip is very strong; even an Ogre might be impressed by the strength in a Steepscrambler's handshake. Steepscramblers carry themselves with excellent balance. Their animal features are widely varied, but most often are in the hands and feet. A Steepscrambler is likely to have a raccoon's hands whether he's marked with the Mask or not, or the feet of a bighorn sheep even if he doesn't possess a full set of horns. Some Steepscramblers have tails that aid them in climbing, though they aren't strong and flexible enough to manipulate objects.

**Durance:** The Steepscramblers learned to climb in some of the most outlandish settings. Jagged cliff faces and twisted forests were only part of the story. They may have had to light the candles on chandeliers suspended from hooks 100 feet above the ballroom floor. They could have fetched books from bookcases the size of watchtowers in a gargantuan library, or been sent to collect the eggs of crows nesting in a palace's highest parapet. Falling didn't always mean death, no matter the height — the Steepscrambler broke, yes, but the Keeper mended the Steepscrambler's shattered bones and organs and set her back to work. Eventually.

**Folklore:** Steepscramblers with an affinity for monkeys may reflect the whimsical yet dangerous monkey gods such



as Hanuman and Sun Wukong; monkeys are tricksters in the lore of most cultures. The squirrel Ratatosk who clambered through the branches of the World Tree was also seen as a bit of a trickster. Some goat-like satyrs and gylions might be more Steepscrambler by nature, and obeah-lizards out of Jamaican folklore could be of this kith as well.

**Frailties:** Cannot turn down a wager, repelled by serpents, bane of curdled milk, cannot harm anyone daubed with clay, cannot carry an axe, may not injure a priest

## SWIMMERSKIN

When the Swimmerskins lost themselves to the Beast, they also lost themselves to the water. Their animal instincts were shaped by dark and cold ocean currents, by the taste of saltwater or the feel of a pounding river's flow. Returning to themselves meant remembering what it was like to walk on dry land, the pleasures of grass underfoot and the feel of the wind surrounding them.

Swimmerskins are aware that they're caught between two worlds in more ways than one. Their fae half remembers the water, yearns for it. Their human side remembers the beautiful things to be found on land. Some Swimmerskins find it easier to reconcile the two longings than others. These Swimmerskins may have already been swimmers, surfers or fishermen. They know they can enjoy the best of both, if they're wise about it. Other Swimmerskins have more difficulty, particularly if the waters near their home have been polluted. They are more prone than any other Beast to become involved in environmental action, being more deeply affected by overfishing and pollution.

Most Swimmerskins have a slender, aquadynamic build, though some may be unusually bulky to match an associated animal. The most common tells are webbed fingers and toes, which manifest in piscine and mammalian Swimmerskins alike. A Swimmerskin always has a humanoid profile, but some have legs that seem almost like independent fishtails, making them seem as much triton as anything else. Some boast dynamic colorations, similar to the bandings of a sea snake or the vivid stripes of tropical fish. They may have unusual teeth, such as the wide jaws of a shark-blooded Beast, or even overlong tusks reminiscent of a narwhal.

**Durance:** Some fairy tales feature a fisherman who catches a talking fish, shows kindness in releasing it and is in return granted wishes. The Swimmerskins may have been taken in such a fashion when their wishes were corrupted. They served in grand crystalline fortress-palaces in the dark ocean depths where sea serpents coiled in carnivorous dreams. The Swimmerskins were flayed and re-clothed in sealskin to serve as proper handmaidens to mercurial water-nixes. They served as guardians to octopi and nursemaids to eels. Swimmerskins' escape often involved fleeing to dry land where their Keepers could not follow as comfortably.

**Folklore:** Stories of magical water animals or aquatic human/animal hybrids are nearly ubiquitous. Mermaids and their various triton and mermaid kin are known to a great

many folklore traditions. The fish-tailed human as an archetype reaches back at least as far as records of the Semitic god Dagon. Shapeshifting dragons and serpents of the water are common to Asian myths, such as the dragon king who took in Urashima Taro. The concept of a shapeshifter who requires a fetish item to transform is common to aquatic animals as well, with the most obvious example being the seal-shifting selkies.

**Frailties:** May not be on dry land at noon, cannot cross a line of black sand, repelled by cat's blood, must obey the holder of a stolen personal garment, bane of burning driftwood, cannot drink cow's milk

## VENOMBITE

Some Beasts' natures go one step beyond the classifications of predator or prey, or of whether they were runners, swimmers or fliers. Their nature is simple: they're venomous. Faerie is full of poisons and venoms of all sorts, and the Venombites are those changelings who were changed by such noxious substances to become lethal themselves. While not necessarily any more malicious than their fellow Lost, the Venombites know that there is always one more option when dealing with a bad problem. Whether or not they let this option poison their very hearts is up to the individual changeling.

Similar to other Beasts, Venombites have a wide variety of ways in which their natures may have manifested in their fae miens. Reptilian Venombites show notable scales, and the long folding fangs of a viper or the short envenomed teeth of a coral snake or Gila monster. A spider-kin might have cobwebby hair and a tendency to attract her smaller cousins, and a scorpion-man might have fingertips ending in short stingers like the tails of his cousins. Their coloration is often quite vivid, and markings common to their associated animals typically show themselves on a Venombite's flesh. A cobra-woman wears on her brow the spectacled marks on the back of a cobra's hood. A small South American Venombite has the bright coloration of a poison-arrow tree frog. One spider-Beast has the fiddleback mark of a brown recluse; another displays a red hourglass just above her navel. Most Venombites show off these marks openly when dealing with other Lost. It's something of a gesture of trust — a commodity all too dear to changelings.

**Durance:** Venombites are largely the creations of True Fae who had a particular need or affinity for Venombites' poison. Many were enslaved by ogres, hags or other twisted and poisonous Gentry. Made into venomous animals to match their Keepers' bitterness, Venombites shared their durance with Darklings, Ogres and other unfortunates. Venombites may have served as familiars, or been used as "pest control." Some were even used in the fashion of the legendary poison maiden: groomed to produce a particularly toxic venom, dressed up in the fashion of a concubine or decorative servant, then given to a neighboring True Fae as a present with instructions to bite when the time was right. Owing to the level of mistrust between Gentry, this ruse worked best when



the recipient wasn't a rival, but just an unwitting neighbor whose surprised agonies would amuse the sender.

**Folklore:** As noted above, spiders are often trickster figures in folklore. They can also be creators, fashioning the entire world in some Native American traditions. When spiders' venom is a particular point of the myth, though, they are predictably malicious. The reputation of the black widow and similar spiders is well-known, and many cultures tell stories of spiders that take human form to attract a mate, and then a meal. Scorpions also have a generally poor reputation, from the common fable of the scorpion that kills another animal helping it because "it's my nature" to the Sumerian stories of demonic scorpion-men spawned by Tiamat.

**Frailties:** Repelled by garlic, attracted to crushed basil, may not enter a domicile by the door, compelled to eat small insects, fears bats, cannot fall asleep in a lover's bed

## WINDWING

To return to their human minds, the Windwings had to deliberately ground themselves. It wasn't easy. For all the perils of the Faerie skies, the Windwings had brief moments of what felt like pure freedom in flight.

Some Windwings miss the ability of unfettered flight they enjoyed in Arcadia, but it's harder to miss the loss of human reason that came with it. The Contracts of Fang and Talon mean all the more to Windwings, providing as the Contracts do the chance for true flight with full intelligence behind it. A Windwing is often in love with the shifting weather of the mortal world, reveling in the shifting of warm and cool winds or the passage of clouds, far safer than the skies of Faerie.

All Windwings are notable for the wings that are their namesake. In some cases, the wings are a separate pair of limbs, too small to be really useful if physics alone were at play. Just as frequently, their wings unfold from the forearms of the Windwing as if supported by extra fingers. Avian Windwings frequently have feathers in place of hair, and some have the dark and quickly darting eyes of a bird. A chiropteran may have bat-like ears or an odd nose, while mothlike Windwings display elegant, feathery antennae and skin marked with their wing-patterns.

**Durance:** Among the Beasts, the Windwings are the most likely to have been changed through the direct intervention of a True Fae. The gift of flight is not quickly achieved through simple exposure to Arcadia, and it's rare that a changeling who changed so gradually that they could develop the gift of flight could also manage to revert later. Spells and surgeries are the most typical source of their wings.

Some were kept in cages, Beasts in nature but with a role similar to that of a Fairst. Others were hooded and placed in a dark mews, brought out only to hunt. A cloud castle may have kept only Windwings and Steepscramblers for servants, as all others displayed an unfortunate tendency to tumble to the ground far below.

**Folklore:** Birds alone provide a multitude of superstitions and potential models of personality. The sparrow is mistrusted in the British Isles, but is the core of a folktale where sparrows assist a kindly woodcutter in Japan. The swallow brings storms. Cranes are a sign of wisdom. Owls are sometimes considered wise, but are also messengers of death or the familiars of witches in Native American cultures. Ravens can be an ill omen, but are also one of the more famous and powerful trickster animals. Even bats inspire a number of different stories. They're considered unlucky in Europe and associated with the underworld, but in Asia, bats are signs of good luck.

Birds are also common as subjects of transformation myths. In some, the bird (such as a crane or swan) becomes a human, and may be forced to marry the person who steals the bird's feather cloak. Birds are also a common transition form for





a cursed human. A group of brothers becomes a murder of crows or seven swans.

**Frailties:** Fear of being bound, cannot cross a line of salt, must arise at daybreak, cannot wear wool, may not call a friend by name, repelled by bronze

## NEW KITHS

**Cleareyes** — These Beasts have been granted exemplary senses akin to an animal's. Theirs are the eagle's eyes, the bat's ears, the hound's nose, the raccoon's elegant sense of touch. Cleareyes were kept as lookouts and hunters for their Keepers, charged with discovering a scent for the Hunterhearts to follow or spying an aerial intruder for the Windwings to bring down. However, Cleareyes' keen senses also allowed them to spy a way free of their master.

The Cleareyes benefit from **Primal Senses**: they add +2 to Wits + Composure rolls made to perceive things involving the specific sense that is their hallmark (sight, hearing, touch or taste/smell). In addition, the Cleareyes may spend one Glamour to heighten that sense to truly remarkable levels for a turn — an eagle-eyed Beast may be able to read a license plate from a mile away, or a fox-woman may be able to catch the scent of her enemy in a crowded nightclub.

**Coldscale** — Kin to reptiles both mundane and mythical, the Coldscale has inherited the nature of serpents, lizards, crocodiles, basilisks, wyverns and the like. Coldscapes are a phlegmatic kith, given to sullen and brooding anger rather than hasty wrath and prone to cool contentedness rather than exultant joy. They are marked by scales, reptilian eyes and sometimes cool blood.

The Coldscale's blessing is **Reptilian Blood**: the character gains a +1 bonus to any Composure rolls made to resist emotional manipulation and a +2 bonus to any Stamina rolls made to resist damage from biological venoms and poisons.

**Roteater** — Fed on carrion and offal, the Roteater is akin to the vulture and the hyena, the crow and the worm. As a tamed Beast, the Roteater may have followed at the end of his Keeper's war processions, left to feed himself on corpses. If wild or ungoverned, he may have fallen into a scavenger's ways simply to survive.

The Roteater enjoys the benefits of the **Scavenger's Nature**. The changeling gains two extra dice to roll when resisting poison or disease; the bonus rises to three dice to resist any poison or disease that stems from something the changeling ingested. The character also benefits from the 9 again rule on perception rolls made to scrounge up useful items from an area.

**Truefriend** — These Beasts learned not savagery, but loyalty. They are infused with the nature of animals who have accepted humans as their own. Truefriends are hunting hounds, loyal cats, favored horses, beloved parakeets, animals valued for the companionship they offer. Escaping Faerie was a matter of realizing that whatever fealties they may have been conditioned to show their Keepers, the changelings owed even greater loyalties to the loved ones they'd left behind.

The Truefriend can give her allies the **Companion's Boon**: by spending one Glamour, the character may grant an ally of her choice three additional dice on any roll. Invoking this blessing

is a standard action that requires the Truefriend to be able to see her friend and speak so that he may hear her.





# DARKLINGS

Darkling kiths are aspects of the night. They are often embodiments of particular dreads, things about the night that humans fear or specific aspects of legendary nocturnal fae. Some would note that Darklings are often close to modern urban folklore, creatures that resemble the stalkers from urban legend as much as old legends of haints and nocturnal fae. It proves that whatever other superstitions may have fallen by the wayside, the dread of what may lie in the darkness remains strong.

## KITHLESS

Darklings are among the more abstracted seemings, notable for their bonds to the larger concepts of darkness, silence and night. Some of the Darkling kithless are hard to distinguish from Darklings who have a kith that manifests itself subtly. If anything, kithless Darklings are notable precisely for being even less notable, more subtle. They are fragments of the night or pale nocturnal things, creatures of a more general dread than a specific worry.

## ANTIQUARIAN

Some Antiquarians could almost be mistaken for Wizeden. However, where the Wizeden are defined by the tasks that shaped them, Antiquarians are shaped by a more abstracted force of age and secrecy. Most spent a long, long time in Faerie, even if they returned to the mortal world not long after they left. They are embodiments of the fear of old age, the frightening prospect of trading youth and vigor for wisdom.

Antiquarians are recognizable for the touch of age that lingers on them. Many appear ancient and withered, even if the Mask sometimes shows them as modestly weathered at best. A layer of dust may perpetually fall from an Antiquarian's joints as he moves;

his skin may be like brittle parchment or a faded almost-ivory hue that hints at unknown color bleached away by countless years. Even those Antiquarians who seem quite young both in their fae miens and mortal Masks carry themselves as though they keep far too many years in their pockets.

**Durance:** An Antiquarian's time in Faerie is often marked by isolation and creeping dread, by long stretches of crushing silence spent in the dust-choked libraries and galleries of Fae mansions. Some Antiquarians went for long periods of time without seeing their Keepers, set aside and forgotten like worn-out playthings, with nothing to eat but the stray vermin they could catch. Other Antiquarians were changed by the very nature of the secrets they learned or recorded. Many True Fae are pathologically uninterested in learning about anything that doesn't concern them — mortal names and customs, for instance. An Antiquarian makes a useful servant for keeping track of all the tedious trivia that is really too troublesome for a noble of Arcadia.

**Folklore:** Antiquarians are the Old Ones, wise but frightening. Some may be shaped by the legends of cannibal crones such as Baba Yaga or the witch in the gingerbread house, more inclined to lure prey to them with trickery and cleverness than ogish strength. Those faeries with an obsession for counting might have spawned Antiquarians, kept to record tallies of the number of pebbles in a riverbed or the number of bricks in a city's houses.

Some Antiquarians may manifest as entities from the legends of long-dead peoples, such as myths that live on only in the books of scholars. An Antiquarian could appear to be a dry Egyptian mummy with a jackal's face, a bird-footed witch with a penchant for





muttering in old Sumerian or even a peculiar creature from the legends of a culture no longer known in the mortal world.

**Frailties:** Counting taboos (spilled rice or seeds, books in a bookcase), fear of burning paper, cannot deliberately lie in writing, repulsed by infants or children's laughter, cannot eat meat with bones, must speak in whispers indoors

## GRAVEWIGHT

A child's description of "fairyland" may state definitively that everyone lives forever, that nobody ever dies where the fairies rule. The Gravewights are quite aware of just how wrong that description is. They didn't just see death during their time in Faerie — it surrounded them, seeping into their very beings until they became death-like themselves. The True Fae themselves may be unaging and all but deathless when in the heart of their realm, but the changelings and hobgoblins that surrounded the True Fae shared considerably less protection.

A Gravewight's fae mien is touched by death, but in no consistent way. Gravewights can certainly be grotesque, with rictus grins, skeletal thinness or flesh that looks as much like rotten meat as it smells. But they might also be beautiful, marked by a consumptive pallor or a silent, ghostly grace. Some Lost assume that any Gravewight they might see is a member of the Autumn Court. It's not as simple as that, of course. A Gravewight may care little for the heart-stopping allure of fear, no matter how frightful his appearance may be. Death is something for others to fear. For a Gravewight, it's a constant companion.

The blessing of Charnel Sight is a situational blessing, but the situation is more likely to arise than one might assume. Gravewights are virtually magnets for ghost activity; there's something about their presence that seems to draw ghosts to manifest more frequently. The learned suspect that it's not that the Gravewight somehow attracts ghosts to him, it's that he's destined to cross their paths by virtue of what he is. His connection to ghosts is written on his Wyrð, and thus is a difficult fate to escape.

**Durance:** Surreal images of death haunt a Gravewight's fractured memories of Arcadia. Theirs was the orchard of hanged men, the reef of drowned sailors, the labyrinthine tomb and offal pit and elegant ossuary. Gravewights may have been corpse-keepers and grave robbers, taking the bodies of those

servants who had... displeased their Keepers and delivering the bodies to their own masters for some gruesome purpose. Gravewights may also have been repeatedly present at the moment of death, catching the heads that rolled free from an executioner's axe or watching their banshee Keepers strike down their prey. Gravewights' "servant's quarters" may have been tombs or plague pits — placed there because, as the Keeper said, "You're going to die soon anyway, just not tomorrow."

**Folklore:** There's no shortage of legends that feature otherworldly creatures associated with death, without necessarily being the walking dead themselves. The Celtic *bean sidhe* and *bean nighe* prophesied death with their very appearance, and they might have brought servants along to attend them on their rounds. A Gravewight may have set the sepulchral table for a hyena-jawed *ghul's* feasts, then cleared away the gnawed bones afterwards. She may have followed an Appalachian haint from the wrong crossroads into Faerie, and been wandering through its garden of hanged men ever since. She may have been shackled to a *vetala* or *pishacha* as it stalked through graveyards and charnel houses looking for new amusements. Finding a potential patron legend for a Gravewight is as easy as picking a culture and then looking for something that implies death. Even ghost stories or tales of the walking dead may provide inspiration; there are certainly undead vampires in the World of Darkness, but might there also be deathly vampiric fae who have come a long, long way to prey on mortal blood?

**Frailties:** Repelled by church bells, compelled to wash bloodstains from clothing, repelled or harmed by consecrated grave earth, cannot touch a vampire's blood, can only wear a dead man's clothes, cannot cut or untie rope made into a noose

## LEECHFINGER

The Leechfinger gained an appetite in Faerie. Not the coarse hunger of a Gristlegrinder, or the predatory urge of a Hunterheart, but a soft, gnawing appetite, both hunger and thirst. It may be a craving for blood or breath or even slivers of soulstuff, inherited from a Keeper far more ravenous than his changeling pets.

Now among mortals once more, the Leechfinger is often defined by how she decides to indulge herself. Some Leechfingers embrace their odd lusts, perhaps



joining the Court of Desire to be among like-minded Lost. Others restrain themselves with stoic ascetism, treating the occasional sip of a victim's vital essence as a pragmatic necessity, not a vice to be indulged.

Leechfingers are difficult to recognize for what they are. They may appear as Darklings of almost any stripe, whether smoothly scaled or bowed under tangles of matted black hair. There are no common traits to distinguish Leechfingers (though the great majority are quite fair at least of face), but a well-educated fae scholar may pick out a few of their possible tells. Some are fishbelly-pale, flushing to a slightly pinkish pallor after using their kith blessing. As befitting their common sobriquet, peculiarly attenuated and flexible fingers may be a kith mark. Some have the delicately pointed needle-teeth of a vampire bat, while others are entirely toothless, or even possess the jawless mouth of a lamprey. As Wyrd rises, a Leechfinger may feel an increasing level of hunger, and that hunger may shine in her eyes like witch-fire. Or perhaps there's nothing in her eyes at all — meeting her gaze is like looking into the eye sockets of a hollow porcelain doll.

**Durance:** Leechfingers are often shaped by their Keepers more than their environment. Many Leechfingers were born from exposure to their fae masters' own vampiric hunger, tapped repeatedly like a favorite bottle of wine. Leechfingers may also have been changed over time by exposure to a particularly strange diet, developing unusual hungers from the bizarre concoctions they were fed. Some were even abandoned early by their Keepers, and became hungry wandering the tangled forests of the Arcadian night.

**Folklore:** Leechfingers are tied to those legends of fae that steal breath or blood or souls. The possibilities are numerous. Leechfingers might have been tied to succubi and incubi, beautiful and hideous in turn. Some might take on a faintly animalistic appearance, like a cat or fox, animalistic without being a Beast proper, reflecting stories of breath-stealing animals. The goat-footed gwyllions and bird-taloned Lamashtu may represent a Leechfinger's Keeper, as might the more diabolical demon lover of English folklore or the Scandinavian *mara*.

One might note that there seems to be a far greater tendency to assign vampiric traits to female faeries and demons. While this may be true, Leechfingers are unlikely to reflect that gender divide. Their Keepers are really things without gender, who wear a sex much as one wears a favorite shirt, and who abduct

men and women in equal measure. There's no reason to limit a male changeling from resembling the Swedish *skogsra* — a hollow creature that haunts the forest — simply because the *skogsra* is depicted as female.

**Frailties:** Cannot enter a dwelling without invitation, may not eat solid food, can be enthralled by a game of cat's cradle, cannot attack someone with fresh flowers pinned to his lapel, repelled by blasphemy, cannot enter a child's dreams

## MIRRORSKIN

Deceit and illusion are the fae's stock in trade. The Mirrorskins are the epitome of deception, being shifters even without the benefit of Contracts. Mirrorskins have gained a number of possible faces, at the cost of their own.

Many Mirrorskins never make it back home to the mortal world, due to the dehumanizing aspects of their durance. When a Keeper creates a Mirrorskin, it's usually by stripping away aspects of the captive's identity so that they can be more easily replaced by the identity they're imitating. Too many lose too much; it's only those who can hold on to some vital core of themselves who can escape. There's perhaps a higher proportion of Mirrorskins who suffer from partial amnesia than any other kith.

A Mirrorskin's fae mien is often distinctive for its lack of distinction. Their features may seem somewhat more abstracted, almost artificial — if they have features at all. Some are practically faceless, or have features that run and drip like wax. Many are androgynous. Some appear to be almost patchwork creatures, their features mimicking one person's eye, another's nose, a third's mouth. Only the Mask remembers a Mirrorskin's original features, and even then it's not a certainty. Some Mirrorskins have strengthened their Masks and looked at their reflections in hopes of seeing their true faces once more, only to discover that the Mask somehow didn't reflect their memories. It, too, seemed just a bit more... homogenous. It's enough to make a changeling doubt her own sanity.

**Durance:** The uses for a Mirrorskin are myriad. Particularly trusted servants might be sent to act as spies or tricksters in their Keepers' name. Most Mirrorskins instead must wear different faces for their Keepers' amusement, perhaps even serving as living mirrors to reflect the Keeper's cosmetic changes. A Mirrorskin might be a masquer acting out plays of mortal folly, a concubine of a thousand different fac-



es, a jester mocking the Keeper's servants or rivals or a bogeyman used to threaten other servants. Some Mirrorskins are forced to take on the faces of other True Fae, so that the Keeper may practice his politics — or vent his frustration — without fear of reprisal from someone as strong as himself.

**Folklore:** Some Mirrorskins are apprenticed to classical doppelgängers, taught to mimic their enemies and prey. They may appear to the loved ones of the people they imitate, stirring up delicious anguish with their actions — such as appearing to a wife who had just received (or is just about to receive) news of her husband's death. Many others are bound to shapeshifting fae of all stripes. Such Mirrorskins learn to play the coquette or helpless traveler to lure a kind-hearted or lusty human into a trap, or to take the form of a dreaded tormentor to milk the old fears of the abused.

**Frailties:** Cannot abide being called by true name, injured by strikes to the shadow, cannot ignore questions posed to them, repelled by mirrors, must stop and listen to echoes, cannot tread on broken glass

## TUNNELGRUB

What lurks beneath our feet? What sort of creatures move silently through the earth, only revealing their pale selves if unearthed, or emerging at night to avoid the burning sun? Tunnelgrubs are the changelings who wriggled free from such subterranean monstrosities, or who were forced to go burrowing in the cold Arcadian earth for unwholesome roots and treasures. But although Tunnelgrubs were treated as vermin in Faerie, they also learned tricks that gave them the opportunity for escape. There are legends of a Tunnelgrub “underground railroad” that successfully evacuates changelings from Arcadia to this day.

Many Tunnelgrubs know some form of “knocker's code,” a combination of raps that can warn a listener of danger or send other primitive messages. A Tunnelgrub will often teach this to the rest of his motley as a precaution. The code is not universal, though, as different Arcadian mines and burrows may each have had their own code. This limitation hasn't stopped some Tunnelgrubs from attempting to spread their code as far among allies as possible, sending a series of “taps” even via cell phone as a cryptic warning.

Most Tunnelgrubs are quite slender, all the better to squeeze through painfully cramped tunnels. They may move with an almost boneless gait, and

some seem almost more comfortable crouched or on all fours. A grub-like pallor is common, but some are black as coal with lamp-like eyes. Some have small claws (perhaps providing a Brawl Specialty); others have long and strong fingers perfect for sliding around cobblestones and chipping out mortar.

**Durance:** A Tunnelgrub's durance was invariably spent underground. A catacomb, mine, winding tunnel or slimy burrow may have served as the Tunnelgrub's domicile; some were even kept in the dungeons or sewers beneath brightly lit palaces, seeing little of the extravagant galas that sprawled through the halls each night. Some changelings became Tunnelgrubs by necessity, shut up in a jaded Keeper's oubliette and gradually transforming as they dug their way to freedom.

**Folklore:** Tunnelgrubs are one potential extrapolation of the various subterranean faeries that populate legends. A Wizened might be a more appropriate fit for the diligent kobold miner that's more interested in its job than anything else, but a Tunnelgrub may be the mine-sprite that plays ugly little tricks on miners or the creature they say slinks through the storm drains. Some subterranean fairies of legend are distinctly malevolent, such as the scuttling *kallikantzaro* of Greece who emerge in dark Winter to cause mischief.

**Frailties:** Cannot walk on bare earth without removing shoes, counting compulsions (particularly holes, such as in a colander), agoraphobia, cannot escape from ropes tied with a specific knot, vulnerable to falling rain

## NEW KITHS

*Lurkglider* — Raised among the twisted treetops of Arcadian forests or the spires of palaces lost in dark storm clouds, the Lurkgliders are at home watching from the shadows far above. They may be tied to legends of creatures that swooped down to carry off the unwary, or Lurkgliders may have been kept as grotesque sentinels to watch over their Keepers' holdings.

A Lurkglider enjoys the blessing of the **Gargoyle's Grace**: by spending a point of Glamour, the changeling may dive from up to 100 yards without taking any damage whatsoever. In addition, he receives a +2 bonus to all rolls for the purpose of keeping his balance on small ledges, outcroppings or other small footholds.

*Moonborn* — The lunatic children of the moon, those who dance by their mother's pale light. They are sometimes insightful, sometimes foolish, sometimes calm



and sometimes wrathful. Their moods wax and wane with the moon, their humours affected by its tides.

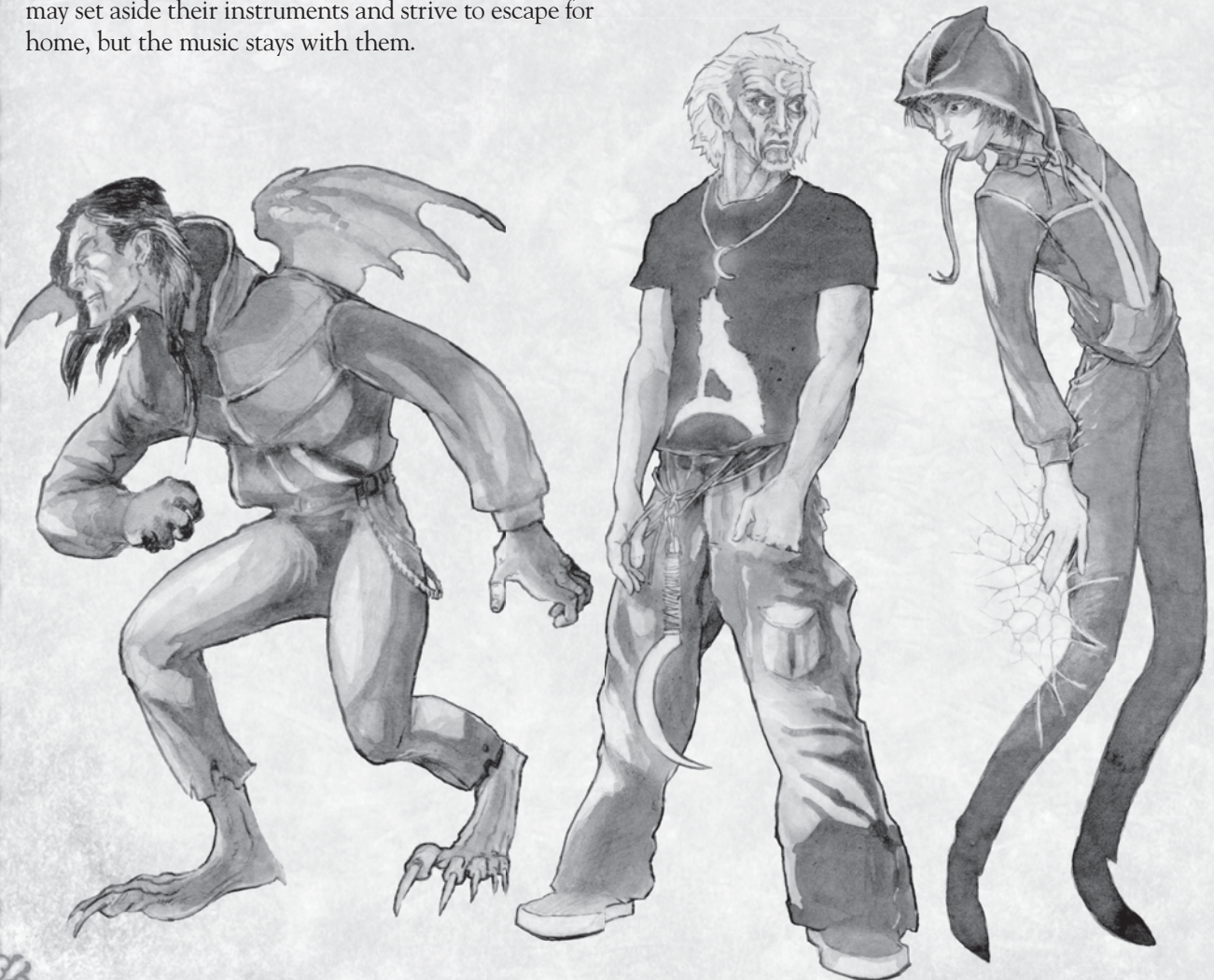
The Moonborn's blessing is the **Lunatic's Kiss**: once in any 24-hour period, the Moonborn may afflict both himself and a person he touches with a derangement. The player must spend a point of Glamour and roll Intelligence + Wyrd, contested by the victim's Resolve + Wyrd (or other Supernatural Tolerance trait). Success gives the Moonborn a mild derangement, and the victim the severe version of the same derangement. An exceptional success means the Moonborn suffers no derangement at all. The madness lasts until the next sunrise in the case of supernatural beings; humans must bear the madness for a lunar month.

*Nightsinger* — The Darklings are not without their music. Darkling music, however, is largely heard without ever catching a glimpse of the musician. Nightsingers compose operas of wolf howls and owl cries, sing banshee songs and play hauntingly devilish tunes on fiddles strung with unwholesome gut. Nightsingers may set aside their instruments and strive to escape for home, but the music stays with them.

The Nightsingers enjoy the favor of the **Haunting Nocturne**: by playing an instrument or singing, they may lull listeners into a hypnotic state. The player spends a point of Glamour and makes a Performance + Wyrd roll; listeners may contest the roll with Composure + Wyrd. Success makes the affected listeners more suggestible; such listeners suffer a -2 penalty to Resolve, Empathy and Subterfuge rolls for the duration of the scene. A Nightsinger also gains a free Performance Specialty.

*Palewraith* — Many Darklings are pallid, but the Palewraiths are colorless to the point of partial translucence. Their flesh is hazy and partly indistinct; some look spectral, others smoky. In some cases, their bones are still visible through their skin. The Palewraiths gained this remarkable trait by being kept so far from natural light that they began to become partly immune to the light.

The kith's blessing is **Light's Aversion**: the character may spend one Glamour to receive +1 to Defense when within sufficient shadows. This bonus





also applies against firearms. The blessing's effects last for the duration of the scene, or until the character enters a brightly lit area.

**Razorhand** — Some Darklings are embodiments of the promise of nighttime violence. They are the sudden slash in the darkest alleys, the gleam of metal under a flickering streetlamp. They may come silently, or whistle tuneless little ditties learned in Arcadia. Some even become skilled practitioners of medicine, though their ministrations are often too unnerving for all but the boldest Lost to seek out.

A Razorhand may invoke the **Ripper's Gift**: by spending one Glamour, her hand becomes as a knife's blade for the duration of the scene, allowing her unarmed strikes to inflict +1 lethal damage. In addition, she gains a bonus Melee Specialty (Knives).

**Whisperwisp** — Spies flourish in the dark, hiding from their false allies and whispering to their true friends. Some have achieved an artful perfection in the trade. Whisperwisp flit from alcove to alcove in the grand halls of the Gentry, worming their way into the confidences of servants and eavesdropping on the masters.

The Whisperwisp's blessing is the **Turncoat's Tongue**: he benefits from the 9 again roll on Empathy and Subterfuge rolls involving conversation or gathering information. The player may also spend one Glamour to whisper a message to anyone within earshot, whether the Darkling can see the target or not. The target hears the message as if the Whisperwisp were standing beside her, murmuring into her ear.





# Elementals

Elementals are virtually defined by their kiths. Each one may have come to an affinity with an element in a different way, some forming their seeming from the primal wilds of Faerie, others from the tamed and shaped elements under the Gentry's control. Similar to the Beast, an Elemental likely identifies himself as a creature of his given element (and thus a member of his kith) first, and an Elemental second.

## KITHLESS

Elemental kithless are rare. Those without any particular kith may be of many elements, with no one gaining dominance; fire and water both run through her veins, her skin of sand and wind. Some seem to be shaped of some primal matter that is too soft to be earth or stone, yet too strange-feeling to be flesh. If such an Elemental later manifests a kith, it is often because some element in the mortal world calls to him more than any part of Faerie could. A single element in his nature finally comes to the fore, or his primal nature "shapes" itself into something reflective of what he loves best about the world of his birth.

## AIRTOUCHED

Among their mismatched memories of Arcadia, the Airtouched's clearest and most vibrant are those of the Faerie skies. Storm clouds that roiled into angry faces, winds as wild as they were free, weather that could form cages of mist and rain. To this day, a few still flinch at the sound of thunder, remembering storms that were far worse than any mundane equivalent.

And yet just as other Elementals, the Airtouched often find some level of joy in their reshaped nature. This joy is magnified by exposure to the skies of the mortal world; while an Airtouched may dislike urban smog, there's something exulting about being even closer to the weather of the world they'd missed so much. It's no accident that an Airtouched's mood is often greatly affected by the weather. When a rain-storm has swept the sky clean or the winds bring the smell of flowers or the sea, the air Elemental is happiest.

The Airtouched walk, move and dance as though they are only partly chained by gravity. Their hair may billow around them in invisible breezes, or may even be partly translucent as if made of mist. Their skin or hair may be the color of a Faerie sky, from stormy grays and blues to the peculiar purplish of an alien sunset. Lightning may crackle in the eyes of an Airtouched, particularly when she invokes the kith blessing to move as swiftly as the wind.

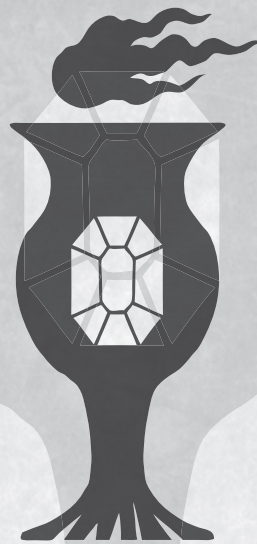
**Durance:** How does a prisoner develop an affinity with the wind? It depends on the prison. Even the skies of Faerie can be oppressive if their masters so will it. Some Airtouched were literally kept in castles of cold, damp cloud far above the Arcadian ground. Others, similar to Rapunzel, were shut up in impossibly tall towers with only the wind as their companion. Some were deliberately infused with the essence of air to suit their Keepers' whims, of course — called on to fan the air through a stagnant pleasure den, to fill the sails of an Arcadian barge or to act as a living bellows in a Fae forge. But other Airtouched associate the development of their aerial affinity as the first step toward winning their freedom.

**Folklore:** The Airtouched can draw from specific legends about faeries of the sky and wind, such as the Greek sylphs. The Airtouched are also close to entities of rain, wind and cloud, storm spirits of tempestuous nature. Some have a little more lightning in their nature than others, matching the violent storm-gods of human legend.

**Frailties:** Cannot step on chalk, must sleep outdoors, cannot resist an offer of wind-fallen fruit, must wear the color yellow, repelled by burning hair, freshly turned earth is a bane

## EARTHBONES

The Arcadian earth is alive. It may shift to bury a beautiful garden under a mudslide, or crack open to swallow an entire castle. The earth may even break off small hills to go floating through the sky. Yet even for these infrequent displays of mercurial anger, earth is still one of





the most stable and reliable features in all of Faerie. Earth waits below the loftiest cloud castles, rests at the edge of violent seas. Earth has its purity, in a way.

And despite Earthbones' ties to the Arcadian soil, Earthbones are all the more deeply rooted to the ground of the mortal world. An Earthbones develops a stronger sense of home because she begins to understand the land itself. The smell of earth conjures the smell of her backyard, of a muddy lot. When she fights her way free, she stands all the stronger against anyone who would sever her from the mortal soil.

Earthbones tend to be stockier and heavier than they were. This rarely manifests as simple fat; rather, they become denser, their flesh more like packed earth than soft meat. Their nails and teeth may become stonier, like black slate or glinting mica. Some have hair like lichen.

**Durance:** The hastily transformed Earthbones may have been designed to act as laborers of unflagging strength, or simply given an earthen nature so that they could better withstand the trials of their captivity. A Keeper scoops up handfuls of clay, molds them into the captive's form, resculpts him into something a bit cruder of feature and elemental of nature. Another changeling becomes more and more stone-like each time her Keeper glares at her with a Gorgonian face or caresses her with cockatrice feathers.

The rest simply develop an affinity for earth over prolonged exposure. Some toiled in great muddy fields, allowed to sleep only in the very furrows they dug. Others were shut in damp root-cellars for long periods of time, and by the time they'd tunneled their way free, the Faerie earth had seeped below their skin. For a few, all they had in Faerie that they could call their own was a small patch of bare earth to sleep on — and because that's all they had, that's what gave them strength.

**Folklore:** Earth-sprites take many features and forms. Some are squat and ugly, like the gnomes named by Paracelsus; others, like the Greek oreads, are as beautiful as a verdant mountainside. They may offer fertility and abundant harvests, but in their fae nature turn wrathful, such as in the tale of Yallery Brown. Some are associated with snakes, as well as with burrowing animals. Some are deeply associated with buried wealth, guarded by animated stone or simply hidden away, and not a few Earthbones take on this Plutonian greed.

**Frailties:** Cannot wear shoes, must grant a favor to anyone who beats them at wrestling, attracted to gold, repelled by saltwater, cannot refuse a meal of tubers, frightened by robins

## FIREHEART

Firehearts know that the fires of the mortal world cannot quite compare to the flames of Faerie — and these changelings are grateful for it. In Arcadia, the fire bound into them

burned much hotter, consuming their ever-regenerating flesh. As painful as the trip through the Hedge was, reaching home was like finding paradise again, if only for a short time. The fire within a Fireheart is now a source of uncomfortable heat at best, and mortal flames seem so much friendlier by compare. For this reason, many Firehearts are among the changelings most violently opposed to returning to Arcadia in any manner. Too many remember Faerie as a place of pain.

Firehearts are typically slender and graceful, as though their excess fat and muscle were melted away. Their hair may flicker like phantom flame, or fires may burn in their eyes. Some appear to have a furnace in their bellies, a glow lighting the back of their throats and smoke escaping when they speak. The fire that fuels them may be red and orange and yellow, but many Firehearts display different hues — the pale blue of a white-hot heat, the lambent green of a Faerie balefire, the rich violets and deep reds of a bonfire fed on stranger fuels.

**Durance:** Many Firehearts were altered deliberately to serve as living flames, for illumination or warmth or even to act as walking cook fires. These purposes gave them opportunity to interact with other stolen changelings, and a number of Firehearts escaped alongside the Wizened cooks that ran their kitchens or the Fairest entertainers that pulled Firehearts down from their sconces.

Wild Firehearts are much rarer, because so few can be thrown on the fires of Faerie and survive. Yet, sometimes that's exactly what happened; a captive was disposed of and yet somehow survived, the flame taking mercy upon him. Other Firehearts may simply have tended great festival bone-fires, beacon flames or great ovens until the heat and light kindled within them.

**Folklore:** Some Firehearts are akin to the faeries of hearth fires and hospitality, but the majority are wilder in nature. They are akin to the salamander or the fire elf, as hungry as Agni or Loki. The burning faeries that acted as their Keepers were highly mercurial in nature, and frequently destructive. Some Firehearts may, just as Wizened, have been attached to the forges of mythic crafters — immense one-eyed smiths, deformed dwarves and the like. A few such forge-touched suffer from some physical flaw, such as the Cyclopeans; the lame or deformed smith is a recurring figure in myth. They may also be tied to the will-o'-the-wisp or lightning-spirits; a Fireheart, such as Grandfather Thunder, need not be a creature of pure flame.

**Frailties:** Can't abide the touch of water, may not turn down an offer of food, hypnotized by the sound of a boiling kettle, cannot eat raw food, repelled or injured by wet ashes, must sleep with a window open

## MANIKIN

The Manikins are something of the odd men and women out among the Elementals. The Manikins' "ele-



ment" is artifice — they are things of metal and wood, stone and porcelain, their bodies partially replaced by inanimate matter. They are still living beings, of course, and must eat and drink and sleep. Such details help prove Manikins are still largely human. Or perhaps these details just attest to the cunning of Manikins' creators... but a Manikin prefers not to dwell on such things.

Some Manikins understandably demonstrate a variation of the "Pinocchio complex": they are more prone to dwell on their own lost humanity, and to wonder at ways to regain it. Almost all Manikins develop a particularly emotional connection to their fetches. The fetch is even more of a mirror to the Manikin; they may even share a few of the same inanimate parts, their wood hewn from the same tree or their skin cast in the same kiln. This leads some Manikins to empathize more with their fetches, and to hope that the fetch can eventually become more human. Other Manikins are deeply revolted by the entirely artificial reflection, and develop a level of hatred that is, ironically enough, very human.

**Durance:** Manikins are peculiar among their Elemental brethren, as Manikins do not have a single element that could provide a smooth transition. They are exclusively artificial in design, no kin to Faerie's wilderness — or so it might seem, but some have memories of clockwork forests and porcelain seas. Most have been remade to some degree, "improved" with new clockwork joints or elegant china skin. Mad tinkers and artist/scientists were their Keepers, masters of crafts that could never work in the mortal world. Some Manikins served as marionettes or wind-up toys to dance on shadowy stages, while tin woodmen and stony masons labored at repetitive menial labor. Clockwork drovers guided their teams of mechanical oxen or steam-driven carts through towns populated by people animate yet nearly lifeless. Some were even altered for no other reason than curiosity: will this human creature still weep if her heart is replaced with something of purest gold?

**Folklore:** Manikins' Keepers are typically the embodiment of the mystical smiths, craftsmen, tinkers and scientists of legend and urban myth. Some may be akin to Herr Drosselmeyer or Geppetto, altering their captives to be more like their prized toys. Other Keepers are frighteningly modern nightmares, the sort who might steal the kidneys from a drunken carouser only to implant them in the new rubber innards of a favored experiment.

A Manikin may be patterned after the "crafted lover" archetype, such as Galatea or the golden wife of Ilmarinen. Manikins may also be servants who share a measure of their Keepers' ability, having been designed to attend them in their insane workshops. Even those who are more like the living toys of certain stories may have picked up something from their mad creators before their escape.

**Frailties:** Cannot eat without silverware, compelled to sing or hum when a clock strikes the hour, must smile

when smiled at, repelled by scissors, cannot sleep in a bed, phobia of worms or burrowing insects

## SNOWSKIN

There are many stories of virtuous people being turned out into the Winter cold, where they meet with embodiments of Winter itself. Sometimes they are spared for their kindness and virtue; sometime they are frozen by the icy Faerie's whim. The Snowskins are those who suffered both fates to some degree. Arcadia is not lacking in lands of perpetual Winter.

Tied as Snowskins are to an element more regional and seasonal than the others, Snowskins are more likely to be found in colder climes, or at least in heavily air-conditioned domiciles. Snowskins have no particular vulnerability to heat, but it's a palpable absence of the element in their veins. Cold brings these changelings comfort, just as an Earthbones likes the feel of dirt between his toes. Similarly, Snowskins aren't all as emotionally cold as they might seem. They're very good at projecting an icy reserve, and they do have that certain Elemental distance, but they're also still partly the human beings they were before their abduction. Though they may prosper in the Winter Court, the Snowskins aren't drawn to it in quite the majority one might expect. For many, it's all the more important that they find emotions other than sorrow and loss to feed on, to prove that their hearts at least aren't frozen.

Snowskins are quickly recognizable for their pale skin and hair, usually a deep glacial blue or the pure white of driven snow. Some, particularly those with high Wyrd, may have actual icicles for hair or fingernails of glacially hardened ice. They emit a soft aura of cold, and even those who are deceived by the Mask will note that a Snowskin always seems unusually cold-skinned. Female Snowskins can rival the Fairest in beauty, though some say the more lovely the Snowskin, the colder her heart.

**Durance:** A Snowskin had to bear cold that should by rights have killed her. Sometimes their transmutation occurred after their escape, and took place as they struggled through Faerie snowdrifts until they found their way to the Hedge. More frequently, Snowskins were altered so that they could serve in palaces made of ice. These alterations had little to do with the changelings' comfort, of course — more often, it was to keep them from melting the delicate ice ornamentation with their horribly warm mortal breath.

