

Ars Magica

Faerie Stories

by Phil Masters & Neil Taylor

Faerie Stories

C R E D I T S

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Faerie Stories

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Chapter I

Introduction

F*airie Stories* is, first, a collection of ideas and detailed supporting information for **Ars Magica** stories, with a loose common theme — encounters and dealings with faeries. As such, it can serve as a simple but useful tool for storyguides and their troupes; a source of tales and ideas, ready to use when the storyguide needs an incident to fill in a gap in the flow of play, is temporarily short of inspiration, or simply needs a rest from creativity.

Second, it structures these ideas so as to provide a portrait of a geographical region wherein those stories may (if the storyguide so desires) all be set. This region is based on the geography of Brittany, in northwestern France (and, more importantly from the Hermetic point of view, in the Normandy Tribunal), and Breton legends inspired many of the ideas which follow. However, not only the stories, but the geographical framework, may easily be moved elsewhere in Mythic Europe. This isn't a guide to Mythic Brittany, simply a set of ideas growing from seeds which we happened to find in that land.

Nonetheless, third and last, the book details this region in enough detail and depth to provide the foundations for a complete saga. It's perfectly possible for characters to come across these incidents, and indeed this whole region, while wan-

dering far and wide, or for a storyguide to place any or all of these locations in odd corners of an established map of a saga's central area, more or less close to the characters' covenant. However, storyguides seeking a more substantial framework for a saga can use the book more intensively and extensively, placing *all* of the locations close to the covenant, using the major figures described in this book as recurring encounters, allies, or antagonists, and making these tricky dealings with the faerie folk into a recurrent theme. After all, the book describes not only wilderness locations, but, for example a small town, which could easily be the nearest substantial mundane community to some settlement of magi.

Furthermore, these story ideas introduce subsidiary topics along the way. While this book doesn't set out to make large additions to the lore or background of **Ars Magica**, it is inevitable that a text of this length will occasionally open up interesting byways and suggest digressions. These background topics are, in general, discussed in insert boxes close to the relevant parts of the stories. Consider them a small bonus.

The Shape of the Text

Most of the story ideas and setting details here take up one chapter apiece,



and form most of the remainder of the book. In some cases, one story idea will most easily be played after another, and in one case, we've given a chapter over to a description of a location, and then presented stories set there in two subsequent chapters. Thus, the book will probably make most sense if read in order — but feel free to dip if you wish. Framing everything else are Chapter II, which provides something of an overview, Chapter VIII, which suggests further ideas in short form, and an Appendix, which deals more specifically with the subject of Brittany.

Character Information and Rules

Character details and other rules-specific matters in this book are based on the systems described in *Ars Magica*, Fourth Edition, with some character details treated according to the optional rules presented in *Ordo Nobilis*. Storyguides are also strongly recommended to obtain

Faeries and *The Medieval Bestiary*. Any references to other books in the *Ars Magica* line will be specifically indicated as such, and will be entirely optional for users of the present volume.

Faerie Guile

Faerie characters who give their solemn word *must* keep it. Most will not even consider breaking their word, and those who do know that dire things will happen to them. All Intelligent Fae are accordingly cautious. If a fair bargain is to be sealed, and they believe the other party will abide by their half, then they *may* commit themselves. Otherwise, they will evade the problem by twisted words or silence, unless bound or forced.

They can become very skilled at this, which is represented in this book by a new Talent. Many faeries do not or cannot lie, but may use this ability instead:

Faerie Guile: This represents skillful choice of words, evasions, and ambiguity, short of outright lying. Force of personality is more important than expressiveness. *Specialties:* *Bargains*, *Politeness*, *Spreading Confusion*. (Presence, Communication.)



Chapter II

The Land Hereabouts

The sort of area in which the stories of *Faerie Stories* are assumed to be set “by default” is a reasonably typical landscape in Mythic Europe; a more or less temperate region of hills, valleys, and woodland, with substantial areas cleared and farmed by peasants who live in small villages and are ruled by feudal lords. Poor roads and minor rivers and streams link these communities, and the economy, while not rich, is sufficient to support at least one small market town. The episodes described in *Faerie Stories* do not involve the sea or any major lakes, so these events can be located in inland districts, but equally, it’s not impossible that the coast is a few days’ travel away or less.

(If storyguides do choose to locate matters in Brittany, the precise location will be in the north of that land, perhaps fifteen miles — 1 day of mundane travel on local roads — from the nearest coast. Subsequent events in a saga developed from this basis can in fact involve a fair amount of seafaring; Brittany has a significant maritime tradition, which is reflected in some of its legends. See the appendix for more on this region.)

The Dominion is the dominant aura in most of this land, albeit mostly at fairly low levels; magi will be mildly inconvenienced in most mundane communities and nearby farmlands, *most* of the time. Nonetheless, there are exceptions

even in such places, for which the shrewd mage keeps a careful watch. Furthermore, the woodlands and heaths are largely free of the power of the church, and locations with magical and faerie auras may sometimes be discovered out in the wilds. Likewise, a few dark spots are under the sway of the Infernal. In fact, it is important for this book that there should be a fair proportion of wilderness; the faeries of these stories are, for the most part (and with important exceptions), unused to having close human neighbors.

The Local Faeries

As the title suggests, *Faerie Stories* makes extensive reference to faeries and their powers. These are, in general, the “typical” faerie folk of Western European legend, as also described in the **Ars Magica** main rulebook and most supplements for the game. If your saga is based in some more remote region, with substantially different “styles” of faerie, these stories may require a little adjustment, though in some cases, this may involve nothing more than a little re-naming.

However, it would be slightly harder to locate these stories in, say, the Levant Tribunal (see *Blood and Sand*), where not only is the scenery substantially different, but faeries are largely unknown, and





their role in stories as non-human supernatural entities is largely filled by the *jinn*. However, that's "harder," not "impossible." Although they are not quite the same as faeries, *jinn* behave in a very similar fashion at times. Most of the beings in this book would be heathen *jinn* — the pious ones make less trouble for humans, and the infernal type are more relentlessly malevolent. Of course, their great houses would tend to resemble domed and silk-draped palaces rather than European castles, but that is largely a matter of appearance. Most other "styles" of faerie also include members who may behave in the ways described in this book.

Regiones

One subject with which the storyguide should make a point of becoming familiar before attempting to make full use of this book is the rules governing

regiones. (See pages 244-245 of the *Ars Magica* rulebook.) Perhaps inevitably given the focus on faerie matters, some of these stories involve activities within such zones of magic. It may be worth noting that a troupe one or more of whose characters possess virtues such as *Second Sight* will tend to have a slightly different experience of these incidents than one whose characters' perceptions are more consistently mundane.

Locating the Troupe's Covenant

If several stories from this book are to be used with the same troupe, and espe-

Hunting Vis

Vis hunts are likely to be a common adventure for magi, especially young individuals from spring covenants which have limited resources and need all the supplies they can get for their new and doubtless ambitious projects.

The best and most usual vis-hunting group probably consists of one mage and an escort of grogs (with maybe an appropriate companion or two). More than one mage is usually a waste of resources, and frankly, can lead to trouble, as two magi can all too easily get on each other's nerves while out and about. How strong the escort needs to be depends on the dangers of the area, and on the practical and combat abilities of the mage; this is up to the storyguide. If the group is too weak, a brief but dangerous encounter with bandits or suspicious guards can make the point clear; if it is too numerous, the storyguide can emphasize the prob-

lems of supplying, managing, and concealing such a party in open country, or even introduce threats to the covenant, where the defenses may have been left undermanned.

A vis hunt involves a process of discovering leads in the form of legends, or rumors, and following these up. Over the course of a season, the hunters can expect to follow many blind alleys: the vis may have already gone, consumed by native creatures or beings, or been harvested by other wanderers, or may have been no more than a rumor. The magus leading the hunt will be the prime mover and vis detector, but the knowledge and talents of others will help too. Spontaneous magic is too tiring and risky to be really useful: formulaic spells and enchanted devices are much better for repeated use. Helpers with practical skills or Extraordinary Talents will also be useful. Spells and

Talents will typically only help when you get close to the vis site: you cannot expect to wave a wand and simply teleport to the nearest supply! Worse still, in many cases the source will not register as raw vis until after harvesting: for example, you can extract vis from the corpses of beasts of virtue, but that does not mean the living animal is a container — in life it moves as part of the spirit of the beast.

Since a vis hunt is a good motivator to fetch magi from their labs, it is often the seed for a full scale story, with dangers, encounters, and commensurate rewards at the storyguide's whim. In that case, the storyguide estimates appropriate rewards when planning the story. However, it can also become a fairly routine "background" activity for a troupe. Indeed, it may be that there are competing stories seeking the attention of the troupe, and yet the troupe wishes to move on to the next game session, rather than going back and playing out the parallel story.

Vis Hunt Activity

A magus may distill vis from the Laboratory Aura, but only obtains Vim vis. Other Arts may only be obtained from the field (directly, or indirectly via trade), from isolated finds or from sites providing a repeating harvest. Covenants are usually founded where vis is (relatively) rich, so vis sources close to the covenant are likely already known and harvested: a hunt must look further afield, and cannot expect to find new repeating sources of vis, only isolated pawns.

A magus may go hunting vis for a season as an alternative to Lab work, in particular as an alternative to distilling Vim vis from the covenant Aura. The Vis Hunt Total provides a formula for

the number and kind of pawns of vis found; the total depends on the skill of the magus in leading and guiding this specialist hunt — unlike laboratory activities, knowledge and luck play as large a part as Arts.

The formula assumes that a vis hunt in the field typically yields less than laboratory activity, in a trade-off for obtaining types other than Vim. Some sagas may wish to adjust the formulae if they make other assumptions; adjusting the Scarcity value is easiest.

The lead magus generates a **Vis Hunt Total** of:

Stress Die + Area Lore + Legend Lore + Magical Aid + Assistance

The **Area Searched** should be a region about the size of a county or a small country; too small an area will lack vis, too large and the search lacks focus. Penalize the Total by -3 per size step away from this: village or covenant -6 , locale (e.g. "the forest around the Covenant") -3 , county (e.g. Cambridgeshire) 0 , small country (e.g. Brittany, or Wales) 0 , larger country (e.g. France or Britain) -3 , Europe -6 .

If the magus possess the Area Lore knowledge of the searched area (e.g. from a previous hunt) then add their full Area Lore score to the total. If the magus's knowledge covers a smaller area within the larger (local area vs. county), or a larger area encompassing the search area (France Lore vs. Brittany Lore), then penalize the Area Lore by -3 per step away from the size of the searched area.

Magical Aid: Add a bonus of the magnitude of the best relevant formulaic InVi spell you know ($+1$ if the spell is mastered), and the magnitude of the best relevant InVi effect in any enchanted device you are carrying. If you have





cially if it is to be used as the basis for a full saga, it is probably desirable to place the players' covenant within this landscape. That is easiest if the magi are content to occupy a site off in the woods or other wilderness, and easiest of all if the site is new, and hence the magi are expecting to have to explore the vicinity, seeking vis sources and other mystical lore. These stories can then become part of their "settling in" process, with the covenant learning the nature of its (somewhat faerie-infested) surroundings. The new covenant's home should be placed close enough to each of these sites

that the stories should follow quite naturally, but preferably not so close that any of the more powerful faeries (or other beings) should become too much a part of the community's life.

Conversely, if the troupe's covenant is to be one that has been established for some time, things become a little more complicated. After all, competent, powerful magi with an interest in the world around them would surely have discovered most of these phenomena within a few years (or decades at most), especially as many of them are significant vis sources. There are several ways to resolve

this problem. The simplest is to place the covenant a little further from the scenes of these stories, and find an excuse for groups of characters to travel this way and encounter these problems. Perhaps they are members of a dynamic summer covenant which is in the process of exploring regions currently under-exploited by the Order of Hermes, and even contemplating setting up an outpost (a rich opportunity for young, newly gauntleted magi), or cautious “scouts” investigating a region previously dominated by a fast-failing winter covenant which was so introverted it tended to ignore even the most interesting features of its neighborhood. Or, the area may previously have been dominated by a powerful non-Hermetic magus who has recently been defeated in a secret war.

Alternatively, the storyguide can simply locate these things a modest distance from an established covenant, and ignore the question of why they have not been documented previously. Mythic Europe is a rich and varied land, Hermetic wizards are an obsessive bunch who often miss things which are right under their noses, and not every mystery has to be explained in every detail.

If the saga is to revolve around an urban rather than a rural covenant, only a little adjustment may be required. It is probably best *not* to locate it in the town described in Chapter III, as that has its own peculiar features which will rapidly become obvious to Hermetic observers at the right time of year — but all this means is that the landscape will have to feature *two* substantial towns, a modest



no relevant formulaic spell level, substitute your InVi cast-without-fatigue total, typically $(\text{Int} + \text{Intéllego} + \text{Vim})/5$ — you still only get the magnitude of that casting level, so you do better to learn a spell.

Assistance: Also add a bonus of +1 for each of the following: if anyone in the party has a better Area Lore than you, a better Legend Lore, or a relevant Talent such as Second Sight. (So fellow hunters may add up to +3.) Furthermore, if you hunt alone without grogs, then you suffer the social penalty of your Gift, as you yourself must quiz peasants for “strange rumors.”

Vis Yield: This depends on the **Scarcity** of vis in the region. For each multiple of the Scarcity factor (drop fractions), the hunters find 1 pawn of raw vis. The scarcity factor varies from region to region: an average wilderness would have a scarcity of 5 (1 pawn per 5 points of total); a settled area might be 6 or 7, while a richer area like Brittany would be a 4. Storyguides should feel free to adjust the Scarcity to reflect the vis richness of the Saga.

Really rich hunting grounds, such as inside an uncharted regio, might be as rich as 3 or even 2,

while St. Peter’s Square in Rome might have a Scarcity of 10 or even higher.

Types of Vis Found: The storyguide can choose the type of vis obtained, or determine the type randomly; it is likely that multiple pawns will be of different types, but you may simply lump it all into one “find.” Some Forms are more common in the region of the hunt, and are more easily found.

The following table may be used, or you may devise a table to suit the Saga and the region hunted. Roll a die, odd or even:

Odd roll, find Form Vis — roll a simple die:

1. Animál
2. Aquam
3. Auram
4. Corpus
5. Herbam
6. Ignem
7. Imáginem
8. Mentem
9. Terram
10. Vim



Even roll, find Common Forms or other Arts. Common Forms reflect the terrain being searched: for example, in forested wilderness, roll a simple die:

1. Creo
2. Intéllego
3. Muto
4. Perdo
5. Rego
6. Common Form (region specific), Animál
7. Common Form (region specific), Herbam
8. Common Form (region specific), Aquam
9. Common Form (region specific), Auram
10. Common Form (region specific), Terram

With the storyguide's approval, the magus can choose a particular Art and ignore leads other than for that: if they desire a common form for the region, subtract 5 from the Vis Hunt Total, otherwise subtract 10, and determine the number of pawns found.

If the Vis Hunt roll is botched, then something goes wrong:

- The vis found may be tainted (Infernal or Faerie Vis).
- *Something* may have been disturbed, and come back to cause problems in a later story.
- It may trigger an immediate adventure, just when the magi thought the hunt was safe.
- Someone may be hurt, or something lost.

Example Hunts

Advena is a recently gauntleted maga sent on a hunt as service to her covenant. She has no InVi spells, but has Int +3, and Intéllego 5, Vim 3, so

could cast a $(3+5+3)/5$, or level 2 spell, without fatiguing herself. This is magnitude 1. She has no devices to help her, and while she knows her home covenant (Covenant Lore 3) she has no knowledge of the wider region, so the covenant send a seasoned hunter with her (Area Lore (region) 4 (paths and trails)), and a wise woman (wife of one of the older guards, Legend Lore 3 (Vis Hunts)). Her companions give her a bonus of +2.

Her player rolls a 2, + 1 (spontaneous casting) + 0 (no devices) + 0 (no Lore) +2 (companions), for a total of 5. She is hunting in Brittany, with a Scarcity of 4: she finds 1 Pawn.

The storyguide rolls to determine the Art: 0 (even: "other Vis"), 6: Common Form. In this fertile forest, Animál vis is common; they found and hunted down a magical bird, and took its feathers.

Advena gets exposure to Area Lore and Legend Lore for the region, for her season in the wild. (Storyguides might let players split Exposure experience between Area Lore and Legend Lore for this type of activity; exposure alone cannot raise abilities above 4). She takes an Area Lore specialization in Vis sites, and a Legend Lore specialization in Magical Beasts. She also realizes she is not using her magic effectively, and so consults the covenant library, finding a Level 16 InVi spell: with her Magic Theory 5 she can learn this, and it is (just!) a 4th magnitude spell.

For her next hunt, she asks around, and manages to borrow a wand of Vis Detection (a 1 pawn, lesser enchanted device, with a level 10 effect: InVi 5, Near, Momentary, Small, +5 for Continuous Effect). She has also determined that one of the odder grogs, who "talks to the clouds," has the *Second*

distance apart. There may be a small problem with the ending of Chapter IV, but nothing which a sensible storyguide will be unable to resolve.

Hermetic Neighbors

Most covenants have to concern themselves sometimes with other covenants in their vicinity, and some of these stories explicitly involve magi from such places. Thus, the storyguide will also have to locate the troupe's covenant in the framework of Hermetic politics.

A lot depends here on the saga's assumptions about the population of Hermetic magi in general, and the numbers in the saga's focus area in particular. These do vary from game to game. However, it should generally be reasonable to have, say, from one to four other covenants on the edges of things, with their members occasionally venturing onto what the troupe may think of as their own territory and making a little trouble. At least one of these neighbor covenants should ideally have some members who are well used to dealing

with faeries; members of House Merinita would be the most plausible.

A last concern might be the state of mundane politics in the region, and most especially whether there is any sort of war on — either a full-scale conflict between crowned kings, a major civil or religious conflict such as the Albigenian Crusade, or a lower level but possibly bloody series of struggles between minor lords.

War, Politics — and Peace

The assumption of *Faerie Stories* is that no such armed struggle is underway, and while there may well be the usual amount of rivalry and even literal backstabbing happening between feudal lords, none of it is enough to disrupt mundane or Hermetic life in the area. However, even if there is some kind of war on, it can still be perfectly possible to run these stories. Perhaps magi and their servants,



Sight Talent. She tells him to come with her, as he will give her an extra +1 bonus.

She rolls better: a 9, + 4 (magnitude of spell) + 2 (magnitude of device) + 3 (Area lore and Legend lore score, and 1 for specialty) +3 (companions), for a total of 21; she is still hunting in Brittany (Scarcity 4) so finds 5 Pawns — much better.

The storyguide decides he cannot be bothered to roll five times, so rules that two finds of 3 Pawns and 2 Pawns were made: (6,3) Muto Vis: they found a shimmering crystal whose color changes continuously; and (1,8) Mentem Vis: at a crossroads they encountered the ghost of a criminal, laid it to rest, and recovered his burial shroud.

Had Advena hunted elsewhere in France, such as Normandy (more settled, Scarcity 5) she would

have found only 4 pawns; had she hunted in the densely settled areas of southern England (Scarcity 6 or 7) she would have only found 3 pawns.

Option: Shorter Hunts

If a magus has some time free, but less than a whole season, they may still find something. A curtailed hunt will bring a penalty, according to time lost or time hunting:

Up to 10 days lost.....	no penalty
Up to 1 month lost.....	-5
Up to 2 months lost.....	-10
2-4 weeks hunting.....	-15



being forced off their usual roads by the threat of encountering armies and getting mixed up in battles, are rendered more likely to encounter faerie locations and other hidden puzzles!

In fact, when looking to run the sort of incident-filled saga which this book supports, it is probably best to avoid having too much in the way of stability in the local mundane world. It is not that magi thrive amidst conflict, it is simply that a strong ruler with no serious rivals tends to be able to set guards on town gates,

charge tolls on roads, and respond to any minor report of strange activity from any small village. Such strong lords will often try to impose their will on remote communities, making trouble for covenants, and to watch for stray travelers in case they should be bandits or spies — which can inconvenience venturesome Hermetics. Fortunately for story purposes if, perhaps, unfortunately for many other people, such secure government is the exception rather than the rule in Mythic Europe.



Shorter hunts are unlikely to yield anything unless the magus knew where to look anyway — in which case the Vis Hunt Total formula is not really relevant.

Option: Finding Repeatable Vis Sources

Typically these are rare, and usually result from a full-scale story rather than a random roll for a background activity. However, if the Troupe desire, a large find may be substituted with a smaller repeating site:

Divide the number of pawns by 3, and drop fractions, to determine the annual yield.

The Troupe should decide how the vis is harvested, and the amount of effort required, but usually it is a matter of being in the right place at the right time of year — a full season's hunt is not required to repeat a harvest.

Option: Alternative Lore

The Troupe may wish to consider allowing Faerie Lore to be used in place of Legend Lore, if the Hunt is to focus on Faerie lands; there may also be circumstances where Occult Lore is appropriate.

Chapter III

The Town

This chapter presents a small town, with associated story ideas and seeds — the main urban community of the area detailed in *Faerie Stories*, and a location for events in subsequent chapters.

The town is based on Quintin, in Brittany, but it is actually a fairly typical and (seemingly) unremarkable, if prosperous, medieval town, of the kind which may be found virtually anywhere in Europe. It has a population of around 1,000, mostly free men of one station or another, and provides the market, craft skills, and assorted other services which the surrounding rural communities need. It comes under the authority of a feudal lord, simply referred to as “the lord” here; in 1220, Quintin was in fact controlled by Geoffroy Boterel. This lord has the basic sense to know that he makes a healthy profit by taxing the place at a sensible, moderate level, and hence continues to look after its security without interfering too much, or too often. In any case, storyguides are welcome to reassign the place or rename the fellow to fit their own sagas.

It is a well established community, and as such has drawn the attention and interest of certain faeries. In fact, like a number of mortal areas, it casts a strange reflection of itself in Arcadia — and on certain dates, that reflection grows quite

strong. Furthermore, the town was apparently built over the site of certain ancient (if minor) powers, although fortunately the human town and the faerie beings involved have adapted to each other comfortably enough these days.

Members of the Order of Hermes and their allies may be drawn to the town by chance, by invitation, or because they know that there are certain sources of power here. Their subsequent experiences will not usually be *very* dangerous, but they can be puzzling, tricky, or entertaining.

First Impressions

The town sits on a hill, defended by a stout stone wall and several gate towers. Its lord’s small castle stands within the walls. The hill rises in terraces from the plain and a moderately substantial river, which runs from south-east to north-west on the south side of the town. At the base of the hill, the river widens to form a pool or small lake about 200 yards long. A road approaches the town and crosses the river by a small bridge just outside the main gate, with large, lush meadows all around.

Beyond the bridge, lake, and meadows, another hill rises, facing the town. At the top of *this* hill can be seen a 14’ tall stone (a menhir), which is known to the





townsfolk as “the Long Rock.” Although this hill provides grazing for sheep and cattle, most locals avoid it most of the time; there are unlikely to be many people to be seen on its slopes. (It does *not* have an evil reputation, but sensitive folk cannot but notice that it sometimes feels “uncanny.”) Anyway, anyone approaching the town for the first time is more likely to be concerned with the road under their feet (or the river beneath their keel — arriving by small boat is perfectly feasible), the solitary guard on the gate, and the prospect of a drink or rest in one of the local taverns.

The Community and Buildings

The town mostly huddles within its walls, although some buildings (mostly stables and barns rather than houses) have sprung up outside, and there are outlying farms amidst the surrounding fields. There is one small mill (the “New Mill”) upstream of the lake, and a larger one (the “Perch Pond Mill”) some way downstream (less handy for the town, more convenient for many of the local farms, and with a stronger current to exploit). The castle, town walls, and churches and chapels are good stone; most of the rest of the closely-packed buildings are wattle and daub. (It goes without saying that fire is a serious threat — so serious that anyone in the town will drop anything else that they’re doing to help fight a blaze.) Although some of the community draw their water from the river, there are a couple of small wells on the north side of the town, and most significantly, a substantial

water source, the “Well of St Quay,” just inside the town walls on the south.

As a relatively small community, the town cannot support the array of guilds found in great cities, although the master craftsmen have formed three semi-formal groups: the leatherworkers, cloth-workers, and carpenters. The town’s three master smiths alternate friendship and rivalry, as do the two families of millers and the assorted resident merchants. If the lord wishes to hear his vassals’ opinions, he summons an irregular council of assorted guild-leaders, craftsmen, and richer merchants to the castle.

The town has two churches: the Parish church is St. Thurian (or Thuriaff), built on a hill about half a mile outside town, and there is a smaller church within the walls, dedicated to St Yves. (The former is older; it is unclear why it is so distant from the community, but this is doubtless due to some historical accident.) There are also a number of small chapels, including one within the castle, mostly used for minor ceremonies and blessings.

The Parish church comes under the authority of Father Simon, a middle aged priest who mostly wants a quiet life, but who is experienced enough to understand people quite well. He gets on well with the town’s lord, and sometimes provides tuition or assistance to the castle when its own clerks prove inadequate. The church of St Yves is tended by Father Andreas, a youthful priest, recently arrived, of strong but erratic dedication, serious ambition, and strictly average intellect. Andreas currently acts nervously polite around Simon, as he instinctively defers to age (equating it to wisdom), but he seems sure to lose some of this deference in the next few years, or even months. Andreas preaches rather fierce sermons, which is making him popular with some of the widows and matrons of the town who

A Covenant in the Town?

Some magi prefer the convenience of dwelling within or close by a substantial mundane community, considering the advantages of regular supplies, stout protective walls, and a ready supply of hirelings, to more than outweigh the drawbacks of a dominion aura and curious or overly cautious neighbors who might take against the working of magic, or who might be forever trying to purchase magical aid. The idea of an urban base may be particularly appealing to small covenants whose members include several with the Gentle Gift virtue.

However, *this* town really isn't well suited for such an arrangement. Frankly, it's large enough for the population to be able to make significant trouble for a small group of Hermetic magi, while being too small to provide significant benefits or for a covenant to be able to lose itself amidst the crowds. That said,

a small and subtle covenant, or an outpost of a larger community, might be able to get along.

The magi could acquire one or more adjacent modest-sized houses within the walls, and convert them to their own use, with sanctums perhaps in the cellars. They could also recruit grogs from younger sons of free farmers or craftsmen — a group often in need of paid employment. However, the lack of stone buildings, and the fact that servants recruited in the town would have numerous local connections, while any brought in from outside might be viewed with suspicion by the parochial townsfolk, could lead to numerous problems. The reactions of town's lord to reports of "sorcery" are up to the storyguide; Father Simon might be inclined to respond cautiously, but Father Andreas could well be a source of trouble.



seek comfort in religious certainty (and excuses to disapprove of their neighbors), and also with a small group of youths who have adopted his words as slogans (and excuses to argue with their parents). Father Andreas is no persecutor or firebrand, but if he ever called for something to be done urgently, this element of his congregation might well rush off and try to do it.

There is a small open square in front of the Castle, in the center of the town, which serves as a venue for minor markets and a gathering place in times of trouble or interesting events. Most of the community's shops and workshops are arrayed around the square, or along the "Main Road" (frankly, an alley slightly broader than most others) which runs

from here to the town's eastern gate. This gate is dominated by a pair of slightly oversized towers. Actually, this was a clever building decision by some previous lord. Because any trouble in the town itself tends to blow up along this road or in the square, the small group of guards always stationed in the gatehouse can keep a useful eye inside the walls as well as outside, and react quickly to problems.

Magic and the Town

Quintin itself, as a modest town, has a level 2 Dominion aura; the churches have Dominion auras of level 5 and the parish cemetery one of level 3.



The small shrines scattered around town typically have a level 3 Dominion aura, but Fluven's well, the Well of St. Quay, has a normal dominion aura right up to the lip, but a level 2 Faerie aura within the well itself.

The Surrounding Country

The town has grown up in a fairly lush and fertile part of the countryside, able to support its market and craftsmen, with adequate communications (that is, roads which are as good as most in rural areas in the age, and a river along which small boats can shift worthwhile loads), and a cathedral city a day or so's walk away. Equally naturally, it has grown up on a usefully defensible hill which commands the surrounding lands.

The road running north from the town crosses another river at a ford within a mile or two; this is a slightly smaller tributary to the river which passes the town, and the two join together to the north-east. The plains in the immediate vicinity of the community have been cleared for farming; beyond these fields lies woodland, albeit mostly tended and coppiced by woodsmen in the lord's employ, and occasionally patrolled by his household troops. Hence, banditry is not a great problem in the area, although the occasional opportunist ruffian may assault travelers on the lesser roads and paths.

The Lake

Although the townsfolk like to refer to the body of water below their walls as

a lake, unkind visitors would call it a glorified pond, or a simple broadening in the river. That said, it's large enough to support a little fishing (rights to which belong to the lord), and for sufficiently determined idiots to drown themselves in stupid accidents every few years, but no more than that. It has a half-dozen jetties where small boats can moor, and it provides fine and pleasing views both of and from the castle.

The "Long Rock"

The most obviously unusual (and hence, from a Hermetic viewpoint, interesting) feature of the lands immediately outside the town walls is the lesser hill topped with the "Long Rock." A faint track zigzags across the contours of the slope, slowly climbing up to the rock. It is easy to ignore this and walk straight up, but the path is in fact significant — following the path back from the rock is one of the ways to enter the Faerie Fair (see below).

A cursory inspection, with the right sort of magic, will determine that the rock and the crown of the hill shows traces of faerie power (a level 2 aura). Sometimes, it manifests a faerie aura of up to level 4; however it is effectively confined by the dominion aura which emanates from the town and its churches. When the bells ring out on major holy days, the faerie aura flickers and all but dies; it is at its strongest and widest when faeries gather for the midsummer fair and market (see below).

Magic and the Area

The lake, the meadow where the Fair is held, and the surrounding farmland have the typical rural Christian area Dominion 1 aura. The Faerie Fair is con-

fined to a regio over the meadow, but within the regio it has a level 4 Faerie aura.

The woods beyond the meadow become increasingly wild as you penetrate further in, as they are a small part of the great forest of Brocéliande — if you penetrate into the wild parts you may find a Magic aura, level 2. There are pockets within the woods where wilder things hold sway, especially faeries. In a such a glade or cave, a higher aura will be found, usually 1 or 2 points higher than the surrounding forest.

In many places, the aura changes with the time of year, and the festivals taking place. At Easter, Christmas, and All Saint's Day, the Dominion spreads wide across the land, while on days which recall the old times such as Midsummer's day or All Saint's Eve (All Hallow's Eve) a Faerie or Magic aura may rise in places.

wandering champions from more distant lands), seeking to prove their worth on the field, and perhaps to win arms and armor from vanquished foes.

What few people realize is that this event is sometimes mirrored by the faerie folk, who hold their own fair in a regio which grows from and around the town at the same time. Most of those few mortals who are fully aware of this regard it as an opportunity for profit, albeit not without its own dangers.

Mortal Ceremonies

Like most events in the feudal, religious world of Mythic Europe, the fair has a number of associated minor ceremonies.



The Annual Fair

Each year, on Midsummer Day and one day either side, the town holds a special fair on a meadow below the hill. Events start with a feast in the castle, for guests invited by the lord; at the same time, the common townsfolk are provided with a lesser feast, eaten in the town square and surrounding streets. Naturally, they enjoy the prospect of free food and drink, and the subsequent fun. The three days of celebration nowadays include a tourney, attended by knights from many leagues around (and maybe a few noted





The Blessing of the Well

At the start of the first day of the fair, the lord and the parish priest (Father Simon) lead the town in a ceremony of blessing at the town well; many townsfolk follow this by tossing small coins into the water. They think of the well as being somehow linked to St. Quay, and perhaps hope that the coins will be taken as offerings, or that they will somehow induce the saint to bring them luck.

What the townsfolk don't know is that there is a goblin (*Fluven*) dwelling in the well. Occasionally, some of the townspeople, especially those with limited mystical awareness, glimpse him, scratch their heads, and wonder if they've been gifted with a glimpse of the saint, or something. Actually, Fluven is a straightforward, amiable being (as faeries go), who thoroughly appreciates the attention

and respect the townsfolk pay him, and just finds it a bit funny that they think he is a Christian saint. During the blessing ceremony, those gifted with very keen eyes or Second Sight might notice him, sitting on the well-rim or its cap, or melding into the stonework. (Roll Per, or Per + Second Sight, with a target of 9+ to spot something strange, 12+ to see him clearly.)

If anyone manages to speak to Fluven, they probably won't get much that is very useful out of him, apart from a friendly (if limited) conversation. Should his well be physically attacked, he would do his best to defend it, and he might conceivably do something to aid any townspeople he liked who got into danger near his home; it is also possible that he knows some minor gossip concerning the faerie market.

Fluven the Well Goblin

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +2, Pre -3, Com -1, Str -2, Sta +1, Dex +2, Qik +6

Faerie Might: 15

Size: -2

Personality Traits: Stubborn +4, Secretive +2

Weapon/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam Fat

Brawling (fist) +11 +6 +12 -2 n/a

Thrown rock +14 +6 n/a +2 n/a

Soak: +4

Body levels: OK, -1, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Awareness 4 (alertness), Brawling 3 (fist), Quintin Lore 4 (events), Stealth 6 (in his well), Thrown weapon 3 (rocks)

Powers:

Bless, CrXx 20, 3 points. Blessings bring aid and comfort to those receiving them. Roll a Stress Die +5, and the effectiveness is indicated by the die roll. (See *Faeries*, revised edition, pages 92 and 136.)

Invisibility, PeIm 30, 1 point. Fluven can become invisible at will, until he wills the effect to stop. Any spells used to detect him must overcome Fluven's Invisibility. (He can also simply hide against the stones of the well or under its roof.)

Curse, PeXx 15, 3 points: Fluven can affect mortals so that their milk curdles, their bread fails to rise, they stumble over thresholds, or they suffer similar annoyances. Roll a stress die +3 and let the result indicate the effectiveness of the curse. (See *Faeries*, revised edition, pages 92 and 137.)

Encumbrance: 0

Vis: 2 Aquam, in his heart.

Note that, like the very similar "Church Goblin" (*Faeries*, revised edition, page 115), Fluven has no weakness either to iron or to Christian symbols or rituals.

At the storyguide's option, he may use his Bless power on those who are in need and especially reverent at his well, or his Curse on those who are greatly disrespectful. Believers are likely to mistake this for a Holy Miracle.

The Procession and Opening Ceremony

Subsequently, the lord and the priest lead a procession round the town walls, through much of the town, and then down to the meadow, where they declare the fair open with another blessing from the priest.

The lord will have his herald pronounce an invitation to a public feast for all the town, to be held in the town square that evening. There will be a parallel but finer feast within the castle, for invited guests.

Commercial Arrangements

The fairground is situated at the western end of the meadow, just across the road from the lake. There are about 20 stalls at the (mortal) fair, and twice as many again peddlers and suchlike. The



merchants who have proper stalls ensure that they or a trusted assistant are always present, and many employ an armed guard or two in addition. (These aren't generally armored mercenaries — just tough bruisers with cudgels.) The stalls have tents behind or awnings over, providing both shelter from the elements and storage for goods. After dark, the fairground is off-limits to those who have not paid for a pitch, although there is only a minimal barrier (a rope line) to keep people out. The lord also has his watchmen patrol the fairground to keep his peace.

(Sharp-witted and criminally inclined characters may correctly deduce from this that there are likely to be fewer of the lord's guards and watchmen patrolling the rest of the town or the nearby woods at this time. However, the castle is always at least adequately guarded.)

In the daytime, this area is crowded with people. Many of the townsfolk come down to gawk, and people come from the surrounding area to buy hard-to-find items. There are entertainers and hawkers (and thieves), all contributing to the bustle and hullabaloo. It is easy to get lost in the press of the crowd, but the fair is small enough that one soon comes out at the far side.

At the eastern end of the meadow is an area reserved for visiting knights or other nobles and their retinues, who have come for the tourney (and feast). Sprawling away from this is a camp site where travelers stay who have not secured any of the limited accommodation in town. Between the camp site and the fair is a small tent which serves as a temporary brothel, and several merchants can be found selling wine, ales, and food; the fair is quiet at night, but this area is busy until late. The three areas fill the meadow; there is no explicit gap, just demarcation lines between them.





(Note: If any magi should visit this event, storyguides should remember the penalties to social interaction caused by the Gift.)

Stallholders

Typical merchants to be found at the fair include the following:

Kemo, a leather worker, selling fine tooled items, fancy work and armor, supple cloaks, and best boots.

Bertrand, who sells “pack wares” — a wide variety of small goods, whatever he happens to have acquired.

Winnol, a brewer from the town, selling ale and mead.

Gralam, who sells good wines from fairly distant vineyards.

Maudez, whose stock consists of plain, serviceable, locally made cloth.