**Folklore:** Naturally, spirits of ice and snow are traditionally associated with frozen emotions or a lack of mercy. They can have a trickster aspect, however, like Jack Frost. The Japanese *yuki-onna* sometimes shows a softer side as well, taking pity on certain victims for various reasons. The Russian Father Frost is also merciful to a girl who bears his cold politely, though he freezes her rude sister to death.



Vanity is also a common trait of snow goblins and faeries. Mirrors, or even halls of mirrors, reflect the nature of ice and the vanity of one cold enough to love only oneself. This pride may come from beauty or even strength.

**Frailties:** Cannot enter a home through a window, repelled by crying babies, attracted to mirrors, cannot wear red, may not harm those who praise their kindness, may not drink alcohol

## WATERBORN

There are a thousand waterways that lead down to Arcadia. The Fae drag their victims into stagnant millponds, polluted canals, stormy oceans. Deep down away from light and air and warmth, the thorny coral and stinging kelp of the Hedge enfold the victims and pull them to the waters of Faerie. Some of the Waterborn never leave these waters, instead being "blessed" to breathe water as naturally as air.

These ointments and potions and pearls do more than just alter one's breathing. They work more prodigious changes. Because of the necessity of altering a captive's breathing quickly, Waterborn are usually among those changelings who are most quickly transformed into part-fae. This circumstance can result in Waterborn becoming even more emotionally disconnected than most Elementals, as they spend a shorter portion of their durance fully human. The coldness of Faerie ponds and streams seeps into Waterborn's hearts all too readily.

Waterborn are usually slender, with a swimmer's build or the waiflike slimness of a stream pouring over a rock. Some can be broad-shouldered and powerful, however, with foam about their hair that makes one think of crashing waves. A few are even bloated and toad-like, swollen with their element. They tend to reflect the colors of the water they once lived in, usually in some hues of blue or gray or green.

Some Waterborn may have faintly animalistic features, which may make an inexperienced viewer confuse them with Swimmerskins. A faint dusting of opalescent scales, tiny antlers made of coral or a pearl embedded in the throat may hint at a durance in the home of a water serpent.

**Durance:** Waterborn may have shared their durance with changelings of other seemings, inhabiting underwater Fae palaces alongside Swimmerskins and Water-Dwellers. Waterborn, as products of their environment rather than their tasks, may have been given any manner of duties. Waterborn might have been nursemaids to Fae babes with piranha-like teeth, handmaidens to kelpie princesses, guards at a nixie's palace, drudges in a pallid octopoid monster's grotto.

Waterborn who are kept in palaces above water may have been kept as living fountains, or to decorate large aquariums full of colorful and dangerous sea plants. Some Waterborn may even have been cleaning drudges, washing out pots or stables with a torrent of water.

**Folklore:** Faeries and spirits associated with water are virtually countless. The seas produce mermaids and *ningyo*, *merrows* and sirens. The Russian *vodyanoi* and *rusalka*, the old man and the young girl: each is an embodiment of the dangers of cold, fresh water. Undines and nereids and nixes all epitomize the elegant beauty of the human form melded with running water. A very common motif is the danger of the water; most water-sprites have a reputation as murderers by drowning.

Many water-spirits are also prone to taking animal form, with serpents particularly common. From the sea dragon kings of Asia to the European Drac and the horned river serpents of the American Indians, there's plenty of precedent for Waterborn to be tied to particularly inhuman Keepers, perhaps alongside Beasts or Draconics.

**Frailties:** Cleanliness compulsions, cannot oppose children of the same gender, compulsively groom hair or beard, repelled by dry salt, weakened by loss of shawl or ribbon, cannot abide touch of holy water

## WOODBLOOD

If you go into the darkest forests, you may never come out again. The Woodbloods cannot. They're unable to leave the woods behind them, for they have become the forest. They have drunk water through their roots, drawn nourishment from strange lights on their leaves. If Woodbloods hadn't escaped when they had, they would have rooted to the spot forever.

Woodbloods feel a kinship to green, growing things, and thus are often less comfortable in urban environments. Some Woodbloods become the protectors of parks or botanical gardens, which may have good results for the neighborhood (as troublemakers and criminals are driven out) or bad (if the Woodblood also takes poorly to more innocent locals). Woodbloods are no more comfortable in the Hedge than any other changeling, however. They understand the Hedge a little better, but that knowledge cannot compare to the bond they feel to mortal woods and flowers.

A Woodblood may appear kin to one particular sort of plant, but Woodbloods may also display the composite traits of the entire forest. Their fingers are like tangled branches, their toes gnarled roots. A Woodblood's skin may be rough and gnarled as an old oak's bole, or pale and paper birch-thin, occasionally flaking away in ephemeral sheets. Their hair is rich green or autumnal red-orange, perhaps leaves or thistledown or fragrant petals or Spanish moss. Their age is particularly difficult to determine, for an aged Woodblood may still be pine-straight and a young Woodblood as twisted and bent as a thornbush.

**Durance:** Woodbloods may have been kept as gardeners in Faerie, but may also have been kept as the garden itself. Some Fae enjoy the topiary effect to adorn their grounds, but find it much more satisfying to sculpt humans



and beasts into plants than to trim bushes into the shape of humans and beasts. Other Fae require all manner of odd herbs, berries and roots for their alchemies, and find it convenient to have the components come to them, pruning away the necessary material that grows from their changeling servant. Escaping these gardens is often a matter of chance — a servant waters the changeling just a bit too much, giving her the strength to uproot herself and flee.

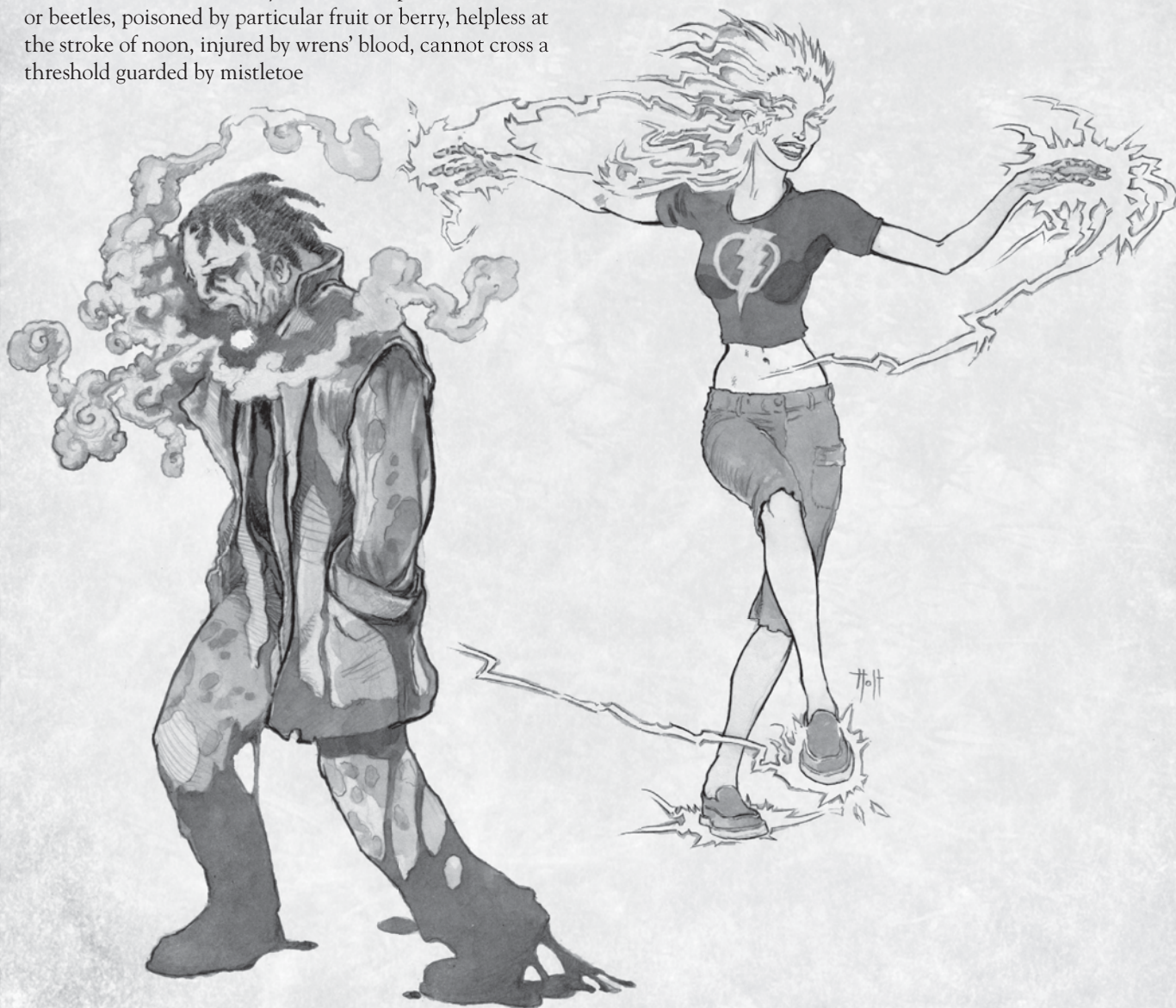
**Folklore:** Woodbloods are kin to dryads and Green Men, the embodied sentence of the forest itself. Some might draw more from Victorian legends of flower faeries, though without the sanitized sweetness that is so uncharacteristic of Arcadia. All manner of plant folklore can be mirrored in the skills and affinities of a Woodblood. Elder trees are unlucky to cut down, willows are twisted and dark at heart, rowan is a guardian against evil forces, the voice of a mandrake root kills.

**Frailties:** Cannot carry a bladed weapon, fears worms or beetles, poisoned by particular fruit or berry, helpless at the stroke of noon, injured by wrens' blood, cannot cross a threshold guarded by mistletoe

## NEW KITHS

**Blightbent** — Some of the most tragic of Elementals, the Blightbent are children of pollution. They were altered by choking smogs, toxic waters, blighted land, diseased forests and chemical fire. Upon their return to the mortal world, the Blightbent are the most comfortable in areas where humanity has tainted the elements in turn. Some Blightbent hate themselves for it.

The Blightbent's blessing is the **Caustic Caress**. Once per day, the changeling may spend one Glamour to inflict a polluted touch on an opponent — breathing a puff of toxic smog into his face, marking him with acidic fingertips or the like. The player rolls Dexterity + Wyrð — the target's Stamina; the victim takes one point of lethal damage per success. Defense and armor can affect this roll if the target





is free to defend himself; otherwise, they do not apply. The Blightbent are also resistant to toxins and poisons of man-made origin, and gains +3 on rolls to resist their effects.

*Levinquick* — Electricity has caught in the heart and blood of these changelings; their flesh is as a lightning rod that calls down the levin bolts into their bodies. Where some Firehearts have had their wits honed by the lightning, the Levinquick are more bodily affected. They are often violent Elementals, quick to strike out at anything that offends them.

The Levinquick are gifted with the **Fireflaught's Vigor**. The player may spend one Glamour to add two points to both Speed and Initiative. The blessing lasts for one turn per dot of the character's Wyrd.

*Metalflesh* — Changelings who were remade in Arcadia's foundries, the Metalflesh are infused with bronze or copper, gold or silver or brass — but never pure iron. They are obdurate of mind and body, resistant to any attempts to casually manipulate them. They were prized creations of

the Gentry, as decorative as the Metalflesh were resilient. But for those who actually escaped, that same hardiness helped them force their way back through the Thorns to the world of chrome and iron.

The Metalflesh may invoke the **Forge's Endurance** blessing. Once per day, the player may spend one Glamour to add one die to Stamina, Resolve and Composure rolls for the duration of the scene.

*Sandharrowed* — The howling deserts of Faerie produce their own children. The Sandharrowed are embodied with the merciless grace and power of the shifting sands. Those who escape the blasted wastes of Arcadia can make homes anywhere, though they seem happiest in warm cities surrounded by the desert.

The Sandharrowed benefit from the blessing of the **Enveloping Sands**: they gain a +2 bonus to all rolls made to grapple an opponent, or to escape from a grapple.





# FAIREST

The Fairest are more generally associated with kiths than some of the other seemings are. As aspects of beauty, the differences between the Fairest can be quite abstract. The five primary kiths are examples of the Fairest at their most differentiated, and even then the line between a Dancer and a Muse might be difficult to perceive.

## KITHLESS

The Fairest are among those seemings with a higher incidence of kithless. Not all Fairest develop sufficient affinity with one particular aspect of beauty or grace to develop a kith blessing. A few Wizenéd mutter that it's because the Fairest may not have had to *do* anything, that they were just "prettied up" and left to decorate whatever impossible palace was their prison. The Wizenéd don't say this to the Fairest, though, who are well aware of how a *durance* does not have to involve physical labor to be grueling.

Fairest without a kith are archetypes. They are beautiful in an otherworldly fashion, often taller than they were (and sometimes shorter), with many of their human blemishes sanded or melted away. Kithless Fairest tend toward flawless complexions and more vivid color than they once possessed. There's a general trend toward being slender, which mirrors the unnaturally thin yet iron-strong limbs of so many True Fae. Some Fairest have pointed ears (but by no means all), others unnatural coloration or particularly long and agile fingers and toes.

## BRIGHT ONE

The word "faeries" often carries the connotation of "luminous being." Bright Ones are the bastard half-children of those luminous beings, carried off for a

certain vibrant spark within them that was made into a more literal enlightenment. Bright Ones are the aspect of radiant beauty, of loveliness so intense that it gives off its own illumination. The light they radiate may seem almost natural at times, but more often it gives off a strange and unearthly hue — the coloration of things under goblin light may seem strange and disquieting.

Some Bright Ones develop a faint fear of the dark, conditioned as they are to savor the light they provide. Others are quite comfortable in darkness and dusk, finding it soothing to have the choice of light rest with their own power and not their environment. They may live like lighthouse keepers in stark isolation, or let the acid neon lights of the city wash over them like pale admirers.

The gift of Goblin Illumination doesn't automatically come with any particular distinctive feature. Still, most Bright Ones seem to have some level of ambient lighting around them. Their hair often appears as if sunlight were shining through it, and some may have lambent eyes. In some cases, a Bright One's heart glows brightly enough to be seen through his flesh. Some Bright Ones look uncomfortably angelic, reflecting Keepers of similar mien. It is less than reassuring for changelings of faith to contemplate the idea of the Others mocking angels — or, far worse, being the only angels the universe has to offer.

**Durance:** Bright Ones were meant to be seen, if not always distinctly. They were kept as will-o'-the-wisp lures, dangled as bait to bring in roaming travelers for their Keepers' amusement. Bright Ones served as furniture, ornamentation and illumination at the same time. They waited in mirrored halls, their own radiance reflected back on them a thousandfold, helping to keep the dark ones their Keepers feared so





much at bay. Bright Ones were kept in ornate chandelier cages, dangling from the ceiling, lowered by a turn of the crank when their Keepers desired closer company. Wherever light was desired, Bright Ones might have been. Wherever the blinding light of a living sun rose from a divan to caress one of its servants, the light may have passed on.

**Folklore:** The peris of Persian lore were often described as luminous, occasionally appearing to mortals and often persecuted by the evil divs that kept the peris in captivity. Many travelers were led astray by strange lights on the British moors or the African plains. Modern UFO lore also often describes the “visitors” as shining brightly, their alien features obscured by the light they emanate. They may also mirror specific bits of angelic lore, such as the burning wheels of the ofanim.

**Frailties:** Repelled by black candles, cannot speak at night, cannot eat honey, injured by pewter, counting compulsions (holes that emanate light, like a sieve held before the sun), cannot cut or break string

## DANCER

One aspect of beauty is grace. Dancers embody this aspect in ways that many Fairest emulate, but few can reach. Lightfooted, elegant and swift, a Dancer is the very archetype of the faerie as something more graceful than a human can hope to be. Though Dancers’ durances were no more pleasant or fondly remembered than those of any other Lost, Dancers are unable to fully resent the gifts of agility and poise they received in Arcadia. The process of attaining these gifts may have been tortuous and best forgotten, but the grace lingers with them every minute of every day. Therefore, a Dancer is often among the camp of Lost that tries to see the best of what they’ve become, making the most of their blessings even if they regret having to go to Arcadia to receive them. Of course, for those not as beautiful and elegant as a Dancer, it’s a hard line to swallow.

The most distinguishing feature of a Dancer is her agility. Every physical motion is imbued with added grace, no matter how small. This is a quality that cannot be entirely disguised by the Mask — Dancers stand out in a crowd, if anyone is watching. Even the way they neatly place their feet when walking is an indication of their instinctive agility and precision. Beyond that shared preternatural grace, though, Dancers vary widely in appearance. Some are pale

and faintly luminescent, almost ethereal; others have pale skin marked with whorls of color.

**Durance:** Many Dancers were literally taken to dance. They spent endless nights in glass ballrooms, waltzing with the Fae until the Dancers’ feet bled. They capered on stages, tied to invisible strings. They were placed on red-hot bronze so that their Keepers could watch their cavorting. Sometimes Dancers were taken to act as partners, sometimes just to be display objects.

Other Dancers were given the blessing of great agility for other purposes, perhaps salacious. A human taken as a sexual slave may not have been sufficiently... limber to entertain a Keeper without some modifications. The castle of a Keeper might have been built of narrow swords laid across deep chasms, where the servants were required to learn exquisite balance simply to keep their lives.

Whatever the reason a Dancer was taken, his preternatural grace may have been the result of arduous effort, odd elixirs or bizarre surgeries.

**Folklore:** Dancing is a common element in faerie folklore. Traditional fairy-tale elements may make interesting components when recast in the shadowed language of the Gentry — red shoes, rings of white mushrooms, secret dancing halls deep under the earth. Many faeries are described as dancing rather than walking when seen, and a Dancer may have had to become what she is simply to keep up.

**Frailties:** May only wear cloth shoes, cannot wear gold jewelry, enraptured by harpsichord music, may not eat beef or mutton, must laugh when hears laughter, must keep a feather on her person at all times

## DRACONIC

Some monsters are hideous, and others are beautiful. Draconics hold the blood of the latter. They are bestial without having acquired the animalistic mind of a Beast, primal in ways that speak of bone and talon and fiery blood. Draconics are creatures of Mephistophelean confidence, charm and hidden savagery. The cruelty of Arcadia seems to run a little closer to the surface in a Draconic, though some turn the cruelty toward good ends. They can be quite aggressive, rivaling Ogres in their relish for physical solutions to problems. More than one changeling has found Draconics a little Luciferan, though in truth the mortal world has yet to become truly Hell and Faerie is a long way from Heaven.



The kith's distinguishing characteristics may overlap with those of some Beasts or Ogres, though the Draconic is always clearly beautiful and commanding enough to be Fairest above all else. Draconics often display some sort of bestial tell. It may be the pearl in the throat of a Chinese dragon, hands that are elegantly talon-like, neatly overlapping scales or a carnivore's sharp teeth. Many possess a very dragon-like arrogance, perhaps without having noticed their change in demeanor. A Draconic stands tall and proud, his posture giving off a faint aura of primordial strength.

**Durance:** Some Draconics were altered by human-seeming fae to deliberately acquire their monstrous traits, perhaps to make the Draconics into elegant yet ferocious pit-fighters or palace guards. More were closer to fae that had very little semblance of humanity. Dragons and basilisks were such Draconics' masters, or such things that come closest to the familiar human myth. They might have served in damp caves where the only illumination came from cold light shining off hoarded treasures, but many more were kept in palaces as grand and bizarre as their Keepers. A Draconic may have served alongside more hobgoblins and fae beasts than stolen humans, sycophantic terrors currying the Great Beast's favors.

Draconics may have been kept as decoration or as concubines, but they also come from a wide variety of physical roles. Many were taught to fight and kept as soldiers or gladiators. Others might have had to physically care for monstrous Keepers or the less intelligent pets of their masters. The more a changeling scrubbed the serrated scales of his charge, the more his skin grew scales in response to protect him from the sharp edges. He may have had to eat from the same trough as his Keeper's cockatrices, and grown stronger and more dangerous on their unwholesome feed.

**Folklore:** Despite the name "draconic," this kith can be tied to any manner of fae that is partly monstrous yet somehow elegant. They might recall sirens or lamiae, or the serpent-bodied Melusine. The classic "devil at the crossroads" might engender a Draconic, hiding devilish strength and vigor under his neat black suit. A riddling Draconic, somewhat leonine and somewhat hawkish, sat at the foot of a sphinx's throne. A thundercloud-dark rakshasa kept a stable of pet changelings, who became savagely beautiful to mirror their lord and king.

**Frailties:** Taboo of vengeance against thieves, riddling compulsion, repelled by silver, must eat red meat at every meal, cannot harm those who flatter them, injured by virgin's blood

## FLOWERING

The flower is a common metaphor for Faerie: beautiful and enticing, of heady scent — yet sometimes guarded by thorns, a home for worms or insects. The Flowering embody the truth of this metaphor. They were humans planted in Faerie, warmed by its sun and nourished on its waters. They were tended and groomed to be the most beautiful ornaments, to be enjoyed in fullest until the time came to prune them down.

Flowering range quite widely in temperament. They aren't all as delicate and inviting as they might seem. They aren't as elementally primal as the Woodbloods, and lack quite the same connection to "other growing things." Flowering can be dangerous at the game of politics, able to eavesdrop quite nicely because so many changelings are foolish enough to assume that Flowering are as vapid as they are pretty and decorative.

The Flowering are easily distinguished from other Fairest. Even at the Flowering's most subtle, they may simply emanate a scent of flowers and leave petals in their footsteps. Their miens are usually more vivid than that, however. Flowers bloom in their hair, vines and creepers curl around necks and shoulders in fetching fashion. Some Flowering are marked by many flowers at once, while others are clearly embodiments of a single blossom. A Mediterranean woman is touched with rich green leaves and white laurel blossoms that set off her skin perfectly; a pale youth's skin tone is neatly matched by the deep blue flowers that sprout in his raven hair. Some Flowering actually change their blooms as the seasons pass, passing from rich color in Spring and Summer to paler yellows and oranges in Autumn and simple white and purple crocuses in Winter.

**Durance:** A Flowering's durance usually recalls gardens in some way. Some had relatively painless days, full of bright sun and warm grass and only occasional unfeeling hurts from their Keepers. It was when the sun sank and the cold night came that the Flowering hurt worst. Others were kept inside, in sweltering greenhouses where surgical Fae snipped and pruned until the Flowering were deemed worthy to decorate the main halls of the palace.



Perhaps the worst aspect of a Flowering's durance was the press of eventual time. In Arcadia, all are said to be immortal — yet flowers must fade and die, as it's their nature. When a fellow Fairest's petals began to lose their color and curl, then the Keeper would dispose of her in whatever way amused him best. Escape was vital, for in the mortal world the Flowering might still age, but the Flowering could yet have the hope of a beautiful, worthwhile life even when the bloom was off the rose.

**Folklore:** Faeries and flowers are a classic pairing. Of course, the Flowering are not the kind of tiny pixie that can hide within a flower. They may still share similar traits, such as delicacy or sentimentality. Some are more like the animistic spirits of flowering trees — cherry, plum, peach — that inspire Asian myths.

The classic language of flowers may provide interesting inspiration. A red rose is love, tansy a declaration of war, forget-me-not true love, snapdragon deception and so on. A Flowering laden with narcissus blooms is more likely than not to be vain and self-absorbed. An athlete may be bedecked with literal laurels. The symbolism can have extra weight thanks to the Wyrd of Faerie.

**Frailties:** Cannot eat meat, repelled or harmed by certain insects, cannot take action against a person carrying the right flower, becomes somnolent when the wind blows from the south, fear of cats, injured by touch of perfume

## MUSE

Artistic inspiration is an unreliable thing, mercurial as a flash of lightning. Muses have been infused with this spark, a flickering illumination that powers their beauty. They are the embodiment of aesthetic beauty, an appeal that feeds the urge to create. Paintings, songs, sculptures — all are potential paeans to this kith.

Many develop a talent for oneiromancy, where they can use their talents for inspiration to soothe a troubled sleeper's dreams or to implant a truly terrifying nightmare into an enemy's slumbering mind. Tragically, many Muses find out that while they are capable of inspiring great art, they cannot themselves create it — their gifts cannot provide them with inspiration, and they have difficulty acquiring any real talent. This only furthers Muses' disconnection with the artists they inspire, which may account for many

a story of an artist's brief flash of brilliance that isn't repeated again.

A Muse would be difficult to distinguish from a kithless Fairest — at least, when viewed through a grainy camera or from a distance. Muses' beauty is more than simple appearance, though: it's a supernatural presence that stirs the viewer. The sensation in an onlooker's gut, even if suppressed, is something other than sexual attraction — it's a potent understanding of the Muse's aesthetic. Muses may appear flawlessly human, or be more elaborately alien, representing their Keepers' favored aesthetic. Some Muses are covered with tattoos of letters or glyphs, the very poems they inspired written on their flesh.

**Durance:** Muses were often, naturally enough, kept as inspiration for their Keepers, or for their fellow changeling slaves. A Muse might have acted as a form of vizier, her very presence rousing her Keeper from a fit of lassitude and giving him some idea of which whim to exercise next. Another Muse may have been taskmaster to a small platoon of Wized artisans, inspiring them to craft works up to their mutual master's exacting standards.

Others developed their Muse nature by osmosis. Their Keepers spent an inordinate amount of time in the mortal world, dropping out of the Hedge to briefly grant a mortal visions of heaven or nightmare. The Muse might have ridden along on such an excursion.

**Folklore:** The concept of the Muse is well established in common folklore, sometimes associated with angels and sometimes from mysterious persons that appear in dreams. The more gentle muses from folklore do well to represent a Muse who wants to have a more positive effect on the people around her. The True Fae derive more from the passions of art, good and ill. Tales of faerie patrons who offer their favor to mortals to create grand things, only to withdraw it capriciously are not uncommon. With a bit of a stretch, the fairy from Pinocchio (unnamed in the original book) could be considered a Muse, as might a guardian angel.

**Frailties:** Repelled by the sound of breaking glass, cannot be told "I love you," rhyming compulsions, cannot sleep in the same room as a lover, cannot contact mortals on Saturdays, fears white cats

## NEW KITHS

*Flamesiren* — These burning Fairest represents the entrancement of flame — when people stare at a



flickering candle or gaze into a crackling bonfire, the force that holds their attention is the essence of the Flamesiren's appeal. It's the beauty of danger and destruction, together in one sinuous, lambent package.

The Flamesiren may invoke the blessing of **Burning Hypnotism**: once per scene, the player may spend one Glamour to surround the Flamesiren with a blazing flame-like aura. Anyone looking at the Flamesiren must make a successful Resolve + Composure roll, or suffer a two-dice penalty to all actions until the character decides to douse the aura or the scene ends, thanks to the distraction.

*Polychromatic* — They are the sons and daughters of the rainbow, fae who are living embodiments of color itself. Their hair and eyes flash all number of vibrant colors, sometimes shifting to match the Fairest's

temper. In a world of leaden skies and rain-slick gray concrete, the Polychromatics are a form of beauty that can never be dimmed.

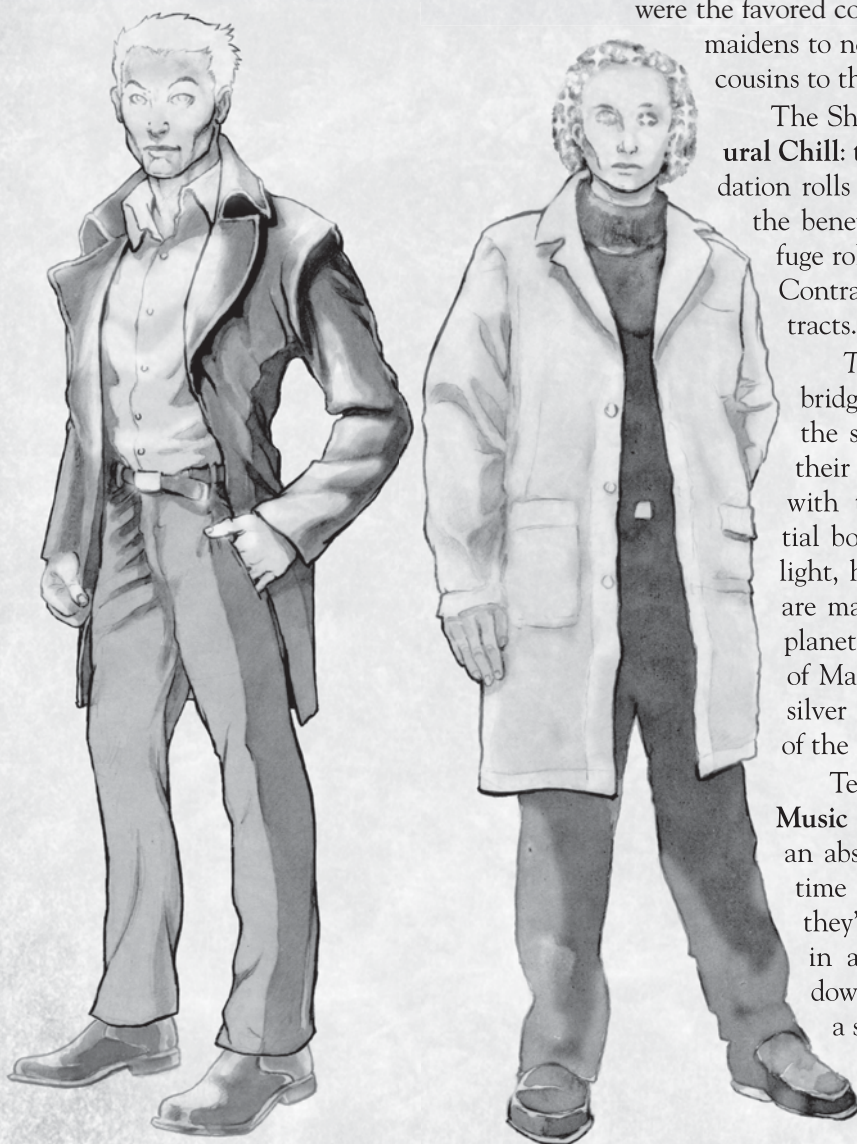
These Fairest enjoy the benefits of the **Prismatic Heart**: the character can change her mood as if moving from color to color. By spending one Glamour point as a reflexive action, the character may add two dice to any rolls made to resist emotional manipulation for the duration of the scene. In addition, all Empathy rolls made against the Polychromatic suffer a penalty of one die, as her prismatic moods are difficult to read.

*Shadowsoul* — The antithesis of the Bright Ones, these fae are the most beautiful chosen of the night. Their beauty comes from the darkness they swathe themselves in rather than the light they radiate. They were the favored concubines, adornments and hand-maidens to nocturnal Keepers, and are distant cousins to the Darklings.

The Shadowsoul's blessing is the **Unnatural Chill**: the player gains a bonus to Intimidation rolls equal to her Wyrd, and receives the benefit of the 9 again rule to Subterfuge rolls. In addition, she may purchase Contracts of Darkness as affinity Contracts.

*Telluric* — Those who walk the skybridges in the vaults of Faerie heaven, the stars in their hair and comets in their eyes. Tellurics are Fairest imbued with the essence and spirit of celestial bodies. They shine with empyrean light, have hair like a starry nebula, or are marked with the signs of a specific planet — the red skin and fiery temper of Mars, the quicksilver wit and quicksilver hair of Mercury, the pale beauty of the moon.

Telluric Fairest are guided by the **Music of the Spheres**: Tellurics have an absolute knowledge of exactly what time it is as measured locally, even if they've spent the last day unconscious in a barren room. They can count down ticking seconds as accurately as a stopwatch, which gives them a +3 bonus to any actions that might require precise timing (such as disarming a time bomb or at-





tempting to drive across town while hitting all green lights). In addition, Tellurics gain the free Specialties of Astronomy and Astrology to Academics and Occult, respectively.

*Treasured* — Far more than any other Fairest, the Treasured were treated as nothing more than prized objects for display. They spent their duration in golden cages or atop cold stone pedestals, with no greater hope than to please the eye of a passing Gentry. Treasured are jeweled, gilded, alabaster, like

Michelangelo's David given the faintest hint of color or a figure that has stepped away from Alma-Tadema's *The Roses of Heliogabalus*.

Countless hours upon a pedestal have given the Treasured the blessing of **Alabaster Fortitude**: once per scene, the player may spend one Glamour to retake any one failed Stamina, Resolve or Composure roll. The only exception is a roll made to avoid gaining a derangement through Clarity loss.





# OGRES

There are countless potential variations on the Ogre's theme. Every culture around the world has its old legends of giant, brutal humanoid monsters, and the Ogre can be likened to any of them. Some Ogre kiths may differentiate on the basis of their environment, while others focus on a particular specialized task. Those who are interested in creating their own kiths to specialize in concepts even further than the printed kiths may discover they can create a near-infinite variety of Ogres.

## KITHLESS

Ogres are more akin to Darklings and Fairest than Beasts and Elementals, in that it's not assumed that the average Ogre has a distinct sub-breed. Kithless Ogres are "classic" examples of the breed — large, intimidating, grotesque. Traits common to the kithless may include a dense build, overlong arms, jutting tusks, smallish horns, thick and jagged nails and rough skin. Kithless Ogres may take on particular aspects depending on the region; Asian Ogres are more likely to have reddish, bluish or dusky black skin, for instance, regardless of kith.

## CYCLOPEAN

The image of a massive troll pushing its way through a dark cave, a hideous snuffling sound echoing off the walls as the troll inhales the air, searching for the scent of its prey — this is the genesis of the Cyclopean. Cyclopeans are marked by the aspect of the Ogre's preternatural senses, scent in particular. The Cyclopean has the nose and ears of a brutal predator, ever searching for the smell of blood or the sound of its prey's breathing.

Cyclopeans are not as easily distinguished as other kiths may be. Some are maimed, clearly missing an eye or a hand, but others manifest a third eye, overlarge ears, a long and dangling nose or a repulsively long tongue. Some don't possess any obvious characteristics that mark them as their kith. A Cyclopean doesn't need flaring, overlarge nostrils to smell the blood of an Englishman.

**Durance:** A distressing number of Cyclopeans were maimed over the course of their durance. Sometimes it was deliberate, the work of a Keeper extracting his pound of flesh as a punishment or even as a method of awakening unusual senses in the Ogre. Or the maiming may have been a simple accident, the work of a bone-mill or stray arrow.

The unusual senses of the kith may have developed in a number of ways. One Cyclopean stands guard at the gates of a citadel, well aware of the dire punishments that await him should an invisible spy slip past. Another sifts through an immense mound of roots in her Keeper's pantry, searching for the tubers in just the right state of decay to add to her mistress's stew. A third ate his Keeper's goblin fruit of prescience, and fled before the theft could be discovered.

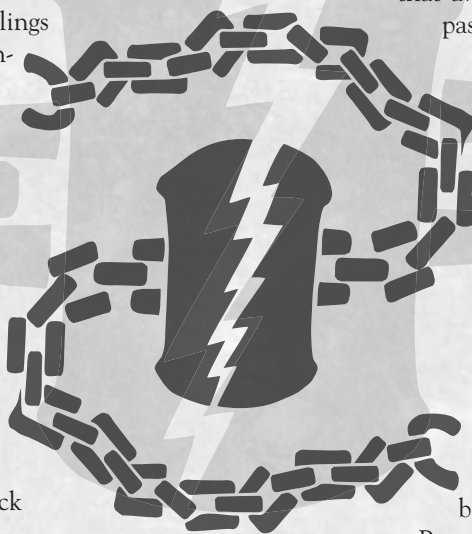
**Folklore:** The Cyclopeans are kin to the many tales of giants with unusual senses, be they sharper or poorer. The Cyclops Polyphemus is an obvious example, but so is the Fomorian king Balor, whose evil eye had to be kept lidded between battles. Argus Panoptes had 100 eyes, half of which were awake at any one time; a Cyclopean designed in Argus's image might have peacock-markings across her body. The Japanese *oni* are often depicted with a third eye, and some Asian demons are described as having ears like elephants.

**Frailties:** Repelled by rhyme, bane of blue glass, fears ravens, must sleep beside a crutch, cannot eat raw fish, cannot accept hospitality from a fellow Ogre

## FARWALKER

Farwalkers are notable in that so few of them have any memories of Faerie civilization. They weren't kept in palaces or cities. The Arcadian wilderness is all they knew. They hunted and were hunted among vast silent forces where human language was all but forgotten.

Due to the nature of their durance, Farwalkers tend to be less social than other changelings. Farwalkers watch





## Smelling Abstractions

The Cyclopean ability to “smell things that can’t normally be smelled” depends in some measure on the specific nature of the changeling in question. It is an ability to smell abstractions, such as “the regretful heart of a widow” or “a defiled work of art.” This power is generally left to the Storyteller’s discretion to adjudicate, but it may be helpful to establish a few specific things or classes of thing that the Cyclopean is guaranteed to smell, and assume most other things are beyond his experience. This kith blessing isn’t a magical trump card that can undo Contracts of Smoke and Mirror and automatically determine which stranger in the crowd is actually a True Fae — it’s supposed to be a cool thing by which the Storyteller can convey unusual and colorful bits of information to the player from time to time. Take advantage of that role.

their human families from afar, careful not to show themselves. Farwalkers do join motleys and form friendships with other Lost, but don’t associate friendship with perpetual proximity. Farwalkers keep their distance, and expect other Lost to do the same. Many Farwalkers feel comfortable only in areas with little human growth, preferring to keep dens in whatever patches of undeveloped forest they can find. Others adapt to the urban lives they once had, becoming Ogrish vagrants who are just as adept at moving stealthily through the inner city as their cousins are at stalking through woods and mountains.

Farwalkers are typically quite hirsute, although still recognizable as partly human. Many develop long, shaggy hair along the backs of their arms, or on their shins and shoulders. Some are covered with a soft, downy coat. While some Farwalkers keep a largely human coloration, others are more dramatically altered. Some Farwalkers have been bleached the bluish-white of a snowy mountain peak. Others have skin and hair that have been altered to a deep, inky black or a fiery orange-red. The Mask shows some hint of the change; a Farwalker yeti may seem as the same human, only gone prematurely white-haired. Farwalkers tend to be long of limb and quick of step, with a silent grace that is often surprising.

**Durance:** Farwalkers endured dreadful isolation during their time in Faerie. Some rarely saw their Keepers, and a few never saw their Keepers at all. Farwalkers may have been targets of a perpetual fae hunt, learning to keep farther ahead of the hunting hounds and to conceal their tracks. Some were set as guardians of specific treasures, expected to ambush anyone who drew near to the wilderness cache. Many forgot their

capacity for human language, and began their escape at the point they remembered they had a name at all.

**Folklore:** Both ancient and modern folklore gives rise to Farwalker ideas. The Himalayan yeti is as likely a prospect as the North American Sasquatch. The Brazilian *Curupira* attempts to protect the forest from humankind, and is notable for its backward-facing feet. The Siberian Almas is covered in black fur, and keeps well away from human habitation. The Filipino Kapre is tall and dark, and has a fondness for smoking tobacco. Japan’s Hibagon is somewhat smallish, only about five feet tall.

**Frailties:** Cannot refer to others by name, poisoned by sea salt, may not speak unless addressed, cannot attack anyone wearing blue, cannot step in another person’s footprint, repelled by the song of virgin girls

## GARGANTUAN

Faerie is a place of tremendous scale. Impossibly slender mountains reach out like daggers to slash at a wide sky. True Fae palaces hang like hornets’ nests in the branches of trees the size of skyscrapers. Causeways built by giants cross fathomless seas. Gargantuans are imbued with a portion of that massive scale, even though their stature is a temporary thing.

Gargantuans come in a wide variety of fae miens. As their most distinctive kith characteristic is temporary in nature, they can sometimes be difficult to tell apart from other Ogres when Gargantuans aren’t using the Spurious Stature blessing. However, they do tend toward the large side, and most have permanently gained a few inches from their durance. This height difference is also notable to those who see the Mask, which may cause further troubles with those who would otherwise recognize the Gargantuans after their absence.

**Durance:** Gargantuans were made what they are because size was necessary. Some were stretched on Procrustean racks in order to better fit the tremendous homes of their overlarge Keepers. Others were fed strange potions to bring them up to a “proper stature” for their labors, then dosed with another potion to return them to a more conveniently stored-and-cared-for size. Some were given Atlas-like duties, compelled to bear tremendous weights on their backs, or to serve as massive litter-bearers for entire mobile palaces.

Interestingly, some Gargantuans remember being perpetually of great height and strength in Arcadia; their return to the mortal world seems to have returned them to mortal stature, with their former size available to them only in bursts. Though it’s not something they discuss openly, some wonder what it would be like to walk the mortal world as a true giant once more.

**Folklore:** Giants are a ubiquitous presence in folklore. The English countryside alone is virtually littered with tales of monsters such as Jack-in-Irons, Blunderbore,



Cormoran and Galligantus. These giants sometimes have multiple heads, though obviously changelings reworked in their mold do not. The African hero Makoma bested many giants that were capable of making mountains and riverbeds with their mighty hands. The Greeks spoke of the Gigantes and Titans, and the Norse told of earth, fire and frost giants that could challenge the very gods. Judeo-Christian lore tells not only of Goliath, but of giant men that walked the earth before the Flood. The massive Kumbhakarna from Indian myth slept 100 days for every day he was awake, such was the gods' fear for his immense appetite. Some giants were even given the role of a town's protectors, in the manner of Gog and Magog (said to defend London) or Druon and Antigonas of Antwerp. Interestingly, the spriggans of Cornish lore were said to be small and bent faeries that could grow to tremendous size — and that had a tendency to steal children, leaving their own offspring in the cradle.

**Frailties:** Loses strength when chained, frightened by trumpet music, cannot wear leather, may not injure mice, riddling compulsions, may not shave

## GRISTLEGRINDER

The very word "Ogre" conjures up images of cannibalism, of man-eating brutes with gruesome appetites. The Gristlegrinder does nothing to dispel these fears. Ogres of this kith are notorious not just for their hunger, but also for their ability to chew up and swallow nearly anything they can fit their jaws around. Theirs were often some of the most dreaded Keepers in Faerie.

Gristlegrinders often become fixated on food when they return to the mortal world. In some cases, it's just a ravenous need that can never be fully sated. The hunger they felt in Arcadia fuels a phantom appetite, making it impossible to ever feel content even if one's belly is stretched to bursting. Some are notoriously open-minded about their foodstuffs, devouring massive quantities of junk food and sometimes even old garbage just to fill their bellies cheaply. Others become notable gourmets, crafting master dishes that delight the palate of anyone brave enough to try them without wondering what might have gone into the pot. A few Gristlegrinders develop a grave dissatisfaction with mortal food, instead pining for the fantastic viands of Faerie. These are the Gristlegrinders to look out for. They might be capable of anything from privateering in exchange for Arcadian provisions to eating human flesh in the hopes that it'll provide that forbidden thrill.

It's usually not difficult to pick out the Gristlegrinder from a motley of Ogres. His appetite is worn on his sleeve... or on his shirtfront. A large mouth is one of the most common marks of the kith, whether wide and toad-like or ordinary-seeming until the Gristlegrinder unhinges his jaw and distends his maw to swallow something the size of a

cantaloupe. Their teeth sometimes seem to be made of unusual substances like flint, stone or even supernaturally hard glass. Some Gristlegrinders also possess a notable potbelly, round as an iron kettle and almost as hard.

**Durance:** The most enduring memory a Gristlegrinder has of Arcadia is a memory of hunger. Gristlegrinders were starved as part of their durance, sometimes to make them more appreciative of the disgusting offal thrown to them as food, sometimes out of sheer refusal to mimic their human-eating Keepers. In some cases, the food Gristlegrinders were given acted as a catalyst for their transformation. A Gristlegrinder may have developed her signature smile from having to crack bones for marrow, or from being fed meat so supernaturally tough that no knife could cut it.

**Folklore:** Gristlegrinders are particularly blessed with inspirational stories from around the world. Ogres are associated with appetite, and human-eating giants are common in essentially all the world's stories. *Oni* and *rakshasas* are ogrish figures with a distinct taste for human flesh, as is *Negoogunogumbar*, the child-eating ogre of Pygmy myth. Some have a specific taste for a given portion of human anatomy, be it grinding bones for flour or extracting a victim's liver as a particular sweetmeat.

A peculiar twist on the concept comes from a giant in Fijian mythology with great flaming teeth, from whom humans gained fire. This is emblematic of a larger tendency toward tales of knocking out a monster's teeth. Sometimes the monster replaces the teeth (with anything from stones to entire mountains or tree trunks), sometimes it is rendered harmless by such non-elective dentistry.

**Frailties:** Cannot harm someone who calls them "mother" or "father," compulsions of hospitality, may never leave food on the plate, poisoned by pepper, forbidden to hold a knife, must drink alcohol instead of water

## STONEBONES

Strong as a mountain, rugged as a cliff face, Stonebones not only adapted to their environment, they absorbed a portion of it. They are generally one of the "wilder" Ogre kiths, favoring natural terrain as their homes if they can get it. Some Stonebones find they have as much in common with Elementals as with other Ogres, even if Stonebones' connections to the elements are a touch weaker. Stonebones might not be creatures of raw natural rock, though. Some were kept in surreally modern domains, and became things of concrete and asphalt rather than granite and basalt.

A Stonebones is usually somewhat distinct from his Ogre fellows. His flesh isn't entirely fleshy; his skin might have a pumice-like texture, and his muscles are angular and dense to the touch. Some have bones of literal stone that break through their skin here and there like rocks in a field. Others have patches of lichen scattered across their skin like acne and hair that's as much moss as anything



else. Although Stonebones might be as grotesque as any Ogre, they can also demonstrate a certain rough-cut attractiveness, like a tribal sculpture brought to life.

**Durance:** Stonebones are often the products of the harshest terrain in Faerie. They bear their Keepers' litters over steep, jagged mountains lashed by rain and lightning where nothing can grow. Stonebones are charged with keeping the fires burning in stark stone caves where there's little to eat save strange, warmish rocks that bleed when you bite into them. They threw coals and living sacrifices into the mouths of volcanoes to keep the fires burning. Their Keepers may be monsters of living stone themselves, sometimes even sections of living rock. The Stonebones kept in a cave may actually have been inside her Keeper's maw or womb.