Tenenan, a seller of woolen fleeces in bulk.

Passerose, whose sweetmeats and spice meats are popular “fair luxuries.”

Jourdain, a wealthy merchant with large house in the town; his man Gudwal actually mans the stall, which sells imported cloth and fancy cords.

Aleaume, a smith with pretensions to be an armorer, selling swords and fine weapons.

Olivia, a vendor of charms, philters and relics. (None of these are actually magical, unless the storyguide decides otherwise; at most, some of the relics might carry a single Faith Point, and some of the charms might include ingredients which would be useful in the manufacture of actual enchanted items. Olivia keeps her head down and avoids accusations of witchcraft, mostly by

being thought harmless, and at worst a rather obvious fraud, and by insisting to suspicious religious folk that she is a relic seller.)

Brioc, a trader in fine cloths and tapestries.

Jehan and Josiane, a couple who deal in linen cloth.

Yvon, a “whitesmith,” a worker in silver and pewter (repairs a specialty).

Rivold, a goldsmith — a dealer in small, low-value items, but even so, owner of one of the best guarded stalls at the market.

Hervisse, a jeweler. Again, very much at the cheap end of his trade, working mostly with semi-precious stones, but again, necessarily cautious of thieves. He has some pieces made up, but also holds a stock of raw materials and will take commissions.

Padrig, a vendor of salt, pickled and smoked fish.

Finnian and Rosamund, another couple, dealing in imported dried and preserved fruits, olives, etc.

Riowen and Avenie, a local potter and his shrewd wife, who handles most of the selling.



Guillot, a seller of fine pottery and imported glassware.

Pol the Blacksmith, a local man selling tools and ironmongery at the fair. His mother, **Old Marie**, sits at the back of the stall, reading palms, telling fortunes, and selling charms. These activities are an open secret around the town; as with Olivia, much of what she offers is dou-

A Typical Mundane Merchant

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +1, Pre +2,
Com +2, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik -1

Age: 31

Afflictions: none

Size: +1

Confidence: 3

Virtues and Flaws: Merchant +1 — stall-holders may also have Well-Off +1 or Prosperous +2 according to their trade (see *Ordo Nobilis* chapter 2 for more discussion of *Characters and Wealth*), Cautious with Bargain +1, Indentured Servant +1, Deep Sleeper -1, Obese -1, Uncommon Fear (Bankruptcy) -1.

Personality Traits: Hagglers +3, Industrious +2, Pious +1

Weapon/Atk Init Atk Dfn Dam Fat
Brawling (fist)+3 +3 +1 +1 +0
Soak: +1

Fatigue levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5,
Unconscious

Body levels: OK, 0/0, -1, -3, -5,
Incapacitated

Abilities: Awareness 2 (thieves),
Bargain 5 (own goods), Brawl 2
(fist), Carouse 2 (games of chance),
Charm 2 (customers), Craft
“Goods” 6 (as appropriate),
Etiquette 1 (townsfolk), Folk Ken 2

(customers), Speak local language*
3 (haggling), Speak neighboring
land’s language* 4 (townsfolk),
Town Lore 3 (people).

Equipment: Good clothes appropriate
to status, knife, money pouch. His
other immediate property is either
on the stall, or in a chest (or chests)
under the stall.

Encumbrance: 0

(* e.g. Speak Breton 3, Speak French 4)

Such a merchant has a stall at the fair, and a permanent shop elsewhere, either in this town (closed up during the fair) or elsewhere. He’s a guild member (a master) and has a younger journeyman working for him, and possibly a young apprentice. While at the fair he employs a pair of toughs to guard the stall and his goods whenever he cannot watch them. He is a keen bargainer, and enjoys haggling, but is always careful not to over-expose himself. He enjoys a fine life, and his bulky form shows it, but he has a great fear of losing all that he has should business go wrong for him. He may consider himself “better” than some locals because of his ancestry or connections (for example, he may be of French descent and living in a Breton town).



bletalk and mild deception, but she does have some supernatural talent. What is less well known is that she also sells access to the Faerie Market; see below.

Doolin, a “percamenarius” — a maker and seller of parchment, plain and uterine vellum, quills and styluses, inks, scrapers. etc.

(Note; if characters attend the fair on more than one year, they will of course

notice a certain amount of turnover in the list of merchants attending; some fall ill or suffer misfortune, others are detained elsewhere, while new businesses can start up. However, this list can be taken as typical, and represents “regulars” at the event.)

There is also a small horse market, held to one side of the main fair, with a pen for the beasts, and its own regular vendors:



A Typical Mundane Peddler

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +2, Pre +1, Com +2, Str 0, Sta -2, Dex +1, Qik +1

Age: 28

Afflictions: none

Size: 0

Confidence: 3

Virtues and Flaws: Merchant +1, Busybody +1, Light Sleeper +1, Curse of Venus -2, Weakness (for a good bargain) -1.

Personality Traits: Keen +2, Pious +1

Weapon/Atk Init Atk Dfn Dam Fat

Brawling (fist)+5 +4 +4 +0 +1

Cudgel (mace)+6 +5 +6 +5 +0

Soak: -2

Fatigue levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Awareness 2 (thieves), Bargain 4 (own goods), Brawl 2 (fist), Carouse 2 (power drinking), Charm 2 (customers), Craft 4 (as appropriate), Folk Ken 3 (customers), Guile 2 (exaggerating his goods), Legerdemain 3 (filching), Sing 1 (solo), Single Weapon 1 (cudgel), Speak local language* 4 (peasants), Speak other language* 2 (haggling), Town Lore 3 (people)

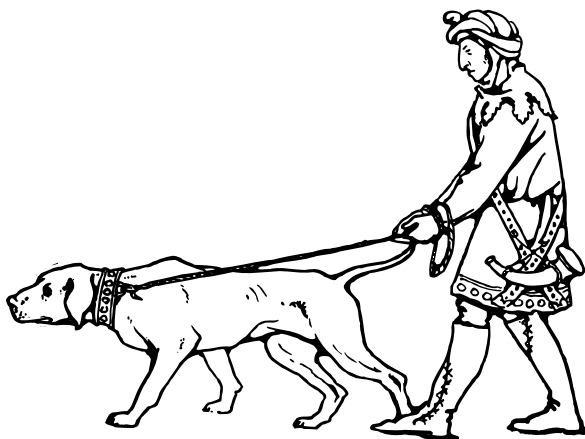
Equipment: Plain clothes, dagger, cudgel (by his pack), money pouch. He has a large pack, much of whose contents are displayed on a cloth beside him — or, if he's selling food, he has a small trestle table, or a tray slung about his neck.

Encumbrance: 0

(* e.g. Speak Breton 4, Speak French 2)

A peddler or hawker, scarcely worth the notice of the "real" merchants, but without whom the fair would founder as he and the many others like him provide much of the food and drink, as well as selling minor items or common items in small quantity.

He comes from coarse stock, but speaks enough of a second language to haggle with his betters. While he has honest goods, he is not above overextolling their virtues; one of the virtues he cannot resist extolling is his own charm to the ladies and many times he has earned the wrath of husbands. He is also, alas, not above filching or picking pockets. After hours, he may be found in the taverns or wine-tents, perhaps trying to pass on more of his goods, or simply to spend his earnings.



Louis, a horse merchant who travels down to the event from a larger town some miles away, with several fine horses. Louis is quiet except when he has to bargain, but good at his trade.

Gilles, a hounds-man, with a number of fine hounds for sale. Gilles is a willing talker with some charm, and any knights or nobles who come to the fair usually end up spending a lot of their time happily discussing

the finer points of hunting dogs with him.

Sezni, a pony seller, with a number of nags and ponies. Sezni is something of an outsider, with an odd accent and a definite foreign air about him. In a saga set in the most south-easterly Hermetic Tribunals (Thebes or the Levant) he may actually be a true “gypsy,” but the Romany folk haven’t reached most of Europe yet, so there, he’d just be a member of some small marginal group who fill a similar role. Sometimes, visitors to the fair may also encounter **Telo**, another, similar pony seller from slightly more distant parts with a running rivalry with Sezni.

Lastly, there are a handful of entertainers to be met around the fair:

The Mummers are a large group of local men who are putting on a mystery play: *The Legend of Saint Brioch*. (Other characters may stumble across their slightly chaotic preparations. Storyguides can draw on Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* for inspiration. See also *The Feast*, page 34.)

The Traveling Players, Wrmonoc, Gwithian, Levan and Gudmon, are a band of wanderers who do whatever turns a fairly honest coin; they act the fool and perform tricks at the fair in the afternoon, and perform in slightly more dignified style at the lord’s feasts in the evenings.

Ninnoc is a bear-keeper. Her dancing bear will perform tricks, or frighten the unwary. She has it fairly well

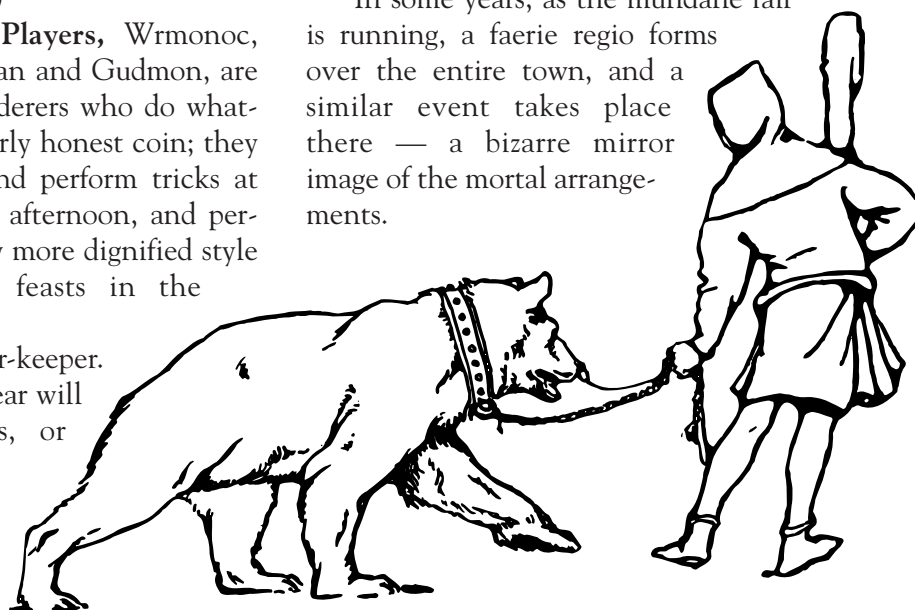
trained, and it is, in truth, rather a small bear. She periodically has to fend off suggestions that it be put to fight dogs for gambling; she doubts that it would survive in such contests for very long, and she makes a more reliable income from it in less violent ways.

The Tourney

The tourney provides yet another potential source of stories (either for knightly companions, or for the light-fingered low-lives who just cannot keep to themselves). It is a modest event by the standards of greater lords, but exciting enough in its way. There is insufficient space to detail arrangements and possible plots here; see *Ordo Nobilis*, pages 92-95, for a discussion of such events, and pages 158-159 in the same book for a depiction of a similar (if grander) event.

The Faerie Fair

In some years, as the mundane fair is running, a faerie regio forms over the entire town, and a similar event takes place there — a bizarre mirror image of the mortal arrangements.





The troupe may learn of this event by various means; Merinita scholars may have heard of it (see *Story Seed: Hermetic Visitors*, page 41), they may pick up mentions from mundanes with knowledge of the Fae or hints from faeries met in other circumstances, or it may simply be common knowledge in established covenants. They may even run across it by sheer chance.

Entering the Faerie Event

It is, fortunately for the humans of the town, quite hard to enter the faerie fair, and virtually impossible by accident. However, those who wish to do so and who have the right talents can manage the trick.

There are three ways to enter the fair:

1. You can follow the standard rules for moving between regio levels, especially if you get lost in the throng of the fair. Faerie Sight may enable you to see through between levels, and if so, to take others with you.
2. You can buy a charm from Old Marie, at the back of the blacksmith's stall. You must demonstrate a sympathetic understanding of the Old Ways (or at least knowledge of the faerie fair), to the blacksmith and then to his mother, and cross her palm with silver; she will give you a crudely carved leaf of oak-wood bound with thread, then show you and your friends out through the back of the tent, and you step out into the regio. The token only works today.
3. You can walk up to the Long Rock and into its faerie aura, then return by following the crazy zigzags of the path down the hill back to the meadow. The locals do not know

about this, as they are over-familiar with its mundane state when there is no fair, but PCs investigating the fair may be curious to follow up tales of the Rock, and then follow the path down.

Leaving the fair is easy: you simply walk out beyond the bounds of the fair, and you will be in the mundane world. If you turn around and return you will only find the mundane fair.

Dealings with the Faeries

Mortals who enter the Faerie Fair can wander around, chat with the faeries, and even inquire concerning the goods for sale, all safely enough. However, actually seeking to purchase anything makes life vastly more complicated. This should be made very clear to characters from the first — the Faerie Market is not meant to be a source of cool magic items or a “munchkin paradise,” but rather a complex role-playing task. If you anticipate this may be a problem, then curtail the items' powers — perhaps the faeries are boasting, or they only work in a faerie aura.

The mundane fair takes place each year, but the Faerie Fair returns on a seven-year cycle. (The storyguide may increase or decrease the frequency to suit the saga. However, if the Faerie Fair is an annual occurrence, you may find the players take too much advantage of it.)

The primary problem is, simply, that mortals rarely have the sort of coin which faeries will accept. It is to be expected that on their first visit, characters (even magi) may have nothing of value to the faeries, and come away with nothing apparently achieved. However, if they have studied the faeries, and managed to talk to some, they may guess at the right “coin”, and to prepare such for the return

of the fair. Some suggestions for things that might interest are listed below, with the faerie merchants.

Storyguides might also draw inspiration from the suggested trades for Dwarven Magic Items in *Ultima Thule*, pages 112-113, with costs such as “your heart’s desire,” “the color of your eyes,” or “seven years of service.”

Thus, acquiring something from this fair should mostly be an intellectual puzzle. Story-guides should reward players who come up with strange and imaginative ideas. For an extended discussion of such matters, see *Faeries*, revised edition, pages 50-54.

Note: Characters — especially those with a poor knowledge of faerie nature — may consider *stealing* from the faerie stalls. This is a very, very unwise idea. As masters of illusion, the faeries are well able to see through deceptions, and may treat thieves harshly: they can summon the guards, or use their own faerie powers against criminals. The storyguide should feel free to be imaginative and cruel in such cases.

Faeries Present

Firstly, many of the human merchants present for *their* fair have faerie counterparts.

However, the faeries trade by complex and obscure rules of their own, and place little value on things valued by man, while valuing apparent trivia. As such, it is not possible to simply walk up to one of these traders and purchase items of marvelous power — anything traded must be a matter of role-play and inspiration. (See the short adventure “A Shopping Expedition”, page 38.)

The mundane counterparts in the following list should mostly be rather obvi-

ous — even the faeries’ names are a warped version of the mortals’:

Kento, an exotic-looking faerie, selling the leather of faerie beasts, beaten out so it is paper thin and very supple. Kento might trade for a special knife — perhaps a blunt knife which could sever the spirit from a body?

Trebrand, a seller of “unconsidered trifles” (anything that the storyguide finds amusing or weird enough). Trebrand will trade trifles for trifles...

Win-All, seller of faerie ale and mead; drink your own oblivion... Win-All will trade more easily than most, and may accept mundane food-stuffs — which might be considered exotica in Faerie.

Galam, who (of course) sells faerie wines, with *very* strange effects on mortal imbibers. Some of her wines capture the essence of places or events: e.g. “Summer Wine” from the Faerie Court of Summer. You might manage to convince her to accept spice-berries containing vis, to brew into magical wine.

Maude, whose cloth is made of the finest plaited grass, or horse hair, or man-hair, or birch bark, or other substances. Her fibers are all drawn from living things, and have a power over their donor. You could sell your own hair, but this will enable her to summon you and demand a service. To sell the hair of another is difficult unless they come in person — a cut lock of hair has no value.

Tennent, who sells cloud-fleece, from small clouds of course. They do look very like sheep skins...

Pass-Rose, a sweetmeats and spice meats vendor whose goods use *faerie*





herbs and spices — e.g. faerie flowers picked by moonlight, nuts from the oldest tree in Brezeliande, and the like. Her specialty is roses.

Goodwall sells cloths and fancy cords. All the cloths and cords have strange properties — cleaning, polishing, smothering, binding and the like.

Alane is a faerie weaponsmith, who sells what he claims are the finest swords in the world. Alas, your poor coin is of little value. Perhaps a heroic deed might win a plain sword of Faerie Iron?

Olave, a dryad (a wood faerie), sells charms. Oh yes... charm a man, or make a man potent; bind him or free him...

Broc is a man-sized Badger, who sits in an armchair at his stall, wearing the clothes of a prosperous Merchant. He sells the finest spider silk.

Jessame sells homespun cloth, which is light and fine, and stays clean forever. She keeps a stable of Brownies hard at work weaving it.

Yrma is a faerie silversmith. She once worked a fallen star into a crown, which gives an idea of her skill and style.

River, a naiad (water-nymph), appears as a beautiful young woman, with a perpetually wet shawl. She sells gold ornaments: rings, necklaces and pendants, brooches and the like. (These are actually taken from the drowned, and are very special to those who understand.) Once you understand what she is trading, an equal trade should be relatively easy.

Harris, a seller of crystals, has crystalized versions of *many* things, and crystal balls, and balls with miniature worlds within. Stones or gems from exotic places, carved masterfully to depict their source, may

interest Harris, particularly if the carved substance is magically related to the subject matter.

Paddler is a faerie fish merchant. The fish have been preserved, but may still talk back to the unwary.

Rosa sells fruits from far into Arcadia, brought out for the local faeries. She has a leafy, twiggy nature.

Rowanne and Anna are stumpy gnome potters, whose pots look utterly plain but are indestructible.

Poller is a dwarf, and a worker of Iron. He sits on a stool surrounded by iron bars, which he stretches and tears and ties with his bare hands, to make chains. He also works hot iron, but not here.

Guillemot is apparently a large sea bird. He sells items made from exotic shells from faerie lands beneath the sea. Guillemot may accept an unusual definition of “shell” if you can talk him into it!

Dool has stacks upon stacks of the pressed and preserved skins of strange animals, stretched tight on wooden boards, styli of faerie silver that will hold and deliver inks like a quill, and strange magical inks. While skins of magical beasts are acceptable, they are not “interesting” as he has his own sources of these. He would be more interested in, say, a scroll whose text has been separated out into a restorative spell or potion.

The mortal horse market, too, has a “mirror,” with its own characters:

Houulis, a talking horse, and a merchant. Houulis sells mundane horses (who *don't* talk back!). Houulis will in fact trade mundane items and horses... but it may take some effort for the players to realize this is

Typical Faerie Merchants

The following can be used as a model for most of the denizens of the faerie fair. Storyguides can adjust precise details, especially abilities, and add minor faerie powers, as seems appropriate.

Characteristics: Int 0, Per +3, Pre +3, Com +3, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex +1, Qik 0

Faerie Might: 15-25

Size: 0

Personality Traits: Rules-bound +4, Cryptic +3

Wpn/Atk	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawling (fist)	+4	+4	+3	+0	n/a

Soak: +0

Body Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Awareness 5 [plus *Faerie Sight*] (customers' desires), Bargain 6 (impossible trades), Charm 4 (strangers), Faerie Fair Lore 5 (strange traditions), Faerie Guile 6 (concealing their true desires), Faerie Lore 4 (the Faerie world), Speak Breton 5, Speak French 5, Speak Latin 5

Powers: One or more powers relating to their Trade, e.g. Control Element, Enchant Objects or such: Hermetic spells can be used as improvised guidelines if needs be, but in practice the precise details of these powers are for roleplay, not rules. Power ratings of 5 to 8 are typical. See *Faeries*, revised edition, pages 92-95.

Faerie Sight, InIm 30, 0 points — the faerie can see through glammers and illusions of less than the level of this power (if it wants to — it can choose to “play along” and accept it as real). The faerie can also add the magnitude of this power (6) to skill rolls against deception, such as spotting attempts at Legerdemain.

One or more defensive or offensive powers, such as:

Control Person, ReMe 25, 5 points — allows the faerie to enslave a single victim for 12 hours, similar to *Enslave The Mortal Mind*, ReMe 40. The victim gets an initial chance to resist with an Intelligence roll vs. 9+.

Enchanting Music, ReMe 25, 3 points — those mundanes hearing the song are affected emotionally by the song: they may be calmed, angered, confused, or inspired to dance as long as the music continues.

Fear, CrMe 20, 2 points — by glaring at a victim, the faerie shows them their own greatest fears, which may make them cower, or flee.

Glamour, CrIm or MuIm 20, 1 point — the power can affect an object up to Size 0, affects all 5 senses and may be treated as a real object or a real transformation. If the faerie leaves or loses interest, the glamour will fade away.

Insubstantial Form, MuCo(Au) 40, 3 points — allows the faerie to assume a non-physical form, but not to become invisible. The faerie remains insubstantial for up to an hour: physical objects cannot affect the faerie nor can it handle physical things while using this power.

Shapechange, MuCo(An) 35, 2 points — allows the faerie to assume the form of an animal or bird, or a fantastical animal. The form chosen limits physical abilities, though it uses its own Intelligence, Presence and Communication scores, and retains a Fae ability to speak. The faerie can revert to its own form without cost, but must expend Might to adopt any other form.





Shapechange Other, MuCo(An) 25, 2 points — anyone the faerie can see can be affected, and changed into any normal animal, adjusting the animal's characteristics as if a Shapeshifter (see p. 252 of the **Ars Magica** rulebook): The animal retains its human Intelligence, Presence and Communication scores (although the latter two are not useful except in dealings with animals), adjusting other characteristics by half the human ones (round towards 0). Replace Personality Traits by the Traits of the animal (see *The Mediaeval Bestiary* for examples). They may speak to animals, but cannot understand or be understood by humans; faeries can speak to transformed animals. Physical abilities are limited to those possible for a normal animal. Duration can be either 12 hours or "until changed". In the former case, to dispel the change before the time is up, the power must be overcome as if a level 25 spell; in the latter, the change will last indefinitely, but any subsequent shapechange will dispel the faerie effect.

Equipment: stall and faerie items.

Encumbrance: 0

Vis: 3 Mentem in head.

The faerie merchants live and trade by a rigid and obscure set of rules which make it very difficult to close a deal with them. Among these are that they will not declare a price for their goods, but expect customers to make an appropriate offer. If impressed, they will trade. However, the sorts of item these merchants consider appropriate are not those considered by normal mundane merchants. See the short adventure "A Shopping Expedition", page 38, for some suggestions. Storyguides may choose to make trades as difficult or easy as they wish, on a whim, according to whether they wish players to acquire any of these strange items.

The faeries consider *all* exchanges to be trades. They are reluctant to bind themselves to another, so players may find them apparently unwelcoming; e.g., offering a wished "good day to you", were it a real wish, would be a generous gift, and so they may be reluctant to accept this, lest it place them under an obligation.

what he is trading, and they may then lose interest!

Gillem "and friends." These are apparently a bunch of Hounds, lounging around, looking for work-for-hire. They quite enjoy the hunt — the fine clothes, the horse riding, the wine and feast afterwards... They seem to have quite have an eye for the ladies, too. They hang around any female faerie hounds, make appreciative comments about mundane bitches who they note, and adopt a familiar air with any attractive female humans or similar

(except for female faerie nobles, who they regard with due caution). Gillem might take payment in coin — Numismatic Amulets (ancient coins enchanted as amulets as a form of protective Hedge Magic).

Szyni, a swarthy faerie whose accent, dress, and conversation suggests that he comes from Eastern Europe, or some point similarly eastern and exotic, such as India, if the saga is set in the east. He has a number of indentured servants for hire, so he says. They don't look very happy. (They may be faeries who have

Faerie Guards

Although it is far from obvious who (if anyone) sponsors or organizes the faerie fair, there are faeries who will arrive to keep the peace, if it is broken. There is an effectively unlimited number of these guards, but not many turn up at once; long before the supply of guards runs out, panic and mayhem among the faeries present will have reduced everything to impossible chaos. Don't forget that most of the traders and customers have faerie powers, which they will almost certainly use in such circumstances, to one end or another!

The guards wear silver chainmail, and carry either staves or swords. If one should be slain, his body and all his

equipment will turn into a stone statue, which will then break into pieces.

Characteristics: Int -2, Per +3, Pre -1, Com -3, Str +3, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik +2

Faerie Might: 20

Size: 0

Personality Traits: Dutiful +3, Suspicious +2

Weapon/Atk	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawling (fist)	+8	+7	+7	+3	n/a
Long sword	+12	+10	+13	+9*	n/a
or					
Staff	+14	+12	+14	+6*	n/a

*See Abilities below.

Soak: +14



MAP OF THE FAIR



Merchants

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Kemo (Kento) | 8. Jourdain (Goodwall) | 15. Hervisse (Harris) |
| 2. Bertrand (Trebrand) | 9. Aleaume (Alane) | 16. Padrig (Paddler) |
| 3. Winol (Win-All) | 10. Alivia (Olave) | 17. Finian & Rosamund (Rosa) |
| 4. Galam (Galam) | 11. Brioc (Broc) | 18. Riouen & Avenie (Rowanne & Anna) |
| 5. Maudez (Maude) | 12. Jehan & Jostane (Jessame) | 19. Pol the Blacksmith (Poller) |
| 6. Tenenan (Tennet) | 13. Yvon (Yrma) | 20. Guillot (Guillemot) |
| 7. Passerose (Pass-Rose) | 14. Rivold (River) | 21. Doolin (Dool) |

Peddlers & Others

- A. Ale
- B. Brothel
- H. Horses & Hounds
- L. Latrines
- M. Meats
- N. Nobles' Compounds
- P. Pastries
- T. Tinkers
- W. Wine



Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Awareness 6 (trouble), Brawl 4 (fist), Faerie Fair Lore 6 (laws and customs), Great Weapons 6 (staff) OR Single Weapon 6 (faerie sword)

Powers:

Discern the Culprit, InIm 25, 0 points: if summoned to deal with troublemakers, they can unerringly pick out the ones who caused the trouble, despite attempts to blame others, disguise oneself or similar deceptions. This ability works against both faerie powers and human magic.

Pacify the Culprit, PeMe 20, 1 point: If an opponent takes damage from the guards' weapons while the guard is wielding them, the victim is put to sleep: roll Sta 9+ to resist.

Equipment: Faerie silver mail armor (half normal encumbrance), a slender silver sword or a stout oak staff (all magical constructs, which turn to stone and shatter if the guard is slain).

Encumbrance: -1 with staff, 0 with sword.

If trouble starts, the guards will soon arrive. They are prepared to fight, and equipped to disarm and disable if possible. If culprits do not fight but try to talk their way out of trouble, the guards, although not bright, turn out to have an extensive knowledge of the strange customs of the fair, and will be able to come up with a long list of apparent offenses, most of them apparently designed to catch out the unwary mundane. If the guards do knock out a culprit, he will wake in the middle of the night with a mighty hang-over, in the meadow outside the fair proper.

Players who are unreasonably prone to violence may be distracted by these fellows, but the real stopping power lies in the many faerie powers which can be exercised by the merchants against those who try to attack the fair. Think "Keystone Cops" rather than a dangerous melee.

somehow been reduced to mortal appearance and powerlessness, or mortals trapped into service by careless dealings with the faerie folk. Trying to free them somehow should lead to long, complex, and tricky plots full of faerie magic; they are bound to service by subtle powers and curses.)

In addition, there are faerie entertainers:

The Four Fools — four gangly faerie specimens in garish fool's livery, with jangling bells. They are not funny, but cruel and vicious: it is their duty to recite sayings from the *Book of Fooels*, which can make a strong man writhe as the punchline hits

home. If they smile, they show the sharp triangular fangs of a pure carnivore. They wander the fair, making everyone uneasy, but anyone harming them may be in for a world of hurt, either magical and subtle or direct, as they are protected by unbreakable faerie laws and customs, which oblige all faeries to take their side.

Ninn-the-Bear, a Talking bear. Ninn-the-Bear will **trade** stories with anyone. She is a large faerie (physically comparable to the Size +2 bear in the *Ars Magica* core book); she also gets called on to help the faerie guards if there is any trouble. In combat, she regularly uses *knockdown* attacks.

Note that, should the magi return to the faerie fair on subsequent occasions (after seven years or more), the human

traders in its mundane counterpart may have died, retired, grown rich or poor, or otherwise changed. The faeries should change to reflect this, usually in some odd and parodic way.

Lastly, there are “casual” faerie visitors and customers. Storyguides can invent all sorts of faeries at whim, or bring in characters from other stories or locations. When the fair is taking place, faerie trods lead to its regio and some of the restrictive rules on travel are lifted. Two examples:

Felicia appears to be a beautiful young woman, full of grace, dressed in finest silks; she has cat’s ears and large almond shaped eyes. She also has many jangling earrings and gold bracelets, and a silver chain looped about her waist and running to her ankle. This chain cannot be broken by normal means, for it is a symbol of her bound servitude; nor can she reveal who she serves, or how she can be freed.

(Characters should guess that trying to find out, let alone to free her, would lead them into lengthy troubles. If they insist on trying, the storyguide should use other faeries to try to dissuade or divert them, or improvise at length. It is not certain that Felicia would *want* liberty.)

Cierella is the “Lady of the Mists” — see chapters V-VII. She cannot normally leave her valley, especially not for mortal realms, but the rules of the fair and faerie paths transcend such limitations.

The Faerie Trods link other faerie places to the Fair, permitting their lords and ladies to reach the fair without leaving Faerie, but Arcadia itself remains out of reach. Locating and identifying a path within the fair would be very difficult, as their owners know how to mask them, but a cunning magus might follow a faerie lord when they set out home.



Ninn-the-Bear

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +3, Pre +3, Com +3, Str +4, Sta +5, Dex 0, Qik 0

Faerie Might: 20

Size: +2

Personality Traits: Ferocious in Combat +3, Obsessed with stories +3

Reputations: Respected storyteller +3, with *all* faeries.

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Maul	+6	+12	+3	+16	n/a
Tackle	+6	+6	+0	+14*	n/a

*Plus knockdown.

Soak: +25

Body levels: OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Bargain 4 (tales), Brittany Lore 4 (lay of the land), Charm 3 (subtle wit), Etiquette 4 (Faerie courts), Faerie Guile 6 (politeness), Faerie Lore 6 (Faerie beasts), Folk Ken 3 (gathered tales), Intrigue 4 (gossip), Legend Lore 4

(mythic beasts), Speak Breton 6, Speak French 6, Storytelling 6 (faerie stories).

Powers:

Strength of the Earth, Mu(Re)An 20, 4 points: by drawing on the strength of the earth, Ninn can increase her Strength and Stamina by 5 points each; and gains a +6 resistance to knock-down. She can only do this if she is in contact with the earth.

Equipment: none

Encumbrance: 0

Vis: 4 Imaginem, in her tongue.

Despite her ferocious appearance, Ninn is an keen and witty story-teller. While she may lack the creativity of mortals, she makes up for this with her wide knowledge. She is keen to learn new stories, so characters with Free Expression will find her quite welcoming.



A Faerie Tourney?

Given that the faeries tend to emulate and mirror the activities of mortals in the town, especially at the time of the fair, it is possible that they will incorporate a tourney into *their* festivities. This could add another strange and tricky set of concerns for magical visitors.

Faerie knights tend as a class to be at least as proud and honor-obsessed as their mortal counterparts, and often even more formidable in battle — after all, they have many mortal lifetimes to practice with their arms, if they can remain focused, and in any case, combat may be the whole of their nature. Furthermore, if the rules of human tourneys seem complex and rigid, faerie tourneys are much worse. Faeries sometimes seem to create rules for the love of it, and live by them absolutely.

It would thus usually be very unwise for mortals to become involved with the faerie tourney as competitors, unless they are somehow forced into it, or they are desperate for something which the faeries are offering as a prize. Nor should they generally sponsor or aid faerie competitors, unless they want to run the risk of gaining whimsical, powerful, supernatural enemies for obscure reasons. On

the other hand, *refusing* a faerie competitor's request for aid or support can carry a similar risk... It may actually be possible to provide such support, earn a faerie's gratitude, and come out ahead.

In the worst case, someone who enters the faerie tourney and is defeated may lose, not just his life, arms and armor, or some dignity, as are the common dangers of mortal tourneys, but lifetimes of service or who-knows-what else. Of course, a vanquished faerie may be required by the rules to offer his opponent all sorts of prizes.

For entertaining effect, when describing a faerie tourney, the storyguide should feel free to make the appearance of the competitors absolutely no guide to their combat skills. The "knights" involved might include huge, strong, but slow and clumsy ogres, comical goblins riding dogs or badgers who display startling cunning or virtual invulnerability, and beautiful female warriors of surpassing skill. Magic of any kind may be prohibited in the tourney — or it may be considered an integral part of each confrontation. And the only way to learn the rules *may* be to take part.

Story Ideas

Short Story: The Feast

This story works best if the covenant has become established and at least somewhat known in the lands around the town — perhaps just as the eccentric or schol-

arly lords of an out-of-the-way area. The lord of the town could thus consider it only polite to include them in any events to which he invites his other neighbors. Alternatively, if some of the magi's companions are lords or knights, they can become involved in this situation.

The situation is simple, and more of an opportunity to make contacts and meet significant people than a dramatic narrative. The midsummer fair is coming up, and the lord of the town has decided,

for various reasons, that this is a good opportunity to show off his generosity and build a few alliances.

An Invitation

Thus it is that the covenant (and/or one or more of their allies or companions) receive an invitation to the feast of the Midsummer Fair. Some characters, especially obsessive wizards, may be inclined to ignore this; they should be reminded (in or out of character) that this would be unwise, as being thought rude and churlish is a great way to lose potential friends and ultimately gain enemies — and while members of the Order of Hermes may be required to refrain from “interfering with the mundanes,” if those mundanes find you irritating enough to want to attack you, that’s just as much trouble.

This doesn’t mean that the entire covenant will be expected to go to the feast, but they should try and find at least one or two people who can attend and look at least vaguely important and passably polite. (Here is where Jerbiton magi

can demonstrate the benefits of their philosophy.) Of course, they will need guards and escorts, and someone should remind them that they will need to take gifts (see below).

Accommodation

Nobles and churchmen (and people with effectively comparable positions, such as the leaders of reclusive communities of “scholars”) will be accommodated in the castle or in comfortable houses in the town owned by the lord; their guards and grooms may be offered space in lofts over the castle stables; other characters attending or hanging round the feast may have to make their own arrangements. The last may not be easy at a time when the town is full of merchants, entertainers, and other visitors.

Medieval folk are more accustomed to sharing rooms and beds as necessary, and may be less likely to demand privacy. However, typical Hermetic pride may make things a little complicated.



Gifts in the Middle Ages

One point which this story illustrates is the vast importance of gifts in Mythic Europe. All but the most unworldly characters will be aware of this, and the players should have it explained to them as necessary before play begins.

Gift giving is an important part of social interaction, be it the meeting of great nobles, the generosity of a lord to underlings, the dues owed by those underlings, right down to the sharing of surplus garden produce by peasants. A gift exchange is more than barter, as it conveys good will, and an expectation of future returns.

When visiting someone, you would be expected to present a modest gift, perhaps a kid goat, or a brace of rabbits. If you applied to a court, you

would offer a gift to the judge in thanks for the service they will offer you. A good master would give annual presents to their apprentices and servants. Likewise, a filius and parens will exchange modest gifts with letters sent, and perhaps larger gifts when they meet.

Much of the time, players need not pay much attention to this — those who visit them will bring some modest token which will disappear into the covenant stores or kitchens, and they (or rather the magi’s grogs!) will draw an appropriate gift from stores to convey to others that they visit. Other times, the gifts will be significant, either because the choice will influence or upset others, or because of the nature and value of the



An Exchange of Gifts

As everyone invited arrives for the feast, the castle servants lead them to the lord, who will present them with what he and his advisers believe to be appropriate gifts. Visitors with even the faintest grasp of social niceties (see the box-out) will have brought gifts of their own to present in exchange.

Most gifts will be quite carefully judged, both for value and form. Giving too little is blatantly insulting, but giving too much to someone of limited means is as bad, as it makes their own, necessarily smaller responses embarrassing. For example, warrior nobles are likely to present each other with fine swords from foreign cities noted for their weapons crafters, or even warhorses (a rather grand, even extravagant gift), while others may give and receive fine fur cloaks, bolts of cloth, sets of silver goblets, chests of exotic spices, and so on.