A Stonebones's durance is sometimes very similar to that of an Elemental, particularly an Earthbones (see p. 75). The differences lie in two places. First, the Stonebones typically has a far more ogrish Keeper, and some measure of his vicious strength is imparted into the Stonebones. Second, the process of becoming imbued with earth or stone doesn't go quite as far.

**Folklore:** The fusion of an ogre or giant to the land that surrounds it is a common principle. In many cases, a particular stony-toothed ogre is associated with a specific location. He may be a guardian of a particular cliff, or credited with devouring the earth from a nearby canyon, or the alleged cause of avalanches on a local mountain.

Stone giants are common among various Native American myths, from the Yahgans of Tierra del Fuego to the Nunhyunuwi spoken of by the Cherokee. They are sometimes vicious and cruel, sometimes sympathetic. Some of the giants of Norse myth are associated with stone, such as the stonemason who attempted to win Freya as a wife in exchange for building a massive stone wall around Asgard.

**Frailties:** Vulnerable on the soles of the feet, repelled by open flame, cannot use wood-handled tools, must sleep after large meals, aversion to crow feathers, cannot refuse a stranger hospitality

## WATER-DWELLER

Consider the river after a rain, pounding mercilessly at the banks. Consider a stagnant millpond, deceptively still but full of tangling reeds that might drag a careless swimmer to his death. Consider the raging sea, where undertows and whirlpools so easily claim lives. Water-Dwellers are born of the fear of dangerous waters, monsters that share that cold hunger for the warm breath of a victim. They were taken themselves into the water, and most made it back to the mortal world the same way. Now living among humans once more, Water-Dwellers find themselves finding ways to stay by the water, working garbage

scows and fish farms, squatting under bridges and dredging the riverbed for murder victims. Though Water-Dwellers may have reason to fear the waters that took them to Arcadia, in their hearts they know they have a better chance in water than on dry land.

Water-Dwellers are easy to distinguish from their fellow Ogres; the mark of the Water-Dwellers' aquatic nature is always upon them. Green skin is quite common, sometimes with patches of scales or barnacle-like warts. Their hair, if any, is like matted river-weeds or kelp. Many have webbed fingers or toes. A wide mouth with shark-like teeth is a common mark, as might be gills on the neck. As their Wyrd rises, some may even drop salty or dank water wherever they go.

**Durance:** Dark, cold caves deep beneath the water's surface were the Water-Dwellers' lot. Fed only on whatever meager scraps of fishbone and frog their Keepers would throw to them, some took to lurking by the water's edge in hope of catching something warm and tender, something they wouldn't have to share. Others were made into brutish guards for the brightly lit palaces of serpentine Fae water-monarchs, wearing armor of living sea urchin, barnacles clinging to their reshaped skin. In some cases, their escape was made possible by a shift in the current, allowing them to outswim their captors for just long enough to make it through the Hedge.

**Folklore:** The water-dwelling Ogres are close kin to the terrible river-crones of British folklore such as Peg Powler and Jenny Greenteeth, just as they're close to the hideous Russian *vodyanoi* and the malicious Japanese *kappa*. Grendel's mother would be very similar to a Water-Dweller, one whose den could be reached only by one as strong as Beowulf. Even the bridge-troll out of children's stories might have been one of these Ogres. Legends depict river-dwelling monsters and crones as fairly stealthy, prone to take their victims quickly and without overmuch fuss. Some may take more appealing form in order to entice prey near; and Ogres are, after all, just as adept with Contracts of Mirror as any other changeling.

Water-Dwellers aren't restricted to fresh water, of course. The legendary Norse goddess Ran rose up to cast her net over ships and drag drowning sailors down to her waterlogged halls; changelings may be spiritual kin to her nine daughters, the billows of the sea. The *merrow* are male Irish merfolk, ugly as Ogres though generally seen as more kind than monstrous. By compare, the Fomorians were seen as monstrous giants who came from the sea to pillage Ireland. The maimed Inuit goddess Sedna lives at the bottom of the sea, and an Ogre might share her fate.

**Frailties:** Repelled by rhyming song, cannot comb hair, cannot resist a bribe of gold, poisoned by honey, may not kill an animal by drowning, must offer gifts to those who flatter their appearance



## NEW KITHS

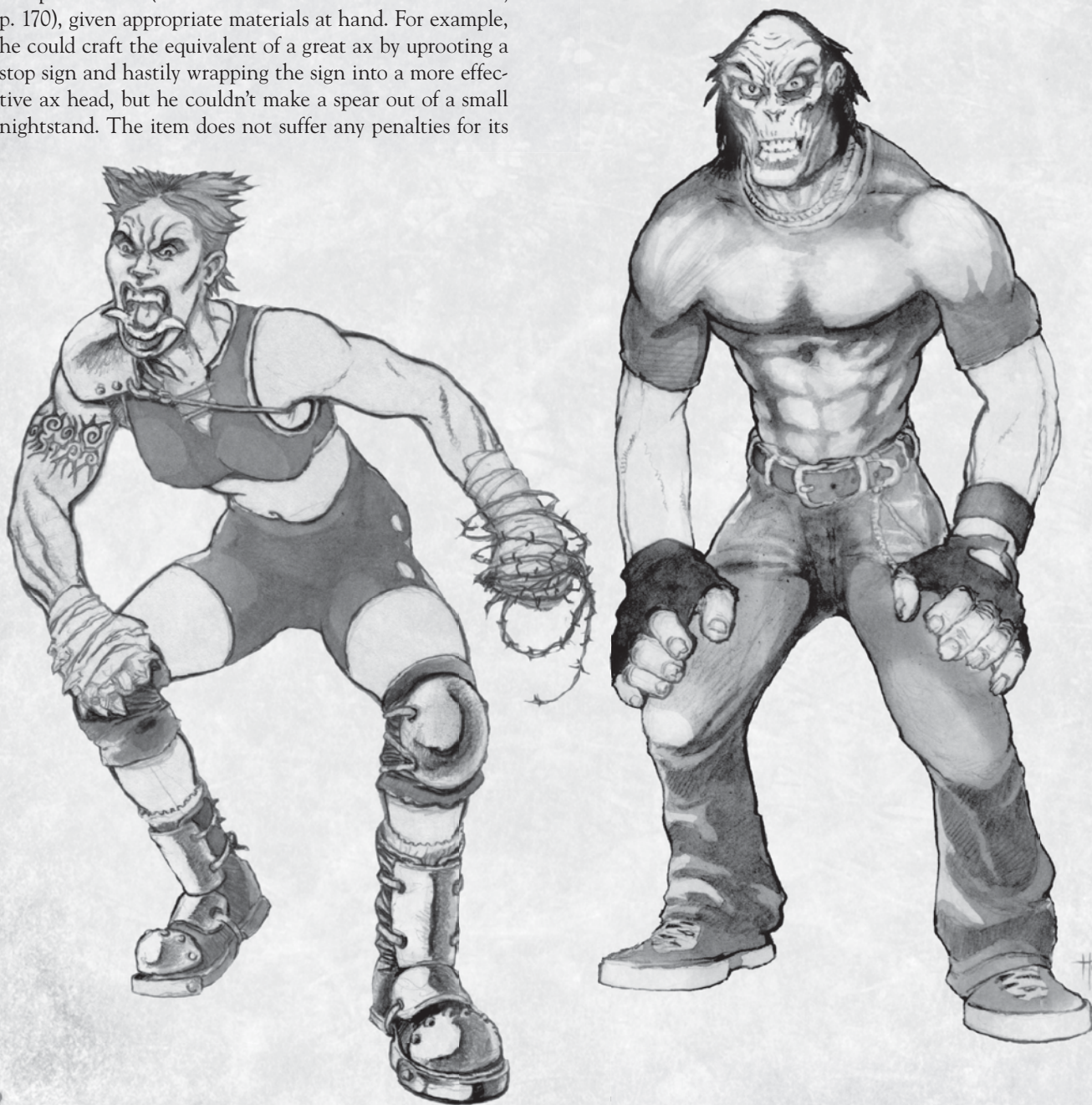
**Bloodbrute** — Veterans of the fighting pits frequented by jaded Gentry, the Bloodbrutes were kept for one purpose only: to fight for their Keepers' enjoyment. In some cases, the battles were simple matters of survival, but too many others came with extra rules and conditions born of a fickle Other's imagination.

The Bloodbrute is a master of **Improvised Mayhem**: by spending a Glamour point, he may rip a suitably sizable object free from its moorings and fashion it into a crude but effective weapon as a standard action. The character can create the equivalent of any weapon from the Melee Weapons Chart (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 170), given appropriate materials at hand. For example, he could craft the equivalent of a great ax by uprooting a stop sign and hastily wrapping the sign into a more effective ax head, but he couldn't make a spear out of a small nightstand. The item does not suffer any penalties for its

improvised nature as long as the Bloodbrute wields it; others suffer a -1 equipment penalty if attempting to use the impromptu implement of destruction.

**Corpsegrinder** — Some Ogres are fed upon death. The Corpsegrinders are survivors of massive charnel pits, brutes maintained on a diet of bones and carrion, the hulking guardians of burial grounds. They gnawed like Nidhogg at the roots of great dead trees, or tunneled into graves like *ghuls* to search out the freshest corpses.

The Corpsegrinder's gift is **Sepulchral Hunger**: the character gains a +1 bonus to any attack roll made against an enemy who has already been reduced to half





his Health. In addition, the Corpsegrinder gains an additional die to attack rolls made against undead creatures such as vampires.

**Render** — The Renders were kept as living engines of destruction. They may have been used as shock troops in a besieging army, charged with ripping open the gates and tearing down the enemy's towers. They may have been woodsmen without axes, quarry-workers reliant on their talons rather than chisel and mattock.

The Render's gift is the **Sundering Talons**: when damaging an object with his bare hands, the Render may ignore up to three points of Durability. His claws count

as a tool created to bypass Durability (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 138).

**Witchtooth** — The embodiment of the cruel, man-eating hag and the selfish, mystical monster, the Witchtooth is among the wisest and most cunning of Ogres. The Witchtooth have a penchant for dark magic, particularly curses. While many of the most famous examples of this monster are female — Baba Yaga, Spearfinger, Black Annis — male changelings can learn the ugly secrets of Witchtooth wisdom as well.

The Witchtooth has learned the secrets of the **Black Hex**: the character may spend Glamour to increase Occult rolls, and gains a one-die bonus to activate any Contracts that involve cursing another person (such as Fickle Fate).





# Wizened

The Wizened are singular among the seemings in that Wizened kiths are almost universally task-specific. Beasts and Ogres and all the others frequently develop kiths based simply on what they are, but the Wizened are what they are because of what they do. This often involved some level of mystical or surgical alteration to make them better suited for their tasks, but always it's the same answer: form follows function.

## KITHLESS

Wizened who never developed a kith are usually jacks and jills of all trades, set to drudgery and toil that never taught them a particular skill. They are surprisingly common by comparison to the kithless of other seemings. Although Wizened kithless lacked any blessing that might have aided in their escape, they also weren't as obviously useful as some of their more specialized brethren. A talented Brewer will be watched more carefully than the unskilled drudge who isn't meant to be seen carrying out her tasks in the first place. There's no way to tell a kithless Wizened from her fellow Wizened with a glance. The best way to pick her out is simply to spend time around her. Most Wizened can't help but relate to the world in the terms of their kith's task sooner or later; the kithless are notable mainly for this absence of specialized perception.

## ARTIST

Creation is a harsh mistress. The Artist's perspective on the world is forever changed. It's difficult for Artists to look on their surroundings without taking objects apart in their mind, planning ways to rebuild them better. Every wall could be improved by a painting; every room could benefit from reconstructing the architecture. Artists can come across as a little obsessive, some suffering more violently from the artistic temperament.

The Artist's appearance varies with his discipline. A carpenter may have fingers like gnarled roots and teeth faintly like a saw's. A stonemason's skin looks faintly like her own brickwork, and her nails are almost ironlike, the better to hook around large stones and pull them into place. In some cases, the Artist's own body was his canvas. A tattoo artist has become a true Illustrated Man, the ink on his body shifting and crawling as if alive. The seamstress's skin has been stitched back into place here and there, and pins are stuck through her flesh as if she had absentmindedly mistaken her own arms for her pincushion. The Artist

also has a very intense gaze, the stare of one who has seen fantastic wonders and longs to recreate them — this time, on the changeling's own terms.

**Durance:** Artists ran a little mad in Faerie. Most other Lost could shut out the memories of things that seemed to make no physical sense, the conflicting angles and colors without names. It was the Artist's job to capture these things for posterity, to design the impossible staircases and galleries of a Faerie mansion, to sculpt a flattering portrait of a nightmare that seethed and roiled inside its silken skin. These tasks tried Artists' mental fortitude to the breaking point, and only those who were later able to reclaim sufficient human perspective were able to return.

Artists might have served briefly as the raw materials for their Keepers' own artistic tendencies. However, this never lasts the duration of the durance; after subjecting Artists to some initial work, the True Fae then sets the poor Wizened to going about the business of creating more oddities and gewgaws for the True Fae. An Artist may have shared a durance with Manikins, one kith mostly the crafter and one kith mostly the crafted.

**Folklore:** Artists have much in common with the various fae crafters of folklore. Artists might have been traded to a demented goblin in exchange for the trick of spinning straw into gold, or apprenticed to a mad Fae cobbler with an obsession for creative leatherwork. Artists can also be associated with many of the fantastic objects and creations of folklore. Did the famous glass mountain have an army of fae glaziers carving the invisible doors into its surface? Impossible tasks given to the protagonist of a fairy tale are also starting points. The girl who must make seven shirts out of nettles for her brothers, or the hero who has to build his own boat — these, too, can become Wizened.

**Frailties:** Injured by the sound of breaking paintbrushes or tools, compelled to obey those who know their "slave names," cannot damage works related to their discipline, compelled to sign own works, may not wear white, fear butterflies

## BREWER

These Wizened were pressed into service in distilleries, wineries and laboratories, set to brewing the most outlandish concoctions from the bizarre ingredients given them by their Keepers. Brewers were made to produce refreshing beverages for their masters and nothing more — though those potables included burning draughts of quicksilver, the essence of moonbeams and basilisk tears, and all





manner of fantastic liquids that only a True Fae could crave. Brewers were also the alchemist servants to the Gentry, producing even stranger infusions for purposes that could only be guessed at.

When it comes to indulging in mortal spirits or concoctions of their own design, Brewers tend to split into habitual experimenters and teetotalers. Those who abstain do so because they associate alcohol with the poisons they ingested in Arcadia, and have no desire to be reminded of their maddened deliria of the time. Those who partake may have a love for earthly drink simply because it *isn't* the concoctions of Faerie, and indeed helps them forget their durance for a time. They might also drink out of a sense of professional pride, indulging themselves just as a musician attends concerts and an author devours books. Brewers are in popular demand for a freehold revel in either case, for even if they don't drink themselves, they can provide refreshments of singular flavor and potency.

A Brewer's mien typically involves discoloration. Brewers' mouths and teeth may be stained strange colors by the peculiar liquids they ingested, or their long and agile fingers might be blotched with a variety of unsettling hues. Some have breath redolent of strange odors, smelling like raw sulfur one moment and fermented plums the next. Those who were pressed into service as alchemists might have blackened sear marks on their flesh, or patches of skin that have been partially transmuted to flexible gold or copper. Some literally shift in appearance, governed by the four classical humors: becoming red-cheeked and gaining weight when the sanguine humors rise in them, only to shrink into a sallow, emaciated state when the melancholic black bile drives them to introspection.

**Durance:** The modifications made to a Brewer often entailed replacing various fluids in their body with peculiar faerie elixirs. These transfusions would be repeated frequently, and the effects were numerous. A Brewer underwent pain, mindless ecstasy, hallucinations, psychotic fits, even temporary physical transformations in the service of her Keeper. Some even recall being run through wine-presses as an object lesson, or perhaps to wring some precious fluid from their bodies that even now is missing.

**Folklore:** The folklore of mystical drinks and magical potions gives rise to the Brewers' tasks. They brewed poisons to apply to ripe apples and spinning needles. Their wine fueled the drunken rampages of the maenads, or lulled unsuspecting people to slumber for 10, 20, 100 years at a time.

**Frailties:** Poisoned by raw milk, cannot refuse an offer of drink, cannot spit or vomit on dry ground, weakened by running water, must eat burnt food, cleanliness compulsions

## CHATELAINE

Chatelaines are notable not just among their fellow Wizened, but among the Lost as a whole. Chatelaines had the rare quality of possessing that strange quality that came closest in meaning to "their Keepers' trust." While the True Fae lack the general capacity for empathy that could actually allow them to give honest trust to another being, changeling or Other, Chatelaines were granted the "honor" of certain responsibilities. Such responsibilities came after an extended period of "breaking-in," of course, but ultimately the Chatelaine's purpose was to arrange matters that her Keeper had no interest in. Some Chatelaines, their spirits not quite broken, were able to abuse that responsibility to arrange for an escape. In some cases, it even worked.

When returned to the mortal world, Chatelaines throw themselves doubly hard into finding a place either among human society or among a freehold. Both are ideal, if it can be arranged. Their organizational and diplomatic skills mean they can usually find something to their taste in one or the other, though the Wizened curse of spite haunts them as they go.

The Chatelaine's most distinguishing characteristic is his poise. He may be tall and surprisingly strong, or bent and scuttling, but his etiquette is always beyond reproach. Chatelaines dress well, no matter their audience; it's a rare Chatelaine who cares little for his own appearance. If one appears untidy or unkempt, it's most likely a feature of his mien. A gaunt manservant may be continually wrapped in cobwebs, emblematic of the statue-like patience he developed.

**Durance:** The Chatelaine's function was often to concern himself with the tasks of administration that grated on a True Fae's patience. If a Chatelaine's body was reshaped, it seemed almost an afterthought, that or a means to the end of breaking the changeling's spirit. Once the Chatelaine's loyalty seemed sufficient, he was entrusted to keep the keys at some of the most outlandish social functions imaginable. He may have served wriggling things on silver platters to the dancers at an elegant fête, armed his Keeper before a hunt and taken the spoils to the pantry afterwards or overseen the punishment of other changeling servants.

**Folklore:** Chatelaines don't themselves appear often in folklore. But although they go unmentioned, their hand can be seen in many stories. They are the unseen presence that allows some of the most magnificent faerie dances and balls of legend to take place at all. They record the names of good and bad children so that the spirits of Winter know precisely whom to visit on the longest night of the year. Chatelaines hold the keys to the fantastic vaults of treasures said to be possessed by jinn and their ilk. Chatelaines show the wanderer into the underground palace of the serpent king, and direct the guards to close the exits. And as the one-sentence ghost story runs, "He reached for a match, and a match was put into his hand."

**Frailties:** Repelled or pained by poorly played music, may not sit down to eat, injured by the sound of silver bells, cannot wear the color red, must speak only when spoken to, cannot draw near a page torn from a book

## CHIRURGEON

So many of the Lost became what they are by undergoing bizarre surgeries to remold them into a new form. Chirurgeons may have been the ones holding the scalpel. Trained to assist in the bizarre and seemingly pointless operations performed by certain Others, Chirurgeons are both doctor and patient. However, they have no Hippocratic oath to adhere to — or if they once did, they're all but sure to have broken it during their time in Arcadia.

A Chirurgeon is often a vital player within her freehold, even if her presence is such that most Lost dread having to seek out her services. Chirurgeons make stupendous underworld doctors, particularly given their ability to operate with only the rudest of improvised tools. Some set up practice as precisely that among mortal society, as their displacement makes it all but impossible to practice medicine more openly. It may be unsavory to operate on murderers or provide organized criminals with cosmetic surgery, but it's work.



Chirurgeons possess exquisite hands, with long and nimble fingers any human surgeon might envy. Their manual dexterity is quite impressive, though never more so than when they're holding a scalpel or suturing a wound. Most are pale, having spent so much of their time in the "facilities" provided by their Keepers. Some show literal scars and odd stitch-marks where an imprecise surgery healed poorly; others have odd grafts such as patches of discolored skin or hypodermic needles implanted under their fingernails.

**Durance:** The circumstances of a Chirurgeon's durance are things other kiths don't even like to think about. The images of blood-caked tables, racks of chromed needles, vats of unclean amniotic fluids holding half-visible pale forms, grotesquely jagged surgical tools, bits of graying flesh stitched together with black thread — all are true. A Chirurgeon is able to give a friend in the Autumn Court more than enough material to work with just by describing her jagged and blurred memories of Arcadia. Often, the changeling was the one undergoing the latest unnecessary or experimental surgical procedure; at other times, she was compelled to practice that trade on other captives.

**Folklore:** Legends often speak of miraculous feats of healing — arms and legs stitched back on without so much as a drop of blood lost, the dead raised to life. The Chirurgeon's surgeries are never quite so neat and clean as the stories go, but they were comparably remarkable. Modern urban legend and folklore provides more of a place for the Chirurgeon. The half-glimpsed aliens who abduct people and perform unrecognizable experiments on them may have had Chirurgeons as their apprentices. The tales of black-market organ-running may have their roots in mortal behavior, but they may also speak of something more.

**Fraillties:** Cannot injure a former patient, repelled by rue, may not cut dead flesh, bane of bird's bones, repelled by the image of a black skull, cleanliness compulsions

## ORACLE

Arcadia is a place where the power of Fate is almost intangible. The oaths, pledges and Contracts that empower changelings are said to be examples of this force: a changeling can transform herself into fire because her fate is intertwined with that of fire itself. Oracles are even more entwined with the force of Fate, and have become able to perceive its threads in the world around them. However, these often-conflicting threads are difficult to make any sense of without some measure of focus. Thus, an Oracle turns to old or new methods of divination. In the patterns formed by bones or dice or splayed guts, they can see the pattern more clearly. An Oracle often becomes a vital player in her freehold, using her Panomancy talent to warn of potential threats — or to further influence local political intrigues.

An Oracle's mien has usually undergone alteration to the eyes. Some appear blind, with milky cataracts obscuring iris and pupil while not actually obscuring the Wizen's sight. Some have had their eyes replaced with pearls or glittering gemstones. A few Wizen wear blindfolds of Hedgespun, which permit them to see the physical world but block out many of the distracting and misleading visions they would otherwise receive.

**Durance:** Somewhat unlike the other Wizen kiths, an Oracle didn't fill a necessary role in a True Fae household. Most of the True Fae possessed such greater mastery over the power of Fate that they didn't need a changeling to tell them what was

about to happen. Rather, an Oracle was often nothing more than an experimental subject who gained the ability to see the threads of fate as a side effect of his transfigurations.

Some Oracles learned their Panomancy in Faerie, rather than as a coping mechanism picked up when they returned to Earth. It might have been stolen from books left moldering in an old castle, learned watching their crone of a Keeper fuss over her divinatory playthings or scabbled together from fragments of lore passed on by other changelings.

**Folklore:** Many otherworldly beings are attributed with the ability to foretell the future. In some cases, this ability sets them apart, such as the Norns of Nordic myth. In others, it's just another way in which the faerie is assumed to have greater wisdom or power than humans. The curse for Briar Rose to prick her hand on a needle and die may have been a curse, and it may have simply been a foretelling. It's a common motif for a person to receive a prophecy from an otherworldly advisor, attempt to avoid the outcome and wind up enabling his dark fate to catch up to him.

**Fraillties:** Compulsion for honesty, cannot foretell the future on a Sunday, repelled by goat's blood, cannot gamble, bane of burning paper, cannot harm a bird

## SOLDIER

The Others discovered war as a concept a long time ago, and indulge it as they would any other passing fancy. Something about the blood, the explosions, the shouts and screaming, the way a war sprawls across a landscape and scars it — it has its appeal. Some of the Others like to participate firsthand; more prefer pushing their armies around like living, bleeding pieces on a map. The Soldiers are veterans of those wars, bent but not broken by the unending, insane conflict.

Some run mad, of course. Post-traumatic stress disorder is all the worse considering the stresses of a war in Faerie. Others find the mortal world to be the peace they'd longed for all their time away, or at least the promise of potential peace. A Wizen Soldier may have a mouth full of curses and a brutal knack for violence, but the mortal world gives him something to fight for that he never had in Arcadia. The mortal world gives him a cause. It gives him hope.

If the Wizen look somehow shrunken, the Soldiers look almost compacted. They don't seem to have lost any weight — it was packed more densely along their frames, making them tougher and more resilient. A Soldier's musculature and joints may look a little off, a touch twisted or knobby. Soldiers' skin often looks somewhat seared and blackened around the tips, powder burnt from peculiar explosions. Some have elaborate scars that form unusual patterns across their faces and entire bodies, the work of battlefield surgeons playing at artistry or encrypting some odd message into the Soldier's flesh.

**Durance:** Only the most senseless of mortal wars can compete with the utter madness of an Arcadian conflict. The Soldier is a veteran of bloody, frenzied battles that lasted for years, all with a purpose no greater than capturing a small yellow flower that caught his Keeper's fancy when he visited a neighbor's garden. The battles themselves were often the tortures that remade him. Broken, half torn apart by elf-cannon and balefire, he was dragged back to his mistress's surgeons and sewn back together in time for the next conflict. Some Soldiers never fought in large-scale battles at all, but were pitted against one another in gladi-



atorial contests or set to patrol the Keeper's grounds for threats that could come from any direction.

**Folklore:** The soldier often appears in fairy tales as a displaced soul returning home from war to a home that no longer has a place for him. From there, he must make his fortune — and the other-worldly appears to him. The hero of the story “Berskin” pacted with the Devil out of desperation and become something less than human until he won his freedom — accidentally delivering two more souls to the Devil in the process. Another soldier wins a magic tinderbox from a witch, and uses the three dogs that are its guardians to win his fortune. The Wizen of his kith share a similar fate, struggling back home to find that they have no place.

**Frailties:** Cannot attack a person wearing white, must keep belongings well maintained, bane of lead shot, cannot injure a woman, may not enter a churchyard, repelled by a widow's tears

## SMITH

Faerie is full of wondrous items, weapons and gewgaws, many of which were not forged by the Others. They were the work of Wizen slaves who worked as smiths, tinkers and builders for their Keepers. Though much of what the Wizen built is impossible to replicate in the physical laws of the mortal world, these Lost retain a preternatural skill for making.

The Wizen compulsion to work is strong within Smiths. Theirs was a very direct and hands-on craft, and it doesn't take long for their fingers to itch for the feel of a hammer and tongs. Many are drafted by their freeholds to hand-forge iron weapons, just in case. It's a tricky order, as raw iron is the one thing no Smith learned how to work in Arcadia.

The Smith is molded by her work. Her arms are corded and powerful from relentless hours spent at the anvil, or her fingers are long and metallic like the repair tools she uses. She may be tattooed with the same maker's mark she places on her work, or her skin may be tinged in places with metal or ash. Some Smiths are permanently blackened by their exposure to the forge. Others bear hammer-marks along their bodies, their flesh shaped as if it were metal that had been beaten into place.

**Durance:** The torments inflicted on a Smith bled over into the tasks given her. The kind of crafting a Smith learned in Faerie required notable skill, and thus she was put to work early and hard. Her first task may have been to forge her own chains, which were then tested by her Keeper — if they seemed too loose or flimsy, her punishment would be terrible. Rest was all but a dream. The Smith may have forged weapons for the Fae hosts, or tinkered among huge rotating gears that powered machines the size of cities. Her work may have been the means of escape as well as her torment — artificial wings that carried her into the Thorns before breaking apart, an axe that cut her chains or a long lock pick to open the back gates of the castle.

**Folklore:** Legendary smiths are all but ubiquitous in folklore. The process of turning raw metal into a fine tool or weapon has seemed wondrous and magical for as long as the craft has existed. The Smith is kin to the dwarves of Germanic and Norse legend who crafted wonders suitable for the gods; she is cousin to Wayland Maker and his ilk. She may have worked to forge a masterpiece, or developed a knack for dismantling equipment like a gremlin. The strange ingredients said to be necessary for some swords, such as the bile of hares in Chinese legend, hint at

fae mercuriality. Some magical smiths cursed their work, as the dwarves Dvalin and Durin did with the sword Tyrfling. Many legendary smiths were lame or crippled, sometimes with their tendons deliberately cut to keep them at their forges.

**Frailties:** May not work raw iron, compulsion to eat coal, cannot use another person's tools, bane of toad's spittle, must baptize a work in blood, cannot fight without a weapon

## WOODWALKER

Where the Woodblood Elemental was made to be part of the forest, the Woodwalker was always an outside force within it. Woodwalkers were expected to tend to the gardens and grounds of their Keepers with humanlike reason, not primal instinct. Woodwalkers cultivated goblin fruits by the bushel, plucked wriggling faerie vermin from the stems and roots of impossible flowers and fertilized shifting flower beds with substances best left forgotten.

Upon returning to the mortal world, the Woodwalker may take a brief bit of time to refamiliarize herself with the way that the plants of Earth work. A rosegarden might trigger a faint flash of dread, until the changeling notes all the differences between the mortal roses and the shuddering bushes that grasped at her arms in Faerie. Still, the memories of home that led the Woodwalker back often included the memories of what “real” flowers and trees were like. With these memories as their anchor, most Woodwalkers gladly return to their instinctual task of tending gardens, orchards or forests. Here, the work is far purer.

The Woodwalker is usually somewhat goblinish in aspect, bent and gnarled like tree roots without actually having the same bark-like skin or ivy-like hair that a Woodblood possesses. Sometimes their joints seem to be in the wrong places, making their limbs seem even more like those of a tree. Some have discolored mouths and teeth, the mark of the goblin fruits that twisted them into their present forms. Others are pale like mushrooms, with soft and spongy flesh that is tougher than it first seems.

**Durance:** Many Woodwalkers were not crafted for the specific tasks, but were rather abducted, reworked, and then discarded into the gardens of their Keeper. There they learned a certain affinity for the plants that surrounded them in part because the gardens were a kind of respite. Others were deliberately modified to act as gardeners, owing to the special requirements of the twisted Faerie gardens. Some were fed exclusively on the strangest and wildest of goblin fruits, the poisons in those juices mingling like alchemy in the blood of the stolen changeling. A few never saw actual plants at all, instead tending pale fungoid forests in the caverns deep in the bowels of Arcadia.

**Folklore:** The Woodwalkers are kin to the goblins, faeries and spirits that lived in the woods without actually being closely tied to the forest's nature. The trickster Robin Goodfellow may have been one of them. The horse-faced *tikbalang* of the Philippines is another potential Woodwalker, one that leads travelers astray. Germanic folklore mentions moss-people who appear as old men and women clad in moss. Certain Native American tribes talked of the Canotili, tree-dwelling faeries with great strength hidden in their dwarfish stature.

**Frailties:** Poisoned by rose petals, cannot refuse aid to someone that is lost, may not hurt a wild animal, repelled by church bells, cannot rest in a room without living plants, bane of hornet's venom



## NEW KITHS

**Author** — In Faerie, these changelings composed words of all kinds for their masters, from poetry to plays to nonfiction. Authors may even have been their Keepers' only connection with mortal language, having to explain precisely what words are and how they held power. Authors still see things in terms of words — ideal nouns and adverbs swim unasked through their minds.

The Author has mastered the **Polyglot's Riddle**: he gains the 8 again rule to all Expression rolls dealing with writing or wordy endeavors. With a successful Wits + Academics roll, he can also deduce the meaning of written text in any mortal language.

**Drudge** — The lowest and most menial of Wizeneds, Drudges were given the most unpleasant tasks to perform. They suffered all the privations and modifications of their fellow Wizeneds, and did not even learn a faerie trade in return. Drudges are the long-suffering inheritors of house elves, *domovoi* and other such faeries. However, not all had their spirits broken in Arcadia, and some managed to slip away through the Thorns before their negligent Keepers noticed their absence.

The Drudge was designed to provide **Unseen Labor**: by spending a Glamour point, the character may complete any relatively simple task in a fraction of the time, as long as no mortal watches her do so. The task cannot require more than five successes on an extended roll to complete; the Drudge could fix something simple quickly, but not repair a badly damaged car. The time required for the task is equal to the original time required divided by the character's Wyrd +1; even the weakest

Drudge can cut a field or clean a house in half the time it would normally take. In addition, the Drudge gains the benefit of the 9 again rule to Stealth rolls; she is easily overlooked.

**Gameplayer** — The True Fae adore games, even if they despise the possibility of losing. Some Wizeneds were kept precisely to empower the Gentry's love of games. The changeling was forced to play against her Keeper, or against canny goblins and cheating imps; or she was made a part of the games, a chess piece in a game that repeated over and over again, or the queen of spades in a long poker game. She mastered many games during her durance, but cannot remember them all; some operated by rules that made no sense in Arcadia, much less in the more solid reality of the mortal world.

The Gameplayer's blessing is the **Grandmaster's Stratagem**: by spending a Glamour point, she can win any purely mental-based game she plays (such as chess or checkers). She also gains a bonus three dice to any rolls made to gamble with games that involve a mixture of mental acuity and random chance (poker and sports betting, for instance, but not craps).

**Miner** — These changelings are the knockers and kobolds, the Coblynau and Telchines. Miners labored in deep mines to extract rare and precious metals, and perhaps other things — chipping out veins of fossilized blood from the rotting gut of a mountain-sized great beast, or tunneling for the root of all evil.

The Miner's gift is the **Tappingspeak**: by spending one Glamour, the changeling may tap out a coded message on a nearby surface. The message (which cannot be longer than three sentences) travels like vibrations to the intended recipient, as long as there's a sufficient medium between the two to carry it all the distance (thus, a recipient currently in an airplane could not receive the missive). The range is one mile per point of the Miner's Wyrd. The recipient automatically understands the meaning of the Tappingspeak, thanks to the Glamour imbedded in the message.





## Gambling

Fae like games — chess matches for the fate of a mortal soul, playing poker with an ante of goblin fruits, all manner of divertissements. As a general rule, gameplay of this nature can be resolved as a extended and contested Intelligence + Composure roll. Equipment bonuses can be applied as necessary: marked cards for a poker game (assuming the character knows how to read the marks), or a book on chess strategies for a game played out over days online. Equipment bonuses can also be used to simulate the random element of some game. For example, in poker it would be appropriate to assign an equipment bonus of -1, 0 or +1, as the luck tends to even out (roll a die: 1-3 = -1, 4-7 = +0, 8-10 = +1). You can choose to play out individual hands of cards in this fashion if you like, or just have the roll represent the entire evening's play.

If playing for money, the following system can be used to quickly resolve whether a character loses or wins big.

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Composure + equipment versus Intelligence + Composure + equipment

**Action:** Extended and contested

**Obstacles:** Odds, as they say, favor the house. There is a flat -3 to -5 penalty to gambling, depending on the complexity of the game and the odds of winning.

**Aids:** The characters can gain circumstantial bonuses for cheating, skilled bluffing or a good eye for reading an opponent. These three are handled as follows: cheating is Wits + Larceny contested by Intelligence + Composure (to spot the cheat), bluffing is Manipulation + Subterfuge contested by Intelligence + Empathy and reading an opponent is Intelligence + Empathy contested by Manipulation + Subterfuge. Success on one of these stratagems grants an additional +2 circumstance bonus to the roll; failure, however, imposes a -1 penalty.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character backed the wrong horse. He loses anywhere from half the money he has on him on up — he may even have bet more than he's carrying and wound up with an ugly debt. If the character was cheating, he is caught in the act.

**Failure:** Either luck or judgment just wasn't sufficiently there. The character loses appropriate to the time spent and the stakes; anywhere from three to 10 times the ante amount is appropriate when playing for money.

**Success:** The character comes out ahead, and makes some modest profit appropriate for the time invested and the level of stakes. If playing for nickels, he probably gets a dollar or two ahead; if the ante is \$50, he may have made a couple of hundred bucks.

**Exceptional Success:** The character wins big in dramatic fashion — bluffing down his opponents with a pair of twos, or achieving checkmate out of nowhere. His opponent may not be happy, particularly if fae.





## OPTIONAL KITH RULES

The basic purpose of a kith is to provide customization for a seeming, to take the general archetype and provide a rules advantage for further defining that archetype to match the concept you have in mind. If your troupe is interested, you can go beyond these game roles, making kith something of a third core “axis” for character creation.

Just as everything presented in this sourcebook, these rules are optional. It’s worth repeating, because they play with the core assumptions of the game just that little bit extra. Blowing the doors wide open like this obviously isn’t going to be for every troupe. But if you’re willing to deal with the potential hazards, there’s no reason you can’t experiment firsthand for yourself.

### DUAL KITHS

One variant for character development is to allow for the possibility of stacking kiths: in effect, letting a changeling possess more than one at the same time. A Beast with an affinity for crawling, poisonous vermin might be able to rationalize being both a Skitterskulk and a Venombite at the same time. An Elemental forced to labor at the bellows in his Keeper’s forge until he became as much a furnace as anything could be both Fireheart and Manikin.

In such cases, the character technically possesses two kiths, but changelings would be unlikely to see it in such a fashion. Nobody’s likely to refer to a Wizenéd quartermaster as a Soldier/Smith; it’s more likely he would identify himself as a Warmaker, or some similar concept. A serpent-blooded Beast with both Venombite and Skitterskulk aspects would probably identify as one or the other, not as both.

If your troupe decides to adopt the possibility of dual kiths, first select one of the following approaches to determine how a changeling acquires a second kith. Allowing for both the Merit-based mechanic and the Wyrd evolution mechanic is probably too much, though again, you know your game group best. Second, decide how to process the benefits of a dual kith: as full access to both blessings, as a single more powerful blessing representative of both kiths or even using both approaches on a case-by-case basis.

#### AS A MERIT

To allow a second kith to be taken during character creation, the simplest approach is to classify the kith as a Merit. This also allows for a second kith to be taken during play, if the Storyteller is willing, with an expenditure of 12 experience points — and presumably a series of trials to be roleplayed out.

#### WYRD EVOLUTION

An alternate approach is to have additional kiths manifest as permutations of a rising Wyrd. At Wyrd 5, a changeling may spend 10 experience points to purchase an

#### *As a Merit: Dual Kith (…)*

**Prerequisites:** Wyrd 2

**Effects:** Your character benefits from the blessings of two different kiths. Upon taking this Merit, you may select an additional kith, subject to any restrictions set by the Storyteller. You gain the benefit of both kiths’ blessings, and your appearance may reflect both aspects.

additional kith. This represents his fae nature becoming sufficiently powerful that he gains an additional blessing; naturally, his mien may grow less human as he changes. At Wyrd 9, a changeling can spend 15 experience points to purchase a third kith, his fae side having evolved even further.

#### BENEFITS

The benefits for possessing two kiths are usually as simple as assuming that the character has full access to both kith blessings. However, with a little bit of extra work, both blessings could be fused into a single and unique blessing that reflects the character’s new, combined kith. This is, naturally, entirely up to the Storyteller and player to work out; there are far too many combinations to track here, even leaving out the possibility of fusing kiths from different seemings. A dual kith with a fused blessing becomes, in effect a brand-new kith with a more potent blessing (it has to be worth the expenditure of experience, after all). Other fae may recognize it as such; the character may not be the first to take this particular path.

**Example:** Mike has announced that he’s interested in letting the players choose multiple kiths via Wyrd Evolution if so inclined, and both Kelley and Rich decide to take him up on it. Kelley’s Gargantuan Ogre, Little Joan, was partly inspired by English giant folklore, and it was hard to choose between making her an actual giant via the Gargantuan kith or taking the Cyclopean kith for the ability to “smell the blood of an Englishman.” She’s quite happy with keeping the blessings of each kith separate. Little Joan continues to self-identify as a Gargantuan, just one with a particularly good sense of smell.

Rich, on the other hand, is interested in having his macabre Tunnelgrub, Mr. Pickman, manifest a ghoulish quality that’s a little more unique. Rich talks with Mike about the possibility of adding the Gravewright kith, but changing the kith blessing to something more distinctive. Rich proposes allowing Mr. Pickman to spend a Glamour point to become somewhat more corpse-like. Instead of taking the Gravewright blessing of Charnel Sight, Mr. Pickman can enter a cadaverous state for a few turns in which he gains all of the benefits of the Tunnelgrub blessing Slither and Squirm, and in addition appears to be dead — no pulse, no body heat, no need to breathe. The deathlike state is



perceptible even through the Mask, allowing Mr. Pickman to be mistaken for a human corpse. Mike likes the concept, but vetoes the lack of breathing; it seems a bit powerful, as it draws on the benefits of playing certain aquatic kiths as well. He instead extends the duration of the corpse-like state, allowing the state to last for five turns per point of Glamour spent, with the blessing lasting for an entire scene if Mr. Pickman invokes the blessing while in a graveyard or morgue. Rich notes down the rules on the back of his character sheet, and names the blessing **Ghoulish Contortion**. Mike also makes a note that at some point, a changeling that might happen to observe Mr. Pickman's newly perfected skill in action may refer to him as "a Corpsecreeper."

## SHEDDING A KITH

If it's possible to grow into a kith, is it also possible to shed one? Perhaps. It's a stranger thing to want to do, but some changelings may have the motive. A changeling may want to excise his kith as a sign of independence from his Keeper's desires, or the changeling may hope that shedding the kith helps him become closer to the human he once was.

Removing one's kith works much like the system of the kithless undergoing ordeals to attain a kith (p. 59), only in reverse. The changeling must find her way deep into the Hedge, to the heart of her kith's psycho structure and then tear her way free in a way that rips off the specialization of the kith. A Steepscrambler's goatish horns are broken away and his hooves split to reveal more humanlike feet; a Smith breaks her tools and tears away her forge-scars. This process requires the expenditure of a Willpower dot: it is anything but easy.

As a side effect of the ordeal, the changeling cannot learn any new Contracts, forge new pledges or spend experience to increase his Wyrld for a week and a day, in order to give his Wyrld time to heal. Once the healing process is complete, the character may resume using his fae powers as usual. He may then also go about the process of picking up a new kith, as detailed on p. 59, if so inclined. In this manner, the changeling may exert more control over his life, becoming something of his own choosing rather than of his Keeper's.

The process to shed one's kith can only go so far; a changeling would not be able to remove her entire seeming and still be a changeling. She would have to remove her entire Wyrld. It may in fact be feasible to do such a thing, effectively becoming human again, but that's left up to the Storyteller and player to resolve. Such a quest would deserve to be the centerpiece of a character's entire story.

## DISASSOCIATING KITH AND SEEMING

Another particularly permissive experiment might be to open up any kith to any seeming. Want an Earthborn Wizeden, a Hunterheart Fairest or a Cyclopean Elemental? Whatever you want. The positive side of such an experiment (making kith an effective "third axis" beyond seeming and Court) would of course be the greater variety of character concepts. It may seem peculiar to create a Beast Seneschal at first, but it might be an interesting way to model someone kept as sort of a "pack beta," someone whose role as beta ultimately had more of an effect on him than the wolflike nature of his Keeper.

Potential pitfalls, of course, lie in the same sheer number of potential combinations. Some combinations may seem nonsensical, and the occasional unscrupulous player may build a character first on the advantages of a given kith/seeming combination of blessings (or if a kith's blessing allows the character to overcome a seeming's curse), and then cook up a character concept around that. This isn't necessarily game-breaking, but it might feel a bit artificial to other players and skew suspension of disbelief.

Seeming may also lose a certain measure of social dynamic; with kith as less of a potential bond between changelings of the same seeming, people may not identify as strongly as "Beasts" or "Ogres" as they once did. Beasts and Elementals in particular would become hard to recognize as the seemings they are without kiths. This might be disappointing to players who enjoy that kind of social dynamic or bond to play off the dynamics and bonds of Court or a shared Keeper.











e had done it before. I could see that in the way he handled the snake.

The rest of us were edgy watching the cobra. Fuckin' snake, hood up, teeth bared, looked at every one of us like we were just a little white mouse, an MRE, a Mouse Ready to Eat.

The Girl with Dreams In Her Eyes looked like she was goin' to piss her panties. And Expat Fritz chewed nervously on a thumbnail, staring out of that one mad eye of his.

But not Yum-Yum Jim — not his real name, which was I think Nọc or Nọc or somethin'. The little Ogre with his golden teeth simply grabbed the snake in his fist and —

Slice-slice! One 'x' in the belly of the beast. Two fingers plunged in.

They came out with the still-beating heart of the cobra.

He plopped it into a white dish, then drizzled some of the blood into my glass of rice wine.

"Drink, then eat," Yum-Yum said.

Everyone gasped as I slammed back the shot and popped the heart in my mouth. I gulped it like a pill. It kept beating all the way down my esophagus.

"There," I said, showing him my empty mouth. "Passed your test. Now let me see the Emperor of the Red Bird."

For the first time, maybe ever, Yum-Yum laughed. It was chillin'.

"That not the test," he said. "You still fight the snake."

"Fight the —" I started to say, and that's when my guts roiled, twisting up inside of me. I felt the snake growing, coiling up in my belly, I could hear its hissing up through my jawbone and into my ear. The damn thing was trying to get out of me any way it could.

"See?" Yum-Yum said, and the rest of the gathered Lost just laughed as I dropped to the floor, screaming.



# CHAPTER 3

## *The Thousand Courts*

*Gya-ni nīnu ko-wa oni-no ko!*

*("A child that does not resemble its parents must be the child of an oni!")*

— JAPANESE ADMONISHMENT TO CHILDREN

Atop a sandswept rooftop in Syria, a *rabisu* Leechfinger demon crouches in the shadow of a nearby tree, ready to pounce upon wayward children, hoping that they don't have a pocketful of sea salt (that, he cannot abide).

In the middle of a Kenyan village, not far from Lake Turkana, two Lost come together to talk about the future and about the threats from the north. The one man is Mara Boro, a Wizen Soldier of the Lion Court. The other is a woman, Naa Maa, an Oracle from the Court of the Many Cows. They count out thorns — magical thorns, the barbs tipped with the blood of an otherworldly red beast that walks this land — that they will use to top the fence that surrounds the village. This shall protect them from the Others. For now.

In the catacombs below a forgotten palace in the Indian state of Punjab, the always-weeping Waterborn girl, Vayunastra, kneels before her new teacher. The teacher, a Broadback, strokes one of his many tusks, a wide ear twitching. He draws a doorway on the wall in bone dust, whispers a secret mantra and the stone wall groans as a gateway opens where none had existed before.