On this occasion, the lord has also invited the monks of a nearby hermitage to send visitors. This is a little difficult for the monks, as they are unsure if it is prop-

er for them to attend a worldly feast, but they recognize the practical need to keep in with their neighbors. They cannot send junior brothers lest they be tempted too far, nor dignify the event with the senior brothers or the prior, so they send a trio of middle ranking brothers. They dress very (almost ostentatiously) plainly. Their gifts are a message of blessing from the prior, and a plain book of morally worthy and uplifting psalms. In exchange, they receive an illuminated manuscript of a text written by a saint; the lord is making a slightly heavy-handed attempt to impress them.

He has also invited the churchmen of the nearest cathedral city. The bishop is in fact away at the moment, and his canon, deputizing for him, is far too busy to attend, but he has sent a priest and two monks from his staff, along with a half-dozen men-at-arms. They give a gold filigree incense burner, and receive in return a gold cross with enamel inlay.

If the magi have been invited, and their status is known, or at least an open secret, or even if they are just regarded as “eccentric scholars,” they represent some-

gift. In particular, gifts between nobles or between magi are likely to be significant enough to record.

Nobles are likely to give and receive extravagant presents: swords or armor, jewelry or cloth, even horses.

When meeting influential mundanes (nobles or clergy), or attending an event the mundanes consider important (such as the feast depicted here), you may wish to gift the magi with (say) a modest book, and to expect the magi to come up with an appropriate returned gift (one which falls within the Code!). Treat this as a role-playing exercise as they struggle to accept and return the gift under the social penalties of The Gift (while the perhaps knowing mundane smiles inwardly).

If a quaesitor is asked to judge a dispute, both parties are expected to offer a gift to recompense

the judge for this service — and since this is likely to be in the form of vis or books, a record is needed. This is not bribery, but freely given (*because it is expected!*). Fines for offenses committed come on top of this!

After the gift of their training (which can never be fully repaid), one of the greatest gifts a parens can offer his filius is that of an initial Longevity Potion, which can be expected to last the filius for many decades, and save them re-brewing until they are competent to brew their own. For this gift, a filius should be generous to their parens.

If you wish a Verditius enchanter to craft a device for you, you might simply haggle over a price, or you might make yourself seem more generous by offering a gift in advance, thereby earning their goodwill as well.

thing of a problem. However, the lord's servants have turned up an obscure, rather battered, but possibly interesting philosophical text, which he hopes will be appropriate. The storyguide can make this simply a minor (if perhaps amusing) addition to the covenant library, or can have it turn out to be a lost gem which is the seed of a whole string of subsequent stories.

The Feast

The great feast which is the focus for all these events takes place in the Great Hall of the town's castle, on the evening of the Midsummer fair. During the day preceding it, the lords and ladies will have been amusing themselves watching the tourney or taking part in it. Since it is

midsummer in Europe, the sun will not set until late, & the festivities begin well before sundown.

Chapter 4 of *Ordo Nobilis*, pages 56-59, describes food and entertainment. A possible menu, drawn from *The Forme of Curye* (rather later than this time, but similar in style) might offer:

Tartlettes (spice meat dumplings in broth),
 Perry of Peson (pea soup),
 Connynges in Cyrip (rabbits in syrup),
 Noumbles (tripe in ginger broth),
 Tart de Brymlent (fruit and salmon pie),
 Funges (mushrooms, leeks and ginger),
 Erbolate (baked eggs with herbs),
 Fritors (parsnip and apple fritters in ale batter),





Sauces inn side bowls, for dipping:
Sawse Noyre (black sauce of chicken livers), and Sawse Sarzyne (rosehips in wine with almonds).

Leshes fryed in lenton (pie of apples, pears and dried fruits),
Rosée (rose pudding),
Sambocade (elderflower cheesecake)

The food would be served in several courses, not as “appetizers”, “entrées”, “side dishes” etc, but as a selection across all these, with the next course being a different selection replacing the first. As suggested in *Ordo Nobilis*, “desserts” (Leshes, Rosée & Sambocade) may be served on a table in a side room after the hall has been cleared for dancing, or they may be served alongside other dishes.

(As an aside, the authors can recount trying these dishes from a modern reconstruction book, and serving food as an accompaniment to the game session, and that it went down well with the players.)

Entertainments

Minstrels will play from a gallery, or walking among the diners. After the meal, one or more guests may sing for the

pleasure of the company — this might be an opportunity for a companion character to show off their skills, either by seeking a place as a minstrel for the feast or as one of the guests.

During the event, the Mummers will present their play. If more entertainments are needed, the lord may also have hired Ninnoc and her dancing bear (page 25).

Short Story: A Shopping Expedition

This story might serve as an introductory episode to a Saga set in an Autumn Covenant, whose senior magi know of the Faerie Fair.

It is nearly Midsummer, and the annual fair is expected at the town, a day’s walk away. The covenant has various mundane needs to be satisfied from the fair, and the Autocrat has arranged to send several grogs to make purchases.

This year, several of the apprentice magi are nearing completion of their studies, and this year have been asked by their masters to go to the fair and acquire certain special items for them. In the way of older wizards, the masters assume that the apprentices will know what they mean, and so have only provided a simple list:

“Multi-Colored Ink” — This really does mean multi-colored, not several inks of different colors

“Cloth of Gold” — Mundane cloth-of-gold (woven with thin strands of gold wire) would be an unimaginative answer, and they assume the apprentices will realize this.

“A Crystal Tear” — A crystallized actual tear.

Mummers and the Legend of St. Brioch

We have little evidence for the origins of secular plays or of mumming, but by the 14th century there is some. We have thus taken the liberty of including the mummers and their play. If you prefer, you can replace them with acrobats. The same acrobats will then be working the fair during the day.

The Welsh monk Briouc (Brioch) came to preach in Brittany in the 5th century, and is believed to have lived where the St-Briouc Fountain stands near the east end of one of the chapels in the Breton town named after him.

“Summer Wine” — Wine of the Summer Court of Light.

“Hair of the Dog” — First catch your dog!

They have, for once, remembered that merchants require payment, and provided a sack which “can be used to pay for things” (apparently an implicit reference to its contents). Inside the bag are:

Twenty-four silver pennies, of recent coinage. (These will purchase mundane food and drink, or other entertainment.)

A fine carved figurine, in dense black wood, depicting a dog-headed man. (This item is of no real value or history, being a recent fake, but tests the apprentices’ assumption that all items provided must “matter” for the exercise.)

An ivory plaque, carved with a miniature showing Crusaders attacking a Castle. (The “castle” depicted is in fact a jinni’s palace.)

Thirty-six sheets of parchment, scraped clean for re-use, folded and creased. (The images that were once present can be restored by magic; this conceals a Tractatus on Animál (Faerie), with illustrations of strange mating habits of fantastical beasts.)

A small pouch of spice berries, looking like peppercorns. (These hold 3 pawns of Ignem Vis.)

Three old and battered silver coins, no longer identifiable (These are numismatic amulets: level 10, hard to detect, non-Hermetic.)

A leather pouch holding fine sand. (The sand is from the land of the jinn; it can be formed into the shape of a castle, making a miniature replica. Recreating the castle depicted on the ivory plaque, above,

produces an object of some magical significance.)

A blunt knife, perhaps usable for eating? (This can sever spirits: PeMe 20, Touch/Mom/Ind, destroys a spirit if $SD+30 \geq \text{ Might}$; 24/day: residue Mag. 1.5.)

A large loaf of hard black rye bread (“Travelers’ Bread”).

A medium-sized cheese, about 2lb, well matured.

Hard-boiled eggs, one per apprentice, plus one rather too old to be edible. Cook provided the bread, edible eggs and cheese for the apprentices; the last egg provides an unusual protective container for a dose of Image Restorative. (Mu(Cr)Im 20, Touch/Perm/Ind)

The apprentices are dismissed once they have the sack and the briefest of instructions, as the test requires them to investigate the items, and deduce their own solution. The apprentices are sent to accompany a party of grogs, who have been given normal monies to pay for the goods on their own list. The apprentices may make reasonable requests for extra items, by asking the grogs: the magi will not allow further disturbance until the test is over (when they return from the fair).

It is expected that the apprentices will open the sack and, being struck with curiosity about the items, investigate them magically. Spontaneous Intéllego spells will reveal much, but not all, about the items. (The non-Hermetic coin amulets will be beyond their powers, requiring laboratory work to investigate, and anyone seeking to use the sand to scry or whatever will find that Hermetic magic cannot penetrate into the jinni’s regio, only to the base of it.)

At the fair, the grogs will pitch tents for the group, and leave the apprentices





to their own devices. If they wish to be accompanied, the grogs will oblige, but warn that too large a group will draw untoward attention.

As they wander the fair, and the stalls are described, the apprentices should observe that most of the items can be found, matching to a greater or lesser degree the specified list — but that this would surely be too simple a test of their intelligence. (The magi will be displeased if they return with mundane items.) Further, the money they have is inadequate to purchase the listed items, yet the trade items seem quite unsuitable for barter.

Eventually, they should find a way into the Faerie Fair. They may now wander the fair again, observing the corre-

spondence between mundane and faerie realms. Their task is to match the items requested and the trade items they have, to the relevant faerie vendors, and to persuade them to accept the trade. Properly matched, the items should be easy to trade as the senior magi have chosen them carefully.

The exact pairing is left to roleplaying, but the suggestion is:

Purchase the “multi-coloured ink” from Dool the faerie scribe supplier. (If they bargain well, he may give them a stylus of Faerie silver, which grants a +1 to Scribe rolls made using it.) Dool can be given the separated parchment and text (the potion in the egg) - they should still be separate, not combined, or he will think them valueless!

Purchase “golden leather” from Kento, in return for the blunt knife, which he will consider to be “very sharp.”

Purchase a “crystallized tear” from Harris the crystal merchant, in return for a depiction of the jinni’s castle formed from the sand from the Arabian regio. (Muto Terram, with a good finesse roll, will perform the task nicely.)

Purchase “summer wine” from Galam, the wine seller, who will be happy with the peppercorns bearing Vis — “fiery” and “spicy,” she will say.

Purchase “hair of the dog” from Gillem and his doggy friends, in return for the three numismatic amulets. Gillem will give three hairs which the senior magi can use to call them for service.

The troupe may find other trades possible, especially if role-played suitably, such as faerie ale or mead from Win-All, in return for delicacies such as black travellers’ bread.

When they return to the covenant, the senior magi will expect an account of their travels, of what they purchased (and how), and what they spent. A good account here will please the magi and set



Hermetic Hospitality

In a parallel to Knightly Hospitality, the tradition of Hermetic Hospitality demands that magi set aside their differences and visit each other peacefully. Visits by or to other magi provide an opportunity to introduce other characters, and a source of story seeds.

While accepting hospitality, a magus is expected to refrain from any hostile behavior and from spying (even by mundane means), and to share tales and news in a manner similar to Redcaps. The host covenant is likewise expected to refrain from hostilities toward, and spying on, the visitor, and to provide adequate food and lodging. Many covenants use this as an opportunity to show their status and wealth by providing generous or even lavish offerings; likewise, a visiting magus wishing to make a point may bring generous gifts. In general, in a dispersed Order with limited contact between magi, visitors are a welcome distraction, and something to look forward to.

If relationships break down, the visitors are expected to leave (and be allowed to leave) before taking up the dispute. Even sworn enemies may choose to abide by this code, in parallels with knightly tales, although magi seem to be a more prickly breed than even Black Knights.

the apprentices on the way to independence. (If they are about to take their

Gauntlet tests, their parentes will treat a success here as contributing to that.)

The storyguide may wish to twist the end of this adventure, by breaking the return journey with Chapter IV, “The Short Way Home.”

Story Seed: Hermetic Visitors

It is very unlikely that senior Merinita magi do not know of the faerie fair, or that they will ignore it. Rather, some are likely to attend, with or without other magi, companions, or grogs.

These visitors may have some distance to travel, and it is assumed that the troupe’s covenant is the closest to the town. The travelers will therefore call on the covenant and ask for hospitality. They will stay one night before the fair, visit for its whole length (three days) and then call back and stay one more night before returning to their homes.

They will bring small gifts — nothing as significant as vis or books, just food-stuffs or similar consumables. They will however introduce themselves, and talk about their own covenants; they will also display any rivalries between themselves. This gives the storyguide an opportunity to introduce the players to other magi and to set out the context of the saga. The troupe’s covenant does not exist in isolation, but is part of a larger order, and interactions between covenants and magi are important, be they allies, friends, rivals or enemies.





Chapter IV

The Short Way Home

This is a story which revolves around a group of grogs, and is essentially for them alone. It arises from the actions of a powerful faerie or group of faeries, although in fact there is little direct contact with the Fae in the course of the plot. It can be played as a sequel to a visit to the midsummer fair described in the previous chapter, although this is not obligatory; in this case, the storyguide will need to use a degree of arbitrary fiat to separate out any magi from the party.

The adventure is slightly strange but essentially simple and linear, and is primarily designed to be played for comedy and to illustrate some odd ideas which happen to be true in Mythic Europe. However, there are real problems to solve and real dangers to face in the course of the plot. It is just that they are not the usual sort.

It is strongly recommended that any storyguide planning to use this story gains access to a copy of *The Medieval Bestiary Revised Edition* for **Ars Magica**, for reasons which should soon become apparent.

A Faerie Joke

The plot starts with a group from the troupe's covenant on the way home.

Where they are traveling *from* is not overly important; it is the being on the road which matters. However, there is one important condition; the group, or at least someone in it, must have annoyed or irritated a powerful faerie, though not necessarily knowingly.

If this story follows a visit to the midsummer fair, it is *very* plausible that someone could have annoyed a faerie visitor there, but the most likely candidate to have caused such a problem is a mage (or apprentice). As the mage (or magi) will be taken out of the plot very soon, it is important that the storyguide makes sure that player has a grog (or non-magical companion) to play as well. Try to make the process of ensuring this look fairly casual.

Thus it is that the group are traveling through a secluded woodland area when they are attacked — not lethally, but very confusingly. The annoyed faerie (and probably others of its kind, assisting out of subservience or for fun) use glammers and lesser illusions to distort the woods, Control Element (Air or Water) to conjure mists, and Control Plants to make bushes and brambles grab and trip, or Confusion (similar to Fear power) or Enchanting Music powers to affect the minds of the group. Any magi in the group can resist these effects with *Parma Magica* and other magic, but the grogs

are less well defended, and the whole traveling party becomes scattered and some are lost.

This part of the plot obviously involves a fair amount of storyguide fiat, which some groups will accept better than others. Some will accept simply being told the result, with mage characters being taken out of play (their players perhaps even being forewarned); others may demand that the whole business actually be played out. In the latter case, the storyguide may have to work at ensuring the desired result without looking too obvious. One option is to work to convince the mage that the best option is to get back to the covenant and find some help to recover the scattered grogs. It is possible to run a mage's solitary, unescorted journey home, through faerie-infested woods, as a separate adventure, if the other players do not mind sitting back and watching; while the mage may be nervous, and can have a few tricky moments, this need not actually be an overly complicated or dangerous trip. (The faeries are much more mischievous than vicious, and have quite likely now withdrawn having made their point.) On the other hand, it may help if the mage is slowed and distracted on this journey.

In any case, one group of grogs find themselves out in the woods, needing to gather themselves together and regain the path.

The Transformation

At this point, the storyguide can have a little fun. The grog players should be told that they recover their wits, and everything now seems normal. However, they will soon discover that things have actually *changed* for them. The storyguide can deliver a speech along the following

lines, shrugging off or ignoring interruptions for as long as possible:

"You find yourselves together, cut off from the main party; as you stay safely hidden for a moment, you maybe think that you hear the clamor of battle in the distance, receding. As you turn to each other, to take stock of the situation, and decide what to do next, you get the sense that things may have become a little odd.

"You are in a large clearing — very large, now you look, with immense trees towering over you. Your immediate shelter is formed by one such tree, growing low to the ground — you can see the open space beyond, looking through the leaves. You have lost all your equipment, arms and armor; you're carrying nothing. However, not far away, in the clearing, is a large pile of equipment and trade goods — perhaps spilt from the goods bought at the Fair.

"On inspection, the pile seems to comprise armor, clothing, weapons, packs and various other belongings, all of which must have been the property of a troop of giants. Nothing is small enough to be carried in your paws, and the packs and belts wouldn't fasten round your bodies.

"There is giants' food in some of the packs, which some of you might enjoy, but the rest of you think it looks and smells dubious and inedible. For that matter, some of you suddenly find yourselves thinking that some of the others look rather more tasty!

"There are some lengths of rope about your own size, as well as giants' rope, and some pieces of blanket as well as immense bales of cloth. One of the packs has spilt open, revealing a pile of shiny metal things, including some paw-sized metal short-spears — although if you hold a spear in a paw, you can't walk properly. (Incidentally, metal tastes nasty if you hold it in your mouth.)

"It may be possible to rig a pack to be carried on someone's spines, or to be strapped to the largest amongst you..."





Yes, the situation should be quite obvious by this point. When the grogs deliberately look at themselves, the truth sinks in. It seems that the Fae have transformed them into other forms.

“Not bad forms actually, compared to the cumbersome giants... (Umm, that is, people...)”

Their duty (and obvious best strategy) is to return to the covenant; they need to find their way home, and protect each other on the way. It would not be seemly to eat each other, so they need to find food, and for that matter, stop other wildlife from eating any of the party.

Transforming Grogs

The storyguide should have prepared for this scene, having anticipated which grogs are likely to be involved, and especially what animals they will be transformed into, and should now hand out new, temporary character sheets.

The grogs will find that they have become several different types of animal. (Ideally, they should be transformed into species which have some kind of “symbolic” relationship to their natures as human beings, but it may be hard to find enough neat matches, and it is better to have a good variety of animal types in the scenario than to get too clever with the “personality matching.”) What is most important is that the mixture should include some weak (but perhaps stealthy) animals, so that the party have to depend on each other, and some conflicts such as predators and prey (e.g. a fox and a hare).

The storyguide should also look for ideas which involve a few small jokes,

such as changing a character with an Uncommon Fear of being caught unarmed into a hedgehog, or even changing an individual with the Curse of Venus

Character Conversions

To generate the animal form’s character sheet, follow the rules for Shapeshifters on page 252 of the **Ars Magica** rulebook: they retain their human intellects and knowledge, including their human Intelligence, and their Presence and Communication scores (but can only use these with other animals). Adopt the animal’s other characteristics from the Bestiary, but add one half (rounded to 0) of the character’s characteristics (including Size): thus a score of 0, +1 or –1 has no effect, but a score of 2 or 3 adjusts the animal characteristic by 1 point.

Most “physical” skills may be disregarded; few animals can use weapons. The transformation gives the character an instinctive understanding of how to use the new body shape. When fighting in animal form, the attacks listed below and in the *Medieval Bestiary* already include the “skill” of the animal, so do not add Brawling on top of this — however, you may wish to add a bonus of Brawl/3 to reflect the character’s training in rough and tumble.