Deep in the dark trods of the Hedge, an ancient Fae stalks the roads. He rips evergreens from the maze walls and wears them as snowshoes. The moon glitters in the ice that crusts over his massive antlers. His frozen heart beats, the ice cracking and reforming with every pulse of its hoarfrost chambers. He is Windigo, perhaps not the real thing but to those poor humans he takes from the world, does it matter? For they become cannibals in his mold just the same, heart-eating Ogres and Elementals right at home in barely-remembered Cree legend.

### MANY-HEADED DREAMS

The madness, beauty and horror of fae existence is pervasive. This magic is everywhere, as Glamour seeps into and out of every corner of the world. What is found in **Changeling: The Lost** is the default society and culture of the Lost. But that is not all there is: like a glittering jewel or a hypnotic opal, changeling life offers many facets and colors all around the world. Many shapes and parts, shadows and bright spots, names and faces. The term "motley" is appropriate here in a different sense, in that the

cultures of the fae are truly motley — a varied spread of body parts (fiery eyes, tusks pink with old blood, grins from many mouths, caprine hooves, bloated bellies like from a Sumerian matron goddess) and social structures (Courts of many directions, tribes of many animals, councils of Lost with many votes).

This chapter will help illuminate what the Lost are like the world around. How does the Hedge look in the desert? The tundra? Out in the middle of the ocean? What kinds of Keepers emerge into the lands of Australian Aborigines or Tokyo businessmen? How do the myths and legends of a place show on the faces and forms of the local changelings, and how do such ancient — or modern — traditions mold the freehold politics and Court structures? Answers await. We cannot be totally comprehensive, for to do so would require a thousand pages, but below you should find plenty of spice to use in your **Changeling: The Lost** games.

### ACROSS THE UNIVERSE

In reading this chapter, it's easy to assume that local cultures give unearthly life to fae existence in that given region. This is true, to a point — you'll see more Ogres reflecting the frosty ice-toothed *tuungaq* demons, or Waterborn and Swimmerskin bearing the stormy sea maiden motif of Sedna in and around Inuit culture. These things reflect their mythology, and the culture has a way of bleeding into Fae and fae existence. (Changelings and their Keepers are, after all, a living reflection of myth and dream.)

However, don't be so quick to believe that changelings of a given cultural bent and appearance only appear near that culture. You have a number of mitigating factors that easily allow for the Lost to appear quite different from what the regional culture holds dear. Consider first that dreams bind us all. That the Hedge is not unique to one area and joins all doorways of the world. Consider, too, that the Fair Folk are quick to steal from anywhere in this world, and may themselves reflect divine powers from seemingly faraway lands. Could one of the Gentry assume the "two snakes in one graceful beauty" form of Madame White Snake, thus infusing her captives with similar magic even though the Lost were kidnapped from New Jersey? Sure. The same way



that a poor Hindu girl — a forlorn Venombite looking more like Kali than she'd prefer — could escape her Fae tormentors and exit the Hedge somewhere in Nova Scotia. Yes, most changelings find their way home because it's what they remember, but extenuating circumstances might drive them out a different exit during their flight from Faerie. Alternately, some cities are composed of a dizzying mash-up of many cultures — think of San Francisco's Chinatown, or how São Paulo in Brazil has the largest population of Japanese people outside of Japan. As long as there's something where the changelings emerge that is a solid focus for their memories of home, changelings will feel comfortable.

Also worth remembering is that that cultural tradition may seem different on the outside, but many images and motifs are shared among different cultures. A number of myths speak of snake spirits. Many regions have yeti or Bigfoot legends. A number of cultures share vampires, flood myths, underworld myths, star-crossed lover motifs, the whole nine yards. While this chapter is ostensibly about describing the differences between the Lost across the world, it's also about the common threads that bind them together.

## ENDLESS FACES

The world's cultures and mythologies are a thousand layers deep. Digging into them reveals new things every time: bloated demons filled with wind, beautiful women cobbled together from blood and sea-foam, thunder-throwing gods who temper their anger with lust and jealousy. While legends and mythologies may not be called as such, every civilization in the world, big and small, living or defunct, has its fairy tales. These fairy tales give the Lost a portion of their shape and form, albeit indirectly. The myths of man contribute to the dreams of man, and those dreams are what slip away from this world and add to the mad lands of Faerie and the twisting maze of the Hedge. It is in these places that a mortal becomes a changeling, and so it comes full circle. The dreams of man and woman go here, and the Others use those dreams to rebuild the men and women that the Fae steal. The Lost are the product of the world's dreams and nightmares.

## THE GENTRY

The True Fae are not able to create their own myths out of nothing. The Fair Folk are sick with sterility, stolid nightmares formed not of new things but of old dreams. Where the Fae come from isn't the issue here; be they gods, devils or the otherworldly manifestations of persistent night terrors, the irony is that these inhuman entities are made from human ideas. It's almost never a perfect one-for-one creation. A Fae isn't purely one god or notion given flesh. No, the form of the Others is a patchwork stitched from various pieces of various stories, often within a given pantheon of tales.

## PLUCKING MEAT FROM LEGEND'S BONES

In the long view, the Fair Folk are scavengers. They thrive off the cast-away bits of man's fantasies, delusions, night terrors. They swoop in like vultures to pick strips of meat off the bones before flying away again into the hot sun or cold moon.

When considering how one of the True Fae represents a culture, consider that the Fae doesn't embody one aspect completely.

Yes, it's possible that a Fae could appear as Tiamat from old Sumerian legend, a bloated sea serpent with draconic wings, vomiting up turbulent waters that stink of brine. More likely, though, the Fae represents the many horrors of Mesopotamian myth as opposed to just one: the dead-yet-seductive flesh of Ereshkigal, the two faces of the servant Isimud, and yes, the serpent's mouth of Tiamat with seaweed woven betwixt her needled teeth. Another possibility is that the Fae is made of the constituent parts of many water-based myths around the world: the scaly tail of a mer-creature, the gelatinous eyes of the Japanese *kappa*, the full human breasts of the Russian *rusalka*. Such a fiend *seems* like a new monster, a cousin original in all its horridness. The reality is that this Fae's form, just as all of them, is an amalgam of many other monsters, gods, goddesses, fairies, demons and devils. The Fae probably doesn't *know* that, at least not explicitly (though most among the Gentry sense their own sterility, and this might be what leads them to venture into the human world to abduct people and steal objects and ideas). But it remains true, nevertheless.

## HUNTING GROUND

When a Gentry embodies the elements of a single culture — perhaps wearing the guise of Hindu gods and demons or draped in the skin of Judeo-Christian devils — it's because that Fae hunts in a region that supports that given culture. That region may not *continue* to support that culture; the Fae that embodies the dark fantasies of Sumerian myth didn't come from pre-existing Sumerian culture, since, well, all of Mesopotamian culture is largely gone. But some regions still maintain the living memories of such cultures. In Iraq, the old stories simmer beneath the surface. Sumer was what is now southern Iraq. During times of war, with the sound of machine guns chattering and the blasts of red light as missiles streak across the sky and set fire to a camp in an unholy explosion, a man may hurry under the cover of night to an old monument carved into a rock wall several miles from his home. There, he offers quick prayers and supplications to the eroded relief of a woman with an eight-figured star above her head. He's praying to Ishtar, a goddess long-gone, but not forgotten. Old myths are still alive, and the Fae can echo such persistent local legends.

Some Fair Folk continue to hunt in a particular area for the reason that they know no differently. The Gentry are cunning, but can be possessed of odd patterns that seem almost obsessive-compulsive. They continue to poach a region of its people, objects and ideas not just because it's easy and known, but because they seem unable to do differently. Certainly some Fae seem capable of hunting all across the world, stealing children and adults from all corners of the map, but many appear incapable of looking beyond that they perceive as their own backyards. A Fae who stalks the Russian steppes might always stalk those empty plains, looking for wanderers and nomads and adventurers. (And moreover, that Fae likely wears the face of local folktales or cautionary stories. Perhaps he appears as the old herdsman Leshii, who is renowned for mischievously leading travelers into getting lost unless they give him a gift. For this Fae, the gift might be for the travelers to offer up one of their own in a sinister bargain.)

## ONE THOUSAND GENTRY

Okay, so what follows isn't exactly a thousand new gentry, but you will find a handful of Fair Folk briefly described. These





Keepers are meant to embody the folktales and mythologies of various cultures.

## MINING MYTH AND FOLKLORE

We've established the equation: man dreams of mythic, folkloric motifs, and the True Fae pillage and loot man's dreams for their own solipsistic purposes. The equation continues, of course, applying to individual Lost — each changeling is somehow a reflection of his Keeper (in some cases a clear and direct reflection, in other cases a muddy reflection as seen through a dirty mirror), but it's a likeness nevertheless. Which means that the Lost are themselves the distillation of myth and folklore when it comes to seemings and kiths.

This section will help you take the folktales of other cultures and apply them to your character, helping not only to highlight the versatility of the creation system but also to give you some new culture-specific ways of doing your own thing.

It's worth mentioning that in talking about folklore, we're using the term broadly. It includes local indigenous folklore, to be sure, but we'll also talk about epic myth, superstition and more modern folklore (consider the Mothman, Men in Black or alien phenomena).

So, grab your pickax. We're going digging.

### *Finding Folktales*

Where do you look for this stuff? Obviously, we don't expect you to have a doctorate in weird mythology (but we certainly encourage you to get one because it sounds pretty awesome), so, how do you find this material?

The easiest and most direct route is the Internet. It has everything you'll need. Doesn't matter how accurate it is, just Google "folklore" and you'll find page after page of character material. Seriously. Go try it, we'll wait.

Back? Great. Now go read some books. The library is, as always, a great public resource. Any books on mythology and folklore will do the trick (try *A Field Guide to Demons, Fairies, Fallen Angels and Other Subversive Spirits* by Carol K. Mack and Dinah Mack and *Giants, Monsters, and Dragons: An Encyclopedia of Folklore, Legend, and Myth* by Carol Rose for starters). If you want to connect myths and folktales to a larger meaning, maybe giving your character some depth or theme, try books by Joseph Campbell or Mircea Eliade. We don't have room to go into them here, but Campbell's ideas of the heroic journey and Eliade's ideas regarding the cyclical terrors of history are damn sure worth checking out.





## WHY MYTH MATTERS

Real quick — why tie your character to the larger motif of myth and folklore? You don't have to, obviously. A Beast may not need anything pulled out of folklore, just simple interesting facts about the animal in question. But myth can be very useful.

Myth and folktales may seem kind of lofty, perhaps even too academic for a game about modern fairy tales, but in taking a deeper look you'll find that they're not lofty at all. In fact, the world's body of folklore is intimately connected to the human story. Man tells stories of myth and legend for a number of reasons: to explain the natural world, to explain the foibles of man, to give some meaning to a hard existence. Even when myth isn't about mankind, it's secretly about mankind.

(Of course, therein lies a great irony with **Changeling: The Lost**. The True Fae, those utterly inhuman beings, are ostensibly formed from the myths that give humanity some meaning. The Fair Folk look inhuman, yes. But the inhuman visages the True Fae take are born out of human minds. The Fair Folk are plundering human dreams, after all, and yet they take everything *but* the singular spark that gives mankind its uniqueness, whether that spark is a soul or creativity or some other esoteric thing.)

So, in choosing to pillage folklore to create a character (in perhaps the same way the Fair Folk do, though hopefully the comparison ends there), you have the chance for your changeling to reflect some element of the human condition. If your character is a grotesque Darkling or even a weird Windwing, could you look to the Native American folktale of "Why Bat Has No Friends?" (Basic gist of that tale is that Bat has wings, so he can't hang with the mammals, but he's got teeth, so he can't hang with the birds. Despite his desire to be friends, he's simply too strange to belong to any one group.) Sure, why not? A grotesque, winged fae could find himself similarly shunned. Could you use the Narcissus myth and create a egoistic Flowering to embody man's need to cover up his own frailties with narcissism? Absolutely. Myth runs only as deep as man's own mind, so when you plumb its depths, you're really just digging into the cultural psyche of humanity writ large.

## KITH AS COMMON THREAD

The seemings — and, specifically, the kith within those seemings — act as archetypes. They are broad categorizations that help you to include the many characteristics of fairies, spirits, demons, devils, gods and other folkloric examples in the very fabric of your character. While folktales may have technically been told in a vacuum (with one culture being isolated half a world from another), they still somehow share common themes and elements. The seemingly vast gulf between disparate cultures narrows when one looks at the myths and legends. Take, for example, a story shared between the Blackfoot Indians and the ancient Egyptians. The story is about two brothers (Noptatis and Akaiyan of the Indians, and Anubis and Bata of Egypt), one of whom is tempted by an evil wife. Both stories end badly. Both stories involve the wife saying to the one brother that she was raped by the other. Both involve the brothers getting separated by a body of water (a lake in the Indian myth, a river in the Egyptian myth). Both end with one brother dead.

The seemings and kiths reflect the common threads running through what should be totally separate cultures. Pick a fairy out

of damn near any folktale, and you should be able to find a representative seeming and kith to represent the fairy in your game. Rumpelstiltskin, the oddly-shaped little gnome that could spin straw into gold, makes for a pretty straightforward Wizeden, probably of the Artist or Smith kith (though one could argue that he'd work quite well as a Manikin among the Fairest, as well). He's not alone — fairy tales are filled with creatures like him. The Nisse, from Norway, is also a puckish "little man" that would easily suit the Wizeden — and he, too, makes demands of those he "helps." The lubberkin, or leprechauns, of Ireland are also strange little men who make the promise of gold but in reality lead their victims astray. Or what of the Cherokee's Yunwi Djunsti, little people who play strange (sometimes deadly) pranks and, again, lead people astray? From a craftsmanship angle, gnomes, dwarves, kobolds, Tommyknockers — they're all little people good at fixing things (working with metal, fostering growth of plant life and so forth). And, in **Changeling: The Lost**, any and all of these cultural variations on a theme fall easily into the Wizeden seeming and into that seeming's various kiths.

For another example, look to the world's endless myths about creatures of the water. Some are commonly known to Westerners — the seal-like selkie, the water-horse kelpie, the fish-tailed merfolk, the nymphs called naiads and so forth. Others are lesser known. What about the scaly-faced old man in the water from Russian myth, the *vodyanoi*? He's responsible for drownings, the old stories say. Or, how about the humanoid amphibian from Zulu folklore who is said to lure people to the water with his whispers, where he either enslaves them or, similar to the *vodyanoi*, drowns them? Among the Xhosa, you have a similar water-demon, except this one lures women so that he may slake his lusts upon them. Or what of the toad-like Wahwee of Aboriginal tales, whose only real goal is to sneak up to people wading by the shore and swallow them whole?

Point is, these fairies and demons are linked across various cultures, which makes it easy to apply these ideas to your changeling character using the preexisting seemings and kiths. Any of those watery beings could be represented by the Swimmerskin, Waterborn or Water-Dweller kith (found in the Beast, Elemental and Ogre seemings, respectively).

However, the kiths are also versatile enough to let you look outside the box when hoping to embody a culture's folklore with your character. Take, for example, the Wahwee mentioned above. The Wahwee eats people. Yes, he's a watery monster, but you might suggest that his primary characteristic is actually his cannibalistic nature. Could he therefore be a Gristlegrinder due to his bone-breaking teeth? Maybe. But the Wahwee is also a monster that lives in deep caves and dark waterholes. Instead, perhaps he's a Tunnelgrub, his slick toad-like flesh allowing him to pull his slug-like body through enclosed spaces. Now, the Wahwee is still a demon of the water, but you don't have to leave that behind entirely. In creating a character that is somehow similar to the Wahwee, you can still give him his water-bound nature by giving him access to Elemental Contracts revolving around water. Sure, maybe he's a Gristlegrinder or Tunnelgrub, but by describing him in a manner similar to the old Aboriginal lore and by giving him water-based Contracts, you've just used the versatility of the system to reflect the cultural variant.

Of course, it's also about story. Part of the joy of linking your character to the old tales and legends is having that character re-





flect the nature and meaning of the story, not just being physically illustrative of a particular fairy creature. In one of the Aboriginal tales regarding the Wahwee, a young girl is warned not to play around the waterhole north of her people's village because that is where the Wahwee lingers, and he is the keeper of the fish and shellfish within those depths. She, like all impudent children in the old stories, goes anyway to steal shellfish from the Wahwee so that she may provide for her village. She does so safely — for now. Later, though, an old woman tells the girl that she's cursed the village and that the Wahwee will one day come seeking revenge for the theft, and that he'll eat everybody as punishment (or call down rains to drown everybody, depending on the variant of the folktale). The girl decides that she can't abide the thought of being responsible for everybody's death, so she does as the old woman bids her and goes back to the waterhole to sacrifice herself to the Wahwee.

How can this be your character? The character needn't wholly embody this tale line for line, but you can capture the spirit of it. Was your character a young boy or girl who didn't listen to warnings? Perhaps he was told not to play in that old swimming hole? Maybe the swimming hole had an old legend about the fattest, meatiest catfish circling the depths, and your character thought that maybe he could catch that fish to feed his family. But, of course, the truth is that the old swimming hole is just a doorway into the Hedge, and lying on the other side was a True Fae who had plundered the old dreams of ancient peoples and looked like the Wahwee. Instead of being swallowed whole, your character was taken to Arcadia, and made soon to look like the old amphibious Other, infused with a watery soul and clad in clammy toad's flesh. (This is made all the more pertinent if your character is Australian or is somehow linked to Aboriginal culture. Remember that the Fair Folk tend to personify local legends, after all.)

Let's look at another example, a Tuareg story about a jackal. The jackal, ostensibly a small, canine scavenger, stays away from humans for the most part. The Tuaregs tell the story of *why* the jackal stays away from humankind.

The story speaks of a farmer who was daily threatened by a lion. The lion would ask the farmer to give the lion one of the oxen from the farmer's herd or instead the lion would kill the farmer and *all* the oxen. The farmer, seeing no choice, gave in to the lion's threats until a jackal came up one night and offered to help the farmer be rid of the lion for the price of a succulent ram. The farmer agreed.

It was successful; the lion was not only dissuaded but killed by the jackal's trickery. However, when it was time to give the jackal his payment, the farmer's wife saw no reason that the scavenger should have a precious ram, and she snuck their dog into the basket carrying the ram. When the jackal lifted up the blanket to feast on his prize, the dog leapt out and bit the jackal — and the jackal ran away, saying that he'd never again offer help to a human being.

How could you translate this into the story of a Beast fae? Perhaps a teen boy — let's say he's from Lagos, Nigeria — has high hopes for himself and his family. He believes that man is good, and that one day he shall elevate his family out of poverty. But he is taken, tricked into going away with a desert *djinn*, dragged into Arcadia and made to suffer. He is kept out in the blistering sun, made to eat scraps and suck marrow from bones and over time he develops like the jackal. But he's more than that, a bright boy, clever and cunning, and he tricks the lion-faced *djinn* with a difficult riddle. He escapes back into

the world where he hopes to continue helping his family, for now he has learned new things in this journey to a faraway realm. But his family loves another son with the boy's old face, a false boy that he can see is made from dry thatch and hematite eyes. He tries to go to them to reveal the truth, but they do not recognize him. They beat him. They call for the police to punish him as an evil sorcerer, so he flees, cursing them and the rest of humans, for now he knows that he no longer belongs to the mortal world.

It's the same core story told in that Tuareg folktale, but cast in the light of the Arcadian abduction experience. The themes are the same — the jackal is more than scavenger, but treated as if he does not possess the wisdom that he has.

## CULTURE-THEMED KITH

It's also possible that you find something in folklore that you feel isn't properly demonstrated by the existing kiths found in **Changeling: The Lost**. As the kiths are painted in broad strokes, they cover the general feeling of culturally-connected lore, but may not handle the specific aspects of a particular folktale. You may look to the aforementioned Rumpelstiltskin and find that in creating a loosely analogous changeling, you don't quite find that the kiths work as you desire. Sure, he'd be a Wizeden, that makes plenty enough sense. But Rumpelstiltskin's trick was that he was a spinner. He spun thread into gold, and while the Artist kith handles this generally (and in some versions of the myth it's noted that the strange little man would also easily be a Brewer), it may not encompass what you feel resonates most about that myth: his spinning of one substance into another substance, of dross into opulence — a kind of "fairy alchemy," if you will.

So, what do you do if you don't find the fit with current kiths comfortable? In the chapter preceding this one, you'll find general guidelines on creating your own kith, and in designing your own kith you can come much closer to the folkloric motif you're striving to replicate.

Below, we've included some sample kiths that are tied exclusively to specific figures throughout the world's folklore. The thing to remember about these kiths is that they aren't painted in quite the broad strokes that you'll find in **Changeling: The Lost**; no, these reflect the particular mythic ideal of the folkloric icons chosen. These kith are meant to really only work in illustrating particular folktales, though you can take these kiths and mold them to what you see fit.

Always remember that kith can be as wildly diverse as you see fit. Although kiths can represent an all-encompassing array of archetypes, kiths can *also* be as limitless and unique as snowflakes or fingerprints. Do what works best for your game and character. If the current kiths can apply, apply them. But if you feel that they're missing that special touch, then come up with something that best tells the story you want to tell.

## BEAST

*Chimera* — Homer's *Iliad* was pretty clear about the creature known as the Chimera: "A thing of immortal make, not human, lion-fronted and snake behind, a goat in the middle." The Chimera kith is not necessarily these constituent parts, but it *does* represent a changeling who bears parts and limbs from not just one beast but many. A Chimera might result from imprisonment by a chaotic Fae shapeshifter, whose many forms bleed into its Lost captives. The many dreams that seem to comprise a Chimera's flesh grant them



## Mix n' Match

Here's a quick and easy way to use the existing seemings and kiths to create new character types. Take the general idea and blessing from one kith, and make it work under another seeming.

Here's an example: the Black Dog from various myths (be it the Barghest from German lore or Black Shuck from England) would ostensibly be best reflected as a changeling of the Beast seeming. A changeling that embodies this legend (or escaping a True Fae that embodies it) would probably have physical elements of the Black Dog physiology — black fur, hound eyes, a dark tail, a lupine muzzle and so on. Except, what if you feel that the kiths found within the Beast seeming don't really cover the Black Dog myth? The Black Dog in folklore is an omen, a portent, a creature that arrives with a certain degree of *foretelling* by dint of his presence. So, create a Black Dog kith, and give this homespun creation the blessing found within the Oracle kith (see "Panomancy," p. 122, **Changeling: The Lost**). This way, the Black Dog changeling still has the Beast blessing and curse, but has the versatile "foretelling" aspect found in the legend.

This can be pretty versatile, opening you up to whole new combinations. Want a sultry water-nymph? Make a Fairest with the blessing of the Gift of Water (see "The Waterborn Kith," p. 110, **Changeling: The Lost**). Or, maybe you want to create one of the demonic house spirits talked about in Lithuanian folklore — the Aitvaras. The Aitvaras could be a Darkling or a Wizened (heck, it could even be a Beast since it's said to sometimes appear as a rooster), but the spirit is known for giving off illumination (as it is imbued with the power of meteorites). So, the Goblin Illumination blessing (from "The Bright One Kith," p. 114, **Changeling: The Lost**) should work just fine. Mix. Match. Trade them with your friends.

the **Goblin's Tongue**: by spending a Glamour point, the Chimera gains a +3 on any Social rolls made against any kind of hobgoblin in or out of the Hedge. This bonus lasts for one full scene.

**Coyote** — It's curious, perhaps, that most of the Beasts reflecting this rare kith seem to bear only one true physical change to their mien, and that is the head. Human features are often entirely gone (with the eyes being the only exception) as the head and face become that of a coyote borne upon human shoulders. Some, of course, manifest different coyote physiology — a tail, perhaps, or claws with which to dig or strike. Of course, in the folktales of old America, what's significant about Coyote is not how he looks but how he acts. Perhaps the predominant trickster figure in mythology, Coyote is the master of manipulating circumstances to obtain what are often the simplest of desires. He often achieves profound effects through even the simplest of deceptions. Those changelings who reflect his spirit in this kith possess the "inventiveness" of truth known as **The Trickster's Truth**: spending Willpower to gain dice on a Persuasion or Subterfuge roll nets the character +5 instead of the usual +3 bonus. In

addition, if the character possesses the Vice of Gluttony, Greed or Lust, the character may then buy Manipulation dots at a reduced experience point rate (new dots x 4).

**Nix** — The nix, or nixie, is a river mermaid from Germanic lore. One often possesses the features of a snake and a fish in some amalgamation (fish eyes, snake fangs, skin spotted with reptile scales and shark cartilage). Some legends posit that the nix are truly beautiful, while other tales suggest that the nix are actually quite hideous to behold, but possess golden voices. In the old tales, the nix would confound fishermen with beautiful voices, causing them confusion and leading their boats astray — often right into the rocks. Such is the power of the **Consumptive Voice**: by expending one Glamour, the Nix's voice will muddy the thoughts of any who listen to her speak. They don't notice that her voice has changed, but it causes a slowing, almost narcotic effect. For the remainder of the scene, any who hear her voice in casual conversation find their Social rolls hampered by a penalty equal to half the Nix's Wyrd score (round down). This ability can be used only once per day.

## DARKLING

**Illes** — In Iceland, the Illes (pronounced *eels*) are troll-like under-folk who linger beneath the surface of the earth and only come out at night. They're said to lure humans away from the surface and into the darkness below where the Illes either breed with the humans or suffocate them (depending on which legend you care to believe). The Illes of the Darklings are similar, to a point, though they needn't be as clearly malevolent. They do tend to be tremendously ugly in the mask and mien. Still, they gain the blessing of their **Shadow Beauty**: once per day, by spending a Glamour point, the Illes can appear beautiful for one hour (equivalent to the Striking Looks Merit at four dots). This also gives the Illes an additional benefit of +2 Social dice when dealing with characters of the opposite sex.

**Pishacha** — In Hindu myth, the Pishachas are demons, gaunt and strange with bulging bloodshot eyes and skin as dark as midnight. Pishachas were said to speak in their own strange language, haunting graveyards and cremation grounds with all the other ghosts. Changelings of the Pishacha kith share the terrifying red eyes and obsidian skin of their folktale analogs, but also have the addition of some manner of odd tongue — often forked, sometimes barbed or simply over-long. The Pishacha, often associated with madness, can afflict a victim with a **Taste of Madness**: by spending a point of Glamour and performing a successful touch attack, the changeling licks the exposed flesh of an opponent. The opponent takes a mild derangement of the changeling's choosing (or a severe version if the mild version is already possessed) and suffers from the derangement for the next week. The Pishacha can perform this attack only once per week (i.e., when the last victim's madness finally fades).

**Skogsra** — This Darkling-of-the-wood kith stems from old Swedish and Scandinavian folklore. In these fairy tales, the *skogsra* are vicious trolls protecting the dark forests, leading travelers astray and either killing them or stealing their goods. Other tales have the *skogsra* luring wanderers off the trails where they are enslaved, certainly speaking to legends of the True Fae who have done that very thing. The changelings known as the Skogsra are Darklings in appearance, but often possess miens adorned with dark vines and leaves (sometimes growing beneath the surface of the flesh where the veins should be) or have eyes like black pools



of water. These forest Darklings are **Keepers of the Feral Heart**: the changeling must look into the eyes of a single animal (bird or mammal), and by spending a Glamour point, enslaves the beast to be his “pet” until the next sunrise or sundown (whichever occurs first). The animal will do whatever it is that the changeling demands, even to its own detriment. The animal must of course be capable of doing the thing asked of it.

## ELEMENTAL

**Apsaras** — These elementals of cloud and fog are spoken of in Hindu myth. These nymphs, ostensibly female (though the kith doesn’t require it), were said to tempt ascetics with their beauty and seductive dances. Those within this kith tend to give off a kind of mist or fog — sometimes warm, sometimes cool — that drifts in languid wisps from their oft-unblemished flesh. Many Apsaras are able to stir one’s lusty humours through use of the **Enthralling Mist**: the tongues of water vapor (air and water) that drift from the skin can be made to target an individual. By spending a Glamour point, the Apsaras is able to change this individual’s Vice to Lust for the next 24 hours. In addition, the Apsaras can add her Wyrd score to any Manipulation rolls made to affect that individual during that timeframe.

**Ask-wee-da-eed** — The Abenaki people of the northeastern United States tell stories of a will-of-the-wisp-type creature formed of fickle fire. This creature, the Ask-wee-da-eed, is tied to meteors and comets and is said to bring bad luck and death by its presence. Those of this kith in some way embody the meteoric fire, but are also able to foretell the misfortune of others, in a way,

with their **Taste of Ill Luck**: once per day, by spending a Glamour point, the Abenaki can force another to re-roll a successful roll at –1 die in the hopes that the re-roll fails (the original roll therefore never occurs). The changeling also gains the additional benefit of a +1 bonus on any rolls to activate clauses within the Hearth Contract.

**Di-cang** — In Buddhist lore, his name means “Womb of the Earth.” As one of the bodhisattvas, he was said to calm the suffering of those poor souls lost in the many hells. Born of the earth, one might suggest that Di-cang is a kind of “jewel elemental,” for in his hand he usually holds a precious gem that salves the pain of others. The Elementals of this kith tend to possess mostly human features, but have skin or extremities studded with various jewels (some might even have multi-faceted eyes such as rubies, sapphires or emeralds). The Di-Cang can provide others with the **Peace of Suffering**: by spending a Glamour point, those in the presence of the Di-cang (within 10 yards) suffer no penalties from existing wounds, as they feel no physical pain. This lasts for one scene. In addition, the Di-Cang can purchase Larceny dots at half the normal experience cost, since it was said that the original bodhisattva was able to unlock all the gates of the many hells to gain entrance.

## FAIREST

**Gandharva** — In Hindu lore, these often androgynous messengers of the gods were beautiful and strange, sometimes having animal or plant parts as part of their heavenly flesh. The changelings of this kith are similar, often pale or golden-fleshed, equally





androgynous (leaning toward the feminine, even when male). They are, just as their mythic counterparts, said to be beautiful speakers and musicians. They speak and sing with **Heavenly Articulation**: by spending a point of Glamour, the changeling gains an exceptional success on an Expression or Persuasion roll at three successes, not the normal five. This lasts for the remainder of the scene.

*Succubus / Incubus* — Whether the Jewish *Lilitu* or the Arab *um al duwayce*, the core idea of the succubus or incubus is the same: a demon or spirit possessed of beauty that is used for malevolent purposes. Their beauty is darkened inevitably by something that happened to them in Faerie, and this hangs upon them in some way that colors their splendor with hints of the diabolical (blood-red eyes, bat wings, black nails, teeth filed to points or other demonic characteristics). These changelings are temptresses, creatures who are imprisoned by lust but can also wield it like a weapon. The Succubus and Incubus gain advantages from **Vice to Vice**: if another character has the same Vice as the Succubus, the Succubus gains a +1 to all Social rolls when dealing with that target. If the Vice shared is Lust, then that bonus is doubled, becoming +2. The Succubus and Incubus also gain the Striking Looks Merit for free at two dots; if the Succubus and Incubus already possess the two-dot version, then it increases to the full four-dot version.

*Weisse Frau* — The Weisse Frau (“White Lady”) in German lore is a beautiful matron said to protect children. Wearing all white, she is thought to be benevolent and sad (compared quite often to the Mexican *La Llorona*, the “weeping woman” who waits by the river-side crying for the children she has lost). It’s said that

a kiss from the Weisse Frau confers protection, and this is true for those of the kith. With the **Kiss of Life**, the character can, once per chapter, kiss another and spend a point of Glamour. In doing so, she grants that person two points of armor that is invisible and without substance, but works to protect the individual just the same. This armor does not stack with mundane or magical armor. Perhaps more importantly, in kissing a child (under the age of 13), this armor increases from two to three.

## OCRE

*Daitya* — In Hindu myth, the Daityas are giants and ogres who opposed the gods and reviled those sacrifices given to the gods. They went to war against the heavens and, for a cycle of history, remained victorious. The kith associated with this legend is said to be composed of those Hindu Ogres who went against their Keepers — some stories even suggest that a great battle was fought in Faerie, with a passel of Daityas bringing down a pair of callous and mighty Fae. Many Daityas are large and reptilian in features, inheriting the serpent’s flesh from their Keepers (who in turn plunder said flesh from the old legends of the dragon-serpent Vritra, the demon who was said to have spawned the Daityas in the first place). The Daityas were apparently potent warriors who could topple pillars and cut the gods’ weapons in twain with a single blow. This gives the kith the benefit of the **Cutting Might**: by spending a point of Glamour, the Daitya can ignore the Durability of a single object for one turn’s attack, doing damage straight to the object’s Structure. Moreover, the Daitya’s gain a free Weaponry Specialty upon creation.





**Oni** — Japanese legend speaks of the *oni*, vicious red-skinned ogres with hirsute bodies, horns upon their head and many eyes. The *oni* came to represent sin as demons, and in many stories were responsible for visiting the wicked upon their deathbeds and consuming their souls. The *Oni* kith visibly resemble their fairy-tale counterparts, though many have skin colors other than red: blue, jaundiced, green, black and so forth. The *Oni* can take advantage of many call **A Mouthful of Sin**: by spending one Glamour point and making a successful bite attack, the *Oni* consumes a number of gulps of the victim's blood equal to damage caused. Each "gulp" or mouthful of blood swallowed heals either one lethal point of damage or two bashing points (aggravated cannot be healed in this way). This can only be done once per chapter (game session). Curiously, this also works only when attacking a creature somehow possessed of sin — the target must be of Morality (or its equivalent, such as Harmony, Humanity, Wisdom or Clarity) 6 or below.

**Troll** — In Nordic myths and fairy tales, trolls are certainly ogriish — tall, featuring exaggerated and grotesque features, sharp teeth and cruel hunters. But trolls are more than that. They're not hunters, instead choosing to wait and hide in places (in barrow mounds, deep inside caverns, beneath bridges) and then trick victims with riddles and double-talk. While many trolls are strong, they're often savvy, capricious, consumed of a kind of subterranean cunning. The *Troll* kith gains the benefit of the **Unyielding Voice**: by spending a point of Glamour, the *Troll* can add his dots in the Strength Attribute to any Social roll involving Manipulation.

## WIZENED

**Gremlin** — Gremlins are born more of modern folktales than anything, with their first official entrance into the lore appearing during World War I. Malevolent little gremlins were said to tinker with planes, causing them to malfunction and potentially crash. Many such malfunctions were blamed on gremlins (as a joke and, for some, a very real fear), and they entered the modern canon as any kind of faerie-like creature said to disrupt the workings of machines. (Worth noting is that the term may come from the Irish Gaelic, *gruaimin*, meaning "ill-humored little man.") Wizeneds who assume the *Gremlin* kith are particularly good at damaging items temporarily with the **Gremlinizing Touch**: by touching a device and spending a Glamour point, the *Gremlin* negates any equipment bonuses associated with the device for the remainder of the scene. This applies to the damage bonuses associated with any weapon, as well (guns in particular). The character can only do this once a day.

**Pamarindo** — Italian folklore makes fearful mention of the *Pamarindo*, the shriveled pot-bellied faeries with salacious appetites. Legend has them often covered in slick fats, guts, blood and greases associated with the butchering of their prey. Their appearance as a kith among the Wizeneds sees the *Pamarindo* manifesting similar physical traits: their cheeks are often smeared with red, their teeth sharp and serrated, their flesh glossy and oily. The *Pamarindo* are foul epicures, possessing the **Gourmand's Grotesquerie**: by spending a Glamour point and touching a piece of raw meat (which can be as small as a single pound of flesh), the Wizened can use that meat to safely feed a number of individuals equal to his Wyrd score. This food nourishes for a full 24 hours, and no other food needs to be eaten during this time (and often can't be eaten, for one feels so full on that meal). The *Pamarindo*

also gains the benefits of the Iron Stomach Merit if the changeling does not already possess it.

**Thusser** — In Norway, they speak of the *Thussers* (known as *Vardogls* in Iceland) that come out of their faerie hills beneath the full moon and sing, dance, and fiddle away the night. Humans seem compelled to try to join in with the *Thussers'* carousing, though no mortal has ever been able to truly dance or sing with the diminutive strange-bodied creatures. The *Thusser* kith is similar to those wee-humans of folklore, often small and moon-eyed, and blessed, too, with the **Fiddler's Delight**: by spending a Glamour point and either singing or playing some manner of instrument (which does require a successful Expression roll), the *Thusser* can hypnotize one targeted individual. This individual cannot do anything for as long as the *Thusser* is able to keep up his music. The spell is only broken once the *Thusser* ceases the music or until the person is forced to defend himself from incoming danger.

## THORNS BY ANY OTHER NAME

To most, the Hedge appears one way: walls of briars, some tangled, some manicured, forming a nigh-infinite labyrinth of pitfalls and hobgoblins, of bloodthirsty plants and succulent fruits. This is, of course, largely accurate. At the Hedge's center — if such a between-realm even *has* a "center" — the maze always seems to default to this description. One always finds variant elements, of course: dark berries encased in glistening ice, thorns of different colors or yellow leaves falling off dying branches and catching flight on a fading Summer's wind. Still, though, the Hedge inevitably seems to play to this type. Walk long enough, and things will grow to look dreadfully familiar.

That being said, the closer one is to the mortal world, the closer the Hedge reflects the mortal world. Different environments play havoc with the Hedge, bleeding over, shifting, evolving. An environment different from what the Hedge might normally offer still manifests among the Thorns, but the Hedge still has its way. The land conforms cruelly to its labyrinthine nature, even while still bearing some familiar (and some not-at-all familiar) elements. Below you'll find a number of environments described, and in each you'll find a kind of goblin fruit, oddment or trifle that could appear in such a place.

Note that these environmental variations don't always manifest in the appropriate place. A stretch of Hedge desert might unfold surprisingly quickly when one passes into the Thorns, even though no local desert is nearby. Therefore, these variations are ways to increase the variety of forms the Hedge can take and to provide more options for strengthening the theme of a local freehold, not to make the Thorns too predictable.

## BOGS AND SWAMPS

Bogs, marshes, swamps, fens: in the Hedge, they all come together in a thing that many changelings refer to simply as the Mire. Trudging through this type of terrain (or lack of terrain) is a slogging journey, a slow walk through brackish water, tangling vines and feet-sucking clay — in some spots, the Storyteller may see fit to halve the Speed of those laboring through the Mire. The maze might be formed of twisting towers of rotting vegetation, curtains of malodorous moss or knobby cypress trees. The bram-



bles exist, here, still — curved barbs, thorny briars. The ground is ever-unstable, the stagnant waters often home to a number of hiding hobgoblins. The Mire usually smells. It's humid. And it's damn sure dangerous. The only oases are the hummocks, the protrusions of dry land that rise up out of the muck — a popular place for the Lost to make their Hollows.

How might the Lost get into the so-called Mire? The door to an abandoned bayou shack (or ancestral manse all grown over with vegetation), perhaps? A massive tree whose hollowed body is big enough to crawl through... and big enough to be a gateway into the Thorns? Certain cities are closer to the Mire than one would suspect; tendrils of swamp pass through the Hedge of Miami, for instance. Some might find themselves sucked under the ground in a hungry quagmire, but instead of drowning with a lung-full of mud, they crawl free into the Hedge, flesh itchy with Mire slop.

**Hog Eye:** Also known as the more formal “Claviger Sedge,” this reed (topped by a knobby outgrowth) is a curious oddment that grows up out of the Mire. In breaking off a piece of Hog Eye, a changeling can use the narrow reed-end as an impromptu one-time-use lock pick. For a single instance, Hog Eye grants +5 to a Lockpicking roll (instant or extended). When the action is over, whether succeeded or failed, the reed seems to sense that its use is complete and turns to dry, desiccated slivers in the hand of the user. Hog Eye has a secondary use — sometimes, the knobby bulrush tip is broken off and used as a floating bobber when fishing among the Thorns.

### *Whither the Weather?*

Does the Hedge have weather? Sure. Any weather in the mortal world when a character enters the Hedge may remain for a time — a light rain, a shouldering wind, a bright white snow shower.

The deeper one gets, though, the more severe such weather can be. Some storms crash through the skies above the Hedge, casting vast blizzards, drowning showers and gale-force winds against the living walls of the labyrinth. It's as if the psychoactive nature of the realm picks up all the madness and magic, and purges itself in its own demented demonstration of the water cycle. It's not uncommon for a cyclone to tear through the Thorns (one almost expecting to hear Dorothy's cries for her dear Auntie Em). Such cyclones don't seem to tear the Hedge asunder, however — but what they *do* accomplish is a rewrite of the local Hedge layout. Trods are suddenly different, new paths form where none existed before, a burbling stream suddenly bubbles up out of the ground. Storms also have a funny way of tossing tokens and trifles about.

Assume that when trapped in such wretched Hedge-weather, you can use the “Temperature Extremes” rules (under which you'll find extreme weather conditions) on p. 181 of the *World of Darkness Rulebook*.

## DESERTS

The world is home to many deserts: some composed of little more than hills and valleys of golden sand, others offering craggy rocks and smooth-walled canyons. Entering the Hedge in such a place can happen at a number of points. Perhaps a changeling enters the swinging doors of a ghost town brothel, or wills a doorway to open in the open space below a sandstone arch. Could be that walking through a heat vapor mirage transports one to the Hedge unknowingly. The desert is home to many nooks and crannies, any of which might be a hole into the Thorns.

Once a changeling is inside, things change subtly. Tall saguaro cacti or bloody-colored stone towers mark the walls of the maze, with the Thorns coming from said cacti or from any other bitterly resilient desert plant (the slice from a yucca sword, for instance). Great walls of violet sage might rise up out of nothing, giving off a sweetly soporific odor. The ground might harm those who try to run on it, too — sharp rocks or hot sand make for a difficult escape should one of the Others come stalking the searing canyon trails. At night, the danger only deepens. Desert creatures, even those hobgoblins that cling to such arid climes, tend to come out when the air cools at night. That's when they hunt. That's when they feed.

**The Judas Yew:** This tree grows up out of the walls of the desert Hedge. Be they the hard rock walls of a deep gully or a tangle of brittlebush, the Judas Yew grows in, around and all over the wall. Its berries are red, each no bigger than a thumb, and grow at about the 10-yard mark and above. The berries are a mixed blessing: consuming one is poisonous, doing one point of lethal damage to the changeling who eats the berry (this is unavoidable regardless of Merits or Stamina that the changeling possesses). And yet, the consumption of a single berry allows the changeling to go three times the normal length without food or drink. For obvious reasons, the berry is quite popular among the local Hedge denizens — all manner of strange birds, reptiles and insects come to the tree to take a taste. Of course, opportunistic predators are rarely far behind....

## FARMLAND

The world is home to many farms. Paddies of rice, endless fiends of corn and wheat, twisting patches of gnarly pumpkins, orchards with trees so tall they blot out the sun while you walk beneath them. The Hedge waits just beyond many of these farms. A field of vegetables fertilized by blood may yield a fruit that curses those who eat them into falling deep into the Hedge. Other areas of farmland might be ringed with old barns, dilapidated trucks and millhouses, all of which might have half-hidden doorways that could, given the right circumstances, open into the Thorns.

Farmlands easily twist into the Hedge's labyrinthine architecture: vast corn mazes (beware when they rustle, for something approaches), long trods hemmed in by fences formed of knobby “old-growth” grapevines or twists of fat creeper from which hang fat overripe squashes. Odd remnants of the human world — sometimes left for so long that they become tokens — might litter the area, too. A John Deere hat, hanging from the high branches of an orchard tree, or a rusty scythe stuck in the earth covered in a hundred butterflies (each with the same human face). Of course, these places are home to nearly limitless goblin fruits and odd-



ments, not all of them good. Worse, one must worry about when the creatures and madmen of the Hedge — the “farmers” — come to reap what they have sown.

**Headgourd:** In the Hedge, often around where other goblin fruits grow, one might find what’s called a Gourdbody. Tumescant vines lined with whisper-thin spines grow up into a form that appears not unlike a scarecrow — arms dangling off a cross, legs hanging loosely just above the ground. Above the Gourdbody is always a fat gourd, the Headgourd, that is often striated with patterns of green and orange. It even seems to have eyes and a puckered mouth. Cracking open the head offers a stinking, brain-like fruit that can be eaten (some liken it to foul French cheeses), but it has a separate function, as well. If a changeling smears the mess across his body, he becomes harder to hit (+1 to his Defense), as the odor forms a kind of pungent and invisible barrier around the character. Of course, doing this also causes a –2 to Social rolls. The effects last one hour, at which point the fruits dry up and begin flaking off. (Some collect these dry flakes in bottles to use as potent spices, thus giving the Headgourd an additional use.)

## FORESTS

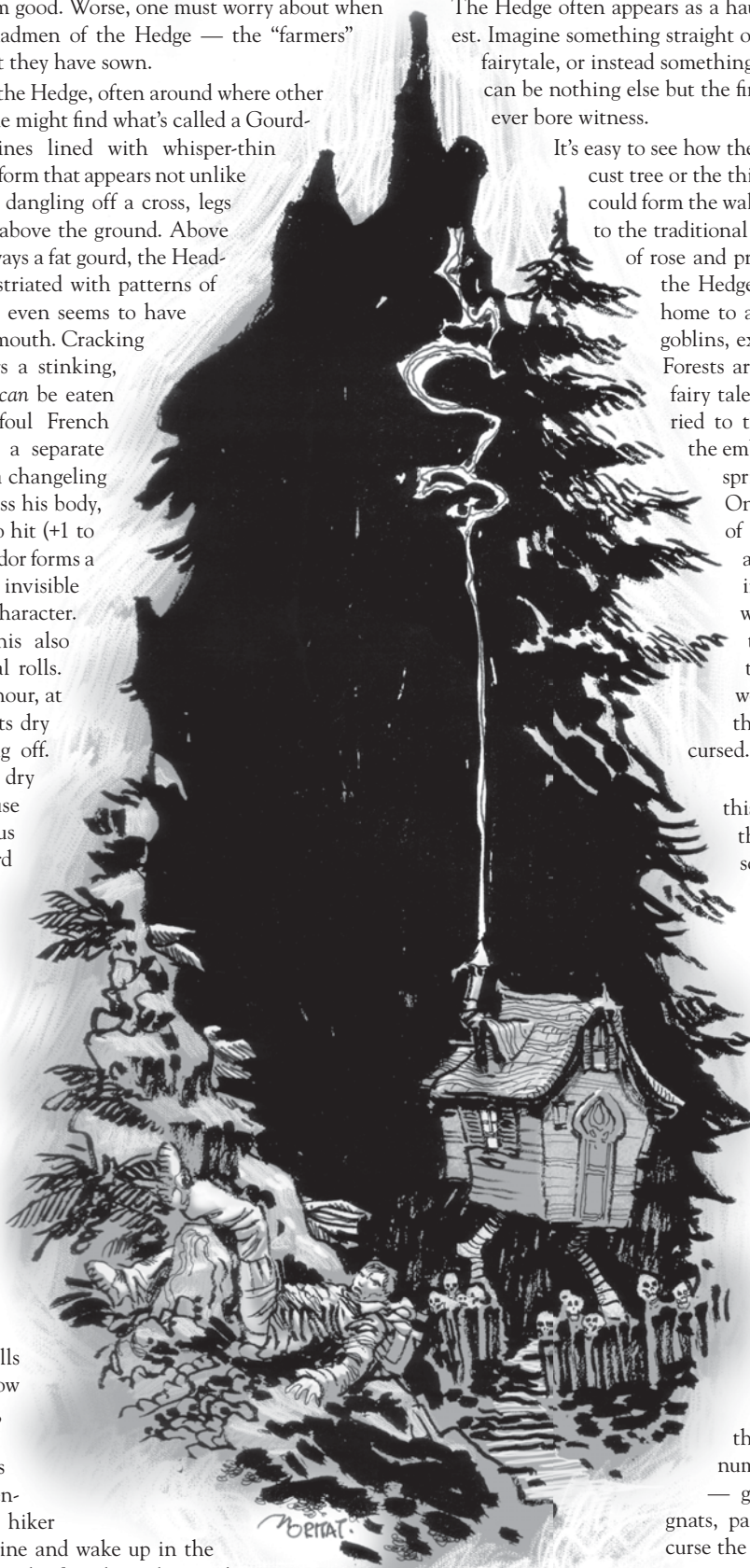
Deep, dark forests wait the world around. Wandering into “the woods” is an easy way for a young boy to get lost and enter the Hedge. Maybe he’s off seeking adventure, seeing what kinds of strange bugs lie beneath a half-rotten log, but he hears the delicate chiming of bells and wanders to follow them. Adults, too, find themselves moving deep into forests and accidentally entering the Hedge. A hiker might slip into a ravine and wake up in the Hedge. A criminal might flee the police and run into the woods, finding an old shack that seems like a place of respite, but is really just a gateway into the Thorns.

The Hedge often appears as a haunted wood or primeval forest. Imagine something straight out of the Hansel and Gretel fairytale, or instead something so wildly overgrown that it can be nothing else but the first forest to which the world ever bore witness.

It’s easy to see how the twisted eaves of a black locust tree or the thick bodies of pale evergreens could form the walls. Most trees, too, are home to the traditional brambles, vast chaotic coils of rose and pricker bushes. The forests of the Hedge blot out the light and are home to any number of strange hobgoblins, exiled Fae and hermitic Lost. Forests are so intimately linked with fairy tales — which are further married to the dreams of man — that the emblems of such folktales often spring up in the Hedge forests. One might see a house made of candy and gingerbread, or a magical starfruit tree (as in the Vietnamese folktale, which drew a raven to the tree that promised gold to those who could prove they weren’t greedy). The woods of the Hedge are enchanted and cursed.

**Vernsap:** It’s hard to tell if this sap comes out of trees, or they are afflicted with it like some kind of fungal curse. It probably doesn’t matter, given that the ecology of the Hedge fails to abide by any kind of scientific law.

What does matter is that this flavorless and odorless amber sap sometimes drips from trees of various types. Vernsap seems to do nothing... until it touches human or changeling skin. Does it react somehow with sweat or body heat? Nobody knows. What they do know is what happens when Vernsap touches the skin. If a dime-sized dollop touches flesh, after one hour’s worth of time that sap will summon any number of harmless vermin — gamboling mice, swarms of gnats, parades of ants. The vermin curse the sap-smeared victim by their very presence, incurring a –2 Social penalty and a –1 to Initiative and Defense (it can be quite distracting). This lasts for up to one hour after





the person scrapes the sap from his skin — if he doesn't notice the sap (thus failing to remove it), the Vermsap's effects remain in place indefinitely.

## CITIES

The human world intrudes upon the Hedge as well. Or so it would seem at first. Those who pass into the twisting mazes of brick, glass and steel quickly remember that the Hedge takes form from the city without taking reason. Elements of the "natural world" still remain strong even in the urban Hedge — thorny creepers may cover buildings, topiary lions push themselves out of smashed sidewalks, odd fruits hang from rusted, asymmetrical fire escapes. But the Thorns aren't always green. They might be made of twisted metal, like stacked cars in a junkyard or concertina wire pulled into the form of briars. The Thorns might be improbably long and thin spears of glass extruded from brick walls marked with alien graffiti. Here the Hedge looks as if it could almost be shaped by the hand of man (or other things), but it's still alive.

The city-marked sections of Hedge are reminiscent of dreams and nightmares. Specifically, they give off the feeling of familiarity while not being *right*. Just as a person dreams he's back in school, but the architecture is all wrong. There aren't enough doors or windows. Passageways bend before they should, or grow narrow too quickly. The buildings, if that's the right word, hunch together like gargoyles. City lights shine through needled rows of thorns. Sometimes, a changeling might see strangely human touches: a street sign bogged down with ivy, a lawn gnome (or stranger still, a pink flamingo), a hubcap, a set of keys someone lost. Depending on how far one has gone from the exit, these may have become tokens that no changeling has yet identified.

**Babel Gum:** This goblin fruit grows lichen-like on the surfaces of the urban Hedge. Babel Gum resembles nothing so much as a large wad of multicolored chewing gum that has been left on a surface to harden. Consuming the Babel Gum (which is something like eating a hard marshmallow that releases lico-rice-like cordial) has a strange effect on the language center of the eater's mind. While under the effects of the goblin fruit, the character cannot make sense of any written words; they appear to be distorted, random collections of familiar and not-so-familiar letters. At the same time, he becomes capable of understanding and speaking any language he encounters. The effects of the gum last for a scene.

## GRASSLANDS

Grasslands are as they suggest: a terrain flat and rolling covered in various grasses, a wide open expanse of empty plains. It seems strange that a changeling could find his way into the Hedge from here, but the Thorns are accessible from anywhere (it sometimes seems as if the realm itself goes out of its own way to ensure that). One might wander into tall grasses, only to find that he emerges in the Hedge. Grasses can rise surprisingly high — seven to 10 feet — and, in pushing through, it's easy to become disoriented and lost, wandering without one's bearings.

Of course, the "walls" of the maze here are often composed of those very same grasses. Sometimes it's as if the trods are carved out of the grassland, while other times it might look as if someone has come along and bound up fresh or dry grasses with barbed bale-wire (hence, thorns). The grasses, too, are often sharp — as they whisper and rub together, one might brush an arm against

them and come away with a long papery cut and stings and itches. Some grasses might be verdant and wet, casting a thick fog from their green blades. Others might be yellowed and dry, brittle to the touch and so desiccated that they seem to draw the moisture away from one's body even by passing too close.

**Chu Chu Culm:** This bamboo-like grass, pale green and always gently swaying, is found in temperate parts of the Hedge's grasslands. The story, still told in Vietnam today, goes that a happy drunken man (called Chu Chu) wandered out of his world and into this one, and eventually died blissful and ignorant amidst the bamboo. It's further said that the bamboo that grows in that region contains part of this drunken man. Breaking open the bamboo stems (or "culms") and drinking the blood-red liquid inside (which tastes curiously like sour lime) is like consuming a highly potent alcohol. A single thimbleful inebriates one utterly. The drunkard feels happy, gaining a +2 to Social rolls, but a -2 to any dice pools based on Dexterity, Wits or Intelligence. These effects fade entirely after one hour as one's head clears.

## JUNGLES

Jungle terrain — also including rainforests and so-called monsoon forests — are hot, humid, and incredibly dense. This only worsens in the Hedge. Even the well-worn trods of the jungle Hedge grows thick with vegetation. A changeling can easily stand on the road and watch as the trees, vines and underbrush slowly conspire to close in on the empty space, first choking out the light above and then moving in at the ground level. That's one of the curious things about the jungle maze of the Hedge: it's not just horizontal like much of the rest of the realm. The jungle maze goes up. It requires clambering up vines and into the tree tops, following the telltale signs of a path along swaying branches festooned with knotty vines. The jungle maze goes down, too, into moist grottos and beneath misting waterfalls. It's easy to get disoriented here. The jungle offers almost too much, visually and aurally, to parse one's own thoughts. It doesn't help that there's color everywhere, as if painted by a lunatic god. Bright flowers beg for wanderers to come close — and once they do, the flowers may snap shut with razor teeth or cast out a whipping vine studded with serrated thorns.

Wandering into the jungle Hedge is almost too easy. Push past a curtain of vines, poof, you've opened the Hedge. Kick open the door of some derelict research station or logging cabin, and uh-oh, welcome to the Hedge. The jungle is home to pits, caves, quicksand, huts, waterfalls and many other ways to purposefully or accidentally wander into the Hedge. (Wise changelings know to ask or observe the indigenous peoples. *They* know what places are cursed. They know what places seem to eat those village children who are too adventurous for their own good.)

**The Cousin's Trumpet:** This yellow, conical flower is not a carnivorous plant like many in the jungle Hedge, and to many it seems nothing more than a pretty flower that gives off no aroma at all. Some changelings know that this so-called Cousin's Trumpet is a potent hallucinogen when brewed in tea. Those who consume this psychoactive tea in the human world undergo one hour of powerful aural, visual and tactile hallucinations. During this time, the consumer often feels blissful, and "at one" with the world around him (though extenuating negative circumstances can easily turn this into a "bad trip"). The consumption allows the character to retain a single Willpower point, but also con-



fers upon him a -3 penalty to all dice pools (as well as Defense and Initiative). However, consuming this tea within the Hedge changes the tea's properties entirely. The tea confers upon the consumer no hallucinations at all, but simply allows her a greater grasp when attempting to consciously mold the Hedge's psychoactive properties (granting her +2 to her Wyrd score for purposes of shaping the Hedge to her whims). Note that over-consumption of this hallucinogen or any psychoactive substance can lead to derangements, caused at the Storyteller's prerogative.

## MOUNTAINS

The mountainous Hedge is composed of deep mountain passes carved out of dark rock as well as subterranean catacombs and cave systems bored through the peaks and valleys. These mountainous regions of the Hedge are desolate places — skeletal birds gather upon craggy peaks waiting for wanderers to sleep or faint (they can be aggressive scavengers, you see), and rocks tumble from high points (sometimes they fall as if sensing travelers beneath them, while other times they are pushed by angry Ogres). Such areas might be cold, even icy, blasted with howling winds that send sudden snow. The air can be quite thin in such places, too — going too high up might incur an increasing dice penalty as the air becomes harder and harder to breathe. Cave systems are always dark and often moist, and filled with any number of blind hunter hobgoblins. (Some systems do manage some light, as various mosses within the Hedge glow eerie colors.)

Getting to the Hedge in the mountains is all too easy. Taking a wrong turn in a cave? Entering an abandoned mine? Slipping down the mountain and falling what must surely be your death (but is really a soft landing in the snows of the Hedge, in some ways a curse worse than dying)? It's all too often that stories end up published that tell of hikers and climbers lost forever upon the mountains. They're lost, all right. They're just not lost in this world, not any longer.

**Hoarflakes:** The snows of the mountains seem to sometimes have an effect on the little rocks and scree one might find upon desolate mountain paths. Those little rocks that sit beneath snows for very long periods of time seem to gain some of the essence of the snow, becoming themselves like large, delicate flakes. Hunting up such delicate rocks (that literally look like intricate snowflakes as big as the palm of one's hand) isn't easy, but doing so offers a strong reward. In breaking a Hoarflake and dusting oneself with the glittering remnants, a character gains the Windwing kith blessing (*Gift of the Sky*, found on p. 103 of *Changeling: The Lost*) for a full hour. (Note that the blessing works exactly as it does in the book, requiring Glamour expenditure to activate.)

## SEAS AND OCEANS

It seems strange, that one could get to the Hedge from the middle of the ocean. And yet, it's still possible. A changeling could turn a bathroom stall door in the middle of a cruise ship restroom into a gateway leading to the Hedge. Perhaps a Swimmer-skin might emerge from the water and clamber up onto an abandoned schooner — one where all the rotten porthole windows seem to lead mysteriously into the Hedge. Mortals and Lost alike might find strange ways of entrance: almost drowning, caught in a cruel cyclone or whirlpool or upon a raft that drifts lazily into a profuse fog only to wash up in the Hedge.

How might the Hedge look in such a place? The ground might be gritty and sandy, with ankle- or knee-deep salt water lapping at one's leg. The "walls" of the maze might be massive dunes, or even the gooey walls of sand castles (replete with parapets). The walls might be lined with sopping seaweed, the initial "thorns" appearing as urchins dangling on razor-sharp fishing line. All around, a Lost might find artifacts of a storm-tossed ocean: boat wreckage, dead fish, a swath of a drowned girl's hair, life preservers hanging still-dripping from the maze walls. The smell of brine might overpower.

**Bottlevoice:** This trifle is rare in the sea-reflected Hedge, appearing sometimes on the ground (stuck in the sand, slick with sea foam) or dangling from the maze-like walls (perhaps on a rime-crusting fishing hook). Bottlevoice is, quite simply, an old bottle with a cork in it. Upon uncorking it, a changeling merely needs to breathe in the heady miasma that rises from the rim (which sometimes erupts with the sound of a man's groan or woman's sigh), at which time the player chooses a Mental Skill to modify. For the remainder of the scene, that chosen Skill alone gains a +3 during rolls.

## TUNDRA

The frigid treeless plains of the world, sculpted by frost and wind, are known as tundra. A tundra is a bleak, barren place — mostly rocks, ice, minimal plant life, slushy bogs, hungry animals. Finding one's way into the Hedge from the tundra isn't easy, but it's not impossible, either. A lone wanderer may find himself starving, waylaid by exposure to the elements, and as in a desert, he might find a place ahead that seems impossible — a babbling brook, a fruit tree, even a cabin with gauzy smoke rising from the chimney. It's a Hedge-spun illusion, of course, a kind of unconscious trap.

Within the tundra-based Hedge, the maze is formed rarely of actual walls, and more *intimated* by the actual landscape. A trod might be along a clean, wide trail of gravelly permafrost. It seems okay to step off the trod and into the sludgy cold water, but in doing so one might disappear into those icy depths, never to return. The roads and paths might be rimmed with cutting rocks or sharp sedge. The tundra within the Hedge doesn't rise up high like in other regions, but it makes its boundaries clear. While within the Hedge tundra, one must worry about growing cold, hungry and lost. It's easy to double back and travel in circles given that the area appears often alien and featureless (especially to those with low or nonexistent Survival scores who can't recognize intimate landmarks such as different colors of mosses and rocks).

**Pedicle Velvet:** This "goblin fruit," if it can be called as such, is actually a pale, sage-colored lichen. It's soft to the touch and, when consumed, is said to provide a major kick to one's potency and virility. Obtaining the Pedicle Velvet, however, isn't that easy. Pedicle Velvet grows on the antlers and horns of various Hedge goblin-animals like on the Bloodfoam Elk or the Bristleram. Pedicle Velvet never grows on benevolent, meek animals — always on those beasts that seem to embody the kind of fierce virility promised by the consumption of this lichen. Eating the lichen raw (it tastes like sucking on a penny) provides a number of benefits. First, the lichen heals a single point of lethal damage. Second, the lichen provides a boost to one's Stamina (+1 for the next six hours). Third, though this one's somewhat unsubstanti-



ated, the lichen guarantees that the character's next sexual encounter will result in a pregnancy. Of course, said pregnancy may very well end in a miscarriage or abortion, but it's a conception just the same. To gain the benefits, one must eat *all* the Pedicle Velvet upon a given beast. The lichen cannot be shared between several characters.

## DISTANT FREEHOLDS

The freeholds described in **Changeling: The Lost** are, by and large, of a European mold — a mix of European tradition (largely medieval) and Western modernity. Is this the only freehold model? Hardly. This model may seem to dominate; the Fair Folk appear to adhere to an illusory and ultimately hollow vision of medieval society, and while any such "society" is really just a group of individuals, the pattern, however false, often trickles down into changeling society. (In fact, some suggest that because changelings give some substance to a social order that the Fair Folk only pretend to use, this gives the Lost some advantage because *true* community confounds the Gentry.)

But this isn't the sum total of what a freehold can be. A freehold can be anything, provided the majority of changelings (or at least those Lost who possess the greatest share of power) agree. Any form of politics or philosophy can drive a freehold, though it's worth noting that the freehold tends to reflect the mortal society in a given region, even if only offering a glimpse of that culture.

While describing the potential social groupings of changelings all over the world would take pages that we do not have, we can give a sampling of what freeholds might look like in other places. Below are some explorations of the topic, with examples. These ideas do not need to exist in a vacuum, and can be combined in any number of ways to make new freehold ideas for your story.

## CASTE

Although Hindu society has formally rejected the caste system that separates its people by breeding and related function, the caste system still exists there and in other parts of the world (usually unspoken). Several African countries still support caste systems, and some Arab groups and tribes divide their people by lineage and purpose (at the bare minimum having "outcasts" or those who fall "out" of the "caste"). The world has seen several caste systems come and go, and many of those that are gone still spring up in freeholds — for instance, the Korean *baekjeong*, or "untouchable" class. Or the *hisabetsu buraku* in Japan, a "dirty sect" of under-castes still discriminated against today.

How does a caste system appear in a freehold? While the system likely reflects whatever the local caste system is or has been, you can assume that the changelings there are at least broken out into two groups, probably more, with one of those groups being a distinctly underprivileged and ostracized group. The Lost cannot discriminate by one's lineage, but they can group themselves in a number of manners related to changeling appearance, function and society. The changelings might break themselves out by seeming or kith, or by who possesses (or is allowed to possess) certain Contracts or tokens or may take into consideration just who one's Keeper was — a potent, lordly Keeper is worth more than some gutter-fed cannibal with a belly full of rotting bones.

The Lost also might break themselves up by some other quantifiable (or supposedly quantifiable) means — intelligence, perhaps, or tests of skill. Some changelings might end up being the ones who build walls, while other changelings might be the ones who *command* them to build walls. The key to a caste system is that the same qualifications for a group always applies. All Darklings might be *that*, or all changelings with animal parts might be *that*.

## THE KOLISUCHAE

In this freehold, found on the coast of South Korea, all the changelings consider themselves outcasts. They do not belong to Faerie, and they do not belong to the human world. They are between. They are awful and low. They live in gray ghettos away from people — houses cobbled of tin sheets, driftwood, cracked stone. The *muban* are the scholars of the gutter, reading books by meager moonlight. The *muban* are the martial class, the protectors of the freehold — dirt-cheeked knights with rusted assault rifles. The *jaein* are the tricksters, actors, jesters, those frivolous few who bring some levity to the freehold with their lies. Finally, the freehold has its *hwachae*, the grotesque underclass — the mad butchers, the feral hunters. How are the castes divided? The freehold has possession of an old manuscript from the late 15th century, written by some changeling known as King Jinchang, and the text gives complex descriptions of what changelings belong where. Some outside this freehold believe that Jinchang was not a changeling at all, but one of the Gentry who preys on the freehold's staid caste system — because the Fair Folk find it easier to infiltrate those freeholds that remain stagnant, forgoing any kind of dynamism.

## COMMUNE

In a commune, everybody works, but everybody also shares the resources. While it's easy to only think of "hippie" or "New Age" communes (and these do apply), the commune comes from traditions found worldwide. The commune tradition goes all the way back to the Middle Ages, when members of small villages could not necessarily trust in the protection of distant nobles, and so instead worked together to provide mutual defense and aid, with every villager presumably equal (the reality of its function is debatable, but the core philosophy is there). The Russian *mir* was a communal order found in small peasant villages during czarist Russia that borrows directly from the medieval communes. Then you have the Israeli *kibbutzim*, founded originally in Russia based on the *mir*, carried to Israel in later years and working (for a time, at least) as a utopian communal society where all contributed to the work, and all reaped the rewards of that work. Consider throughout history how monasteries have worked — while they were founded on religious or philosophical principles, you have monks throughout Europe and Asia throughout history working as relative equals, ideally reaping the same rewards as one's brother. (Of course, this all leads up to the modern idea of communism. While it doesn't work in practice, necessarily, this level of equality is at the core of the idea.)

How does this work in a freehold? Assume first of all that the freehold eschews the grip of the Courts, outlawing their influence in the given region. Second, most such freeholds are in some way agrarian, using plants, animals and the earth to get everything that the freehold needs. (This isn't universally the case





— certainly some urban communes exist, such as a network of thieves who share their bounties as part of a communal pool.) The changelings may work a single Hollow, tending the goblin fruits there. They may have a plot of land, even a whole working farm, in the rural band circumnavigating a big city (think of how the Amish in Lancaster stay the way they are despite being in fairly close proximity to Philadelphia).

## THE HUMBLE FEW

This commune freehold, not far from Paris, consists of the many changelings who could not find a place among the Courts or freeholds of so-called noble Lost. These self-proclaimed commoners work a series of interconnected farms hidden from the world by tufts of thick forest (and through the occasional touch of magic). The changelings grow their own food, work the plows, butcher their own animals. There are no private kitchens or bedrooms. Work together, sleep together, reap together. They intermingle sexually. They provide mutual defense from lying courtiers and Fae incursions. The changelings also grow fields of cannibis and occasionally take their fiery revolutions to the cities, where they burn the cars and buildings of those Lost who belong to the Courts. The changelings seem peaceful, and in many ways, they are. But there's a fire that burns in their hearts, and sometimes that fire leaps from them and burns others.

## DOMINANCE

Traditions of dominance in society essentially demand that the social order hold that some individuals have powers or advantages that others do not. This definition applies to most societies, and certainly this is a feature in the majority of civilizations around the world, past and present. Some societies, however, have an entire social order built upon the notion. The caste system, as noted above, is one example of a dominance society in which the supremacy of one or several groups over another is fixed, but this isn't the only type. Some class systems rely on social dominance to survive. While movement within the classes is theoretically possible, the upper class always has advantages not accessible to the middle or particularly lower class. This applies to animals (think of a wolf pack with its alpha male, or a group of chickens with their pecking order) as well as man (the bourgeoisie, the monarchy, corporate structure). One example of dominance in society that is no longer officially supported by any nation yet still exists in cruel preponderance is slavery — one person “owning” another. Some children are slaves, working in sweatshops around the world. Some women are effectively slaves, made subservient to men by their culture (fundamentalist religion sometimes has women in a distinctly “lesser” role, reducing them to slaves in function if not in name).

A changeling might see elements of social dominance in just about any freehold around the world (the Courts versus the Courtless is the most commonly seen). Some, however, rely on it more than others. A freehold might have a very visible upper class — those who hold the most territory, those who have Hollows with grandiose amenities, those who dwell in opulence while others struggle in squalor. Movement between classes is possible, but ultimately difficult.

Other freeholds give themselves over to slavery. It's certainly a pattern that makes sense — one's Keeper is almost always some manner of slave master, the changeling always the slave. The Lost

sometimes repeat the patterns of existence they experience in Faerie, and so it holds that upon emerging from the Hedge the first time, a changeling may suddenly find himself in iron cuffs, dragged before the currently-ruling Court and “sold” to some entitled aristocrat. Slavery in freeholds is rarely permanent — one can either work his way out of ownership (because all changelings therefore start their new lives as slaves) or show ability and cunning worthy of being more than just a servant. For obvious reasons, few freeholds indulge in this system, and outsiders who hear of it are unwilling to refer to such places as “freeholds” at all.

## HACIENDA SUEÑOS

This freehold is composed of a single estate, countless acres of land and fields surrounding an opulent Spanish colonial house with too many rooms to count. The freehold exists far from the cities, and has its own airstrip, zoo filled with exotic animals and a museum filled with “cursed” objects (such as the car Archduke Ferdinand was in when he was assassinated). The Lost who rule this hacienda — the *hacendados* — rule a small cocaine empire from this estate, though they do not themselves work the estate. That is left to the *peons*, those poor changelings who have come back from the Hedge in one of the nearby villages or cities (the *hacendados* go out at times, seeking new Lost, drugging them and then bringing them back to the hacienda to work). Enslaved humans make up the remainder of the workforce, bound to their masters by unforgiving pledges. A changeling's time as a *peon* is limited, but five years is a long time. Especially to those who have just emerged from the Hedge, trading one form of slavery for another. One day, it's possible that the *peons* will rise up and strike their oppressive *patrons* down. For the time, however, the *peons* hold fast to the promise that one day they may become *hacendados* (and evidence supports that they will).

## NOMADIC

Indigenous peoples are sometimes nomadic, whether the reindeer-herding Saami of Sweden and Norway, the Bedouin of Africa and the Middle East, or the “Five-Animal People” of the Mongols (called that because their entire society is based on five particular animals: horse, cow, camel, sheep, goat). Nomads travel. They are not bound to a single location; they move like animal herds or flocks of birds to where the resources are at any given time. These hunter-gatherers travel to where the game is, or to where the fruits and vegetables are growing (or can be grown) at a particular time of the year.

Nomadic freeholds operate in much the same way, for the most part. Groups of changelings go to wherever it is that they can either find work, resources or safety (if one village is routinely invaded by the Fair Folk during the Winter months, the entire freehold may get up and move to a place of safety for that season). Some nomadic freeholds are more modern-minded, perhaps traveling just for the sake of seeing the world, or to stay perpetually “off the grid.”

## THE TINKERS

This Courtless freehold travels the highways and byways of the world in large motorcades of trucks, trailers, RVs and cycles. They are not bound to any one nation, nor are they bound to their vehicles — if one ceases working, they leave it behind. If it's time to travel across an ocean, all their means of transportation





(socially or physically) with one another. Each fiefdom might be controlled by a particular changeling or a motley of changelings. Some territorial freeholds work better than others. One might have a council of rulers composed of representatives from each fiefdom, while another might simply exist in a constant state of violent struggle.

Think of how street gangs or mobs work the world around, whether a Columbian drug cartel, a gang of thugs in a Brazilian *favela*, or a nest of neo-Nazi pricks in Prague. Generally, each group exists for its own gain and only that. They work against one another, marking lines of territory and sometimes existing in peace, other times battling in war. Land is key, because with land comes the resources of that land (be it good corners on which to peddle drugs or access to the docks where one can plunder goods coming off the boats).

## THE COALITION OF BAD, BAD MEN

One of the freeholds in London is composed of a number of changeling gangs — some more thuggish than others, but all criminals and miscreants of one stripe or another. Each motley essentially works as its own gang, policing its own area, running cons and odd jobs in its own particular little slice of town. The Tottenham Bishops, the Strap Yard Felixes, the Edgecott Badges... all are motleys in and around the freehold. They

keep a tense peace most of the time, sometimes even finding common ground when trying to fuck with the so-called noble changelings toward the center of the city. But this peace only means that blood isn't spilled all too often — that doesn't mean the gangs don't work against one another most days. They run mean con games on one another, inch forward and take little bits of territory one shop or house at a time, threaten allies, call the police on one another's operations.

It's a constant game of one-upping each other.

## THE OLD PLEDGES

Throughout the world, man has pledged himself to deity, state, ideal and, most common of all, to other men. Husband and wife swear vows to one another. Joining some kind of order, be it a fraternity or the police department, requires an oath. Even in the simple act of paying someone money for something is a simple form of pledge. Below are a few examples of pledges throughout the world and what kinds of changeling pledges might result.

## PLEDGES IN MYTH

Folklore and myth are bursting with oaths and vows. A god's promise — or a man's promise to a god — is a potent thing, a promise made real by the simple act of its foreswearing, a fact the Lost know too much about.

are cast away, as they will find new ones wherever they go. These Lost fix things. That's what they do. Any kind of simple or complex machine is like clay in their hands, though a handful of the Tinkers also claim to "fix" other more esoteric things (madness, sickness, the human body, broken marriages, games of chance, etc.). The entire freehold, governed by a rotating crew of monarchs (king and queen, always), is perpetually on the road, never staying in one place for more than a week at a time.

## TERRITORIAL

Don't assume that every freehold is governed by a single ruler. Many around the world instead are composed of a number of fiefdoms, each holding a particular territory that many times wars



Consider the River Styx from Greek myth, so important and respected by the Greeks that oath-makers often referenced the river in their pledges. Some have it that Zeus would force those who swore by the river and then later broke that promise to drink from its waters, and it would score their throats so badly that they could not speak for nine years.

Or, what of Frigga, the Nordic goddess and mother of Balder, who so dearly wished to protect her child from death that she made all the elements, plants, and animals swear not to harm him? Loki found a way around that pledge, using a mistletoe dart to poison Balder (though Loki ultimately paid a terrible price for helping mistletoe to break this oath). Some stories have it that mistletoe never actually made the oath to Frigga; others say that mistletoe *had* made the oath, but was then cursed by Frigga. Once a plant awarding protection, for a time mistletoe became a wretched plant given great disdain. Also in Nordic myth is the Oath Ring, a golden ring upon which Thor swore his good faith when making promises.

Consider the dog and cat, said in Jewish folklore to have made an oath to never cross one another's path — an oath that was broken and resulted in Adam cursing both animals to forever quarrel. Or the *kappa*, a Japanese spirit that can be tricked into oaths it dares not break for it fears the consequences? Or the Icelandic *fylgiar*, a fairy-type spirit that is bound by oath to protect a human (see the "Fylgiar's Caul," below).

Point is, myth and folklore are forever mentioning oaths that are made and, when broken, bring about very real (and often supernatural) consequences. How does this apply to the pledges that changelings swear to one another? They will often swear using the names and symbols of local regional tales that involve oaths and pledges. Changelings of Northern Europe may very well swear on a golden Oath Ring. Changelings of the Middle East might invoke the name of a *djinn* or *ifrit*, or might even mention a curse born of *Shaitan*. Any element of myth may work its way into a pledge: changelings swearing beneath dangling mistletoe, pledges made at Mount Olympus or upon a river's edge (where the Lost drink from the river to symbolize unity) or even at the lowest point in the region (involving swearing upon the netherworld, a common practice in ancient Mesopotamia, such as in the tablet poem of the Myth of Etana).

## PLEDGES OF MAN

Mankind is not without his pledges, either — oaths of service, oaths of fealty, oaths of faith. Elements of these oaths play into the pledges forsworn by changelings, too. Mortal emblems, in particular, find their way into the oaths and vows the world around. Such a mortal emblem might be a *Kshatriya*'s staff or thread, a fraternity member's letters or ring, a lock from a Muslim man's beard or a Mossad agent's favored weapon. Local culture has mortals promising duty all the time, whether it's a man promising himself to a woman, a woman promising herself to her child or a priest devoting himself to his faith. Any and all of these elements can bleed into a changeling's pledge, even if the pledge is between two Lost. The Lost, nursed on the distillation of mankind's dreams, cannot escape his promises.

## FORGIVENESS OF THE IMP

So Genta forgave the vile *kappa*, I forgive you for your transgressions against me. We shall share peace and good fortune for one year and one day, and to break that peace is to destroy our fortune.

**Type:** Vow

**Tasks:** Alliance, Lesser (+0)

**Boons:** Favor, Lesser (+1, the errant individual owes the favor to the wronged changeling)

**Sanction:** Violence, Medial (–2, both)

**Duration:** Year and a day (+3)

**Invocation:** 1 Willpower (both)

The story of Genta and the *kappa* (a Japanese river imp) is a simple one: a capricious and cruel river imp was dragging a beloved horse into the river so that he could drown the animal. Genta captured the foul thing and hanged it from a tree by its neck — nearly at the point of death, the imp relented, begging for forgiveness and promising to leave Genta and his animals in peace. The warrior agreed, and they formed a pact.

That pact is the basis of this simple vow in which one individual (usually a changeling) asks for forgiveness from another, promising some manner of small favor and peace as a sign of sincerity.

## THE FYLCIAR'S CAUL

*You have chosen the mortal to be blessed. I am that blessing. Should my blessing break, then I too shall be broken. You will not speak of this, or the chosen ward will suffer by your insolence.*

**Type:** Oath, True Name

**Tasks:** Endeavor, Greater (–3, changeling must protect the chosen mortal ward from Wyrd), Forbiddance, Lesser (–1, mortal may not speak of this oath to anybody), Forbiddance, Lesser (–1, mortal must give the changeling some small token of appreciation)

**Boons:** Adroitness (+1, changeling gains bonus to one combat-related Physical Skill of his choice, between Brawl, Firearms and Weaponry), Favor, Greater (+3, mortal bound to one later favor), Blessing, Lesser (+1, mortal gains "peace of mind" in form of Meditative Mind Merit)

**Sanction:** Curse, Greater (–3, both)

**Duration:** Lifelong (+3)

**Invocation:** 1 Willpower dot (both), 1 Glamour (changeling)

In Icelandic myth, the *fylgiar* is a fairy spirit said to protect certain children (in many cases, those special children born with a caul, though other stories exist of worried mothers cutting deals with the fairies so that her children may be protected from them).

In this pledge, a human and a changeling exchange a pledge wherein the changeling is expected to keep safe ward chosen by the oathbound human. "Safe," however, is only defined in parameters involving Wyrd (ensorcelled mortals, hobgoblins, Fair Folk and, of course, the Lost). The changeling needn't keep the ward from normal danger (getting hit by a car, for instance), but only from harm caused by things related to Wyrd or Glamour.

Note that the ward is never told about this protection, at least not in true terms (the changeling may be referred to as a "bodyguard" if he is present, though many Lost simply shadow their wards from a distance).

## THE SECRETS OF THE DEAD RIVER

*My secret is safe with you, this you promise. And I promise to hold your tongue by dint of my service... or my sword. By the River Styx, may it be so, lest the ash of the dead dread waters drown us both.*

**Type:** Corporal, Personal Emblem



**Tasks:** Alliance, Medial (–2, the oathbound with the secret promises to keep to a one-sided alliance of coming to the other's aid when necessary); Forbiddance, Lesser (–1, one of the oathbound promises not to share the other's secret)

**Boons:** Adroitness (+1, the oathbound keeping the secret gains a +1 bonus to Subterfuge so that he may better hold his tongue – or lie about it), Glamour (+2 for the oathbound with the secret)

**Sanction:** Flaw (–2, Mute Flaw)

**Duration:** Year and a day (+3)

**Invocation:** 1 Willpower, 1 Glamour

Those who invoked the River Styx in a pledge were held to their deal — if Zeus caught a pledge-breaker who had invoked that deathly river, the god would make the person mute.

This pledge allows one of the oathbound to keep the other's secret. If the one bound lets the secret slip, the punishment is silence (the Mute Flaw, permanent). The one with the secret agrees to help the other in times of need, a one-sided call to aid.

## THE FARAWAY COURTS

For the Lost, the four seasons are what help provide structure to their lives — to them, the seasons *mean* something, and in their hearts, the Lost find some connection with the whorls of snowflakes in Winter, the stir of drying leaves in Autumn, the pollen on a bee's legs in Spring or the vapor rising off a hot road in Summer. Out of this inclination came the Courts, broken up into limited reigns marked by the start and close of a given season. Not only does this lend them the aforementioned structure, but it also grants the Lost some measure of protection against the True Fae. The Others don't seem to easily parse that seasons begin and end, and having a Court system that follows this pattern of waxing and waning is confusing to them (for they are solipsistic creatures unconvinced that the world and its ways do not shudder with their every step).

And yet, the four seasons are not universal. While a good part of the world celebrates the seasonal shifts, others find that certain seasons might be truncated or missing altogether.

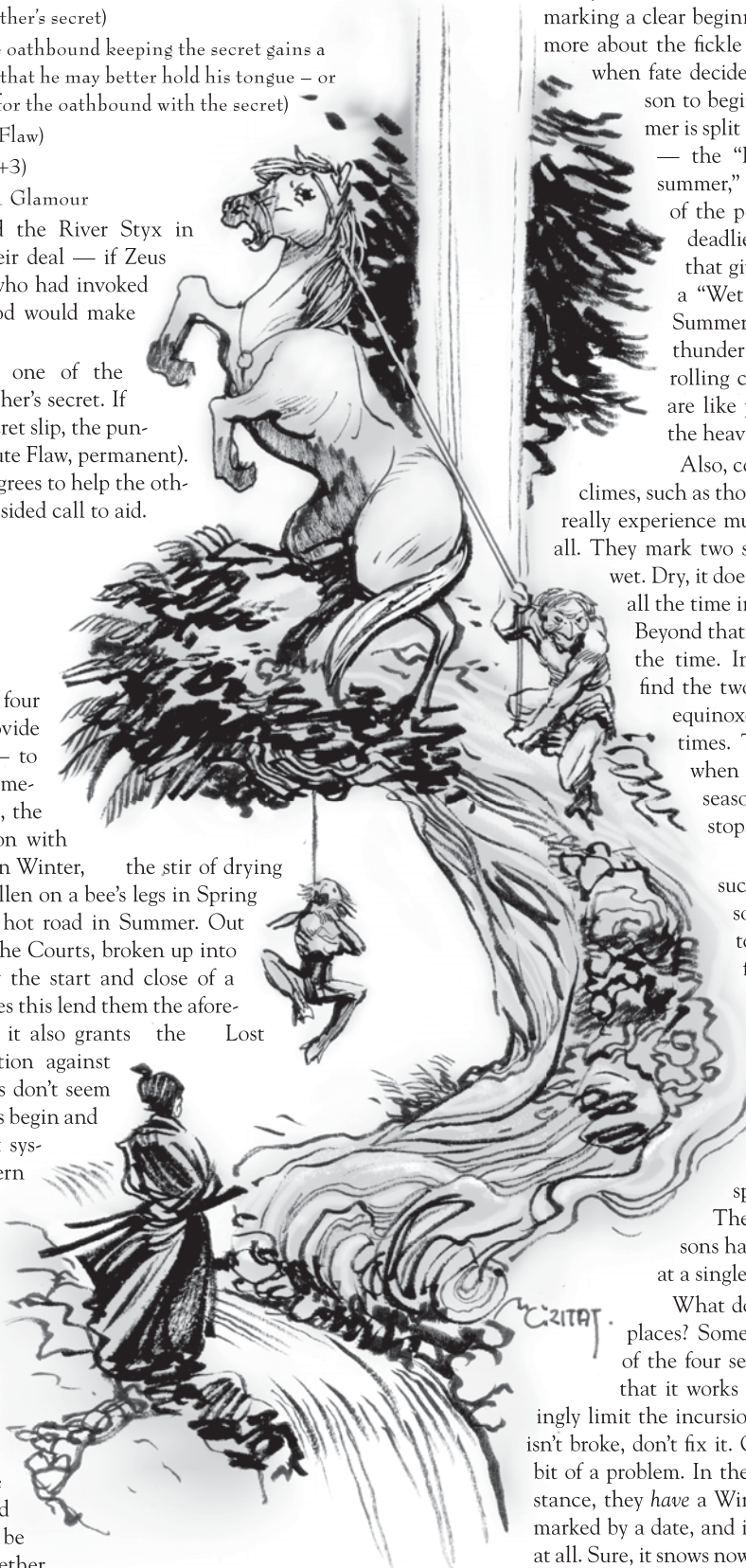
Or perhaps these cultures consider different “seasons” to be more pertinent — what of a “dry” season or a “rainy” season? Consider the desert. In many deserts, the seasons are less about dates

marking a clear beginning and a firm end, and more about the fickle patterns of weather and when fate decides to allow a certain season to begin. In some deserts, Summer is split into two separate seasons — the “Dry Summer” or “Fore-summer,” which mark the first half of the period and is the hottest, deadliest time of the year. But that gives way in many cases to a “Wet Summer” or “Monsoon Summer,” when lightning and thunder herald downpours from rolling clouds, where the sunsets are like pink and red fire setting the heavens ablaze.

Also, consider how in temperate climes, such as those near the equator, don't really experience much of a seasonal shift at all. They mark two seasons, the dry and the wet. Dry, it doesn't rain, and wet, it rains all the time in flood-bringing torrents. Beyond that? It's hot like Summer, all the time. In such places, you don't find the two seasons marked by any equinoxes or hard-and-fast start times. The rainy season begins when it starts to rain. The dry season begins when the rain stops. That's it.

Or consider a place such as Ecuador, which has some regions that are able to grow all the seasonal fruits at one time — the mountains are cold and allow them to grow autumnal fruits, while at the base of the mountains villages bask in the warmth and grow spring and summer fruits. There, you have all four seasons happening in a single place at a single time, all year round.

What do changelings do in such places? Some still give into the idea of the four seasonal Courts, believing that it works in other places to seemingly limit the incursions of the Gentry, so if it isn't broke, don't fix it. Of course, this leads to a bit of a problem. In the Sonoran Desert, for instance, they *have* a Winter — but it's not really marked by a date, and it's not much of a Winter at all. Sure, it snows now and again. And it marks the appearance of the seasonal snowbird. But it's not





Winter like one would find in, say, Buffalo, or even Philadelphia. To a point, that means that the Winter Court has less power here. Others look down on these changelings for being bound to a weak season. And, should the freehold be clear that power isn't transferred upon a date but upon signs of the season's apparent arrival, the Court of Sorrow might reign for only a month and then have to give up its crown again.

In such places, it's not uncommon to find that the seasonal structure is still in place, but is more in line with those seasons embraced and marked by the local populace. If they only have two seasons, wet and dry, that's what the Courts represent. In a place like the desert, the freehold might either accept a fifth season (splitting the Summer Court into a doubly-ruled fiefdom with syzygistic lords) or simply clip the Winter Court out of the equation entirely and have Spring, Dry Summer, Wet Summer and Autumn Courts.

Below are a few brief descriptions of some "replacement" Courts that can switch out with some of the other Courts depending on the local clime and culture. Note that these are not described in full as they are still tied to the existent Courts in some fashion.

## DEAD SEASON

Also known as the Long Winter.

During the tundra's long Winter, the bleak and treeless landscape becomes a barren, windswept place devoid of life. Changelings of this Court still follow sorrow and grief, but it is not the passionate, sweeping sorrow of broken romance, but the empty well of depression so deep that one can barely muster emotion at all.

The Mantle of such changelings is often reflected by dry, dead skin, empty eyes, cold lips and a wide mouth as deep and dark as a bottomless pit.

## DRY SEASON

Also known as Dry Summer, or Foresummer.

Rage is the emotion of these Summer Court changelings, a slight twist on the anger and wrath found in most Summer courtiers. The rage comes from the way that, during the long hot and dry season of the desert, the sun may suddenly ignite the brush or the trees — suddenly, a conflagration sweeps across the brittle, cracked ground. It's like that for these changelings: they're dry, bitter, themselves a bit cracked. Then one day, the temperature rises and a blaze consumes them... and all those around them.

The Mantle of Foresummer changelings often features flesh as fractured as the desiccated earth — a Mantle of clay, sandstone, desert sands and brittle brush.

## GROWING SEASON

Also known as Short Spring.

The Growing Season may be long, as it is in parts of Europe, or short as it is in the savannas of Africa. The Growing Season is a time of swift and verdant growth, of greenery outpouring, of animals breeding, of fast rains. The changelings of such a Spring Court tend to be fickle and indecisive, and consumed with one particular shade of desire: *lust*. This is the time of growth, and growth doesn't come without breeding. Animal desires pervade.

For Growing Season changelings, the Mantle is a wild, unkempt thing — eyes of two different colors (often bright), greenery or new fur sprouting in strange places, a hungry perfume drifting from their pores like a potent, seductive pheromone.

## MONSOON SEASON

Also known as Hurricane Season, the Wet Season or Wet Summer.

When the rains come in some places, they come hard and stay long. Buckets of rain batter the jungle and make the oceans roil. The wrath felt by these Summer Court changelings is not impersonal. It's not about being wronged in a business deal or made to hurt on the battlefield. It's personal. *Sanguine*. Revenge against old lovers and ex-friends. Vindication of broken hearts and betrayed pledges of service by close kings and closer servants. This is not a dish served cold, but piping hot, fresh and bloody.

The changelings of Monsoon Season are stormy, featuring sodden Mantles — hair wet and tangled, eyes sobbing tears that will not cease, voices like the dull roar of rain or the booming break of thunder.

## TORNADO SEASON

Also known as Whirlwind Spring.

Tornado season, predominantly found in America, is usually March through May — or, in other parts of the world such as in New Zealand, during the approximate middle of the Spring season. Tornadoes are unpredictable, dropping down out of the sky and leaving a swath of destruction in their path — and the changelings of such a Court are little different. Their desires are dark and mad, as destructive to themselves as they are to others. They might suffer from addictions, sexual dysfunctions or bursts of gleeful violence. They are stormy and swift, true harbingers of chaos with little grip on Clarity. They may not be allowed a place in the seasonal rotation, instead acting outside as a maverick Court beholden to nobody.

The Mantles of such changelings are tense and unpredictable — at times eerily still, placid, and other times bearing flesh that ripples and whips away from them in gale-torn ribbons, with eyes gunmetal gray like the sky before a tornado strikes.

### Alternatives

The Court system needn't be the ones described here or in *Changeling: The Lost*. Really, the freehold can designate its system of rule in whatever way it sees fit. Below are a number of alternate systems, only briefly described. Feel free to take any of these and extrapolate them into full-blown Courts designed for use in your game. Also, feel free to mix and match. In a fashion, the current seasonal Court system is already a mix — the Spring Court is more than just about the season, it's also about the emotion of desire. A Court can be many-tiered, based on the following:

animals, gods, figures out of folklore, political parties, tribal ideals, Zodiac (Chinese), Zodiac (Hindu), Zodiac (Western).



# THE DIRECTIONAL COURTS

In many parts of Asia — be it India, China, Thailand, Korea, Japan — the changelings do not gather in the seasonal Courts of the West. Certainly some do; Asia has its seasons, after all, and marks them with festivals and rituals just like the rest of the world. Some of the Lost, though, prefer to adhere to more cultural traditions when assuming a Court structure, and have for thousands of years have established freeholds under a system of Courts based on the four directions and their mythic guardians: the Black Tortoise of the North, the Azure Dragon of the East, the Red Bird of the South, and the White Tiger of the West. These Courts are syncretisms of various regional traditions, Buddhist ways and Asian myths.