Retain those Virtues and Flaws which seem to make sense in animal form

An aspect of the Faerie transformation in this story is to grant the normal skills of the wild animal, and to gradually replace the human Personality Traits by the animal’s Traits.

into an ermine — the symbol of purity and chastity.

Preferably, all the animals will be different species, but pairs of individuals who are notably similar in natures and abilities might become similarly matching animals. All should be vertebrates, of wild species known and preferably fairly common in the country around the covenant. Most should be mammals; reptiles are possible, but birds would cause too many problems.

Species possibly worth using include the lizard, hare, cat, and rat. A wild boar would be too large and formidable, unless the storyguide wants the characters battering through many problems, and a horse or a bear would be *much* too big, while a mouse might be too small. Storyguides should generally avoid rab-

bits and badgers, if they are going to use the set of encounters detailed below.

Talking to the Animals

One thing that the grogs will discover, sooner or later, is that the transformation has given them the ability to talk, not only to each other, but to all other animals (both wild and domesticated), and also to at least some Fae — but *not* to humans. (Of course, different animals may have different accents and styles of speech, at the storyguide's whim.) This will sometimes be convenient (and interesting) along the way, but terribly inconvenient at other times.

The grog-animals have also lost the ability to understand the sounds made by





Sample Animals

The following animals are a selection drawn from *The Medieval Bestiary: Revised Edition*. They would form suitable mixture for this adventure, avoiding fliers and large creatures, but storyguides are encouraged to make their own selection from the full *Bestiary*.

Cat (*Felis*)

Characteristics: Cun +1, Per +1, Str -5, Sta -2, Dex +3, Qik +1

Size: -3

Personality Traits: Curious +3, Aloof +2

Abilities: Athletics 3 (leaps and falls), Awareness 2 (alertness), Hunt 2 (small prey), Stealth 4 (hunting)

Ferocity: 1 (vs. rodents)

Wpn/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam
Bite or claws	+4	+4	+6	-6

Soak: -4

Fatigue: -2

Fatigue levels: OK, -3, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, -3, Incapacitated

Powers:

Eyes of the Cat: can see in near darkness

Perfect Balance: as per the Virtue on page 42 of the *Ars Magica* rulebook.

The cat is called the mouser because she kills mice. She has such sharp sight that she can see at night. Her vision pierces the darkness with gleams of light. She is stealthy when pursuing her prey. The birds do not realize what is lurking until she pounces. The cat buries her excrement because she cannot abide the presence of foul-smelling things. The tom-cat is very lustful. He will remove the kittens from their mother so that he can seduce her without distraction.

Ermine (*Mustela Alba*)

Characteristics: Cun +2, Per 0, Str -7, Sta -3, Dex +1, Qui +2

Size: -4

Personality traits: Proud +3, Chaste +2

Abilities: Athletics 2 (grace), Awareness 3, Herb lore 2 (medicines)

Ferocity: 2 (serpents and mice)

Wpn/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam
Bite	+5	+3	+8	-9

Soak: -7

Fatigue: -3

Fatigue levels: OK, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, -5, Incapacitated

The ermine is also known as the white weasel. He is a symbol of purity and chastity. It is said that if the ermine is surrounded with mud, he would rather be captured than muddy his coat trying to escape. He is a creature of northern parts, and not seen in Greece, Italy, or Iberia.

Fox (*Vulpes*)

Characteristics: Cun +4, Per +1, Str -5, Sta -2, Dex 0, Qui +2

Size: -3

Personality traits: Wily +3, Deceitful +2

Abilities: Athletics 2 (running), Awareness 3 (alertness), Disguise 1 (corpses), Guile 3 (animals), Hunt 3 (small prey), Stealth 1 (sneaking)

Ferocity: 1 (attack from surprise)

Wpn/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam
Bite	+5	+3	+8	-6

Soak: -5

Fatigue: -2

Fatigue levels: OK, -3, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, -3, Incapacitated

Physiologus writes that the fox is a wily, and crafty animal. He plays tricks on the unwary, and is entirely deceitful.

When he hunts, the fox does not use prowess, but guile. He is fond of the hedgehog but is not mighty enough to dash it open. So, he resorts to various schemes to get at his meal. Sometimes, once the hedgehog has rolled into a prickly ball, the fox will gingerly pick the hedgehog up in his mouth and roll it over. Then, its soft underparts are exposed, which the fox attacks to gain his meal. Other times, the fox will urinate in the hedgehog's snout and drown him, since he cannot essay the frontal attack.

The fox catches the hare through persistence. Once he has spotted his prey, he keeps steadily after it. The hare, seeing the hunter, dashes off for safety, and then waits a while. The patient fox comes along before long, which sets the hare off on another sprint. Eventually the hare is exhausted from dashing here and there, and the fox can catch it without further ado.

When the fox is truly in need of food, he will cover himself in red earth and then lie still. In this way, he appears bloodied and dead, and thereby lures birds who are interested in the apparent corpse. The birds will land and begin to peck at the fox, but he is patient, and waits until one is within his grasp, then he turns on the birds.

Hare (*Lepus*)

Characteristics: Cun -1, Per +1, Str -5, Sta -2, Dex 0, Qui +2

Size: -3

Personality traits: Timid +3, Devoted +2

Abilities: Athletics 2 (leaping), Awareness 5 (hunters)

Ferocity: 1 (defending its young)

Wpn/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam

Bite or kick +4 +1 +6 -8

Soak: -5

Fatigue: -2

Fatigue levels: OK, -3, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, -3, Incapacitated

The hare runs swiftly, and thus is called "light-footed" (Lat. *levipes*). He is a swift creature and a timid one. The hare is nimble on his feet. When he is chased by hounds, he will run this way and that, but never in a straight line, to try to elude his pursuers. The hare is vigilant, for he sleeps with his eyes open, and thus is never caught unawares. The hare of the plains is faster than the hare of the mountains. The mountain hare exercises on the plains, but takes refuge on rocky ground when he is pursued. Unlike horses and hounds, he is not bothered by the rocky ground, for his paws are coated with thick fur.

The hare makes his home in the rocks, so that he might have more places to hide from pursuers. When he returns to his home, he obscures his tracks in order to confuse the hunter. In winter, the hare beds in sunny spots, but in summer, he prefers shade. This way, the hare stays comfortable in his home all through the year. The hare knows his limitations, respects the limits of his abilities, and manages to survive by knowing his surroundings.

The female hare carries her young half-formed in the womb, and some are more formed than others, so that she need not give birth to them all at once. She is very devoted to her children. To protect them from predators, she will distribute her young about several nests, so that they will not all be caught at once if they are caught in their home.





Hedgehog (*Ericius*)

Characteristics: Cun +1, Per 0, Str -7,
Sta -3, Dex 0, Qui +1

Size: -4

Personality traits: Devoted (to family)
+3, Spiteful +2, Timid +2

Abilities: Athletics 1 (climb),
Awareness 3 (searching)

Ferocity: 1 (when collecting food for
young)

Wpn/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam
Spines	0	0	+7	-10

Soak: -6

Fatigue: -3

Fatigue levels: OK, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, -5, Incapacitated

The hedgehog has the appearance of a ball covered in quills. Physiologus writes that he climbs up into the grapevine to pluck the fruit from the vine. He throws the grapes to the ground, descends after, and then rolls on the fruit. This fastens the fruit to his quills, which he can then carry back to his young.

When the hedgehog is threatened by his enemies, such as the fox, he rolls himself up into a ball. His coat is covered in spines, so that when he curls up, he is defended by his spiny armor. He hides among the rocks to augment his natural defenses, for he is a timid animal. He is also spiteful, for he will urinate on his skin if he is caught, making it unfit to use.

The hedgehog's den has two holes in it for ventilation, one facing north, and one facing south. He will block up the north entrance to keep the northerly winds from blowing unchecked into his home. Likewise, he will block the south entrance to protect against southerly winds.

Sun Lizard (*Saura*)

Characteristics: Cun -3, Per 0, Str -7,
Sta -3, Dex 0, Qui +1

Magic Might: 10

Size: -4

Personality traits: Cold +2

Abilities: Athletics 3 (climb),
Awareness 3 (search)

Ferocity: 2 (when warm)

Wpn/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam
Bite	+3	+1	+6	-11*

Soak: -7

Fatigue: -3

Fatigue levels: OK, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, -5, Incapacitated

Powers:

**Poisonous Bite:* the lizard has a poisonous bite. The victim should make a Stamina stress roll of 6+ or lose a Body level.

The Severed Body Made Whole, CrAn 30, 5 points: if the lizard is cut in half, it can restore itself to full health if the parts can be rejoined.

The lizard is a kind of reptile that has limbs, unlike the serpent. Most lizards are poisonous, but their poison is stronger in the day than in the night, for they are cold by nature. Thus they can only harm when warm. Lizards sleep in nests in the winter and go out in the summer.

It is said that if a lizard is cut in half, the parts will scramble about. If the two parts find each other while they still have life in them, they will rejoin and reform the lizard. The lizard will eventually recover, but he will have a scar like a seam around his middle as a reminder of the experience.

humans, but instead perceive human speech as a dull booming buzz.

Personality Changes

Lastly, the transformed grogs should gradually become aware of a subtle but serious problem. They have their full human personalities and memories — for now. However, they also have the senses and many of the instincts of the creatures which they now resemble. It is the nature of mice to flee danger, or of hedgehogs to curl up when threatened — and it is also the nature of cats and foxes to eat mice and hedgehogs. While the grogs are not instantly reduced to mere beasts in spirit as well as in body, the natures of their changed bodies press on them.

To begin with at least, the storyguide can limit himself to merely hinting at this, mentioning in passing that the smaller and softer creatures look *tasty* to the carnivores, especially when they are hungry, and suggesting “appropriate” actions to each character in moments of stress. However, as time goes on, especially if the grogs seem to be dawdling or not taking the situation seriously enough, enforced die rolls may be appropriate. When a character might instinctively do something “animalistic,” whether it is fleeing danger, eating something clearly edible, or snapping at an opponent (or at possible food), require the player to roll a stress die, modified for the Strong-Willed virtue and any applicable personality traits. To begin with at least, the number to beat can be as low as 3, but this should increase as time goes on, if the character becomes hungry, or if the provocation is strong.

A botch can have the character acting purely as an animal for a minute or so, and *might* add one of the animal species’ standard Personality Traits to the charac-

ter’s list, perhaps at a reduced level. Several failures in a row could leave the victim barely capable of coherent thought. Some things may bring out an animal’s nature especially strongly; the smell of blood in large quantities can certainly induce fear or hunger, and fire is *terrifying*.

Storyguides should use this problem lightly — having one of the grogs eat another could hurt the game rather badly. Nonetheless, the problem should be present, and can act as a way to keep the party moving and taking their problems very seriously.

Encounters on the Way Home

Once they have come to terms with their situation and organized themselves, the transformed grogs will have to make their way back to their covenant. As they can remember, this is located around seven miles away on poor roads crossing several valleys — a bit over half a day’s travel for humans, slightly longer for this group, not all of whose members are built for prolonged walking. It will take them the remainder of this day, overnight and half the next day to get home.

The grogs can remember the way well enough, but when they think, they will realize that the route which they were taking avoided major roads or tracks in favor of privacy and quiet — not a bad idea for a human wizard, slightly tougher for a group of animals. In other words, they will be going cross-country, and what they, as animals, will meet may be slightly unpredictable.





Typical Hedge Faerie

Characteristics: Int 0, Per +1, Pre 0, Com +1, Str -9, Sta 0, Dex +1, Qik +3

Faerie Might: 5

Size: -5

Personality Traits: Proud +3, Curious +2, Friendly +1

Wpn/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam Fat
Brawl (Fists) +8 +5 +12 -14 n/a
Soak: -1

Body levels: OK, Incapacitated

Abilities: Awareness 3 (alertness), Brawling 3 (fist), Faerie Guile 3 (obtuse), Faerie Lore 2 (forest faeries), Forest Lore 3 (their bramble patch).

Powers:

Control Plants, Re(Mu)He 15, 1 point.

The faeries can control their brambles or similar plants, so that they move or transform at their command.

The faeries have an intimate knowledge of the immediate vicinity of their brambles, and some knowledge of the forest beyond. They have heard of the “wizards’ house,” and have an approximate knowledge of the route, which can confirm the grogs’ estimates.

The following encounters are merely some of the possibilities. Storyguides are free to run these in almost any order, change them in other ways, and add or subtract interesting incidents.

Hedge Fae

The grogs blunder into, or are hailed by, a group of figures, each just a few inches tall. These beings are humanoid, but dark brown in color and with the texture of wood. They also have brambles and thorns jutting from their bodies and limbs. They evidently view the “talking animals” with amusement, but no great surprise.

These are, of course, more faerie folk — minor rustic beings unconnected with those who transformed the grogs. They have enough magical sensitivity to recognize what happened here, and possibly noticed that there were “big lords of our kind” in the vicinity very recently, but they have no power to reverse the trans-

formation. Their powers, such as they are, concern plants, not animals or humans.

However, they will be friendly enough if addressed politely, and may give a little good advice. They may even give some small magical gift of a temporary nature, especially if the storyguide wants to reassure the grogs that they are heading in the right direction. For example, they might provide an acorn which will, for the next day, issue a small squeak of alarm if the bearer turns away from the correct route to his destination. (Unexpected drawbacks with such a gift are left to the imaginations of unkind storyguides.)

If these “hedge faeries” are treated badly, or maybe even insulted, let alone attacked, their first response will be to run and hide. However, they are far less weak or helpless than they appear (at least as compared to a small group of woodland animals); they can “animate” surrounding vegetation, including brambles and thorns, leading it to attack and harass opponents. Grogs who are foolish

enough to behave badly here are likely to end up battered, injured, and unhappy, though not actually dead unless they themselves acted especially viciously.

The River

As they follow their path home, the animals come to a river — not a great obstacle for a human party with the ability to wade, find a ferry, or use minor magic, but a much greater problem for these animals. It is both wide and deep — too much for most of the animals to swim.

Various schemes are possible here, including larger, stronger animals ferrying their lesser brethren on their backs, finding a fallen tree that will serve as a bridge, or even improvising a working raft (with severe difficulty, and no guarantee of reliability). How well any of this works depends how clever the players are, how generous or obstructive the storyguide is feeling, and how long the story is intended to run.

There are some ducks swimming on the river, but for a group such as this, probably including a fox or other predator, to persuade the ducks to help takes quick thinking and persuasion. (There is a temptation, too, for the storyguide to indulge in silly voices in this encounter...)

The Wide Open Meadow

Next, the animals come to something which does not at first *look* like an obstruction at all; a wide open sunny slope, with a short cropped meadow, where perhaps sheep graze by day, and rabbits by night. However, as any rural characters may guess, or sharp eyes may observe, there is a problem. By day, the

meadow is the haunt of raptors (hawks); by night, of owls.

Crossing the open space could be dangerous, and leaves one exposed and vulnerable, but to detour round it is a **long** way, and involves a lot of ditches, dense undergrowth, and other minor obstructions — and may not be certain to avoid the predators' attentions!

Perhaps they will instead take the long detour and follow the woodlands edge. Here, a predator in the party may encounter a mouse in the hedgerow — how will they behave? Will they ask for guidance or assistance, or eat the mouse? (Or both!)

How the animals deal with this is up to them. The larger, tougher individuals may seek to drive off predator attacks from their smaller friends, or otherwise “screen” them, or the group may go



Duck (*Anas*)

Characteristics: Cun -2, Per 0,
Str -6, Sta -2, Dex 0, Qui +2

Size: -3

Personality Traits: Brave -2

Abilities: Athletics 2 (flying),
Awareness 3 (searching), Swim 3
(diving)

Ferocity: 1 (vs. eagles)

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam
Beak or claw	+1	0	+3	-9

Soak: -5

Fatigue: -2

Fatigue levels: OK, -3, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, -3, Incapacitated

The duck is named for his love of swimming (Lat. *natan-di*). The female duck lays her eggs on the land near the water or in marshy ground. The ducklings are able to start swimming almost immediately after hatching.

The duck is hunted by the eagle, which is especially fond of ducklings. The duckling dives underwater to take cover from the swooping eagle. But if the eagle is persistent, it will lead to a bad end for the duckling, for either the eagle will catch the duckling, or the duckling will tire from his diving and drown.





Hawks and Owls

By day, hawks hover above the meadow; by night the screech owl swoops over. Both birds are described by the "Small Raptor" category with a few exceptions listed below:

Small Raptor

Characteristics: Cun 0, Per +3*, Str -4, Sta 0, Dex +2, Qik 0

Size: -3

Personality Traits*: (see below)

Abilities*: Athletics 4 (flying), Awareness 3 (hunting), Hunt 3 (small prey)

Ferocity*: (see below)

Wpn/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam

Beak or Talon +4 +6 +7 -4

Soak: -3

Fatigue: 0

Fatigue Levels: OK, -3, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, -3, Incapacitated

Powers:

Keen Vision: as per the Virtue on page 42 of the *Ars Magica* rulebook.

Hawk (Raptor)

Personality Traits: Fierce +3

Ferocity: 3 (venomous creatures)

When his eyes become injured or infirm, the hawk knows to use the astringent juice of the wild lettuce to heal them. The hawk, like the eagle, can face the rays of the sun without pain, and is not dazzled in the least. This allows him to fly at great height above the earth.

The hawk is the bitter enemy of the snake and other venomous creatures. No snake, no scorpion, no venomous

creature of any sort will escape his view. He will not touch fruits or seeds, for the hawk delights in eating flesh and drinking blood. He will feed these to his young as well, so that they develop the taste from an early age. It is said that the hawk is passionate in his lechery.

Screech Owl (Ulula)

Characteristics: Per -3

Personality Traits: Morbid +1, Lazy +1

Abilities:

Athletics 3 (flying), Awareness 3 (stealthy pursuit), Hunt 2 (small prey), Stealth 4 (by night)

Ferocity: 1 (near the dead)

Powers:

Night Vision: The owl has a Perception score of +3 at night.

The screech owl gets his name from the sound of his cry of mourning and lamentation. He is a bird associated with death, for he hovers near the graves of the dead both day and night. His cries imitate the sounds of weeping or groaning. He is said to foreshadow evil events, and his lamentations spell disaster. However, his silence indicates prosperity.

The owl is an unclean bird, as the Scriptures tell. He lives in caves. He is loathsome because his roost is filthy with his excrement. He is a bird burdened with feathers and with laziness.



around the edge, suffering fatigue loss, taking hours, and running the risk of minor accidents. Mostly, this scene should be played as a test of alertness, teamwork, and determination.

Storm and Respite

As the animals go on their way, a huge thunderstorm brews up, and a massive downpour begins. Although fur keeps the rain out quite well, it does so only so long as it remains dry. Once it becomes sodden, the animal becomes soaked and cold. This storm is bad enough to drive any creature to seek cover.

So shelter is needed... luckily, with a very little searching, the animals discover

a large burrow nearby. However, once they are all squeezed in, they should realize from scents or other traces that it is occupied by badgers — creatures who would be dangerous foes to any of the animals, and whose temperaments are uncertain.

While the storyguide can run this as a bruising skirmish with territorial, cunning animals if he wishes, it may be more interesting to make it a problem of negotiation with some shrewd (if earthy) creatures, who are bemused to see this strange collection of visitors. It may be even more amusing to have the badger who comes to investigate the sounds of intruders at the burrow entrance turn out to be one of the “servant class” among the species.

As described in the box-out, such a “servant” badger is used as a kind of “living wheelbarrow” by his social superiors



Mouse (Mus)

A mouse is going about his travels among the brambles, perhaps searching for hazel nuts or bramble fruits (depending on the season). He is worried about his family, and talks to himself, expressing his fears that he will not be able to gather enough food, and now his wife is pregnant again!

He has some knowledge of the hedges around about, but is more likely to end up as a snack for the fox, cat or ermine, and he knows this.

Characteristics: Cun 0, Per 0, Str -9, Sta -4, Dex 0, Qik +1

Size: -5

Personality Traits: Lustful +3, Greedy +2

Abilities: Athletics 1, Awareness 3,

Ferocity: 1 (protecting young)

Weapon/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam

Bite +3 +1 +7 -14

Soak: -9

Fatigue: -4

Fatigue Levels: OK, Unconscious

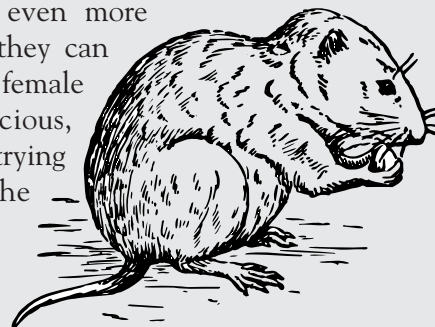
Body Levels: OK, Incapacitated

The mouse is a feeble little creature. He gets his name because he is born from the dampness of

the earth. Thus does the mouse come from the humus. He is a fearful and feeble beast. He is easily scared by noises, especially the squeak of the weasel and the mewl of the cat. When the mouse dies naturally, his limbs dissolve away, leaving nothing behind.

The mouse's liver is in sympathy with the moon. The liver grows more lobes as the moon waxes, and loses them again as it wanes. It is said that this behavior persists even once the liver is removed from the mouse.

Pliny writes that the mouse is the most fecund animal of them all. So great is their fertility that even a lick between lovers can result in pregnancy. They become even more prolific when they can eat salt. The female mouse is salacious, and is forever trying to seduce the male.





in the community. The creature with whom the grogs have dealings may be a stolid, humble character, but not entirely immune to the lure of offers of a more interesting life than being pulled around with a stomach covered in mounds of dirt. Grog who use some tact and charm may even be able to persuade him to leave the burrow and join them on their journey. The magi back home would doubtless be fascinated to meet this new friend, and perfectly willing to give him a place in the community in exchange for descriptions of life among the badgers of the woods.

Farmers

The party find that their path next goes through some cleared farmland — an area far too broad and extensive to bypass. Thus, they will have to cross it.

However, there are farmers working in these fields, and the grogs *are* a group of animals, some of them doubtless to be considered vermin, or good eating.

The problem here thus becomes evading or distracting these mundane mortals. The storyguide should play the peasants as stolid and fairly predictable, but *not* entirely stupid. However, they have no cause to expect any animals they see to act with human cleverness or determination. Attempting to communicate with them should be futile, however; they will just treat odd behavior from animals as mildly freakish at best, a sign of dangerous sickness in the creature at worst.

(That said, some storyguides may wish to follow sentimental narrative convention and have one or two young children among the peasants who are still open-minded enough to believe in intelligent animals.)

Badger (Tasso)

Characteristics: Cun 0, Per 0, Str -3, Sta +3, Dex 0, Qui +1
Size: -2

Personality traits: Vicious +4, Humble +1

Abilities: Athletics 1, Awareness 3 (searching)

Ferocity: 3 (disturbed in burrow)

Weapon/Attack **Init** **Atk** **Dfn** **Dam**

Bite or claw +3 +1 +4 -5

Soak: +2

Fatigue: +2

Fatigue levels: OK, -1, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, -1, -5, Incapacitated

The badger (Lat. *meles*) is an unclean animal which lives in mountains and other rocky places. He digs out holes by scraping with his feet. Now an interesting detail is that some are servants to the others. When they are digging out a new burrow, the servant lies on his back, and piles on his belly the soil to be cleared away. When he has taken on all he can carry, he grips a piece of wood in his mouth and holds on to the dirt on his belly as he is dragged clear by his fellows.

Hunters and Dogs

The next encounter should probably come immediately after the one above. As they travel onwards, the party hears a distant baying of hounds — which quickly becomes less distant. It is clear that there are hunters out, with dogs, and the scent of the grog-animals will probably soon catch their attention — if it has not yet already done so. It is likely that the farmers from the previous scene called out the hunters, especially if any of them noticed the grogs, even in the distance.

This scene should mostly be an exercise in evading, or a confrontation with, the hounds, which have run on ahead of their handlers; only very bold (or inept) parties should have to deal with the human hunters, who have not only size on their side, but also weapons and some skill in their use. The grogs can talk to the dogs, but they will find that the dogs

Hound (Canis)

This close to the covenant, the hounds will most likely belong to the covenant's own hunters (if they have any), otherwise to the nearest group of peasants — those who help feed the covenant, or are even tied to it. If the players have detailed the covenant's houndsmen and their charges, have the player-animals recognize the individual dogs.

Unless the returning animals handle this very badly, they will not actually encounter the hunters; if they do, use some of the Covenant's own grogs, treated as NPCs for the duration.

Characteristics: Cun 0, Per 0, Str -2, Sta +1, Dex -1, Qik 0
Size: -2

Personality Traits: Loyal +6 (covenant)

Abilities: Athletics 2 (running), Awareness 2 (smell), Hunt 2 (tracking)

Ferocity: 3 (defending master)

Wpn/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam

Bite +4 +4 +3 +3

Soak: 0

Fatigue: +1

Fatigue Levels: OK, -1, -5, Unconscious

Body Levels: OK, -1, -5, Incapacitated

Powers:

Keen Smell: The dog gets a +3 bonus to all rolls involving smell, like with the Virtue Keen Vision on page 42 of the *Ars Magica* rulebook.



Farmer

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre -1, Com -1, Str +1, Sta +2, Dex +1, Qik 0

Age: 30

Size: 0

Confidence: 2

Virtues and Flaws: none

Personality Traits: Stolid +3, Pious +2, Curious -1

Weapon/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam Fat

Brawling (fist) +5 +5 +4 +1 +6

Club +6 +6 +6 +6 +5

Soak: +2

Fatigue levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Animal Handling 4 (oxen), Awareness 2 (search), Bargain 2 (produce), Brawl 3 (fist), Carouse 3 (drinking songs), Craft: Peasantry 4 (tilling), Folk Ken 4 (Peasants), Hunt 1 (sur-reptitiously), Legend Lore 2 (superstitions), Manor Lore 4 (customs), Speak Own Language

4 (peasants), Survival 1 (fields), Wagoneering 3 (oxen).

Encumbrance: 0

The farmers are engaged in seasonal work — plowing, tilling, weeding, harvesting or such. They will remain engaged in their activities until they notice something amiss (Awareness roll of 9+, or against the animals' Stealth rolls) — their clue is most likely to be unusual behavior by their oxen or dogs in response to the party of strange animals!

If they spot the oddities, they will move over to investigate. They will be guided by superstitions, both folk beliefs and a coarse Piety, tending to see the work of the Devil or of the Fae in anything they do not understand or cannot explain away.

They will respond aggressively to animals they consider vermin, such as a fox! If a fox is spotted, they will bring and loose dogs — use the Hound described above.



prefer to bark or bite rather than listen (and if they bark, this will soon call their masters!). They may recognize individual hounds, and may be able to trick the hounds by playing on their Loyalty Trait.

Full game details for hunting dogs are on page 17 of *The Medieval Bestiary*, or there are alternative treatments on pages 110-111 of *A Medieval Tapestry* or pages 59 and 210 of *Ordo Nobilis*.

Snare Trap

This last problem may or may not be associated with the hunters in the above scene. The point is that *some* human hunters have set snare traps on the path which the grogs are following.

These are likely to be fairly easy for animals with human intellects to recognize and evade; generous storyguides might require a botched Perception test for any of the party actually to fall victim to a snare, and even then, the animal may be unhurt, or may at worst suffer just one wound level, and merely require a little effort and ingenuity from the others to be set free. On the other hand, by this point, the grogs may be tired, wet, hungry, and increasingly subject to their animal natures overwhelming their humanity — dangerously susceptible to even the most simple tricks.

Perhaps more interestingly, though, one of the snares may have an animal already caught in it; a rabbit. This rabbit is badly wounded, and cannot escape. The grogs may feel some sympathy for it, but, well, it is just a rabbit — and the chances are that any carnivorous beasts in the party are hungry by now. This scene can be an interesting test of character and role-playing opportunity.

Return and Restoration

Even once they regain their covenant, the party's problems are not quite ended. After all, their friends and colleagues have no more reason to guess who or what they are than any of those farmers or hunters who they have just escaped.

This scene may require the storyguide to take the roles of grogs or even magi of the covenant. In theory, with troupe play, some of the players should be able to take those parts, but it would probably be asking too much to expect them to separate out player and character knowledge this completely (though if they seem genuine-



ly capable of this, the storyguide can go ahead and try). A storyguide running what are normally player-controlled characters should refrain from having them behave *too* annoyingly stupidly or violently — it would be impolite to parody the characters' normal behavior, tempting as that might be — but there is no need to pull punches; if the animal-grogs jump out in front of bloodthirsty and impetuous human grog hunters, the consequences are *their* problem.

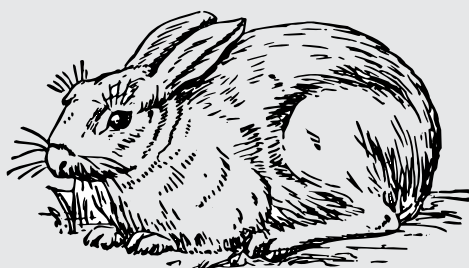
Fortunately, covenant folk are generally a little more accustomed to strangeness and the supernatural than most mortals of the age, so it is likely that eventually, the animal-grogs will be able to draw the right sort of attention to themselves. Humans with virtues such as Animal Ken have a chance to perceive that there is *something* odd about these creatures, which would help. Eventually, it is very likely that a mage or two will be brought in to investigate the problem.

Appropriate Magics

Most such magi should be able to use formulaic or spontaneous magic to examine and even communicate with the transformed grogs. InAn 20 will allow direct conversation, though even InAn 10 will reveal the animal's unusual "dominant drive," or, with a Corpus requisite, that they are transformed people. Since they retain their human spirits, Mentem spells are effective on them, although Corpus spells are ineffective until they transform back.

Changing the faerie victims back to their normal shapes will be a little harder, but not impossible. If the faeries of the

Rabbit (Cuniculus)



Use the statistics for the Hare (page 47 in this chapter), but make the following changes:

Personality Traits: Timid +5, Lustful +3

Strike out the OK and -3 Body Levels (making it Incapacitated), due to the wounds inflicted by the snare and the rabbit's struggles against it. The beast is still conscious and struggling feebly, and is aware enough to converse with others.

The rabbit is originally from Iberia in the west. He is shaped like the hare, in the main, but his coat is darker in color. He has a smaller tail. His head is shorter, and is smaller, mostly because he is less fleshy. His eyesight is poor, but his hearing is keen. If such a thing were possible, he is reported to be more lustful than the hare. According to huntsmen, the rabbit is not worthy game, but is instead something to be trapped or snared. Many timid soldiers are called rabbits by their fellows.



faerie market were responsible, then the "until shape-changed" condition is easy to satisfy, and will end the transformation (rather than needing vis to make a permanent restoration).



Chapter V

The Valley of the Mists

In a remote wilderness area, not very far from the covenant but nonetheless with a certain sense of remoteness and quite far enough from roads or villages, lies a system of small valleys and gorges, through which minor rivers and streams flow towards their confluence in a larger current. Such humans as know these valleys even exist tend to avoid them; some may think of the area as haunted or uncanny, whereas others might just regard it as useless and inaccessible wilderness.

In truth, this region encompasses a faerie place. This chapter describes it; the next two chapters detail stories set there.

Geography

Characters who take some time (a day or two) to survey the area will conclude that there are two main valleys. The lesser, which lies to the west, is essentially mundane, though strikingly wild. The river which flows into it actually disappears under a mass of rocks at the head of the valley, before reappearing as a series of cascades.

The greater valley, lying about seven miles east of the lesser, is the interesting one. It has steep, rocky, heavily wooded slopes on all sides, making it hard even to approach. The best routes are probably up or down the river — and there is little in the way of paths below the valley, while the path down into it from above is almost as steep as any other approach.

This upstream path runs alongside the river, through a cleft where it enters the valley. The river is still full where it enters the cleft, but much like the river entering the lesser valley to the west, it soon completely vanishes beneath a mass of huge rocks, and flows hidden from sight, generating a rather unnerving rumbling sound.

The valley itself is quite lush, but little of the floor is even or smooth; rather, it is a jumble of boulders and twisted trees and shrubs. The air is always full of spray thrown up by the river, and there is often a mist. The river cools the valley noticeably on hot days. All of this could be taken for natural effects, or as an explanation of the place's sense of strangeness. Actually, there are other elements here which contribute to the oddness felt by visitors.

The Fae of the Main Valley

The valley is the home of a community (actually, two communities) of faeries who embody the wildness and also the natural beauty of the place. Control cycles with the seasons between powers of Bright Winter and Dark Summer. Neither is generally interested in faerie politics or in dealings with mundane humans, but both can be inspired to action. The magi and their servants are most likely to have dealings with the Court of Bright Winter and their

queen, who enjoys company and pleasure; the lord of Dark Summer is an austere, distant figure, who mostly rules from an inaccessible regio even in his season.

Indeed, his season is rather shorter than that of the queen, which annoys him somewhat. This is because the Faeries of Bright Winter fill the valley during cooler, damper months, and this period stretches from early September to early May.





Cierella, Lady of The Winter Gorge

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +3, Pre +3,

Com 0, Str -1, Sta +3, Dex 0, Qik 0

Faerie Might: 30

Size: 0

Personality Traits: Calculating +4,
Impulsive -1

Wpn/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam Fat

Brawling (fist) +2 +1 +1 -1 n/a

Soak: +10

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5,
Incapacitated

Abilities: Awareness 4 (keen eyed),
Brittany lore 1 (unknown places),
Charm 4 (fascinating), Etiquette 5
(the valley), Faerie Guile (polite-
ness) 6, Faerie Lore 4 (valley
faeries), Leadership 4 (valley
faeries), Legend Lore 2 (mundanes),
Valley Lore 6 (the land)

Powers:

Strength of the Valley, ReVi 25, 0 points:

Cierella is essentially part of the valley, and to affect her by magic you must overcome the valley too. She adds 5 times the valley's aura to her Might to resist any magic not native to the valley, and adds the aura to any soak or resistance tests she must make. (If she leaves the valley, she loses this protection while she is away.)

Mist's Royal Crown, ReMe 30, 1 point:

Cierella can draw on the strength of the valley and add its Faerie Aura to her Presence if she wishes.

Glamour, CrIm or MuIm 20, (Size+1) points, minimum 0: Cierella can create illusions that affect all five senses and may be treated as real in all ways, including affecting inanimate matter, unless the illusion is overcome (e.g. by magic). Cierella can change the appearance of real things (including herself), but not

their actual size and weight. Once she loses interest, the glamour will fade away but any effects the glamour had on the surroundings will remain. Intéllego magics need to overcome the equivalent level spell (see above), after which those who see the reality may choose to treat the Glamour as its real form. The Fae consider it exceptionally rude to break through a Glamour.

Control Mist, Cr(Mu,Re)Au 30, 1 point:

If she concentrates, Cierella can call up or intensify mist and spray, so as to make the air opaque, to coat everything in dew, or even to make it rain. She can make the mist behave in any way she chooses, and has been known to use it to conjure an entire palace with walls and furnishings of "solid" mist.

Winter's Touch, PeIg 15, 3 points:

Anyone Cierella gestures at is struck by an effect similar to Winter's Icy Touch (**Ars Magica** page 138), and will lose a fatigue level (roll Sta 9+ to avoid).

Winter's Aura, PeIg 20, 3 points: This

power cools a room sized area around Cierella (or a chosen target), leaving it a little below freezing. All non-living things are chilled through, not just on the surface. All living things, save faeries of the winter or their like, lose one fatigue level and must roll Sta 6+ or lose another. House fires become as small as campfires; bonfires as torches. Campfires and smaller fires go out. (See *Conjuration of the Indomitable Cold*, **Ars Magica** page 138.)

Invisible Stride, ReCo 25, 1 point:

Cierella can walk behind a tree, bush or boulder, and immediately

walk out from behind another up to 7 paces away; she can do this up to 12 times per round (once per second), but cannot use the object she steps out of to take her next step. She might use this to escape, or to sneak up upon or otherwise trick opponents.

Deflect Rock, ReTe 25, 1 point: Cierella can at will instantly deflect metal or stone weapons, including arrows in flight, so they pass harmlessly to the side of the target. She cannot deflect a weapon made solely of wood.

Summon Winter, Re(Co,An,He,Au) 30, 0 points: Cierella can call any of her court to her. At will, she can summon any of the valley's inhabitants, although they must make their own way to answer the call. They are not compelled to attend, but there are very few in the Valley who would not respond.

(Note: Cierella is **powerful**. Storyguides should feel free to add further powers to this list if this would help ensure that players respect her.)

Equipment: anything in the valley that she wants can be brought to her, or she can Glamour up most things.

Encumbrance: 0

Vis: 6 pawns of Auram Vis in her heart. She also knows the location of all the vis within the valley.