## POWER BREAKDOWN

One of the advantages of the seasonal Courts is that they shift. A single Court's rule is impermanent — not only does this allow the freehold some degree of creativity, guaranteeing that it isn't stifled by a single mad ruler, but it also helps confound the True Fae who only know their own permanence and cannot grasp the changelings' choice to live under limited rule. Once a season is complete (whether marked by day or by some environmental condition such as the first snow or first thaw), that given Court's rule expires for the year.

How do the directional Courts do it, then? The Lost divide it up a freehold into small kingdoms broken out by north, south, east and west. A Court rules its respective territory all year around. Decisions regarding the freehold are made together by a parliament of emperors (for each Court is ruled not by a king or queen, but by an emperor or empress) who come together in the center of the freehold — always safe territory — and vote on matters at hand. They share power, though such power-sharing is rarely friendly. The Courts often squabble over issues, or three Courts might join together to muscle out the fourth. Many even go to war over issues of territory. The Serpent Court of the East might seek more power and dare to take it from the weaker Court of the South — unless the military dominant Court of the West decides to intervene on their behalf. The freeholds under this system are always rebalancing. Sometimes, blood is spilled in remaking territorial equilibrium. Alliances shift. Old enemies become new friends.

How does this confound the True Fae, then, given that their rule is far more permanent? For one, the Fair Folk don't understand sharing power. They have a difficult time understanding why any one individual would be willing to possess only a slice of the total supremacy when, in theory, he could have it all. Also difficult for them to understand are the directions themselves. Fa-

erie is a mad dreamscape without borders or directions. One does not head "north" in Faerie — one simply walks and hopes that the realm does not suddenly shift its mutable landscape beneath one's feet. Breaking power out by such... human means is something most Fae cannot even consider, much less understand.

## SUPPLANTING COURTS

The directional Court system needn't only be in Asia. If you feel it necessary, any freehold could instead use the directions and their legendary guardians as the foundation for its political structure. While the Courts are ostensibly Asian in theme and origin, they could work anywhere. The guardians could also be modified as appropriate; Iceland, for instance, has the four guardian beasts of giant (South), sea serpent (East), eagle (North) and bull (West) in its coat of arms, and could well manifest a Court system based on these beasts. The four beasts of the Evangelists (human, lion, eagle and bull) could also form a system in certain freeholds.

One option worth considering is that one of the following Courts either replaces an existing lower-powered Court in the freehold or is instead added as a "fifth" Court. This is not an easy fit, but that's what makes it interesting — it provides conflict, two worlds colliding, two different patterns of thought causing some kind of disarray (which can lead to further incursions of opportunistic Fae). Consider, for instance, Chinatown in San Francisco or Chicago. What's to say that the changelings of Chinatown haven't banded together to form a Vermilion Court in opposition to the other four seasonal Courts?

### *The Demon's Gate*

Within the folklore surrounding these four cardinal directions, some also believe that a fifth direction — the northeast, known as *kimon* or *ushitora* — is a corrupt direction from which evil always comes. It is considered to be the direction of the Demon's Gate, and in many freeholds using the directional Court system, this seems to manifest as true. (Whether the directional Courts are inadvertently founded as a response or whether the founding of the Courts somehow "causes" the Demon's Gate phenomenon to occur is unknown, a true "chicken and egg" problem.) Often, away from the freehold in the direction of the northeast a terrible door into the Hedge opens, and this door always opens into some awful part of the Thorns. Moreover, it's through this door that True Fae seem to emerge more often. Changelings have successfully closed or even destroyed such Demon Gates, but they always open again somewhere else nearby.





# Court of the North

(THE ARMOR COURT, THE STUPA, THE COURT OF CONSTANTS)

Starving? Cold? Skin peeling, muscles aching? Good. When the Others came for you and took you away, it was most terrible because you were not used to suffering. You were cast from a world of luxury into a place of madness. Like being thrown from a warm bath out into the ice and snow. Our job is to prepare you for suffering.

Suffering is good. It is constant. We learn through suffering. If we make it so we are friends with our pain, no one can ever force it upon us. If we make it so we welcome suffering with open arms, the Others have no power over us. And so, we harden you, and you gain strength in this. No nightmare can hurt you, now. Let me put it this way: if you cut out your own eye, then no other can take that eye from you. Understand, now?

The Court of the North follows, to a point, the Buddhist "truth" that all of life is suffering. Human beings are imperfect, and changelings even less so. The Lost are made in the image of the Fair Folk, and this, too, is imperfect. All imperfection leads to suffering; it's simply the nature of things.

This is what the Armor Court claims to see most often: a changeling escapes his Keeper, and flees the Hedge back to his home. Once home, he embraces life too easily. He seeks comfort away from the horrors of his durance. He exhibits great emotion, connects himself with the material world of money, the mental world of love and attachment, the physical world of pleasure. He shies away from the suffering he experienced, and in once again claiming a kind of happiness in this world, as wide or as meager as the changeling can manage it, he once again knows

fear. The fear is of losing what he has regained. His life. His money. His loves. His pleasures. The Fair Folk can come out of nowhere — descending out of a bleak fog or crawling out through a broken mirror — and take it all away again with but a snap of their spidery fingers.

The Court of the North refuses to become that fearful thing. Therefore, they practice suffering, and in suffering, detachment. One's attachments lead to fear of losing those attachments and so, by and large, they deny them-

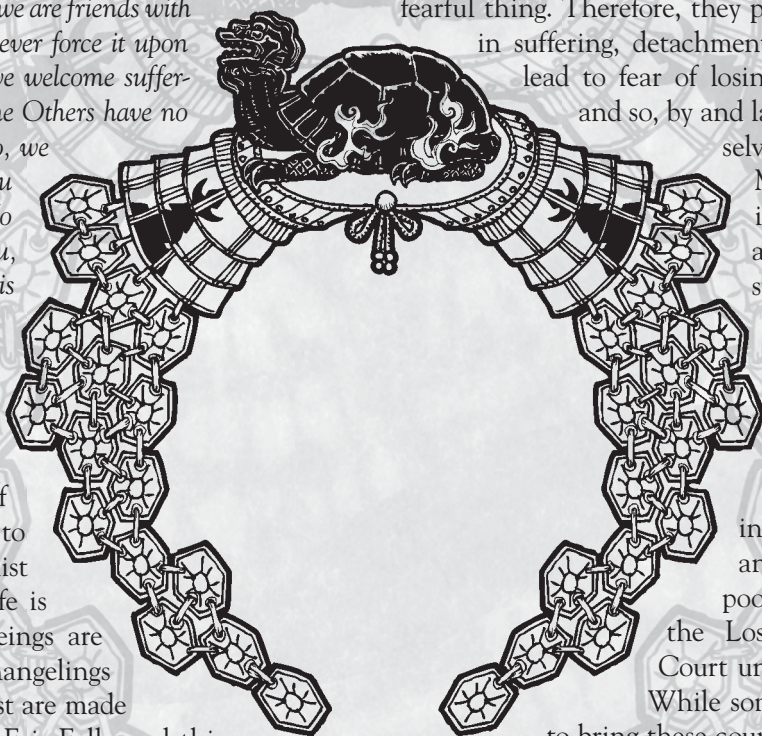
selves such pleasures. Money? No. Love? Not in a romantic sense, at least. Physical pleasures? Denied. If they do not have these things, the Fair Folk cannot take them away. And since the True Fae seem to take some pleasure in plundering one's life and stealing all that the poor fool has, this makes the Lost of the Northern Court undesirable to the Fae.

While some Fae may endeavor to bring these courtiers harm just to see if they might break, many Fae are lazy and indolent, and prefer to go after easier targets. Targets with more to pillage.

The Court favors the Black Tortoise (*Xuan Wu* in China, *Genbu* in Japan, *Hyeon-mu* in Korea). In the old stories, the Black Tortoise became heavenly by purging himself of his humanity and by rejecting all the demons from his past. By denying the demons, he stole their power.

## COURTIERS

The changelings of the Armor Court are often ascetics. Some are obviously so, with flesh exposed





to the elements, ribs showing from a lack of food and skin darkened from the sun. But such a level of discipline isn't necessary, and many of the courtiers simply mitigate their desires and live sparsely. One might wear all black, and live in a bare apartment with little more than a bed and a toilet. Most of them are simple, sagely, even stubborn in their devotion to freeing themselves from attachments. They tend not to have much money, possessing usually the bare minimum to help them get by. By the Court's demands, they may not fall in love or have physical relationships. (The reality is that this falls apart more often than the Court would care to admit, and at the bare minimum, they ask that the courtiers keep such relationships hidden and temporary.)

The Court only admits those who are willing to commit to this lifestyle. They offer no tests to neophyte courtiers, no trials to test their worth. Any and all are allowed to be a part of the Court, but once a part of it, they must adhere to the Court's demands for a spare life filled with suffering or be ejected from within its ranks. Some have an easier time of it than others. A Tunnelgrub who emerges from the Hedge and lives in the basement of an old theater with little to eat will have a far easier time playing by the Court's rules than some Bright One who immediately assumes an idle, opulent lifestyle (though, one wonders why she would bother to join the Court of the North in the first place, unless she is being particularly troubled by her fetch or her Keeper and seeks extreme measures with which to combat them).

Worth noting is that many within the Court are able fighters. However, part of that lies in the fact that any martial skills the changelings possess are intended to be used for defense, not offense. ("Always defend, never attack," is a common motto among the older courtiers.) Attacking is, in its way, a manner of attachment and risk — put oneself out there, extend the spear and you may lose the spear or even your hand. But stay where you are and wait for the attack to come in... well, that is how the Black Tortoise would do it, wouldn't he? By stooping low and staying with his shell armor, he lets others make their attack — and, inevitably, fail in that assault.

## RITUALS

The Court of the North keeps various storehouses (*stupas*) of many tokens and other artifacts

of power — a curious thing, given their distaste for detachment. For the most part, they keep these items of supernatural power so that they do not fall into the hands of others. The Court thereby generally refuses to use the tokens themselves — or, at least, they keep them out of the individual hands of their courtiers, doling them out only when the Court at large views it as necessary. (For instance, a motley under attack from hobgoblins might be granted temporary use of powerful supernatural weapons.) Once a year, though, when the cherry blossoms begin to drop, the Court brings the tokens out of their storehouses and showcases them much in the way that one might showcase relics tied to the Buddha or to Catholic saints. None are allowed to use or even touch the tokens, and instead the artifacts are meant to remind the Lost of their time enslaved and the suffering they underwent. Most don't think it a celebration because of this, but the courtiers do. They find that remembering their suffering and how they have adapted to it cause for satisfaction and some level of celebration.

Other rituals are periods of pain and tribulation brought on by oneself. Some call this the Gauntlet — a changeling is expected from time to time to renew his friendship with suffering. How he does this is up to him, though many prefer physical pain (flagellation, deprivation, branding, piercing). Others like to make trouble for themselves — they court danger, make pledges just to break them, taunt the Fair Folk from afar.

## HERALDRY

Black and white are the colors of the Court of the North. Other symbols include the *stupa* (the Buddhist mound or storehouse said initially to contain the Buddha's ashes) and pieces of old Chinese or Japanese armor (most common is the old Shang dynasty armor, which was literally formed of turtle shells bound tightly with cords). Many courtiers wear little black turtle fetishes, either on a necklace, around the wrist or sitting in one's pocket. Beyond that, the Court doesn't give in to too many symbols, once again hoping to eschew attachment.

## MANTLE

The Mantle of the Court of the North is, just as its courtiers and philosophies, stark and simple. At Mantle • to •••, a courtier may occasionally give off a whiff of dust and ash (similar to those ashes of



the Buddha), or appear to bear scars that were never physically earned. Those of Mantle ••••+ might show bodies laced with a network of scar tissue or tortoise-shell pattern of bruises and contusions — and parts of the flesh might appear armored momentarily, like the black glassy shell of Genbu.

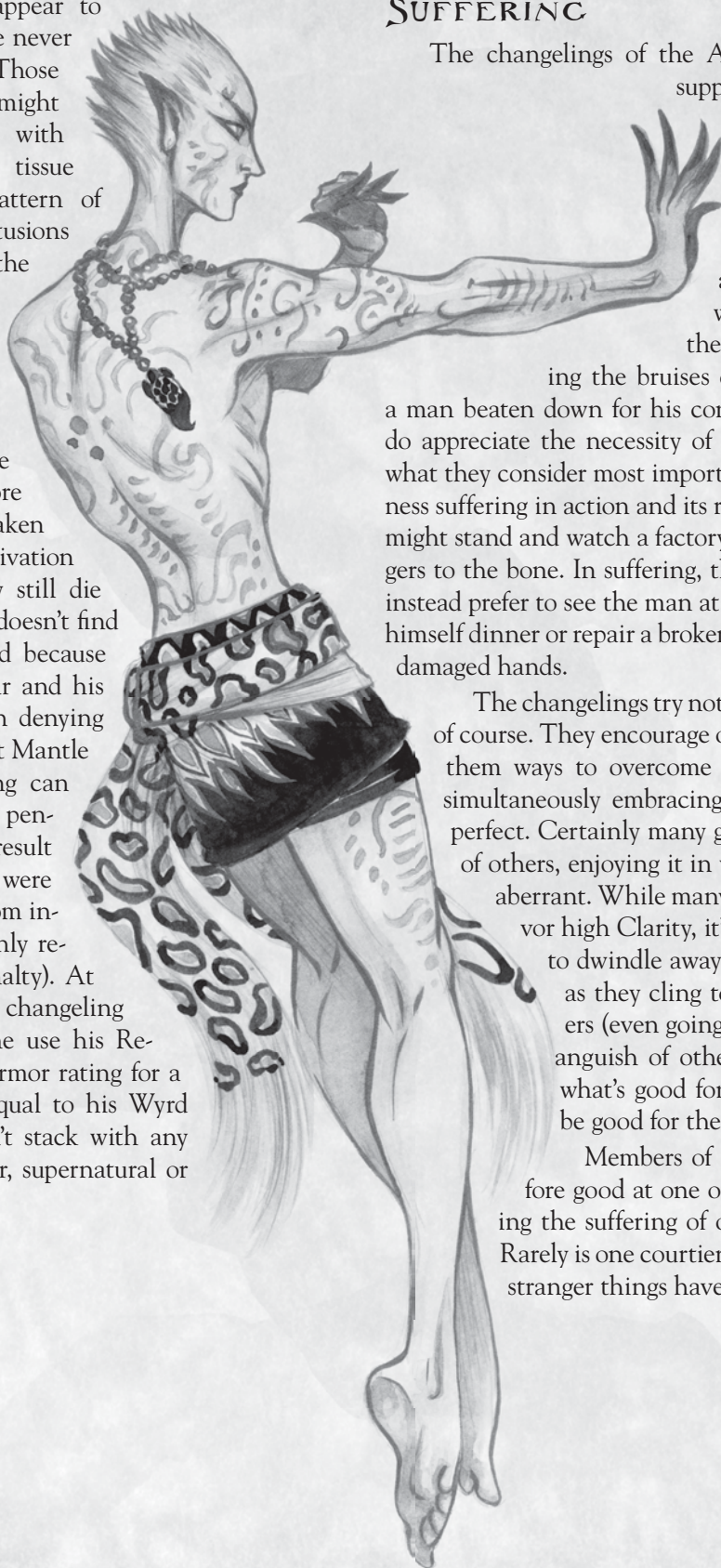
At Mantle •, the changeling can ignore any penalties taken from fatigue or deprivation (the character may still die from them, but he doesn't find his abilities reduced because his mind stays clear and his body sharp even in denying it its necessities). At Mantle ••, the changeling can ignore one die from penalties taken as the result of wounds (so, if she were suffering -2 dice from injuries, she would only really suffer a -1 penalty). At Mantle ••••, the changeling may once per scene use his Resolve score as his armor rating for a number of turns equal to his Wyrd (though this doesn't stack with any other type of armor, supernatural or mundane).

## SUFFERING

The changelings of the Armor Court are not supposed to delight in suffering, though they are said to appreciate it. For the most part, it's true. They don't revel in another's pain — a woman starving on the street, a child bearing the bruises of an abusive parent, a man beaten down for his convictions — but they do appreciate the necessity of suffering and so it is what they consider most important. They like to witness suffering in action and its results. In action, they might stand and watch a factory worker labor his fingers to the bone. In suffering, the changelings might instead prefer to see the man at home, trying to cook himself dinner or repair a broken door with his feeble, damaged hands.

The changelings try not to be callous about it, of course. They encourage others and try to show them ways to overcome their suffering while simultaneously embracing it, though this isn't perfect. Certainly many give into the suffering of others, enjoying it in ways that are perhaps aberrant. While many within the Court favor high Clarity, it's true that some start to dwindle away from their humanity as they cling to the anguish of others (even going so far as to cause the anguish of others because, to them, what's good for the goose must also be good for the gander).

Members of this Court are therefore good at one of two things: alleviating the suffering of others and causing it. Rarely is one courtier good at both, though stranger things have happened.





# Court of the East

(THE SERPENT COURT, THE TRIDENT, THE COURT OF WEALTH)

*Look at that vase upon the shelf, there. See the dragon painted upon it, coiled around it? Beautiful. Glittering fish scales. Eagle's talons upon its feet. Wary rabbit eyes. Breath of both fire and rain.*

*See, the dragon's a lot of things. He keeps many beasts within his skin. Why does he do this? Because it gives him power. Power is all we have in this world, friend. Money. Authority. It gives us meaning. It gives us control. A bag of gold may not keep The Strangers at bay, but it may be able to buy the services of one who can. Money doesn't buy everything, no. Just most things.*

The changelings of the Serpent Court make no bones about it: yes, they are greedy. Why shouldn't they be? They come back from a harrowing imprisonment deep in the middle of some madman's nightmare, and they return to this world as something unique, something no longer human. They possess strange and fickle magic that, when harnessed properly, can grant them all the wishes in the world. And that is what this Court does.

It's a twist on the seasonal Spring Court, but with a different shade of desire. The Court of the East ties power with wealth. One cannot have the first if he does not have the latter. By possessing great wealth, the Court of the East believes that all becomes possible if the money is kept in savvy hands. Want to own the temple in which waits a forever-open door to the Hedge? Purchase it. Or secure the employ of

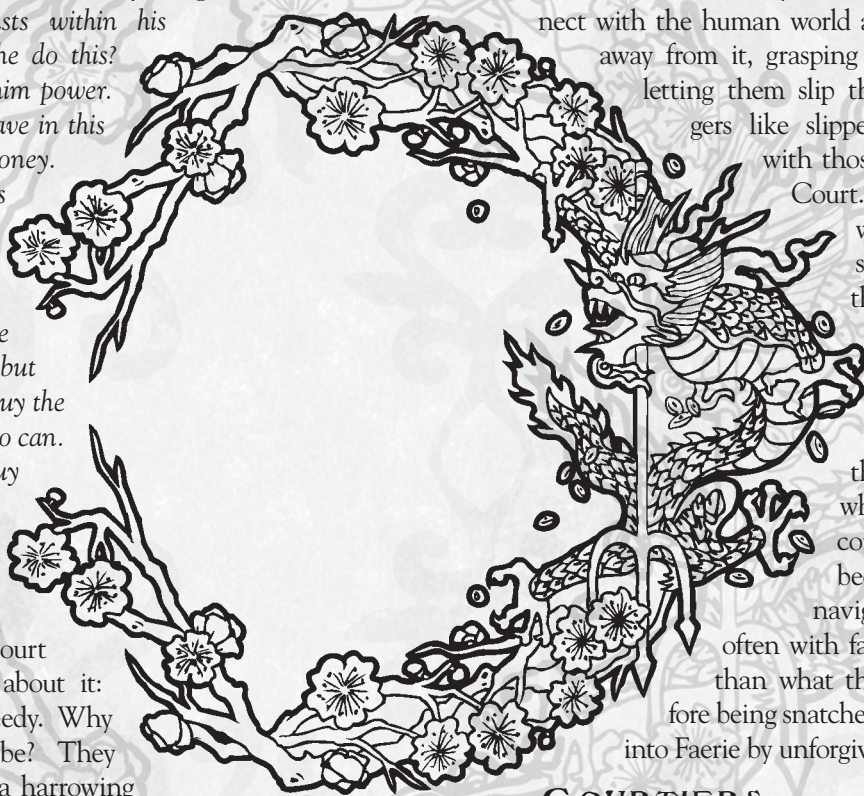
someone who can clear it out, take it over. Or have it destroyed. With a sack of gold and a no-limit credit card, what cannot be achieved?

It's all the more interesting that many changelings seem somehow destitute. They seem unable to reconnect with the human world and so they exist away from it, grasping at resources but letting them slip through their fingers like slippery eels. Not so with those of the Serpent Court. They reconnect with the human sphere as best as they can, often gaining quite a bit of temporal power in the process (for that is nominally where the money comes from). Many become experts at navigating that world, often with far greater aplomb than what they possessed before being snatched up and dragged into Faerie by unforgiving Keepers.

## COURTIERS

The Serpent Court expects its courtiers to possess some manner of wealth. This needn't be some unending cache of precious metals and glittering jewels, but some kind of prosperity is expected (in systems terms, assume that this means Resources 2 with the unspoken promise of trying to increase one's assets as time goes on). Certainly the Court has taken in the destitute, provided they show some signs of talent when it comes to aggregating wealth. A hollow-eyed pauper on the streets of Beijing can be a potential courtier provided he demonstrates the skill and the hunger necessary to join the Court of the East.

How do most courtiers amass their fortunes? The ways for a changeling to make money are as limitless





as the blades of grass in the world. Many use their strange abilities such as pledge-making, dream-shaping and Contracts when it comes to making money. One might sell tokens in an open-air Bangkok market. Another might sell her beautiful body in the red light district (Patpong Street) of the same city. Magic can garner high prices — some might sell ensorcellment or fulfill other promises and wishes. One courtier is even said to sell the richest Japanese businessman “pleasant dreams” for what could only be described as a jaw-dropping sum of money.

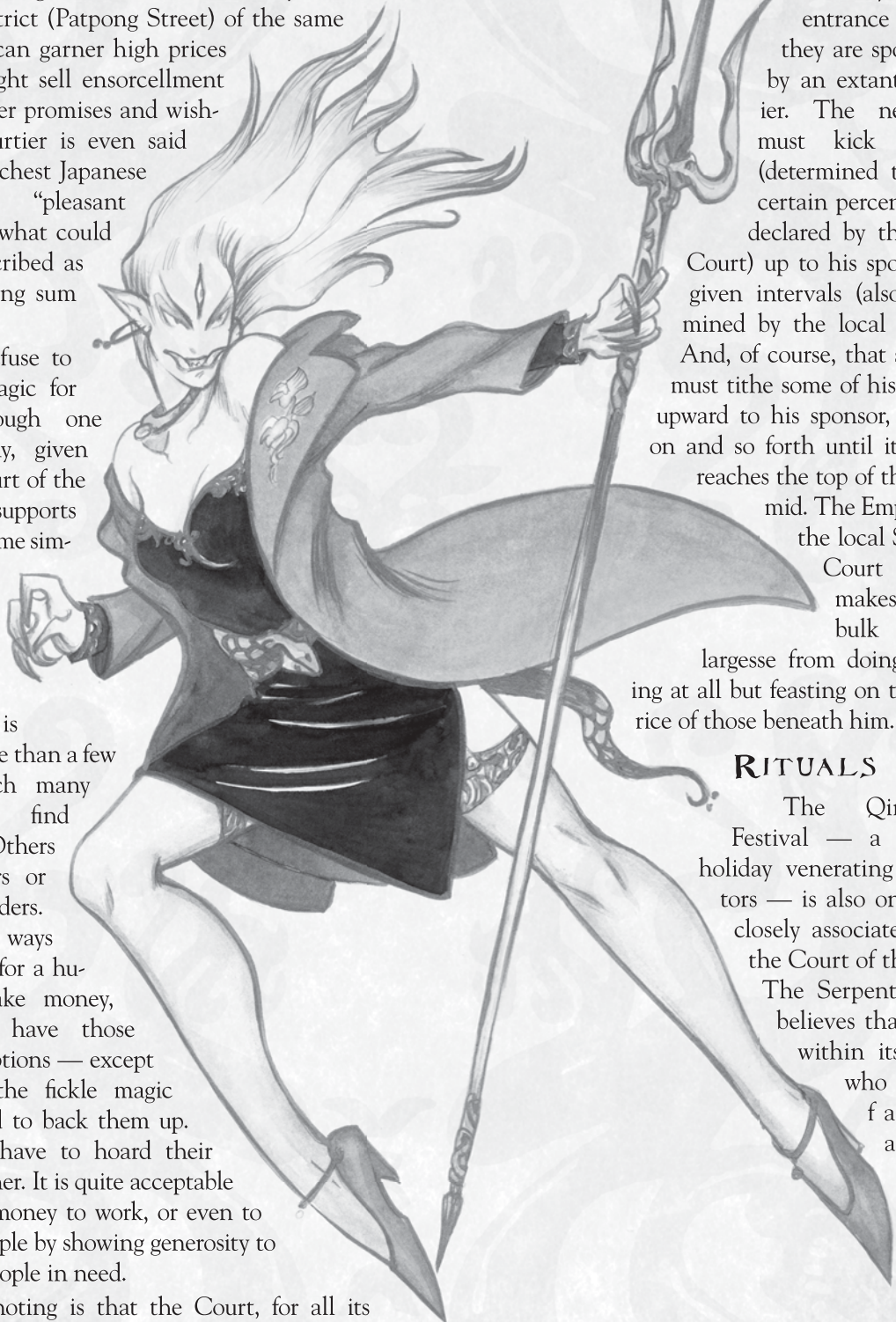
Some refuse to use their magic for money (though one wonders why, given that the Court of the East fully supports doing so). Some simply use their cunning to become excellent in business — the Court is home to more than a few CEOs, which many changelings find surprising. Others are inventors or market traders. For as many ways as there are for a human to make money, changelings have those very same options — except they have the fickle magic of their kind to back them up. They don’t have to hoard their fortunes, either. It is quite acceptable to put that money to work, or even to invest in people by showing generosity to promising people in need.

Worth noting is that the Court, for all its seeming independence and individuality, is ultimately

a self-serving entity. It runs on what is essentially a pyramid scheme. New members are only allowed entrance when they are sponsored by an extant courtier. The neophyte must kick money (determined to be a certain percentage as declared by the local Court) up to his sponsor at given intervals (also determined by the local Court). And, of course, that sponsor must tithe some of his money upward to his sponsor, and so on and so forth until it finally reaches the top of the pyramid. The Emperor of the local Serpent Court often makes the bulk of his largesse from doing nothing at all but feasting on the avarice of those beneath him.

## RITUALS

The Qingming Festival — a human holiday venerating ancestors — is also one most closely associated with the Court of the East. The Serpent Court believes that those within its ranks who have fallen are still owed





wealth, for even in death and among the ghosts wealth gives one power. They venerate their ancestors and forebears by leaving money, tokens and other items of luxury on their graves or at house temples and altars in an effort to appease their spirits. If one's sponsor has passed, he uses this time to pay his sponsor what is still owed — he pays this by either leaving it on the grave if that poor changeling had nobody else, or by paying it to his family or other designated beneficiary (one courtier was said to leave his tithing privileges to his dog, a three-legged Pekingese who once a year was showered in opulence).

The Court also performs other smaller rituals — the Loosing of the Coin, for instance, where a changeling marks an item of money with his symbol or name, and sends it out into the world by buying something with it. If he receives that money back (and doesn't interfere on fate's behalf to get that money back), then it is considered to be excellent luck, indeed.

## HERALDRY

The predominant symbol of the Court is the Azure Dragon (*Qing Long* in China, *Seiryu* in Japan, *Cheong-ryong* in Korea), which the changelings imagine to be a great blue serpent coiled around his golden hoard. He further symbolizes the season of Spring (Spring indicates growth, and these changelings are all about growth — provided “growth” means “growing wealth”), and the courtiers take on images associated with that season (flowers, green leaves, blossoms).

Other symbols prevail, as well — the trident, said to embody wealth because it is how fisherman used to haul in the biggest, greatest fishes. The colors blue, green and yellow are key (blue for the dragon, green for plant growth and yellow for gold). Many wear flowers of those colors on the lapels of their dark suits and elegant dresses.

## MANTLE

The Mantle of the Serpent Court is about power and money. With Mantle • to •••, one exudes a sense of power, and the courtier may seem larger than she really is, or may appear to be composed of sharp potent angles that dominate the eye. Those of Mantle ••••+ are paragons of dominance, seeming to always tower over or overshadow those around them, and stranger still, they give off signs of being made of money: coins seen in the dark of the eye, a rattling of gold when they walk, a glint of jewels on their teeth or fingernails.

A courtier with Mantle •+ knows that procuring wealth isn't a cold game of numbers but one involving people, and so he gains an extra die on any Socialize rolls. With Mantle •••+, a courtier finds that his tongue (which may at this point become forked like a serpent's) will do what it must when money is on the line. When making a deal or stirring the envy in another, the character gains a bonus die on all Subterfuge rolls. Those with Mantle ••••• wield their wealth like a weapon. Once per day, the character can add his full Resources score to any Social roll as bonus dice.

## ENVY

One might suspect that greed is the dominant emotion within the Serpent Court, and for many individuals, greed is. But what fuels the changelings' power is *envy* — others want what their neighbors possess, or worse, what they can never have, and that is what gives the Court its power.

A down-on-her-luck actress who wants the best part in the commercial so that she can buy all those pretty dresses? The child who sees that his friend has *two* scoops of ice cream instead of his paltry one? The rich man who can always point to someone richer? These are what give the courtiers their power. If nobody cared about wealth and having something bigger, better, and more beautiful, the Serpent Court could not operate.

These changelings thrive on those who want more and will do anything for it. Someone who begs, cajoles and weeps in trying to secure some kind of pledge or favor from one of the changelings is like sweet music or a delicious candy. The baleful stares of people on the street sizing up other passersby, wishing that they were as thin or wealthy or had such nice clothing... well, the courtier often feels like he's just sopping up gravy with a good piece of bread, it's just that tasty.

Of course, it doesn't hurt to stir the envy from time to time, to casually (so casually they aren't aware of the manipulation, the way Iago swayed poor Othello) remind someone that there's another out there who has it better and... don't they deserve more? The courtiers are often very good at reminding someone of his weaknesses. Once such a reminder is in place, it's easier for them to mount a deal and gain further power. It's battle, but without swords and guns. Weak-en the enemy to take their position. Almost too easy.



# Court of the South

(THE VERMILION COURT, THE INK BRUSH, THE COURT OF SONG)

*We have been killed, my son, but we are now reborn. Look at your flesh! What do you see? No longer do you possess the featureless skin of man, wearing instead a cloak of blood-red blossoms and looking upon me with eyes like slices of tender lotus root. Have you seen the things you can do? Have you felt that your soul has been replaced with the stuff of madness and dreams?*

*I see the look in your eyes. Don't be scared. This is what we are, now. We are creatures of passion and desire, of art and song, of creation and destruction. Yes, it is madness. It threatens to overwhelm us, but what would you rather be? A dull, placid lake? Or a roaring tide alive with foam and brine? It may drown you, it may drown us all, but one should die at the peak, not at the nadir.*

Life is chaos and passion. Life is also art, and art needn't be comfortable. The Lost of the Vermilion Court do not try to connect with humanity, but instead exult in being changelings. They do not deny any emotion, whether it be love or hate, hope or despair. Instead, they endeavor to feel it so keenly that it nearly destroys them. Love is felt so strongly that it might elevate one to the uttermost heights of bliss or the lowest pits of gloom. Anger is just as pure, and a changeling of the Vermilion Court might let his anger burn off swiftly in a sudden conflagration of violence, or he may instead let it simmer for years, even decades, nursing on his fury like a bottomless bottle of rice wine.

The Lost are a part of that emotional world, hewing far closer to it than humans ever could — changelings experience it, feed from it, and the Court of the South rewards them for doing so.

How does this help them thwart the Fae? Because emotion can give the Lost power. It is tied intimately to Glamour, and a changeling who knows how to emote and orchestrate the emotions of others can be quite powerful, indeed. Each changeling of this Court consider himself an artist. While many embrace various

means to express that artist's desire (calligraphy, song, sculpture, theater), all believe that a changeling's innate abilities represent a true art. They all practice it, learning new Contracts, clauses and catches, finding new ways to bond humans with Byzantine pledges, seeking out the rarest and most delectable fruits in the Hedge.

## COURTIERS

Changelings of other Courts find those of this Vermilion Court to be captivating and frightening. Because the Lost of this Court give into their emotions so fully, it becomes madness. These changelings know they're all at least a little bit mad (and of course, a loss of Clarity is common among them), but they feel it's a necessary price to pay. They try not to manufacture emotions, however — it seems foolish to try to feel something that isn't obviously felt, to dredge up false emotions just for the hollow experience of having it. But when an emotion does well up naturally within them — a flash of lust for a pretty thing across the room, a stab of jealousy for the Hunterheart who has already kissed the back of her hand — they embrace it, act upon it, stoke it like a fire. The courtier might go to that pretty thing and casually push past the Hunterheart. Should his romantic rival react in an adverse way (and why wouldn't we), the courtier might kick him in the kneecap, break a bottle over his head or simply whisper a jaw-dropping threat in the poor Beast's ear. Then,





of course, the courtier will sweep the lady off her feet and charm her like none other (until he's done with her, of course, having found a prettier thing by the door).

All within the Court are artists of some fashion, as well. This allows them some avenue to express their emotions, and it's suggested that this helps them mitigate any Clarity loss. One might be a perfect calligraphist, while another a harpist. But art needn't be so commonly defined: there is an art to seduction, an art to engineering or architecture, even an art to inspiring (and destroying) emotions in others.

The Court of the South is quite stringent in who it lets stand among them. Many expect admittance to be easy ("Oh, you can paint? You're a breaker of hearts? Clearly you must belong to the Court of the South!"), but the masters of the Vermilion Court test their entrants ceaselessly before allowing them to truly join with the Court. The courtiers seek to provoke entrants, sending them on maddening tasks and having them ponder over riddles that have no answers. The masters hope to provoke a kind of lunatic *satori*, a Zen-like explosion of enlightenment (clarity achieved through a loss of Clarity, in a way). Many are surprised that entrance into the Court is so complex — and so trying. After such trials, a changeling might sleep for a week, feeling so physically and emotionally spent.

## RITUALS

The Court keeps three holidays of note, each meant to allow (or force) its members to exhibit and embrace particular *motifs* of emotion.

The first holiday coincides with the Chinese New Year, and is known simply as the Time of Folly. For a period of five days after the New Year, the Court members are encouraged to act erratic, to appear insane and strange. It is expected that the courtiers will perform tasks that are odd, even dangerous. This serves two purposes. The first is that it confuses the Gentry. They don't know what to make of the madness, and often stay away during those five days. The second purpose is that chaos allows for a time of upheaval and renewal. Something cannot be mended without it first being broken — such as the breaking of a bone to reset it for healing purposes. The lunacy can set of a chain of events that creates new conditions, and helps stir new emotion.

The second holiday is the Lantern Harvest. In the midst of Autumn is when all enjoy the fruits of their labors, as the Summer harvest is complete. This is therefore also the time when the courtiers seek to invoke their most positive emotions — love, hope, light. They use this light to stave off the darkness of the coming Winter, and to thumb their noses at the Fair Folk who might be watching from distant Arcadia.

The final holiday is known as the Lament for Qu Yuan (and coincides with the date of the Dragon Boat Festival). Qu Yuan was a minister within the Chu state more than 2,000 years ago, a loyal servant to the king until the king became corrupt and slandered Qu Yuan. He then left government life, wandering the countryside and learning of many legends and folktales, writing poetry great and small about his experiences. Along the way he reflected (literally in some cases, staring into the waters of a well on a hill) upon his darker feelings. When he learned that his beloved capital of Ying had been captured by the Qin state, he lamented, then wandered into the river with a great rock bound to his back. The Court celebrates his drowning suicide by negotiating their own darker emotions and urges, and giving into them fully for a single night. The courtiers don't repress much, but what little they do repress comes out on this night in a vast outpouring of negative emotion. This shows the Fae the potential of their anger and pain, and acts as a warning not to come toying with the Court of the South.

## HERALDRY

The colors and images of the Court of the South are that of the phoenix (known in China as *zhu que*, in Japan as *suzaku* and in Korea as *ju-jak*). The phoenix's plumage is bright, a spray of vermilion, a chaotic explosion of blood-red feathers. Many courtiers dress in bright colors, and always feature at least a single red feather to make their allegiances and passions clear.

The ruler of the Court of the South possesses the symbolic Ink Brush, a brush said to be made from the softest under-feathers of the phoenix's down. The handle is of dark cherry, and rumor has it that the Ink Brush is a powerful token that can be swept across any surface to open a gateway between this world and the tangled Hedge.

## MANTLE

The Mantle of the Court of the South is one of passion and chaos. Those with Mantle • to ••• give off a kind of heat, a faint warmth radiating outward that excites the pulse. Those with Mantle ••••+ often possess faintly red eyes, and those in their wake often find themselves giving into their Virtues and Vices more plainly. Sometimes, those of high Mantle leave behind an occasional bird-like footprint that smolders with smoke and steam.

A Vermilion courtier with Mantle •+ gains a Specialty to her Empathy Skill. A character with Mantle •••+ finds that she can purchase the Empathy and Expression Skills at half the normal experience point cost. A courtier with Mantle ••••• finds that her emotions affect others around her and may even shift her own flesh. She can take either the Inspiring Merit or the four-dot Striking Looks



Merit. If both are already possessed, she gains +3 dice to the roll made to use the Inspiring Merit.

## ECSTASY

Unlike the Spring Court, the Vermilion Court isn't about desire — at least, not exclusively. Desire is just one emotion among many, and the goal is to experience all emotions as profoundly as one can manage. This, to them, creates a kind of ecstasy, a nearly indescribable Zen-like *satori*.

Every Vermilion courtier finds this ecstasy in different ways. One might be caught smoking opium on a rusty junk boat, while another may endeavor to sit still for weeks amid a grove of cherry trees (and in the process honing in on a single emotion to experience utterly). Another might

fall in love every ten seconds, while one of his motley might engage in such supreme outbursts of gleeful violence that it must be seen to be believed. In grasping at emotions, the Court claims one will feel ecstasy, and through this ecstasy, enlightenment.

Of course, this helps ensure that members of the Court of the South are not necessarily the most productive members of society. Giving wholly into their emotions is curious at the least, and outright dangerous at the worst. Most of these courtiers are unable to hold jobs (though they see themselves above such human nonsense), often ending up as wanderers, transients, criminals, rogues. Some make it as artists, but the rest are often too unstable to find any kind of reasonable balance.





# COURT OF THE WEST

(THE WHITE TIGER COURT, THE SWORD, THE COURT OF WAR)

Somebody has to protect us. Who do you think that will be? Some are content to give themselves over. They place themselves in the hands of others like mewling kittens hungry for a taste of milk.

That's not what we do. We are masters of our destiny, because we are masters of war. What we want, we take. What we need is given to us because others know the consequences. And in return we protect the freehold, even if they don't want our help. War isn't pretty. But it's noble, even when soaked in blood.

The legend suggests that the White Tiger would appear only when virtue reigned and the world was at peace. But the Lost of the White Tiger Court know that this is a lie told to children, and that the truth is far less pleasing.

The reality is, the world is at war. Humans fight with humans. Humans fight with the natural land and the beasts that walk within it. The changelings fight the encroachment of the Fair Folk, and worst of all, the Lost might often battle their own. The changelings of this Court believe themselves to be the true guardians of the freehold, warriors who know that permanent peace is impossible and that war must be managed and fought by the virtuous. They, of course, claim that they're the virtuous ones.

The Lost that comprise the Court of the West obsess over martial prowess. Many carry assault rifles slung over their shoulders and knives or swords

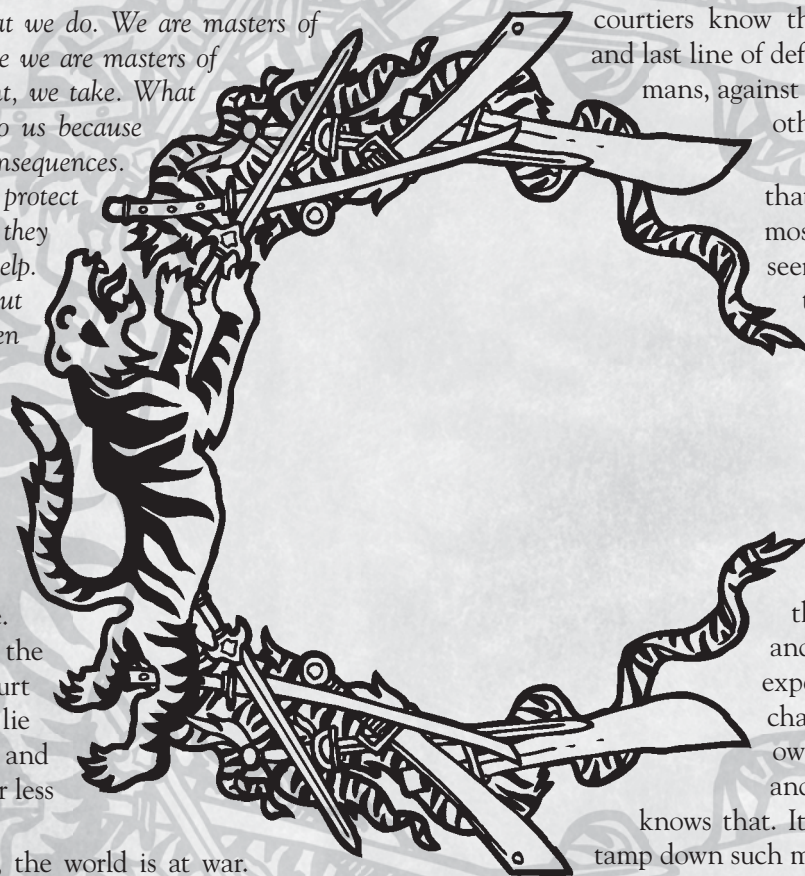
sheathed in hip-hung scabbards. Some know how to fight with only their hands, learning close combat techniques honorable and dirty (a gentle disarm followed by a kneecap-shattering heel kick). These courtiers know that they're the first and last line of defense against the humans, against the Fae, and against other changelings.

It's the latter group that concerns them most. Changelings, it seems, have taken from their imprisonment some of the callousness from their Fae tormentors. Every one of the Lost seems capable in even the best of times to exhibit some of that pitiless cunning, and it comes out unexpectedly. In this way, changelings are their own worst enemies, and the Court of War knows that. Its members strive to tamp down such manipulations.

## COURTIERS

Those who join the Court are those who see the world as it is and want to fight for it and for themselves. Some are tough brutes, scarred physically and emotionally by their Keepers, while others are young and idealistic who, like a bright-eyed boy running off to join the military, see a way to make a difference.

The Court attempts to unify its troops with a kind of sameness. Obviously, some degree of uniqueness is critical, as weakness is easily bred through homogeneity (and the predictability is a vulnerability that seems to draw the Fae all too quickly). A Master





General with a keen eye for strategy is different than the on-the-ground soldier who's master of nothing but his rifle, but the Court endeavors to instill in each of its changelings a kind of cold and distant hardness. The Court asks its courtiers not to show much emotion, and to abide by rather strict codes of honor and conduct.

And everybody trains for war. Even the savviest politico or mental strategist is nothing within the Court if he's not good with a gun, blade, or his own hands. The courtiers are almost fetishistic about their weapons, obsessing over their cleanliness, functionality, even their iconic status as something capable of stealing the life from another. Only once one has mastered some kind of martial skill is he allowed to develop in other ways.

Pledging oneself to the Court is, on the outset, easy. The Court will take anybody (the saying suggests that within any lump of coal lingers a diamond), and from there the Court members often literally beat the proper skill set and mindset into their recruits. The first year within the Court is hard, with rag-tag bunches of neophytes being run ragged through countless Gauntlets and hardening rituals. Some fall away and leave the Court, and all are encouraged to do so (for if they do not have the steadfastness to remain, their weakness should not be allowed to drag the others down). Those who emerge from this year are ineluctably tougher, harder, colder than they were when they first joined up.

## RITUALS

The rituals of the Court of War are many, but they are rarely large scale. It isn't about massive holidays or large gatherings, it's about the small rituals that one performs every day. The ritual of cleaning and maintaining a weapon. The ritual of keeping one's domicile neat and spare. The ritual of martial practice, of meditating over a cup of tea, of testing oneself against increasingly awful conditions.

Society within the Court of War is driven by ritual — it has to be. War is brutal. It leaves one hollowed out. It appears futile. The depredations of warfare can crush the spirit and leave a changeling feeling like he did back in Arcadia, ready to collapse on the floor in a trembling fetal ball. Ritual props the courtiers up; it gives them something on which to hang their hats. Even the simplest act — like how all members of the Court bow deeply to one another and utter gracious

statements in favor of each — helps give what is ostensibly a bloody and bloodthirsty tradition a kind of dignity and integrity.

Two larger-scale rituals are prominent within the Court. The first is, after a new recruit's first year, he's finally welcomed into the Court with a celebration. It's a chance to let loose if only a little bit, to find a kind of reward for the trials and tribulations. The second ritual, known as the Changing of the Tiger, is when the Master General of the Court retired and is replaced. It's a sorrowful, but lively celebration, a sad moment in which a beloved (whether truly or not) figure steps down, but a celebratory moment because a new Master General is taking the reins. It's the one time when the Court becomes truly raucous, firing weapons into the air, drinking profusely, engaging in clever physical challenges.

## HERALDRY

Symbols of the White Tiger (*bai hu* in China, *byakko* in Japan and *baekho* in Korea) are ever-present among the courtiers of the West: lots of white and black. Some wear actual tiger skins with the color bleached from them; others groom their teeth and claws to be of the tiger (yellowed, but tipped with pink to mark the old spilling of blood).

The sword is also key — all courtiers carry a sword, some for purposes of war, others purely ornamental (having chosen to become married to a different weapon such as hands, knife, or rifle). Many become branded or tattooed with sword imagery: some simple such as a small cross-blade brand on the back of the hand, some elaborate such as a scene of clashing blades inked across the breadth of one's shoulders.

## MANTLE

Within the Court of the West, the Mantle is one of cold ferocity, of stone-cold martial ability. Lost with Mantle • to ••• radiate an eerie coldness that isn't cold to the skin so much as it is cold to the marrow of one's bones. They also tend to have their eyes glint and flash like a polished blade turned in the sun. Those with Mantle ••••+ may actually see their skin develop the black stripes of the White Tiger, even manifesting a faintly downy fur. One's breath often smells of a fresh kill, the heady scent of coppery blood even though no meat has passed across that changeling's lips.



A courtier with Mantle •+ finds himself married to whatever weapon he has chosen to carry at that time — any weapon in his hands gains a point of Durability, becoming as steely and unyielding as the changeling is.

With Mantle

•••+, the

changeling develops the ability to enter the fray like a tiger would — fast and without mercy, gaining a +1 to his Initiative score. At Mantle •••••, the changeling gains the reflexes of a beast, as well, allowing him to choose the *higher* of his Wits or Dexterity for purposes of determining Defense. Moreover, he can apply his full Defense against multiple attacks in a given round of combat.

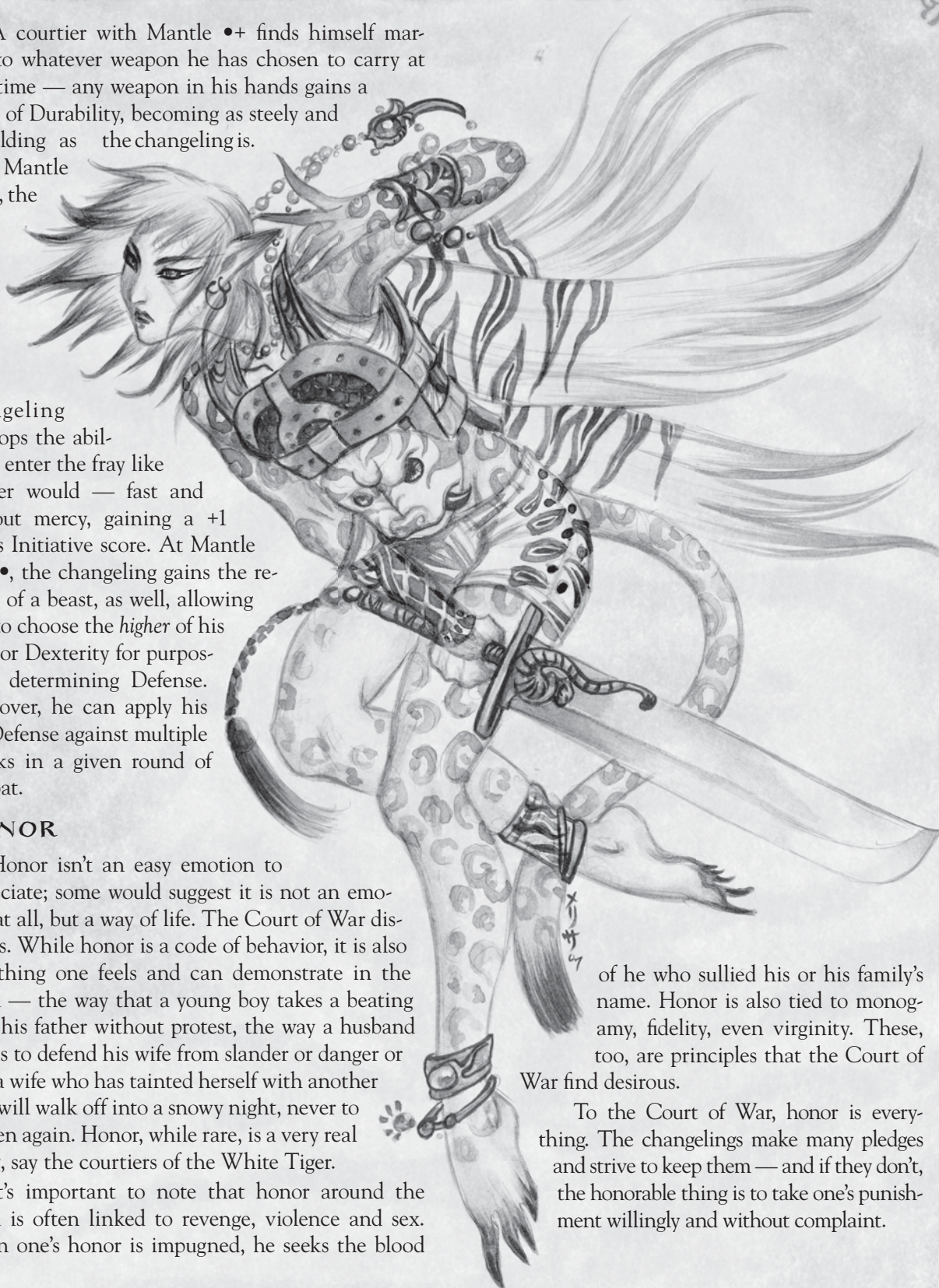
## HONOR

Honor isn't an easy emotion to appreciate; some would suggest it is not an emotion at all, but a way of life. The Court of War disagrees. While honor is a code of behavior, it is also something one feels and can demonstrate in the world — the way that a young boy takes a beating from his father without protest, the way a husband rushes to defend his wife from slander or danger or how a wife who has tainted herself with another man will walk off into a snowy night, never to be seen again. Honor, while rare, is a very real thing, say the courtiers of the White Tiger.

It's important to note that honor around the world is often linked to revenge, violence and sex. When one's honor is impugned, he seeks the blood

of he who sullied his or his family's name. Honor is also tied to monogamy, fidelity, even virginity. These, too, are principles that the Court of War find desirous.

To the Court of War, honor is everything. The changelings make many pledges and strive to keep them — and if they don't, the honorable thing is to take one's punishment willingly and without complaint.





## CONTRACTS OF THE FOUR DIRECTIONS

These Contracts were founded long ago by those of the directional Courts, and generally help a changeling find his way in this world — or cause others to lose theirs. It's not just about the so-called cardinal directions; it's about the space in which a changeling exists, and his innate understanding of how all the world and universe moves around him.

### MINDFINDER (◉)

The changeling is able to track down another individual without any tracking skills or other information. It doesn't provide the character with the target's location, only the direction of that location. Mystically, the target's *chi* or internal energy suddenly appears on the character's internal radar — it may manifest as a faint humming sound that increases as one gets closer, or even a flash of light or a "floater" in one's vision that changes as the distance between character and target decreases.

**Cost:** 1 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Survival + Wyrd – target's Wits

**Action:** Reflexive

**Catch:** The changeling has a lock of hair from the target.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character's internal compass goes wild, causing dizziness and headaches. The character suffers a –1 penalty to all rolls until she secures eight hours of uninterrupted sleep.

**Failure:** The character is unable to get a bead on the target.

**Success:** For the next hour, the character knows in what direction the target is. If the target moves, the character's sense of direction toward the target adjusts accordingly. Note that the target may be moving in the opposite direction, and Speed may end up a factor in if one is able to outpace the other.

The character can reactivate this clause once the hour is up in an endeavor to continue tracking that same target. Doing so, however, becomes more and more difficult as the hours go on — with each subsequent hour after the first, the character suffers a cumulative –1 penalty to the roll to activate Mindfinder.

Note that the character must have at least met the target in question, even in passing. She cannot use this clause to locate targets she has never before encountered.

**Exceptional Success:** The power works for two hours instead of one on this activation.

### FINDING THE FLOW (◉◉)

The character finds that his movement is aided by a preternatural flow that he did not before possess — perhaps he feels in step with the southerly warm wind or the harsh gales sweeping from the north. Perhaps he simply feels in tune with every element in his proximity.

**Cost:** 1 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Wyrd

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The character successfully meditated for one full uninterrupted hour within the last 24 hours.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character's movements are cursed for the remainder of the scene. All Physical dice pools suffer a –2 penalty during this time.

**Failure:** The character is unable to find his directional flow.

**Success:** The character can ignore a number of environmental dice penalties equal to successes gained (maximum of five penalty dice ignored). This works only on environmental penalties that would hamper Physical dice rolls (for instance, during a fight on an icy street, driving through a flooded parking lot, jumping across a chasm in gale-force winds or while picking a lock in total darkness). The character's body seems to move almost of its own accord, aided by the balancing forces of the four directions. The effect lasts for a scene.

**Exceptional Success:** The character also gains +1 to his Defense during this time — he finds himself almost supernaturally attuned to incoming attacks.

### INEQUITY OF THE CENTER (◉◉◉)

In much of Asia, the "center" is as much a direction as north, south, east or west. One's center is, to a point, one's current location but it's also more than that — it's the axis of that person's very being upon which all of space and time swings. This clause disrupts one's sense of self, staggering the flow of *chi* in the brain and body — or, in less mystical terms, upsets the magnetic balance of a target's internal compass with a directional curse.

**Cost:** 1 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Wyrd versus opponent's Survival + Wyrd

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The changeling succeeds in touching a magnet to the target's bare skin (requires a successful touch attack).

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character loses his own center. Assume that the negative effects that would plague the intended target now plague the character, instead (see below under "success").

**Failure:** The curse fails to take hold (the opponent gets the same or more successes).

**Success:** The character rolls more successes. The target feels slightly confused and dizzy, particularly in regard to his location. In system terms, the target's Speed is halved (round down) for the remainder of the scene. This also applies to *any* vehicle in which the character drives or is a passenger.

In story terms, this manifests in a number of ways. If walking, running or driving, the character makes persistent wrong turns without meaning to — in meaning to run through the doors of the restaurant, he accidentally instead walks into the alley just behind the restaurant without realizing he's done so. In driving, he perhaps pulls into a dead-end or cul-de-sac, or maybe finds himself hemmed in by construction while the character's own vehicle is able to handily escape. (In this way, the curse may manifest as obstacles as well as wrong turns.)

While the target's *actual* Speed is technically unaffected (a man walking 10 miles per hour still walks 10 miles per hour), the Speed score sees a drop because of constant wrong turns, obstacles and interruptions.



**Exceptional Success:** The confusion further affects the target's balance, and he assumes a -1 Defense for the remainder of the scene.

## THE HUNDRED STEPS (....)

With this clause, a changeling protects his domicile — up to a thousand square feet — from intruders. The clause requires him to walk 100 steps away from his domicile in each of the four directions before the clause can take full effect.

**Cost:** 2 Glamour and 1 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Wyrd

**Action:** Extended (one roll is equivalent to one minute, successes required increase with the size of the space protected; a 100-square-foot room requires five successes, a 500-square-foot room requires 10 successes and a 1,000-square-foot room requires 15 successes)

**Catch:** The character has two working compasses somewhere on his body at the time of the clause's activation.

## Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The supposedly protected room rejects the character. For as long as he remains within that space, he suffers flu-like symptoms (chills, fever, coughing, nausea) that cause him a -3 dice penalty. The flu-like effects fade immediately when he leaves the space. The space remains cursed in this way for 12 hours.

**Failure:** The character fails to call the four directions to protect his chosen space.

**Success:** The space is blessed by the four directions that conspire to protect it from intrusion. If the space is a room or building with exits and entry points, *anybody* besides the character must make a successful Lockpicking roll (five successes necessary) just to open a door, window, or other point-of-entry (such as a gate, grate, manhole cover, etc.). Even if the point of entry isn't or cannot be locked, it becomes locked during this time (even so far as manifesting a keyhole during this time frame). If the space protected has no walls, then the general area gains the following blessings, but can be penetrated without fail (as there are no points of entry able to feature the mystical locks).

Once inside, anybody besides the character suffers several ill effects. His Defense and Initiative scores are halved (round up). Also, changelings and the True Fae cannot access their Contracts in this space (though they can affect the space from outside of it with no problem). The Storyteller might also declare that other supernatural creatures cannot access their magic in the protected space (vampires are cut off from Disciplines, werewolves from Gifts, Prometheans from Transmutations, mages from their spells, etc.).

In story and setting terms, all but the character feels "off" while in the space. They find objects are always in their way, the might inadvertently trip on loose floorboards or simply feel queasy as they smell something strange, feel unnaturally warm, or suffer from a chill wind at their backs.

This blessing lasts until the next sunrise or sundown, whichever comes first. However, the character may continue the benefits without rolling by expending an additional two Glamour (the catch does not apply, here). If the character does so, the benefits extend for another 24 hours. He can continue these effects indefinitely.

**Exceptional Success:** Not only is the space itself blessed, but the character using the clause finds himself blessed, as well.

## HARMONY OF PORTALS (.....)

A changeling using this clause can step through one door and walk out another one miles away — in no more time than it takes to blink an eye.

**Cost:** 2 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Wyrd

**Action:** Reflexive

**Catch:** The character possesses the key to both doors.

## Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character steps through the door and appears in a particularly dangerous part of the Hedge.

**Failure:** The character walks through the doorway and comes out the other side.

**Success:** The character walks, climbs or crawls through one portal and exits out another portal of his choice within a number of miles equal to his Wyrd score.

This has a few restrictions. First, it requires that each portal be closeable in some fashion — a door on hinges, a manhole cover sliding over the hole, a trap door to be shut, etc. Second, the changeling cannot come out a random door. He must have in the past *seen* the portal out of which he cares to exit. Choosing a random door dumps him into the Hedge — which may be fine, but it may also put him in great danger, as this portal into the Hedge is only one-way.

**Exceptional Success:** The character can choose an exit portal within a range equal to *twice* his Wyrd score in miles.

## COURTS OF DAY AND NIGHT

Slavic myth is rife with dualities. Gods of day and night, moon/sun, dry/wet, good fortune/bad fortune, right/wrong, and so forth. The ancient pagan traditions that come out of Eastern Europe see all of life in this way, in a series of oppositional forces that, by working against one another, inadvertently work together to make all of life. And so, the Courts of the Lost that emerge out of these areas often embody this duality.

## POWER BREAKDOWN

The essential power breakdown for the Courts of Day and Night are simple. During the daytime, the Court of Day rules. The Court's power ends at sundown, when the Court of Night takes control. It's as straightforward as it sounds. The Court of Day must abide by the laws of Night when the sun is down, and the Court of Night must abide by the laws of Day when the sun is in the sky. Both sides actively oppose one another, for it is what must be done, its what's in their very *bones*. They sometimes spill one another's blood, yes, but rarely is it done through murder (while the Lost of each Court are known to do awful things to one another, they accept that murder crosses the line and only serves to give the Fair Folk power). But it's not about violence, it's about undoing the work of your opposition. The two Courts remain locked in a constant push and pull of resources, advantages, allies and territory. It's an endless war, and they all seem to recognize this fact. So much so that some members of each Court are openly friendly toward one another, even existing in motleys together



— they see the constant give and take as an ineluctable necessity, an opposition of philosophies that needn't spill over into personal relationships. Of course, others cannot contain their disdain for the other Court and make it very personal, indeed, making blood enemies of those Lost belonging to the rival Court.

How does this thwart the True Fae? The Gentry come from a land where the sun never goes down or the moon is always in the sky. In their given domains and awful haunts, night is eternal or day is forever; the cycle of night and day just doesn't occur in Faerie, for the most part. The True Fae are staid, unchanging creatures, and they don't understand the diametric give and take of these two Courts. The Courts seem to openly understand that power shifts as the balance changes and that nobody wins this massive game of chess (though from time to time a ruler comes along who seeks to change that, earning his Court a "permanent" win against the other, but some say that this is just a natural part of the struggle and that even such tyrants serve the balance). The Fae don't understand balance. They don't grasp the purposeful shifting of power. And this gives the Courts of Day and Night a slight edge against their Keeper foes.

## SUPPLANTING COURTS

Much like with the directional Courts, feel free to take one or both of these Courts and insert them into the seasonal Court system in a given freehold — this will create a bit of chaos and conflict, true, but that's all good for a game. Alternately, it's possible that you want to reject the seasonal Court system entirely and use this duality in your freehold, even in regions outside of Eastern Europe. Go for it. The most likely places where this will apply is in cities that feature a high immigrant population of Slavs. Chicago, for instance, has a huge Eastern European streak that runs through its population. So, too, with Detroit, Buffalo, Milwaukee and San Francisco. Alternately, various cities in Brazil have notable Lithuanian populations, too. Really, the old Slavic tales may have bled their influence in nearly any city across the world, into and out of Turkey, Russia, even across old Mongolia.

## SIMILAR DUALITIES

Slavic myth isn't the only one with dualities, or with a given eye toward a day and night cycle. The Courts below could easily be shifted to work with Egyptian mysticism, Taoism, the Samkhya philosophies of India, the Zoroastrian struggle of Ahura Mazda

versus Angra Mainyu (which lends itself to any Manichean struggle) or even in a Christian- or Gnostic-based freehold where God and the Devil are seen as polar forces eternally working against one another. The seelie and unseelie breakdown so prominent in Irish folktales, too, may work with the below Courts.

Note that it's not always about "good" and "evil." While on a simplistic level one can view it this way, but it's ultimately more complex than that. It's about the persistent cycles. Day and night, yes, sun and moon, sure. But it can be seen in other phenomena, too — the push and pull of the tides, the waxing and waning of the moon, the water cycle represented by rain and evaporation. Ultimately, one could suggest that it's always about life and death. Death is clearly not the end, for life grows out of it. These dualistic Courts embody all of this, really, so feel free to embed such imagery and symbology into your story when using the Courts found below.

### *Recognizing Reality*

Do the Lost who subscribe to this duality of Night and Day really understand that their constant struggle is part of a larger picture? Is that even possible?

Many don't recognize it, especially the younger changelings. They see the other Court as vile, even labeling them as "evil" or "wrong" in their pursuits. In their minds, the freehold would truly be a better place if it existed under the rule of a single Court (*their* Court, of course). Eradicating the other Court and undoing their efforts is therefore a zealously protected goal.

Others, particularly older Lost, recognize that the give-and-take is somewhat futile, and plays into a greater cosmic picture in which a duality is necessary. Undoing the efforts of the other Court is possible only in the short term, and they recognize that as being perfectly fine. It's still possible to win the day (or the night) in the short term, with the resultant reward of having done so present for a month or a year. Yes, the tables will eventually turn again, but that's just how the great gyre works. It keeps on turning, and to keep it turning, this struggle must be had.





# THE SUN COURT

(COURT OF THE DAY, THE FOUND PATH, THE WHITE HILL)

*Come up here, girl, and sit with a tired old man and listen to his rantings. Didn't we help you find the way? Didn't we offer a hand to you to help you free from the Thorns? So abide my words for a time.*

*Others won't tell you this, but I will. Some, even you maybe, think this is about good versus evil. It's not. We're no better than them — I know, I know, heresy — we're just different. We have our vices, too, you know. We're proud creatures, too proud, so sure are we that our way is the virtuous way. I'll put the difference between our two groups here as simply as I can manage it: they will stab you in the back, while we will stab you in the front. One's no better than the other. A knife's a knife wherever it's stuck. But don't tell anybody I told you that. If they ask, just say I reminded you how foul and grotesque our adversaries are.*

When the sun rises, the Court of the Day gladly resumes its control of the freehold. And what does it do with its 12 hours in power? The Court seeks to undermine the efforts of the Moon Court in whatever way the Court of the Day can manage.

Some say the best way to do this is not necessarily to undo the work of the adversaries, but merely to do moral, virtuous things and this righteousness helps to tip the scales. Such righteousness might be expressed in a number of ways: one changeling might work at a homeless shelter, while another motley will go into the Hedge to try to rescue lost travelers (that's one of the Sun Court's big ideals, helping others find their way — hence the alternative name, "the Found Path"). Some endeavor to close rogue doorways into the Hedge, bring lost Clarity back to one's allies or provide healing for those who might've been hurt the night before. The King might himself go out with a pack of huntsmen to roust the wicked from their holes and put arrows, bullets and blades into them.

Others say that the only way to truly counteract the iniquitous ways of the Wayward Road is to be proactive and literally unmake their efforts. This might mean going out to find any pledges they've made and help the tricked humans into breaking those pledges (though the Sun Court changelings might not be so clear as to the true ramifications of breaking such a pledge), or it may involve tracking down the Moon Court's secret Hollows and closing them off or even burning them down. The allies of the Court of the Night are easy targets — pawnbrokers, prosti-

tutes, mammonite businessmen, whoever — and some within the Sun Court are glad to put the torch to such malefactors. Part of the deal is simply trying to uncover all the Moon Court's dirty little deeds — they do a fine job at obscuring their works so that the Sun Court cannot undermine them.

Thing is, while the changelings play at being moral, it doesn't mean that they're free from sin. Some within the Sun Court believe that it is sometimes necessary to do the immoral thing to make a wrong situation right. If they go out to hunt

criminals, be it some jackbooted neo-Nazi thug on the streets of Prague or just the wormy ring-leader of a local gambling ring in Vilnius, they don't give that criminal a trial.

Sometimes the Sun Court change-

lings hurt the criminals, breaking fingers or foot bones; other times, the changelings just kill them. Is that justice? Or wrath? In thinking themselves better, they give themselves over handily to the vice of pride, and this pride often gives them false license to do what they want and take what they desire. While

not every Sun Court member is so consumed with his own righteous-

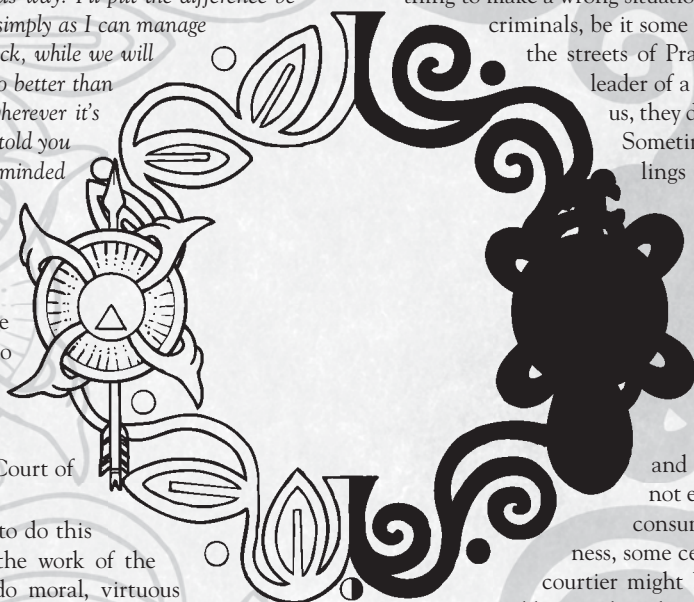
ness, some certainly are — a "golden boy"

courtier might believe that it's perfectly acceptable to take whatever pleasure he wants from

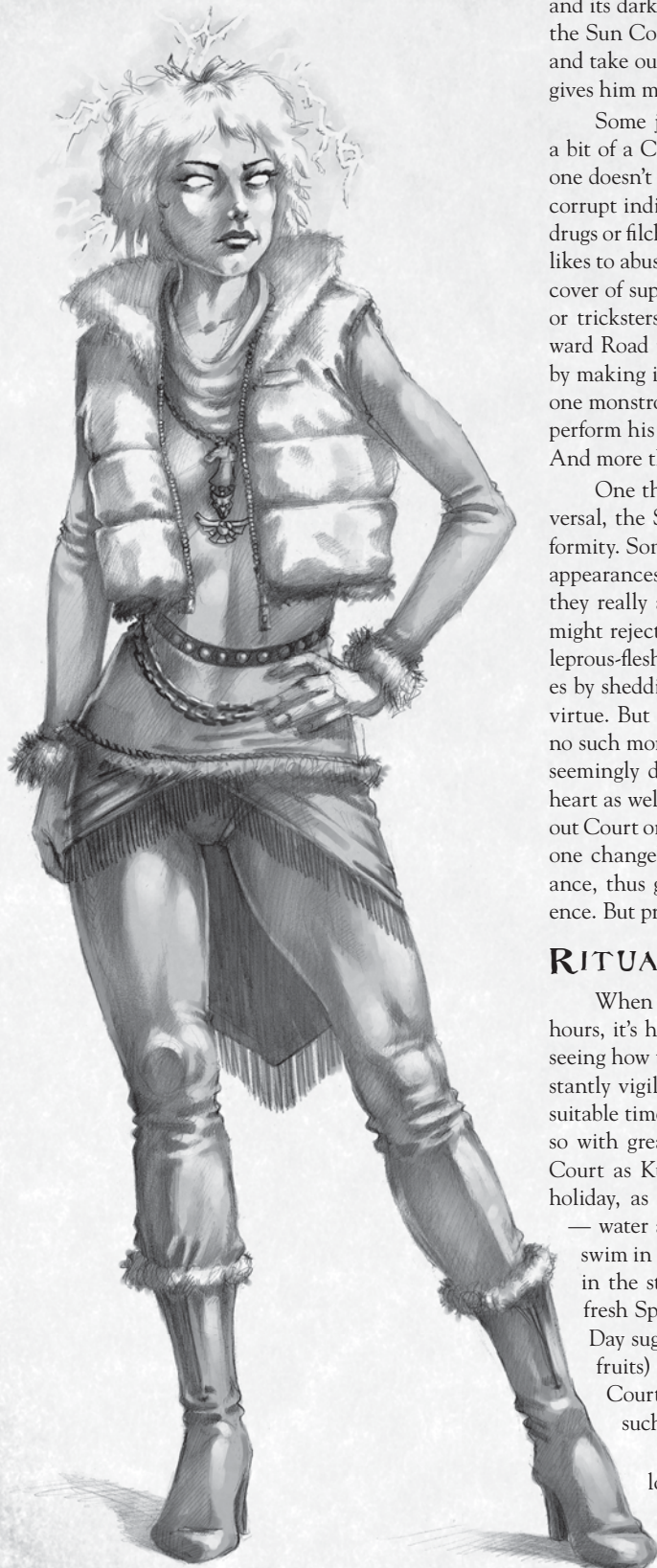
some street trash from a Moon Court operated whore's den. It's not universal, but many within the Court of the Day see those of lesser morals to be lesser in *all* ways (and the irony of this is that it only confirms their own fragile morality, but few are willing to turn the light on such a shadowy realization). Many genuinely try to walk the straight and narrow — broad-shouldered knights, honest maidens, upstanding merchants. But it's all too easy to become convinced of one's moral authority, which is a slippery slope, indeed.

## COURTIERS

Those who join the Sun Court often do so because they feel they can make a difference. Having emerged from their captivity beneath a likely cruel Keeper, they want to cover up that dark spot in their heart and do something that feels *right* after what may have been years doing something very wrong. They're tired of stealing, hurting others or being hurt themselves, being made to eat the flesh of their brothers, or whatever awful thing the Keepers demanded of them. For some, this is a legitimate need to overturn the darkness within and find the light. For others, this







is a grasp at revenge. It's all too easy to associate the Moon Court and its dark ways with the callousness of the Others. In joining the Sun Court, a changeling might hope to extract his revenge and take out his rage upon the grotesque — and the Sun Court gives him moral license to do that very thing.

Some join the Sun Court to escape morality. This seems a bit of a Catch-22: why join the supposedly righteous group if one doesn't actually want to be righteous? It's the same as why a corrupt individual might join the police force. He wants to run drugs or filch cash from criminals, or maybe he's just a sadist who likes to abuse others and finds that he can do so easily under the cover of supposed rectitude. Some in the Sun Court are bullies or tricksters, just as bad as or worse than anything the Wayward Road might put forth — but they can do their misdeeds by making it look like they're doing the right thing. More than one monstrous killer has joined the Court of the Day so he can perform his grisly murders while wearing the raiment of justice. And more than one such killer has been lauded for his efforts.

One thing worth noting is that, while this is far from universal, the Sun Court looks down upon grotesqueness and deformity. Some changelings are malformed or monstrous in their appearances because of their time in Faerie, not because of who they really are. In some cases, however, the Court of the Day might reject them by dint of their monstrous countenances. A leprous-fleshed Tunnelgrub who can squirm through tight spaces by shedding his slick and flaking skin might be a paragon of virtue. But if the presiding ruler of the Sun Court thinks that no such monster can truly be righteous (judged of course by his seemingly diseased skin, an obvious sign of disease inside the heart as well as outside it), then that Tunnelgrub is either without Court or instead must belong to the Moon Court. More than one changeling has been turned down because of her appearance, thus giving the Moon Court the advantage of her presence. But pride blinds.

## RITUALS

When the power between the two Courts shifts every 12 hours, it's hard to get in a proper festival or holiday, especially seeing how the Moon and the Sun Courts keep each other constantly vigilant. However, the Summer solstice seems the most suitable time to manage such a holiday, and the Sun Court does so with great abandon. Summer solstice is known within the Court as Kupala Day, a Slavic word meaning “bathing.” The holiday, as appropriate, features water as a prominent theme — water as a purifying element, in particular. The courtiers swim in the lakes and rivers, drop flower petals and tea leaves in the streams to tell fortunes, and baptize one another in fresh Spring water. Ancient stories among the Court of the Day suggest that certain goblin fruits (healing or purifying fruits) only grow on Kupala Day, and so some within the Court go on day-long expeditions into the Thorns to find such rare fruits and flowers.

Kupala Day is also a day of love — not sexual love, but romance. Courtiers engage in rather ornate (dare we say, Byzantine) rituals to show their love for others within the city, be they human or changeling. They write poetry spare and elegant. They perform heroic feats of the old *bogatyr*s to



impress the targets of their affections. They give elaborate gifts: delicate glass eggs, nesting dolls, garlands of flowers picked from all over Eastern Europe, bottles filled with water from all the local sacred rivers.

Once Kupala Day is over, the Sun Court obviously loses its power yet again — and then Kupala Night takes over, as brought forth by the Moon Court (see their rituals, below).

The Court has other rituals, as well. Since the changelings identify with Perun (the Slavic god of sky and storms), they take very seriously those who break their oaths to the Court. Similar to Perun, they punish those oathbreakers during terrible storms, and only then. An oathbreaker is free to walk unpunished (though he may suffer the consequences from a broken pledge, but the Court considers one's word as binding as a supernatural pledge) until a storm arises. When the sky cracks open spilling rain and thunder, some members of the Court go hunting for those who betrayed their word.

The courtiers also sacrifice animals to please Perun and Byelobog (the "white god"). Oxen are the most common sacrifice, though many courtiers will sacrifice smaller animals in lesser instances where a blessing is desired (going out to hunt the wicked, for instance, a motley may wash their hands in the blood of a hare to give them speed and keen eyes).

## HERALDRY

The Sun Court associates itself with a number of images and symbols. Anything pertaining to light or the day — white clothing, bright reflective surfaces, images of the sun and its rays, blue skies, the green of plants. The changelings also tie themselves to Perun the sky and storm god as well as Byelobog, the "white god" (or god of light).

Many courtiers mark themselves with the images of certain weapons (or carry the weapons with them): hammer, axe and arrow are thought to be weapons of honor, and are also the chosen weapons of Perun. Some animals represent the supposed nobility of the Sun Court: eagle, dog and horse. They also make heavy use of the "white hill" or "white mountain" image, perhaps scrawled upon an old chestplate or etched into a tattered flak jacket. Finally, they tend to carry working compasses with them, if only as a symbol that they always know the proper way, and can lead the astray in a safe direction.

## MANTLE

The Mantle of the Sun Court is one clearly represented by light and the sun. The way light plays off or even radiates from a courtier is emblematic of this Mantle. At Mantle • to •••, a character's mien displays glints or starbursts of bright light, like sun reflecting off burnished metal (even if the character isn't in the sun or wearing metal at all). At •••••+, the light becomes brighter — it may pulse, shine off in stark beams or drift off the skin in languid tendrils of golden luminosity. Plants seem affected by this; as a courtier walks by them, they might faintly lean toward him, as a plant might do when it has a chance to sit in the sun for a time.

The Sun Court's members find that their light guides them and provides them with righteous strength. At Mantle •, the light illuminates the path before them and allows them to add +1 to all Perception rolls. At Mantle •••, the light can be confounding to those in close combat with the courtier, and so he gains a +1 to his Defense. At Mantle •••••, the light provides inner strength: the character gains +1 to degeneration rolls and rolls made to determine whether a derangement is gained after degeneration.

## SHAME

Shame and guilt are powerful tools, so say the members of the Sun Court. A son who disappoints his father and weeps has learned a lesson about failing his forebears. A wife who performs an illicit act in full view of others and is chastised for it, her spirit broken, has learned a similar lesson about filial duty. A knight who promises his king the satisfaction of a quest but comes back empty-handed knows that he is to be mocked in front of others, perhaps stoned or caned or made to carry heavy weights in a temporarily Sisyphean struggle up a hill (a white hill, of course, made so by the bright light of the sun above). The sun sees all. One's sins are cast into the light during the day whether he wants them to be, or not. The light illuminates all those dark corners, exposing the inequity and bringing guilt out of its hiding spot.

Shame is a powerful social tool. A businessman who loses the money of his associates, a restaurateur who sells food that gets his patrons sick, an old man who has become too frail to get himself up the steps? All of this brings shame — or, at least, it should — and the Sun Court drinks it up. The negative reinforcement of shame and guilt is potent, providing a shared space from which no man can truly stray. He may think he can escape his shame, but he can't. (And those that do try to escape may find a courtier from the Found Path waiting to "remind" him in some brutal fashion.)

### *A Symbol of Two Courts*

Both Courts accept one symbol to represent their overarching situation, and this symbol is taken straight from Slavic iconography: there is a river, and on one side of the river is a black rock etched with the white name for evil or darkness, and on the other side of the river is a white hill etched with a black name for good and light.

One thing worth noting, too, is that some of the Lost that belong to these Courts accept that the two overarching forces of opposition are actually separate aspects of a single idea, the Dazhbog. The Dazhbog is all, and cannot be destroyed — he simply wears a different face at night than he does during the day.



# THE MOON COURT

(COURT OF THE NIGHT, THE WAYWARD ROAD, THE BLACK ROCK)

*Under the cover of night, anything is possible. When you remove the light, nobody can see what you do and so you are free to do anything without consequence, without concern. Under the cover of night, we can lie, cheat, steal, wear a thousand faces, spill a thousand drops of blood, howl, sing, we can rip the world asunder and nobody would notice the difference because they can only see by the meager light of a slivered moon.*

Those upstanding fools standing stock still in the harsh light of the sun — they live by a thousand rules that keep them from doing what they really want to be doing. They think they're better than us. Maybe they are. But we're free. You see that, don't you? They are bound by their righteousness. We are liberated by our wickedness.

At night, the monsters howl and play. They hunt the innocent. They leap over fires. They drink and smoke themselves into languid stupors. They invite peril, taunt the Gentry and become masters of Goblin Markets. Beneath the full moon, all manner of strangeness and depravity may bask in the bare light — all the better to serve the darkness and to snub one's nose at the fools of the Sun Court.

It's odd, in a way, that the Moon Court is ultimately less concerned with the Sun Court than the Sun Court is with the Moon Court. Members of the Moon Court don't really seek to undo what the Court of the Day does, instead doing their own thing with great glee and abandon, knowing full well that it invites the revulsion of those supposedly virtuous upstarts.

So, what is it that they do? Whatever they want, for one. The Moon Court doesn't care to give its members many boundaries. They don't view this as sin, but instead see it as freedom. Want to shoot up Afghani heroin in a velvet curtained jazz bar in Kiev? Want to sell Afghani heroin in Budapest? Want to stalk the lonely women of Warsaw, haunting them night after night until they cannot sleep for fear of the nightmares they'll have? Want to pierce your face with slivers of bone and lengths of chain, brand your body in a spider web network of puffy scars, or play a game of Russian roulette with your nearest and dearest? The Moon Court asks only that you do as you desire, worrying about the consequences later. The stranger and more grotesque the urge, the better it is.

Simply put, the Moon Court is composed of changelings who know that they are monsters and relish in the fact. Does

this make them evil? Perhaps some. Because they are allowed, even encouraged, to embrace their monstrosity, this leads some to be particularly horrendous. It's amazing, though, how few of them are truly malicious. Many are tricksters, yes. Con men, sure. Some flaunt their ugliness and deformity like a pretty pink dress, okay. But only few of them are evil in the strictest of senses. Most are just gleefully selfish, glad to give into whatever so-called wickedness demands their attention at any given moment.

At night, they own the surface, and during the day, they dwell beneath the ground in sewers and subbasements and caves. But even when they retreat to the world below, they still leave their mark on the world even as the sun shines high in the sky — they leave behind allies, networks of criminals and human monsters who are as bad as or worse than they are. They like to think of it as "leaving a present or two" behind for the Sun Court. Just enough to keep the righteous fools busy and out of real trouble.

## COURTIERS

The Moon Court takes all types with open arms (never mind if the arms are scaly, slimy or sore-encrusted). Many of the changelings who comprise the Court belong because they see themselves as something other than human, something that has crawled out of the Hedge but doesn't truly belong in the light. It's no big stretch to see that they're the monsters from the old tales — or, at least, illustrative of such monsters. Many believe themselves to contain at least a small part of those old monsters — the cannibal hungers of Baba Yaga, the one blood-shot eye of the Likho, the hungry lusts of the man-eating Queen Thamar, the suicide girl known as Vila.

Of course, not all end up in the Court because that's where they truly want to belong. In some cases, the Sun Court rejects them. That group may think a changeling too horrid in her appearance or not "moral" enough for them, and so they cast them away — down and into the dark, where the Moon Court waits with a smile. Others may join because they want revenge against the Found Path, having some cross to bear — justified or not — against those prideful Lost. Finally, some see the Moon Court as the ideal way to fight the Fair Folk. The old cliché of fighting fire with fire applies; here, it's fighting darkness and monstrosity with a dose of the same.





In the end, the Moon Court teaches its members to embrace its awfulness and inhumanity. (Again, this doesn't mean evil. While some may take it as a license to commit truly heinous acts, many instead believe it condones bizarre or otherwise grotesque behavior.) The members run the spectrum: a circus geek biting the heads off various animals, a homeless lunatic presaging the end of the world with his shit-smeared signs, a prostitute with blistered thighs, a street vendor selling the finest sweetbreads and brains. They are the unwashed, the mad, the monstrous. And they love it.

## RITUALS

The Moon Court tells an old story of how over time, the sun in the sky became smaller and smaller — and so, the day became darker and colder as the days and years went on. It came time where the sun was no longer doing its job, and so the Black God Czernobog had to step in and destroy that sun. In doing so, he was able to replace the dying sun with a new sun of his choosing, and while *that* sun was alive, Czernobog was given more



power. He was a hero for a time, and the Moon Court uses this as a bit of legendary egg on the face of the Sun Court... for one day, they will winnow and become smaller, and the Court of the Night will destroy them and gain power and kudos for having done so.

The day that Czernobog's triumph occurred is said to be on the Winter solstice — called Korochun among the Slavs. This New Year-type celebration is a renewal of all things, and the monsters of the Moon Court use it as an excuse to give in to whatever mad urges call to them on that long night. Many use it as an excuse to give themselves over to great excess: drugs, drink, lust, dreams bought from Goblin Markets, foolish pledges and so forth. Others mark the day as a perfect nadir to the year, a time when true horror can be visited upon the world. Some courtiers slake their vengeance against those who have wronged them, harrying and hunting them, torturing them just to hear their screams cut across the dark forest or empty alleyways. During this night, the Court gives two sacrifices to their gods: a young man and a young woman, killed, their bodies cast into a river. Their youth, beauty and vigor please the dark gods, and ensure the Moon Court will gain strength in the coming year. When day finally comes after Korochun Night, the courtiers crawl back into their holes and sleep, fatted, sickened, blood-slick.

Curiously, though, the Moon Court also marks Kupala Day as a holiday — at least, sort of. The night before Kupala Day, the Moon Court members work themselves into a frenzy: jumping over bonfires, beating each other into adrenalin-fueled bruise junkies, popping pills to get their hearts raging. Then they spend the rest of the night taunting the Sun Court changelings, mocking them from the shadows, threatening them. Anything to ruin the Found Path's coming holiday.

One small ritual — a habit more than anything ceremonial — carries on from nights past. The members of the Moon Court lead humans astray. The changelings find tourists and send them not to the local bar crawl or historic statue, but to the dangerous part of town. The Court members find lost children and direct them into the sewers where they may be lost or even taken in as family by other Wayward Road changelings. They take the drunken fools who can't seem to find their way home and steer them right into the Hedge (sometimes leaving little presents for the Fair Folk who might come and kidnap such an inebriated lout — such as a pocket full of razors, a sexually-transmitted disease or even a live hand grenade that might explode when the fool Other goes to toy with it).

## HERALDRY

The Court of the Night associates itself with two gods: Veles, the subterranean god of earth and the underworld, and Czernobog, the "Black God," the cursed one. The symbols the Court keeps as significant are often those symbols associated with these two deities: the dragon or snake, the lute or panflute, the bloody bull or one-eyed ram. The *volzhav*, or sorcerer of Veles, is a master of music and magic, and carries with him weapons like small knives and daggers or the barbed whip.

Obviously, darkness is a key symbol, as well. Anything relating to the night — the moon, stars, certain constellations, swatches of black paint or dark blood, shadowy cloaks — cer-



tainly works, as do other more esoteric symbols of darkness (crows, ravens, owls, bats).

## MANTLE

The Moon Court's Mantle is, appropriately, skewed to darkness. The miens of the courtiers seem to absorb light, and shadows move around them as if of their own accord. At Mantle • to •••, a changeling seems always cast in a band of shadow, even if the shadow has no source or shouldn't exist at that angle. At Mantle ••••+, this shadow becomes something almost alive. It may ooze away like tendrils of fog or may pool at the character's feet and drag behind him like a sack filled with severed heads. Some have miens where only certain body parts are shrouded in darkness — hands cloaked in tenebrous spheres, eyes "leaking" darkness like squid ink in an untroubled sea.

The courtiers of the Moon Court embrace (and are embraced by) this darkness, providing them with benefits external and internal. At Mantle •, the darkness helps a character perform acts of minor theft more easily, as his hands are blurred by shadow — any Larceny rolls involving manual theft or some other kind of prestidigitation gain +2 dice. At Mantle •••, the darkness may accentuate the character's already monstrous ways and features, casting sharp shadows and seeping gloom across tusks or serpent eyes or from long talons. Whenever the character spends Willpower on an Intimidation roll, it provides that character with four bonus dice instead of three. Finally, at Mantle •••••, the darkness seeps into the character's own soul, nesting there and feeding. Any time the character gains Willpower from giving into his Vice, he gains two Willpower instead of one.

## DISGUST

It's a subtle tweak on shame, an irony that the Moon Court favors an emotion similar to one given such importance by the Sun Court, but there you have it. Disgust is a beautiful thing to the seemingly monstrous courtiers of the Moon Court. It's in the way a beautiful woman stares down at a deformed cripple sitting on the curb or how a group of priggish socialites see a poor man (or worse, a poor man who is publicly and embarrassingly drunk). Disgust is the other side of shame; it's not what the actor of the sin feels, but what the witnesses to the sin feel. And to the members of the Moon Court, it's as good as a glass of sweet brandy.

They luxuriate in how others see them — especially those courtiers from the Found Path. The more awful a changeling's mien, the sweeter the experience when a Sun Court prick stares upon her with a sneer and a squint. While humans do not by

and large see a changeling's mien, they can perceive his human deformities and sometimes sense the grotesquerie that lies behind the mask. When this isn't the case, a Moon Court member might instead *do* something to disgust an onlooker: biting into a meat pie filled with fresh blood, dropping one's blouse and squeezing a tit while making lascivious gestures or engaging in some sudden outburst of lunacy or violence.

And, while others feel disgust, the changelings of the Wayward Road feel no shame. Shame is simply not allowed. The Sun Court would have everyone believe that even the faintest indiscretion should come with a lifetime's worth of guilt, but the Moon Court offers that *no* action is worthy of guilt. Yes, some actions are punishable, but no action is deserving of shame. Disgust, yes. Disgust is sweet. Shame is bitter.

## *Court of Elephant, Court of Donkey*

One Court system strictly married to American culture is that of the Elephant and Donkey — roughly analogous to the Republican and Democratic parties.

Freeholds broken out into this two-Court system tend to see most of the changelings broken out into one Court or the other. The Donkey Court, embodying more liberal ideas, favors greater control by the ruling party tempered by a certain... looseness of morals (while this isn't always emblematic of the *human* Democratic party, it seems universal among changelings of this Court). The Elephant Court tends to keep its hands out of changeling affairs except when absolutely necessary (at least, so it claims), and prides itself on being the more moral (translation: higher Clarity) Court. These two groups don't always practice what they preach, much as their mortal counterparts, but this at least provides some kind of general flavor.

Each Court holds power for four years, then transfers its rule to the other party. Decisions are often made through voting, as few freeholds are so populous that this cannot be managed (though in particularly large cities, one might find a more human form of representative democracy, where ruling changelings are elected to help decide the fate of the local freehold).



# THE PHANTOM TONG

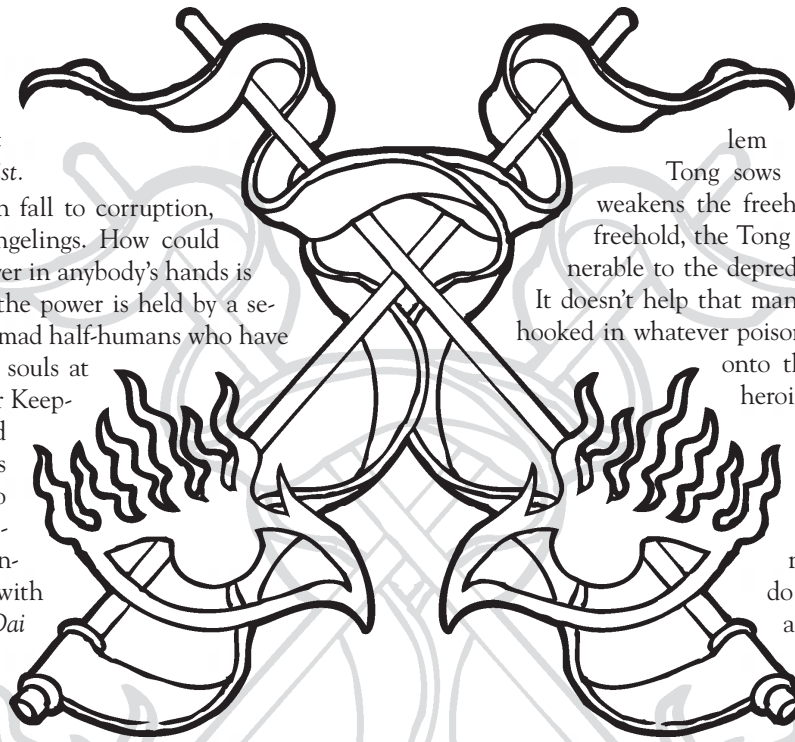
*We do not exist  
until you need us to exist.*

The Courts often fall to corruption, so believe some changelings. How could they not? Putting power in anybody's hands is dangerous, and here the power is held by a select group of possibly mad half-humans who have taken into their very souls at least a *portion* of their Keepers' callousness. And so, some freeholds have changelings who belong to a secret "noble" order, the Phantom Tong, named with the entitlement of *Dai Lo* (sometimes translated as "big brother," other times as "chief").

The Phantom Tong is a criminal organization. It exists to purposely propagate an illicit underworld bent toward acts of violence, thievery, gambling, prostitution, drug-peddling, piracy — whatever unruly behavior the group can manage. Its members either belong to "normal" fae society and work with the Tong on the sly, or instead disappear from the freehold's normal comings and goings, working full-time for the order — becoming phantoms, themselves.

The Tong claims that it all the bad things it supports are necessary to countermand the rule of the existing Courts (be they the more common seasonal Courts or the directional Courts found across much of Asia). By causing some degree of chaos and unruliness, the Tong helps keep the rulers honest — the corruption is therefore out of their hands, and into the hands of the criminals, where it rightfully belongs.

The Tong itself is not "secret," only its membership. The greatest criticism levied against the order is that the Dai Los simply use the entitlement as an excuse to act as criminals. Certainly the underworld is profitable. The order allows and encourages its members to make money and to enjoy themselves in the process. The whole "we're staving off corruption" angle rings hollow to many, who believe it's just a cover to bring chaos and crime to what could be an otherwise safe freehold. And therein lies the other prob-



lem — some say that the Tong sows *too* much discord and weakens the freehold. In weakening the freehold, the Tong makes all the Lost vulnerable to the depredations of the True Fae. It doesn't help that many changelings then get hooked in whatever poison the Tong is throwing onto the streets, whether it's heroin or meth or some fae-born "magic pill."

And yet, the Dai Los of the Tong insist: what they do is necessary. If they don't do it, someone else will, and they act as a legitimate counterbalance against the Courts. Whether anybody agrees with this or not, the Tong is hard to eradicate. They're hard to find and rarely if ever do members expose their membership (those who try to track down the Dai Los often get lost in a maze of back alleys and dangerous cons, so tangled and confused by the end that they've little choice but to give up or give in).

**Title:** Dai Lo (though some prefer *Hung Kwan*, or "Red Pole Lieutenant")

**Prerequisites:** Wyrd 2, Larceny 3

**Joining:** To become a Dai Lo within the Phantom Tong, it's said that one must "court" them in the way that one would court a distant lover. Except here, instead of leaving flowers from a secret admirer or writing poems from afar, one must perform criminal actions (or actions against the extant Courts) in the hopes that the Tong will take notice. This usually means that whatever the entrant does, it must be momentous or at least public — something that stings a given ruler is of particular value. When the time is right and the Tong is said to be pleased, the Dai Los apparently approach the potential entrant with an offer to join. This offer might be genuine, or it might be a con — more than one changeling has been made to believe that he's tithing money and Glamour to pay the "cost" of entrance, when in reality they're just fleecing the poor fool and leaving him out in the cold... often selling him out to the Courts in the



process. Some even suggest that *all* offers to join start with a con of some kind, and only those Lost clever enough to see through the ruse are given the courtesy of an honest invitation.

Once a Dai Lo, the changeling is usually given some manner of control over a particular sphere of criminal influence. If he's a leg-breaker, maybe he'll be sent out on collections. If he's got a cunning mind and a greedy heart, maybe he'll be cast out to run cons on unsuspecting marks (human and fae). One might be a chemist, boiling up strange new drug strains using goblin fruits, another might run a gambling den where one of the evening's festivities include various brutal "fight club" matches.

Leaving the Tong isn't really... encouraged. The Tong takes the "blood in, blood out" attitude, like most street gangs or criminal organizations. The only way out is your own blood, preferably spilled out of your broken head across cracked pavement. Another way is possible: kill all the other Dai Los. If the Tong is eradicated from within, then those who wish to escape its grasp are safe. Or, so they hope.

**Mien:** To remain secret, the Dai Los of the Phantom Tong have been able to mostly suppress any changes to their mien (it would do their secret little good if any changeling could gaze upon them and see clearly that they embody the physical shifts emblematic of the order). They haven't been able to stifle these changes entirely, however, and those who belong do find that their miens change in subtle ways (but obvious to those who know what to look for). In certain lights (full moon, for instance), a Dai Lo's eyes seem to fade partly out of existence, becoming opaque or translucent — "ghost eyes," the Tong calls it. Others sometimes breathe out wisps of breath that look like fog but have the haunted eyes and frozen silent mouths of ghosts.

**Background:** Most of the Dai Los come from some manner of dysfunctional background. Some come from criminal families or from pre-existing street gangs. Others have simply lead bad lives as

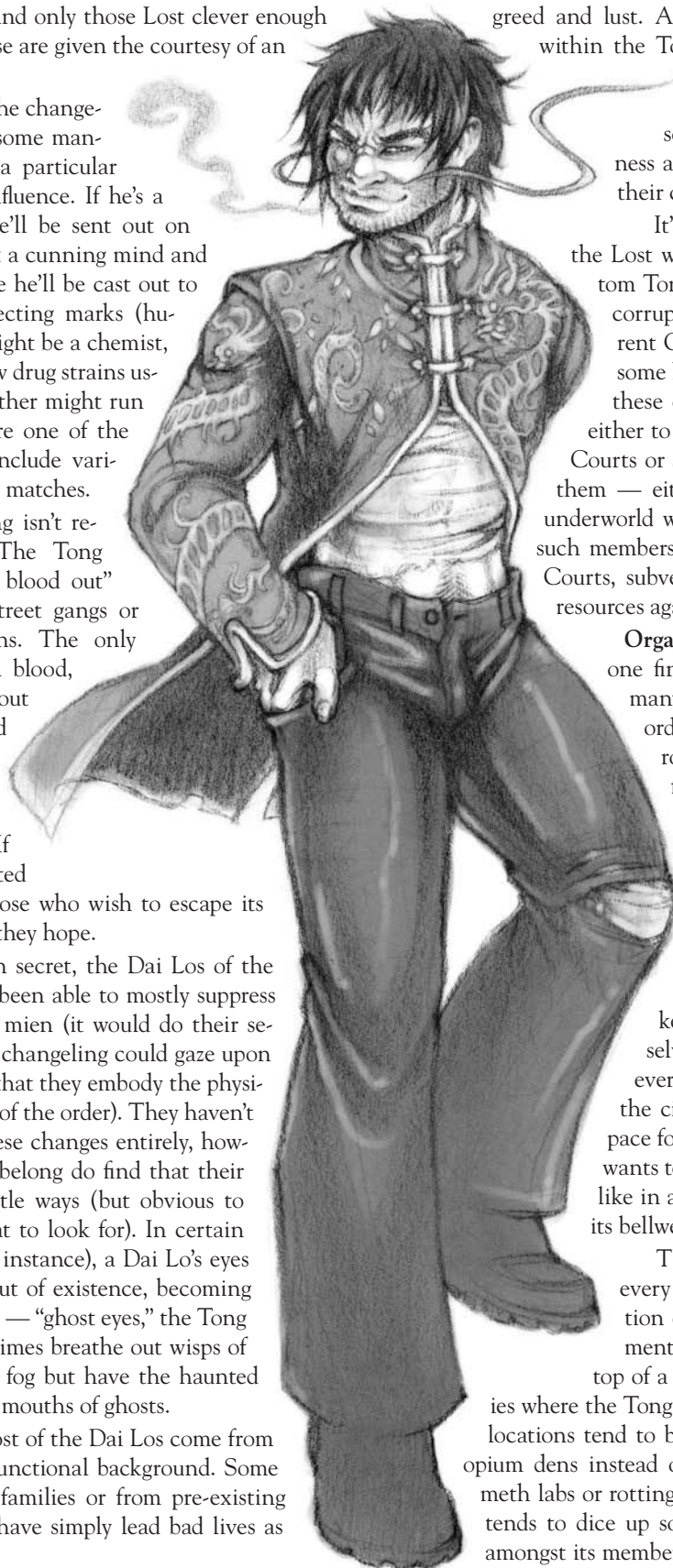
humans, fae or both, and need an outlet for their rage, greed and lust. A number of the changelings within the Tong care little for their own

Clarity, focusing instead on the sheer power that some Contracts (such as Darkness and Smoke) can give them in their criminal endeavors.

It's worth noting that some of the Lost who end up within the Phantom Tong do so because they see the corruption that exists in the current Courts and truly hope to play some kind of errant Robin Hood to these crooked courtiers. They seek either to inject some honesty into the Courts or seek outright revenge against them — either could lead them to the underworld where the Tong awaits. Many such members still belong to their current Courts, subverting the ruling body's own resources against it.

**Organization:** In any city where one finds the Phantom Tong (and many worry that this not-so-noble order is as prevalent as rats and roaches, and often as hard to find and exterminate), one finds the Dai Lo Dai (also "chief of chief" or "brother of brothers"). The Dai Lo determines how broad or narrow the focus is of the local Tong. Do they only concentrate on the drug market? Or do they spread themselves thin, running rackets in every conceivable dark corner of the city? The Dai Lo Dai sets the pace for all the other Dai Los; if one wants to know what the Tong will be like in a city, the Dai Lo Dai is often its bellwether.

The Tong has meetings under every full moon at a different location each time — strip club basement, penthouse apartment, at the top of a water tower. Certainly in cities where the Tong has more power, the meeting locations tend to be more opulent (extravagant opium dens instead of broken-down crackhouses, meth labs or rotting poppy fields). The Tong also tends to dice up some of the freehold territory amongst its members, with the larger portions of





the domain (and hence, its spoils) going to those Dai Los with greater seniority. Such territories encompass all of the freehold — it's just that the other changelings might not recognize that their communal space is just around the corner from a known drug den or slave market.

An important note is that the Tong tends to maintain strong connections with mortal criminal organizations, too. Crime exists in every city of the world — tongs and triads across Asia, street gangs and Mafia in the Western world, corrupt police... well, everywhere. Any brother, drug den or chopshop, the Tong will hope to have its hands involved.

**Concepts:** Bangkok ladyboy, black market maven, carjacker, con artist, corrupt Hong Kong cop, double agent, drug chemist, kneecapper, river pirate, slave marketer, smuggler

## PRIVILEGES

Below is a privilege available to those who possess the Dai Lo entitlement, belonging to the secret order of the Phantom Tong.

## CRIMINAL NETWORK

Once the Dai Lo is officially connected to the larger criminal network of the city, the Dai Lo has easier access to resources that others do not. Dai Los, upon joining the Tong, can take one free Specialty in either Larceny or Streetwise. Moreover, any Allies or Contacts purchased with experience points and specifically relating to the criminal world (ask the Storyteller for approval) possess a reduced experience point rate of new dots x 1.

### *Rumors of the Tong*

During any story featuring the Phantom Tong, a number of rumors may reach the characters' ears regarding the Dai Los:

- Some suggest that the Tong goes well above local criminal activities, and instead has connections to a far greater and more dangerous network of bad assholes. This network is sometimes said to include the Taliban warlords of Afghanistan, the meth chemists or opium lords of Burma (technically Myanmar), even various jihad organizations in and around the Middle East.
- Another rumor tells that the Tong has an ally far worse than any human monster: the Others. Some say the Tong has a True Fae patron, while others say the Tong is working for a whole goddamn network of the Fair Folk. Further whispers say that upon joining the Tong, one must pledge his alliance to a given Fae Keeper.
- Many have seen evidence that the Tong really does work against corruption: one Summer King was said to be found hanged by his neck from a lamppost, an avalanche of evidence against him piled at his feet. It was said to take the city wholly by surprise, for the King seemed virtuous and upstanding — until his pledges to the dark Fae were revealed. The Tong took credit for exposing him and his grim allegiance.



# THE BRONZE BEYLIK

Why do we call you 'Sultan,' Sultan? Because we have chosen you to be that.

This noble order has its roots in Turkey, but has since spread to various parts of the world and can be found commonly in parts of Iraq, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Russia and across parts of Eastern Europe. The Beys of the Bronze Beylik have a long-standing tradition of "selecting" a ruler for a given Court, then acting as that ruler's counsel until his reign ends. The Beys at large are without Court, but in a given freehold they select whatever Court is most powerful (or has the potential to *become* most powerful), and from there they groom a changeling to ascend to that Court's rulership.

Pride drives the Beys. They accept that they are king-makers as easily as they accept the wetness of water or the heat of the sun. Yet, curiously, none of their own may ever ascend to become a ruler. The story goes that this has to do with a pledge from thousands of years ago, a pledge made with a powerful *djinn* trapped in one of Constantinople's towers. The Beys reportedly broke that pledge and have been paying for it since. Any attempt for a Bey — or even a one time member of the Beylik — to ascend to the topmost spot in a given Court always fails, often spectacularly. So instead, they take comfort in being the ones who raise a changeling to rule.

Some Beys do this out of an honest believe that a selected ruler is the proper one. They genuinely seek the health of the freehold and take pride in choosing the right king or queen. Many, though, do so out of their own lust for power. By selecting a weak ruler and placing him on the throne, they are afforded the opportunity to tug his strings at any given time, making him dance as they see fit. If one cannot be king, then the next best thing is having a gun to the king's head, is it not?

The Beys are not secret about what they do. They

make their efforts clear, which often puts them into opposition with the local changelings (especially those who support an existing ruler, one who has little interest in being forcibly deposed). But the Lost of the Beylik take it all in stride, having full faith in their abilities to raise a king, queen, sultan or caliph to the throne.

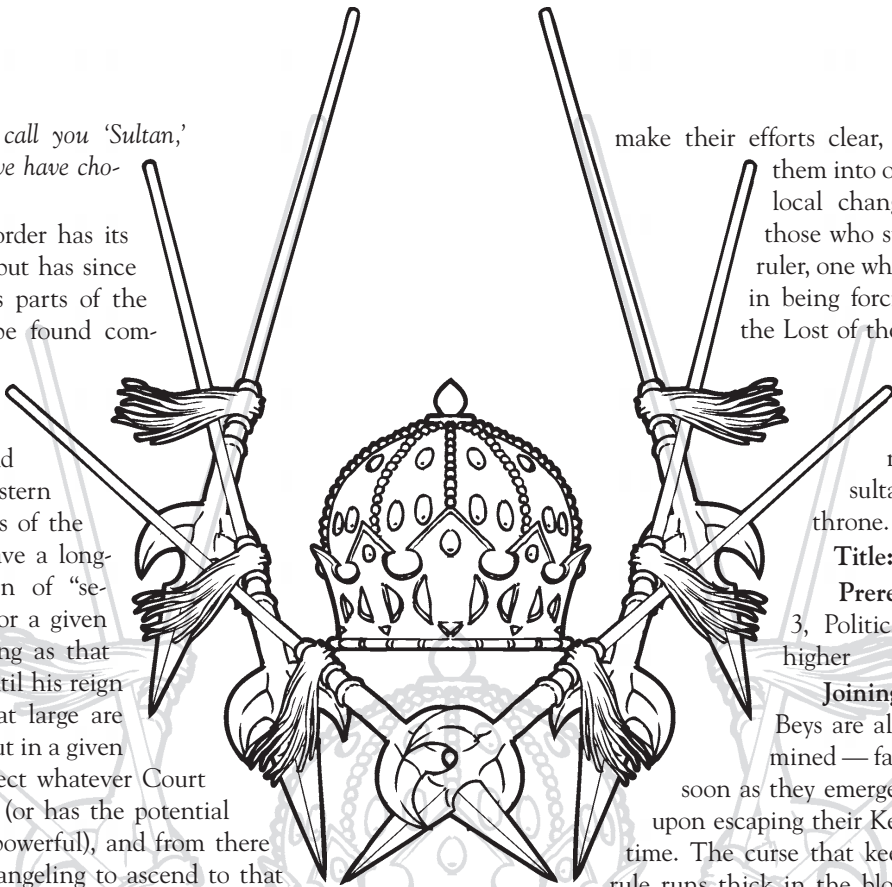
**Title:** Bey

**Prerequisites:** Wyrd 3, Politics 3, Clarity 6 or higher

**Joining:** It's said that the Beys are all already predetermined — fate chooses them as soon as they emerge from the Thorns upon escaping their Keepers for that first time. The curse that keeps the Beys from rule runs thick in the blood and dreams of some changelings, and these Lost clearly belong to the Bronze Beylik.

Whether this is true or not remains a mystery. As with many supposedly predestined orders or religions, one can petition the Beylik for entrance into the order. In doing so, one opens himself up for whatever testing the Beys believe will indicate a fated member of the order. Such tests are often difficult and seemingly random (tests of skill in impossible games, athletic feats that tear muscle and break bone, political situations on par with frenzied sharks). Only rarely does a member "pass" such a test and gain entrance into the Beylik.

One surefire way in, however, is to find one of the bronze spearhead tokens that every Bey carries with him at all times. It's said that finding one of these spearheads in the Hedge is a truly propitious event, and in doing so one automatically declares himself a Bey. Of course, not every changeling who *finds* such a spearhead (described below under "privileges") wants to join the Beylik, but he'll find that he has little choice in that matter. Discovering such a spearhead is rare and convinces the Beys uniformly of a changeling's fate among them. They will do whatever they





must to convince him to join. They start with honey, always promising reward. If that fails, then vinegar will be necessary.

**Mien:** Those of the Beylik find that their bodies begin to reflect bits of bronze — a Woodblood might show an occasional sheen or chip of golden metal (as if embedded in wood) while a Swimmerskin or Venombite might have some of her scales supplanted by bronze scales, flakes or rings. A single strand of hair might turn bronze, as might teeth or fingernails or even a whole ear.

Unrelated to the mien are the long beards and long hair of the Beys. (Obviously, the women forgo the beards.) It's tradition among their kind that marks them in their mask and mien and represents strength and authority.

#### **Background:**

Because fate plays some part in the choosing of a Bronze Bey, it's theoretically possible that changelings of any stripe can end up in the Beylik. For the most part, though, fate seems to choose similar characters: politically savvy, physically strong and with some specific skill in the social realm (be it lying, convincing people with plain truths or simply having potent threats in one's arsenal of words). If a changeling who joins (perhaps finding one of the bronze spearheads) does not possess these qualities, the Beys will force him to have those qualities. Either he'll learn them willingly or he'll be made to develop them with a boot on the back of his neck and his face pressed into the hard desert ground. The Beys have forged strong bonds of fraternity and allegiance to one another, but to reap the benefits of that bond, one must do as the group demands.

**Organization:** The Beys set up a clustered domain in whatever freehold they live under the central authority of the order's lead counsel, the Atabey. This clustered domain is for issues of fraternity and safety — for instance, in Hungary's Budapest, the Beys cluster their homes and businesses around the Nagy Vásárcsarnok (Central Market). One might set up a small tea

house on one side of the market, while on the other two Beys might run a small boarding house or speaking hall.

This clustered domain marks the locus of their power, and from here, all their decisions and movements are made. Once they properly elevate their chosen ruler to the throne of their liking, this domain then becomes a haven of true authority backed by (and itself backing) the ascendant King or Queen of the given Court.

The Beys also make this governed domain as defensible as they can make it, protecting themselves from incursions from the True Fae and from attacks by other Lost (which happens more frequently than the Beys'd like, as the Lost are viewed quite plainly as puppeteers of the highest order). Moreover, the Beys tend to connect this domain to various Hollows within the Hedge — backdoors, if you will, allowing them entrance and escape.

The Atabey, the head of the order in a freehold, isn't so much a hard-and-fast ruler as he is a counselor and tiebreaker. His word is not law, as he is viewed as no better than the other Beys. But he's likely older (perhaps even the oldest in the area), and serves as a figure who has the wisdom of years to share with the younger changelings.

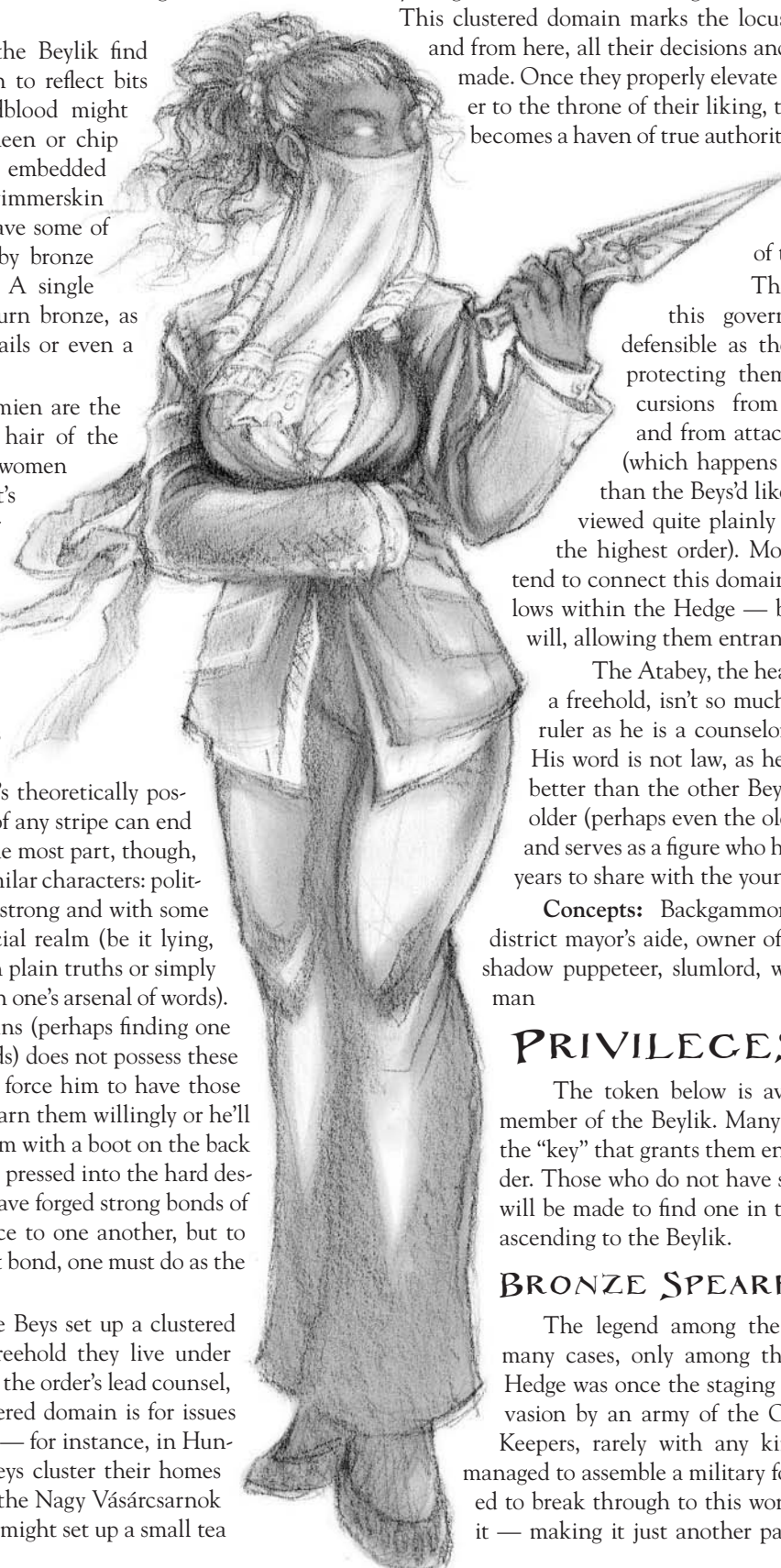
**Concepts:** Backgammon master, bully, district mayor's aide, owner of local tea house, shadow puppeteer, slumlord, wealthy businessman

## **PRIVILEGES**

The token below is available to every member of the Beylik. Many find it, and it is the "key" that grants them entrance to the order. Those who do not have such a spearhead will be made to find one in the Hedge before ascending to the Beylik.

### **BRONZE SPEARHEAD**

The legend among the Beylik (and in many cases, only among them) is this: the Hedge was once the staging ground of an invasion by an army of the Others. The mad Keepers, rarely with any kind of solidarity, managed to assemble a military force that intended to break through to this world and subjugate it — making it just another part of the beauti-





ful nightmare that is Arcadia. The Beylik did not exist at the time, but some say it was this mad conflict that birthed them: a select few banded together and helped a military leader ascend to the topmost position of the local freehold. Under this leader, the Beylik helped form an army of Lost, and the True Fae were routed. The war was terrible, and the Fae's own weapons were turned against them. This includes their terrible spears, each unique to the Keeper who used it. Even now, the tips of these spears lay hidden within the Thorns — some are lodged in trees, others tangled in barbed loops. For some, the earth hides them: kick aside the dirt to find the tarnished bronze beneath.

When activated (it must be held in the palm of one's hand for this to work), the spearhead transfers some of the maddening gloom of the True Fae to the Bey. For the remainder of the scene, the Bey may add his Wyrd score to any Intimidation rolls he makes: he appears threatening not in a mundane way, but in an eerie, otherworldly manner.

**Action:** Instant

**Mien:** Each spearhead appears the same when laying inactive: dirty, tarnished bronze, its edge nicked, its once-glorious metal dinged and scratched. Activating the spearhead, though, creates a whole different spearhead, each unique to the Keeper who once used it: some might glow, others might give off a strange fragrance. One spearhead maybe features an iridescent engraving of a butterfly, while another consistently drips with fresh blood.

**Drawback:** The eerie madness of the True Fae can be useful in some situations, but it's certainly not useful in others. For the scene in which the token is active *and* in the following scene, the Bey suffers a -2 penalty to Social rolls requiring Animal Ken, Expression or Socialize.

**Catch:** A character can use the spearhead by scratching himself with it, causing one point of lethal damage.

### *Rumors of the Beylik*

During any story featuring the Bronze Beylik, characters may encounter rumors of this "kingmaker" order:

- Some claim to have seen the Beys communing with a very strange hobgoblin within the Hedge, a creature that isn't a True Fae but isn't a documented hobgoblin, either. This *djinn*-like being is made of constantly whirling beads of hematite, its eyes made of clustered emeralds. Why do they commune with this *djinn*? Do they hope to negate their own curse and make their own member kings?
- The local Beys possess a ledger, it's said. In this ledger is a list of all the changelings they Beys have assassinated over the years. Some killed to make room for leaders of their own choosing. Some killed because they *were* the leaders of the Beylik's choosing, but did not concede to the Beys' wishes.
- Rumor has it that you can always sucker a Bey into a game of chance. They're creatures of fate, obsessed with it at times, and this is their weakness. (Of course, it's also their strength: they tend to be very good at such games.)



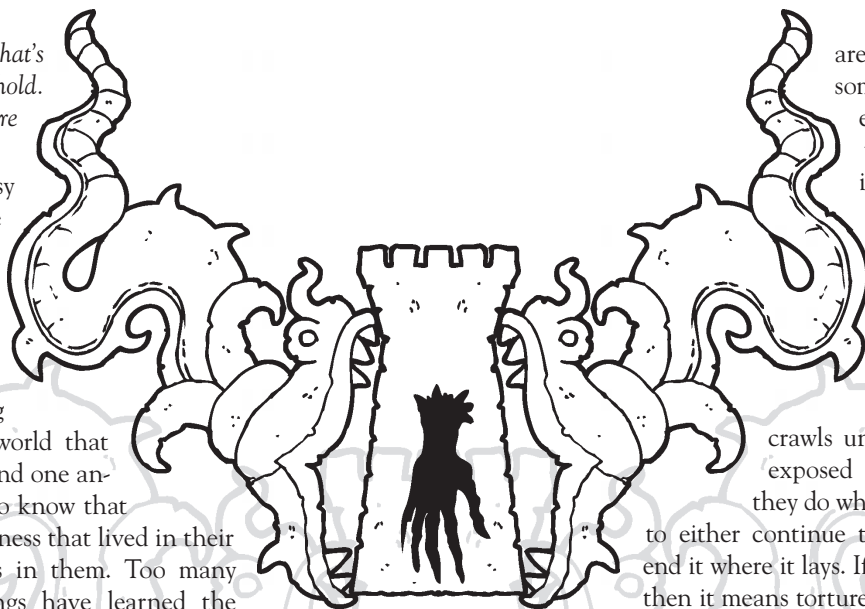
# THE KNIGHTHOOD OF THE DRAGONSLAYER

*I just want what's best for the freehold. These restraints are just a formality.*

Trust is no easy thing among the Lost. Changelings undoubtedly share a bond, having come from a terrible place and having no other in the world that can truly understand one another, but they also know that some of that awfulness that lived in their Keepers now lives in them. Too many trusting changelings have learned the hard way that these are creatures who sometimes seem driven to cheat, trick and lie. Moreover, time and again evidence mounts against changelings who are still doing service for their dark Keepers, either willingly or at the tug of a chafing leash. Often, the other Lost uncover such evidence far too late – the damage has been done, and the Fair Folk given strength.

It was just a hundred years ago that a changeling emerged in São Paulo, Brazil, naming himself after the mythical dragonslayer, Saint George. This changeling (actually *São Jorge*, but he often anglicized his name) discovered that two of the local Courts were engaged in decades-long relationships with various True Fae just on the other side of the Hedge. For a very long time, this grim alliance had worked against the ignorant Lost of the city's freehold — many vanished over the years, their disappearances said to be the result of their own misdeeds and failings when in reality it was various courtiers working against the freehold and for Faerie. Saint George — a humble and unassuming Brewer — massed a number of other changelings to go after those still bonded to the Fair Folk, routing them in a bloody coup. Saint George exposed them all, and legend has it that he even helped destroy one of the tempestuous Others who swept in to seek revenge. (Images of George have him with a desiccated severed hand hanging by his side on a leather cord, a trophy taken from the slain Fae.)

Saint George's legacy lives on in the form of a noble order. The Knighthood of the Dragonslayer — or *Ordem dos Cavaleiros Matadores de Dragão* — still works today, but not necessarily in a militaristic capacity. While members



are expected to have some martial prowess to their credit, what they really do is function as spies, interrogators and policemen. It is their job to kick over the rotting log from time to time to see what wretchedness

crawls underneath. If what's exposed cannot be abided, they do whatever must be done to either continue the disclosure or to end it where it lays. If this means torture, then it means torture. If it means threats against the innocent, then one must abide not

by the individual but by the needs of the greater good. The Knighthood is very utilitarian in this way, and will do what it must to keep its freehold safe from treachery.

**Title:** Knight (*Cavaleiro*) — though a derogatory nickname is the “Snakes” (*Serpente*)

**Prerequisites:** Wyrd 2, Wits + Composure dice pool of at least six dice, Intimidation 2

**Joining:** The Knighthood of the Dragonslayer is glad to have new members. The more members it has, the Knights figure, the greater insurance the freehold has of routing treason. The Knighthood “knows” that its members are all on the right side of the fence — knights don't have to examine the knights, because otherwise, what's the point? (Many suggest that this is just wishful thinking, and that the knights hope to keep any internal treacheries hidden by simply not exposing them in the first place — a nasty irony, given their supposed mission statements of uncovering perfidy within the freehold.)

Regardless, the Knighthood welcomes new changelings with open arms. Certainly it tests them. The Dragonslayers examine every piece of a neophyte's life, sifting through the remains of his mortal life, taking a close look at the fetch, drawing out the terrible dreams of one's durance to ensure that the changeling doesn't still secretly harbor hidden puppet strings that connect him to his Keeper. (Worth noting, too, about the fetch is that once examined, the neophyte knight is not expected to let his fetch live. The fetch is just one more connection to the Others, so it's best to cut



the fetch's throat and let it fall into its constituent parts of monkey tails and pigeon bones.)

One interesting factor regarding new members is that, if the knights are able to extract a confession of treason from a changeling, they might offer that traitor a second life within the group. Traitors aren't given a free pass, of course, and unlike other knights, traitors *are* scrutinized for many years to ensure that their duplicitous ways are burned out of them, but it allows them to forestall their executions. And, many such "second-chance" changelings end up being the Knighthood's most zealous members.

**Mien:** The changes brought on by joining the Knighthood of the Dragonslayer are subtle, and to some, almost unnoticeable. The first change is in the eyes: pupils shrink, and the whites of the eyes become stark and bloodless. (Those who don't note this change specifically still feel the amped intensity from a Knight's unblinking stare.) The second change is in the appearance of minor draconic features: a few black scales on the back of a hand, a few teeth turned to curved needles, a tongue starting to split at the tip like that of a snake. Why is this? The party line explanation is that the founder was splashed with the blood of the True Fae "dragon" he destroyed, and this blood contaminated his mien with elements of that rough beast. Others, though, suggest that it is a sign of the corruption within the very heart of the order, a callous and reptilian leaning.

**Background:** The Knighthood of the Dragonslayer values talents across the entire spectrum, but is particularly interested in keen-eyed, sharp-minded Lost (i.e., those with higher-than-average Mental scores, and high Perception, as well). The key, according to the order's basic doctrines, is that one must be able to sense subversion, preferably before it manifests (hence, one is actually trying to guess at the potential for subversion,

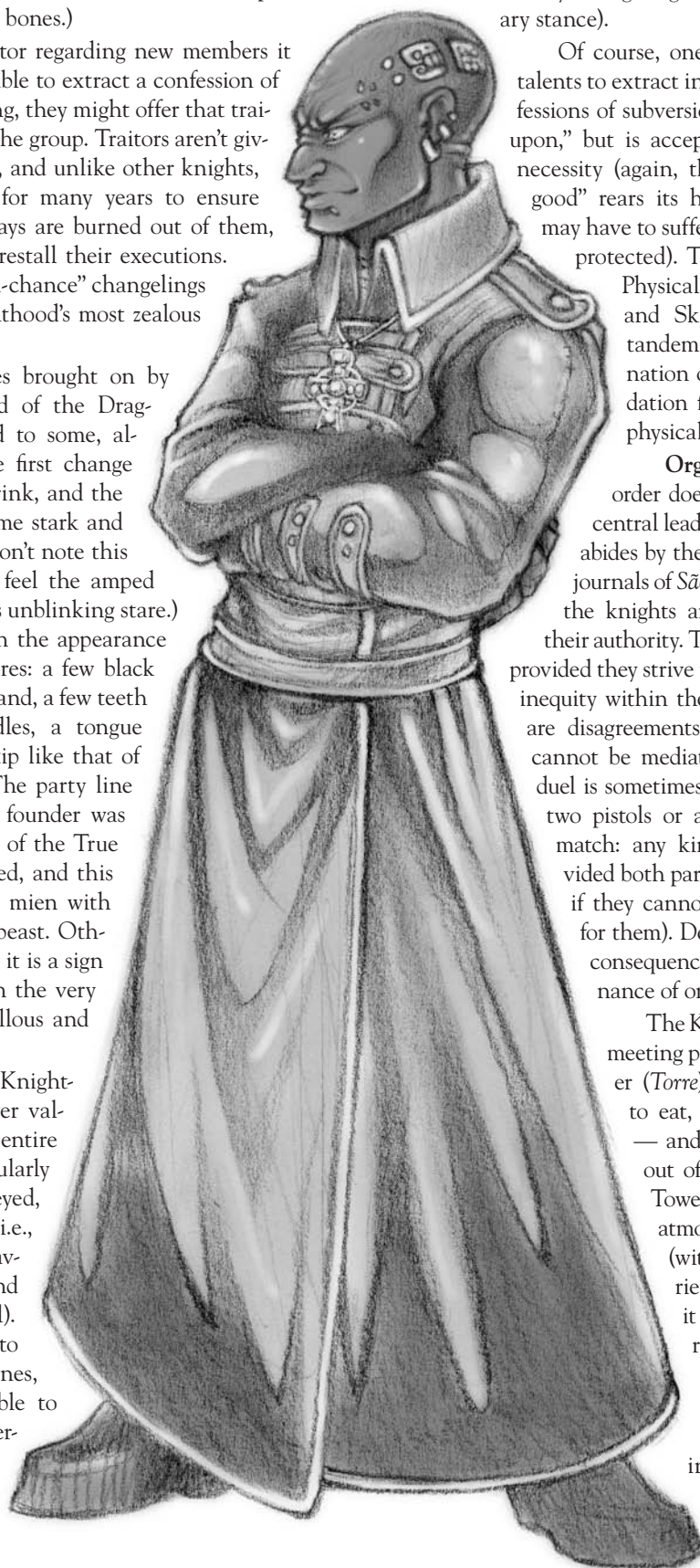
which many changelings fear is a rather reactionary stance).

Of course, one must also possess the talents to extract information and the confessions of subversion. Torture is "frowned upon," but is accepted as an unfortunate necessity (again, the idea of the "greater good" rears its head, for one innocent may have to suffer so that the masses are protected). This might mean strong Physical and Social Attributes and Skills that can work in tandem (for instance, a combination of Strength and Intimidation for purposes of causing physical pain).

**Organization:** Oddly, the order does not give itself over to central leadership. The order simply abides by the tenets laid forth in the journals of *São Jorge*, and beyond that, the knights are almost rudderless in their authority. They may do as they wish provided they strive to expose the deceit and inequity within the freehold. If ever there are disagreements between knights that cannot be mediated with words, then a duel is sometimes necessary. Two rapiers, two pistols or a bare-knuckled boxing match: any kind of duel works, provided both participants can agree (and if they cannot, someone will choose for them). Death is not the intended consequence of a duel, only dominance of one's point of view.

The Knighthood has a central meeting place that it calls its Tower (*Torre*), where knights gather to eat, drink, sometimes sleep — and to extract information out of other Lost. While the Tower usually has the homey atmosphere of a barracks (with similar camaraderie among those present), it also has separate side rooms and cells where the treasonous are kept, starved, tortured.

In many ways, being a Dragonslayer is a full-time job, though the group also





encourages its noble knights to find work in the mortal world that will help them do their work within the Knighthood.

Curiously, too, many within the Knighthood are devout Catholics. They allow no dissonance between the world of the Lost and the doctrines of the Church. God is still Almighty, and one must confess his sins to a priest to gain entrance into Heaven. Many believe that Faerie and the Hedge are clearly Hell, and escaping that place was akin to squirming free from Lucifer's grip. Those who dare to still brook with the True Fae are in fact those who would dare dine with devils and dragons.

**Concepts:** Bail bondsman, federal policeman, fencing school instructor, government interrogator, nun, reformed *favela* thug, street vendor who sees all

## PRIVILEGES

Below is a token available only to those knights or *cavaleiros* of the Dragonslayer.

### THE GRAND CROSS OF SAINT GEORGE

Many knights of the order wear this cross — cobbled together from gems, seeds, bits of glass and other debris found in the Hedge — as part of a sash badge worn across the chest, though many simply pin it to a shirt or jacket. When activated and pressed against the skin of another, the cross is said to sense the sin within that person's heart. The cross burns the skin provided that the target's Morality score (or

its equivalent, be it Clarity, Harmony, Humanity or Wisdom) is at 5 or below. For every one below 5, the cross does an additional point of lethal damage (Morality 5 causes one lethal, Morality 4 causes two lethal and so forth to a maximum of five lethal damage). In addition, one can heal the injury, but the cross leaves a permanent plus-shaped scar upon the flesh. If pressed against the flesh of someone with Morality 6 or higher, the cross has no effect (other than to tell the wielder that the victim may not be quite the sinner one suspected).

**Action:** Instant

**Mien:** The cross appears like an ugly, poorly crafted badge of flawed stones and bits of smooth glass (hemmed in by rings of dirty pewter). When active, though, the badge glows and throbs with an inner light that shines out through the multi-faceted stones and bits of glass to create a colorful display. When pressed upon the flesh of a sinner, the cross smolders and hisses.

**Drawback:** If used on a target with a Mortality (or equivalent) score of 6 or 7, the knight feels dizzied and fatigued for the remainder of the scene, suffering a -1 penalty to all rolls. If the target had a Morality of 8 or 9, the penalty increases to -2, and if the target had a rare Morality 10, the penalty jumps to a dangerous -5 (penance, apparently, for testing the faith of someone who is clearly sacrosanct).

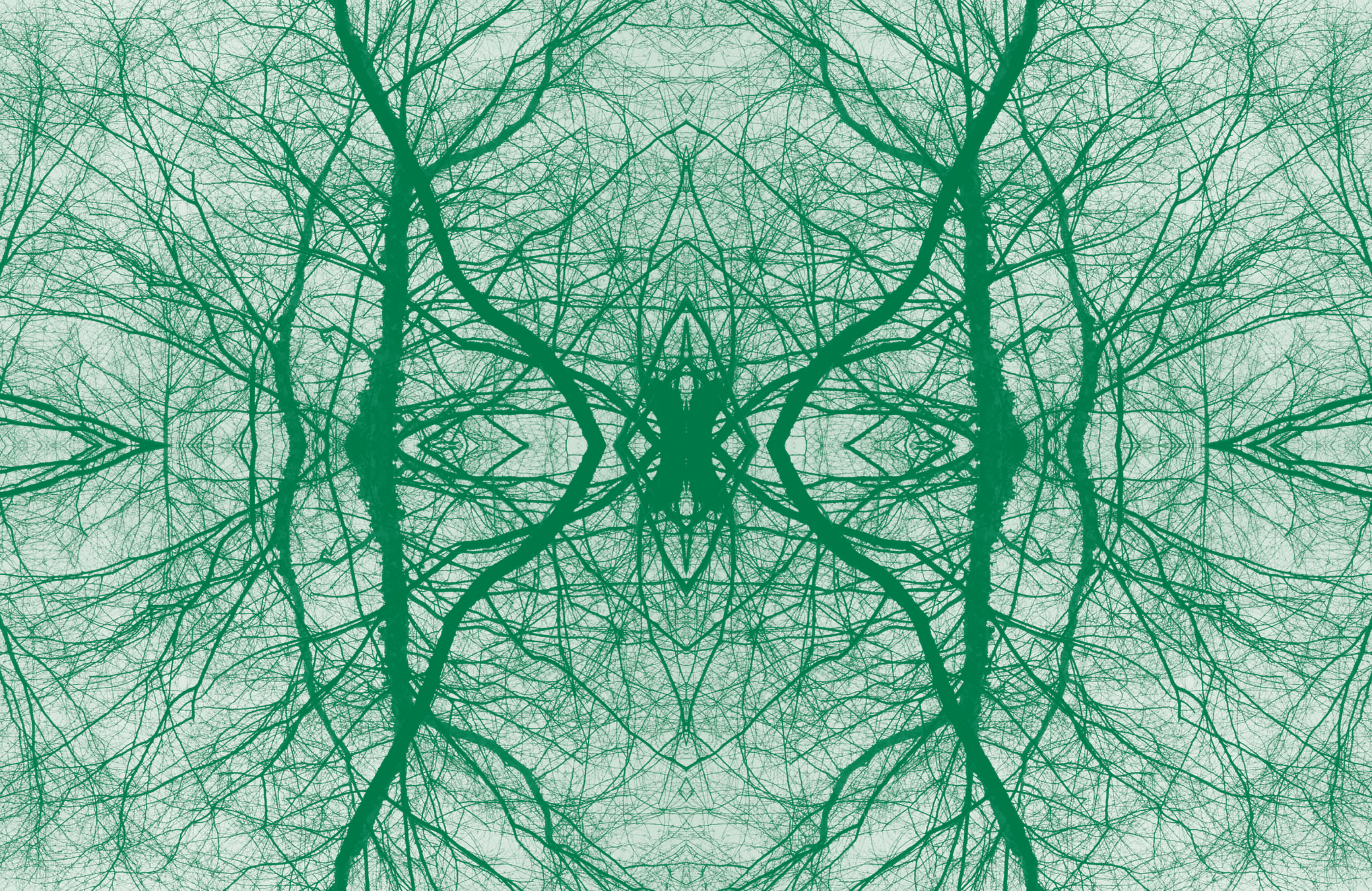
**Catch:** The token burns the hand of the user as well as (potentially) the flesh of the victim. This causes one point of lethal damage to the wielder. It doesn't, however, cause a permanent scar — once the wound is healed, the scar will fade.

## *Rumors of the Dragonslayer*

Rumors swirl about the Knighthood of the Dragonslayer, and characters may encounter such tales during the course of the story:

- The Knighthood is said to have a grand Hollow in the Hedge — a massive *Torre* of blood-colored brick swaddled in biting vines. Not only is this a major meeting place for the noble *cavaleiros*, but it is said to have a labyrinthine prison beneath it, home to a number of “disappeared” Lost. The knights claim that such missing Lost were taken by their Keepers, but in reality, the rumors suggest that the Dragonslayers have the Lost.
- Whispers among the changelings of the Knighthood claim that their greatest enemy is one Keeper whom they believe is quite literally the Devil himself. Lucifer lingers in the deepest, darkest heart of the Thorns, beneath a spot on the horizon that supposedly sits beneath a constantly roiling storm.
- Of course, the biggest rumor is that the Knighthood hunts corruption to divert attention away from its own vile treacheries, and these treacheries form a laundry list of possible betrayals: they nurse at the teat of some True Fae overlord, they secretly want to control the Courts and so they remove any who would stand in their way, they have made so many nefarious bargains and pledges over the years that soon the dark debt will come calling, etc. One of the most worrying rumors for some, though, is that they're *not* corrupted at all, and in fact have found a way to stave off the madness of lost Clarity in the face of torture and murder.









*The winter light is pale and bright  
And so the serpent basks,*

*The Beast is bowed beneath the plow,  
The djinn rest in their flasks,*

*The craftsman's made to fit his trade,  
The workers match their tasks,*

*On snowy floor, we waltz the score,  
We masquers are our masks.*

—GALCANVOCEL

*This book includes:*

- Extended information on the seemings, from their durance to new Contract lists
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