Cierella is the Mistress of the Valley, and its most powerful inhabitant (at least in her season). As such, she can call upon the aura of the place to defend her, or to add to her majesty; she can shift or alter the valley's mists on a whim. In some sense she embodies the qualities of a cold, misty winter.

She usually appears as a tall, thin, pale woman with long gray hair, wearing a flowing robe in plain gray trimmed with silver. Her footsteps make no sound, and her voice is high and sharp, like frost cracking. She might appear as if in her forties, or as a well weathered older woman, but not as a young maid. She has a habit of tightly clenching her fists together, and moves with short harsh motions.

She is not capricious or whimsical, like some Fae, but rather cold and calculating. She is complex, and intelligent; she is also curious about the world outside her valley, of which she has little knowledge — she cannot (generally) leave, as she is essentially a part of the place. She would enjoy taking advantage of mortals, either as servants or agents, or as fools. However, she is not habitually cruel, and she has a certain sense of fairness.



Valley Aura

When the Court of Bright Winter holds sway, the valley has a level 5 Faerie aura by day, falling to 3 at night; when the Court of Dark Summer holds sway, the aura changes to level 2 by day and 4 by night. These cycles reflect the aspects and relative strengths of the two courts as manifest in this valley.

If you should stay in the valley as the seasons change, then at the storyguide's option, you might find that the Bright Winter valley moves to the outskirts of Arcadia and loses contact with the mundane world for intervening months, or you might find that time skips summer, and you step out again into the next autumn.



Amenea, False Lady of the Valley

Characteristics: Int -1, Per 0, Pre -1,
Com 0, Str -1, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik 0

Faerie Might: 10

Size: 0

Personality Traits: Impulsive +2,
Calculating -1

Wpn/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawling (fist)	+2	+1	+1	-1	n/a

Soak: +3

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5,
Incapacitated

Abilities: Awareness 3 (keen eyed),
Brittany Lore 1 (local area), Charm
2 (trying to impress), Disguise 5
(Cierella), Etiquette 2 (the valley),
Faerie Guile (elaborate lies) 3,
Faerie Lore 2 (valley faeries),
Leadership 1 (being bossy), Legend
Lore 1 (faeries), Valley Lore 3 (the
land).

Powers:

Lesser Glamour, CrIm or MuIm 20, 1
point: Amenea can create illusions
lasting until sunrise or sunset, that
appear real to all senses of living
beings — except that they are not
solid, and inanimate objects will
simply pass through them. At a cost
of (Size+3, minimum 3) additional
Might, she can make “real” glammers
(like those of Cierella) which are
solid, but she must concentrate to
maintain them. If she loses concen-
tration (or loses interest), then they
lose their “reality” and become
insubstantial illusions.

Personal Glamour, MuIm 20, 3 points:
Amenea can change her own
appearance to that of anything that
looks even remotely human. The
transformation includes voice,
sounds and accoutrements such as
clothing and weapons: it changes
sounds, images, smell, taste, and

touch. This lasts until sunrise or
sunset. Amenea can lower her
Presence through Glamour as much
as she chooses, but not raise it by
more than 3 points.

Equipment: Like most of the Fae,
Amenea has little in the way of per-
manent possessions, but may decide
that some interesting thing (even
one belonging to a visitor) is “hers.”

Encumbrance: 0

Vis: 2 pawns of Imáginem, in her hair.

Amenea is actually Cierella’s maid,
but her driving motivation is that she
resents and is desperately jealous of
Cierella. Her “natural” form is a short,
scrawny, wizened maiden, but she often
uses her Glamour to make herself taller
and more glamorous, and even to look
like Cierella. (After so many years, she
is very good at this!)

Amenea is particularly amused by
fooling others into thinking that **she** is
Cierella, although her powers are much
more limited and insubstantial. She has
studied the mannerisms of the Lady of
the Valley and can do a passing fair
impression. When she makes statements
like “I am Cierella” she can literally
deceive herself, taking herself at her
word so that even magic cannot reveal
the intended deceit, until the memory
fades after a few minutes and her own
nature returns. However, she is impu-
sive where Cierella is calculating, and
much less clever and perceptive, while
her personal Glamour can be seen
through by those with talent, if they try.
She often folds her arms in front of her,
believing this makes her more forceful
(and despite this being something
Cierella almost never does).

Trefle, the Crow Herald

Characteristics: Int +3, Per +1, Pre -1, Com +1, Str -5, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik +1

Faerie Might: 13

Size: -3

Personality Traits: Faithful +3, Self-important +3

Wpn/Attack Init Atk Dfn DamFat

Beak or claw +4 +3 +7 -7 n/a

Soak: -3 (but suffers +4 damage from Iron)

Body levels: OK, -3, Incapacitated

Abilities: Athletics 5 (flying), Awareness 4 (searching), Brittany

Lore 3 (geography), Brawl 3, Carouse 3 (dice games), Faerie Guile (silences) 4, Faerie Lore 4 (valley faeries), Ferocity 3 (when valley threatened), Speak (local lower-class language) 5 (riddles), Speak (local upper-class language) 4 (bad poetry), Storytelling 2 (romantic lays), Valley Lore 4 (valley faeries).

Powers:

Reveal the Hidden Purpose, InMe 15, 1 point: the crow can determine the intent of a human it focuses on.

Equipment: Although he normally carries nothing, Trefle has a hidden store of bright shiny things such as crows value, like polished pebbles or bright colored feathers. At the sto-



The Fae of Dark Summer

Visitors who come to the valley in late spring to early autumn will usually find that the tough journey yields few rewards. The valley is humid and clammy, and the lord's court is inaccessible in a hidden regio.

The Fae that one might encounter are minor, "natural" beings; storyguides may use the crows, wolves, and rock trolls described under Bright Winter. However, they are uninterested in visitors at this time, and unlikely to speak or change their shapes.

Gaining access to the court's regio would require a major feat of magic, or special circumstances. For an example of such circumstances, and relevant character information for some Fae of the Dark Summer court, see chapter VII.

The Fae of Bright Winter

There are several types of Bright Winter Fae living in the valley. While their ruler and her immediate court appear more or less human, most of her subjects do not. There are a great many of these beings lurking in the mist at any time; any turn or twist round a bush, rock, or bank of mist may bring you to them, but they are more often seen in the distance. As they may often meet and deal with visitors, they are described here in some detail.

The Host

Numerous small creatures wander around Cierella's domain, especially in the dark, showing just a little more intelligence than their counterparts in more mundane lands. They are not *terribly* interested in visitors, except as the subjects of



ryguide's option, he may also have winnings from previous games of chance (see below).

Encumbrance: 0

Vis: 2 Intéllego in feathers.

Trefle is a faerie *Crow of Virtue* (see the *Medieval Bestiary*, p. 51), one of The Host who stands out from the rest. Over time, Cierella has come to use him as a flying messenger and scout, if only because he presents himself and insists on being treated as useful. He is not interested in strangers, but makes a special point of greeting returning visitors, claiming to be the valley's steward as though he were welcoming one to a mundane castle.

Trefle has encountered a number of bards and troubadours on his flying travels, and will follow others that interest him. He has picked up a number of their tales, which he will recite (badly) to those who will listen. He has also learnt how to play various human dice games, and is quite adept in the "throw," standing on one foot and grasping the dice in the claws of his other foot. Visitors may find him trying to play with them, as the other Fae do not understand or share this foreign interest.

Goblins

Characteristics: Int -1, Per 0, Pre -1, Com 0, Str -1, Sta 0, Dex +2, Qik +3

Faerie Might: 8

Size: -2

Personality Traits: Playful +4, Vicious +2

Wpn/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawling (fist)	+8	+6*	+9*	-3	n/a
Bite	+7	+5*	+7*	-2	n/a
Knife	+8	+6*	+10*	-1	n/a

*See *Stealthy Sidestep*, below.

Soak: +1 (but suffer +4 damage from Iron)

Body levels: OK, -1, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Athletics 5 (jumping and leaping), Awareness 4 (alertness), Brawl 3, Faerie Lore 2 (valley faeries), Valley Lore 2 (their small patch)

Powers:

Stealthy Sidestep, ReIm 10, 1 point: The goblin appears to be a foot or two from where it really is. This works on as many people as the goblin cares to affect, but costs 1 point per round per person affected. In melee, this advantage gives the goblin +3 defense, and +1 attack. Those affected suffer a further -4 on missile attacks.

Equipment: Bronze knife (see below)

Encumbrance: 0

Vis: none (exceptional goblins may have 1 pawn of Corpus Vis in their teeth).

Most of Cierella's subjects are stunted, misshapen goblins of wildly varying features. Almost the only thing they have in common is that they are vaguely human-like, and ugly. They mostly have gray skin, and poorly tailored clothing in shades of black through gray.

Left to themselves, they spend much of their time pulling sadistic pranks on each other and teasing the weakest among them. If any local mundane animals stay around long enough to be caught and *played* with, the goblins will *play* with them.

They fight with large (for them) bronze knives, but are not stalwart warriors; if struck by iron, they will flee. Also, if they botch an attack, their brittle knives will break. The touch of iron hurts them, and wounds from iron weapons cause them an additional +4 damage.

Silver Wolves

Characteristics: Cun +3, Per +1, (Pre +2), Com n/a, Str +2, Sta +4, Dex +1, Qik +2

Faerie Might: 12

Size: 0

Personality Traits: Brave +6, Loyal +4, Wily +3

Wpn/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam Fat

Bite (wolf) +9 +7 +8 +5 n/a

Tackle (wolf) +7 +6 — +1* n/a

*Target must make a Strength + Size roll of 12+ to remain standing

Brawling (fist, as man) +9 +7 +8 +2 n/a

Soak: +5 (but Iron weapons cause +50% damage after soak).

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Brittany Lore 4 (places), Etiquette 4 (courtly service), Faerie Guile (mute) 1, Speak (local lower-class language)* 4 (peasants), Speak (local upper-class language)* 3 (nobles), Valley Lore 5 (places)

*Although mute, they understand speech.

Powers:

The Grey Herald, MuAn (Co) 25, 1 point: the wolves can take human form as needed, lasting as long as they desire. It takes Might to re-assume human form, but not to revert to wolf form. However, they cannot speak, even in human form, but remain mute.

Sylvan Speech, CrMe (An) 20, 0 points: the wolves can make themselves understood by faeries or animals; the power does not work on mundanes.

Equipment: none, or a tight fitting tunic and trows of fine, soft gray wool (wolf fur).

Encumbrance: 0

Vis: 3 pawns of Animál (in frozen heart).

These fierce beasts represent Cierella's army. They fight without fear and completely without mercy. Once one has made a kill, it stops for one round (if it is not being attacked and must defend) and howls. The wolves have purple eyes that reflect no light. Once they are killed, water pours from their wounds, and characters may discover that their hearts are made from ice. If these hearts can be prevented from melting, they carry 3 pawns of Animál vis each.

If visitors bring violence they will be met with violence from summoned wolves; otherwise they may encounter the wolves hunting. The wolves hunt with a cruel attentiveness, toying with their prey, then rending it horribly. The local small creatures know and fear them.

If they discover strangers, or visitors they have not been introduced to, they will not launch unprovoked attacks, as they know this would annoy Cierella, but they will tease and provoke as best they can. If they can lure others to attack them, they can strike back, freed of their restraints. To this end they can display a surprising cunning, showing themselves at a distance and encouraging pursuit.

When at Cierella's court, they may appear as humans, normally as young men or women, in peak fighting condition, poised on the balls of their feet and ready to move on an instant — always as if held back on a leash but straining to be off. If unleashed, they will revert to wolf form and leap on their victims. They retain the purple eyes and silver hair of their wolf form, and perhaps an overly toothy smile. They wear tight fitting gray tunics and trows, which trans-





form with them (being really part of themselves). They are mute, relying on facial expression and gesture — they are really wolves, after all. Intéllego Corpus or Animál magics can show their true natures.

Cierella uses her wolves as warriors, obviously, but also as messengers and runners, and favors them as handsome, lithe servants — unlike her goblins. Visitors who have been made welcome are likely to encounter them in this role. The wolves are also free to leave the Valley, so many have been sent out carrying messages, and know the surrounding lands quite well.

Sprites

Characteristics: Int -1, Per +1, Pre +2, Com 0, Str -5, Sta -3, Dex +2, Qik +4

Faerie Might: 5

Size: -3

Personality Traits: Playful +4, Mischievous +2, Patient -2, Industrious -3

Wpn/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam Fat
Brawling (fist)+7 +4 +9 -8 n/a
Soak: -6

Body levels: OK, -3, Incapacitated

Abilities: Speak (local lower-class language) 4 (jokes).

Powers:

Glamour, CrIm or MuIm 15, 1 point:

The sprites can create illusions (no larger than a man) that affect all five senses and may be treated as real in all ways including affecting inanimate matter, unless the illusion is overcome (e.g. by magic). They can change the appearance of real things, but not their actual size and weight. Once they lose interest, the glamour will fade away but any effects the glamour had on the sur-

roundings will remain. Intéllego magics need to overcome the equivalent level spell (see above), after which those who see the reality may choose to treat the Glamour as its real form. The Fae consider it exceptionally rude to break through a Glamour.

Equipment: none.

Encumbrance: 0

Vis: 1 pawn of Imáginem in their wings.

These denizens of the faerie woods are beautiful sylvan creatures, never more than a foot high, with gossamer wings and chime-like voices. They are the most gleeful and playful of all the faeries, though they can be as mischievous as most others.

Sprites want to play with the big people. They are much more of the Light than the Dark, but these are Winter Fae too, perhaps more mischievous than their Summer kin.

Their voices sound like bells chiming, and their wings tinkle rather than flutter.

Rock Trolls

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +2, Pre -4, Com 0, Str +6+Size, Sta +7, Dex -3, Qik -4*

Faerie Might: 5-15 (5 times (Size+2))

Size: -1 to +1

Personality Traits: Secretive +4, Ponderous +3

Wpn/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam Fat
Brawling (fist)+1 +1 -(Size) +6+(Size)n/a
Soak: +14+Size

Body levels: OK, 0/0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Awareness 5 (keeping watch), Disputatio 4 (extended debate), Faerie Guile (verbosity) 5, Storytelling 4 (long epics about

Faerie), Legend Lore 3 (past eras), Speak (local lower-class language) 5 (learned speech), Valley Lore 4 (history).

Powers:

Patience of the Mountain, MuTe 5, 0 points: The troll may become a boulder, but it retains its senses and perception.

Neither Here Nor There, MuTe 10, 0 points: If not observed, trolls can move surprisingly quickly — treat their Quickness as +4, not -4; however, if anyone is watching them, they are lumbering and rock-like. If someone turns to look at them, their unobserved reactions are generally quick enough to change back into a boulder before they can be seen.

Encumbrance: 0

Vis: (Might/5) pawns of Terram, in their toes.

These obese, warty creatures are the smaller cousins of the enormous mountain trolls. They are around 3' in height, but vary in bulk, and spend much of their time curled up as boulders. They are very secretive, and hate to be revealed, but hold secret conclaves among themselves, in which they conduct ponderous slow discussions of weighty matters. They know much of what has gone before.

In boulder form they cannot really be affected — only the apparent rock can be harmed, and even if the rock is shattered they can re-form later. (Perhaps their spirit goes elsewhere and inhabits another rock?). As either troll or boulder, they are affected by Terram spells rather than Corpus; magi can use the Corpus guidelines to improvise Terram spells to affect them.

Their favorite game with mortals is “*The Wandering Rock*.” When no one is watching, they shuffle around a bit,

invariably just enough to confuse their victims when the latter look back. If mortals make camp near where Rock Trolls live, they may wake to find they have acquired a following of boulders.

They can be commanded by Cierella to appear before her and to serve her, but they are so slow and ponderous that she rarely bothers. They are, however, strong and nearly invulnerable, and not bothered by iron. They make surprisingly effective spies, as they have keen senses and indefinite patience, and are almost always overlooked when in boulder form.

Dusk Elves

Characteristics: Int 0, Per +2, Pre -1, Com +1, Str n/a, Sta n/a, Dex +0, Qik +0

Faerie Might: 10

Size: 0

Personality Traits: Shy +3

Weapon/Attack: None (they are insubstantial shadows)

Soak: n/a

Body levels: OK, Destroyed

Abilities: Speak (local lower-class language) 4 (peasants), Speak (local upper-class language) 3 (nobles).

Powers:

Shadow's Leap, Relg (Im) 15, 0 points: the Dusk Elves can only exist in shadows, but may step directly between any patches of shadow that they can see.

Insubstantiality, —, 0 points: the Dusk Elves are no more than shadows, and can no more affect or be affected by material things than can ghosts.

Encumbrance: n/a

These beings will rarely be seen as more than patches of darkness, slipping





between the trees. If anyone approaches, they will slide into the trees or rocks, and disappear. They may step between shadows, and may even be no more than shadows themselves; certainly they will not be seen in bright light. If they speak, it is with but a thin hollow voice, as if the very shadows spoke.

They are insubstantial and without solid form; they cannot affect the world nor can it affect them, but as shadows

they can only exist in shadow — both uniform light and full darkness dispel them to reform elsewhere. They can be harmed by spells of Fire and Light—an *Ignem* spell equivalent to +5 damage will destroy them. Iron cannot harm them, as they are insubstantial, but its taint hurts them and causes pain.

They occasionally serve as spies or even messengers: their insubstantiality can both help and hinder this role.

momentary amusement, but add a bit of color, fear, and the unknown to the setting.

Crows will often follow visitors, flapping from perch to perch high above, and cawing rude comments about them (if one could but understand their speech).

Bats replace the crows when darkness falls. They have no need of light, and may grow bold if strangers stumble in the dark, and show themselves blinded by it. They have no real powers, and do no more than swoop close, disturbing the air, but like to further distress those distressed by the dark. They may be heard chittering in high voices, at the limit of hearing.

If game details are required for such creatures, see *The Medieval Bestiary: Revised Edition* — although faerie animals will often have higher Intelligence/Cunning ratings than their mundane counterparts. Most are Size –4 or –5, and only take one wound level to be incapacitated. A few of the Host stand out as individuals, such as Trefle the Crow (see page 63). These few can be treated as *Beasts of Virtue*, and may either have the powers suggested for their type, or some Faerie power(s) instead. If slaughtered, the *Beasts of Virtue* may contain vis in their corpses.

Time and the Fae

As most magi and many grogs probably realize, time does not mean quite the same thing to the Fae as it does to mortals. On the one hand, being themselves ageless, and with few deep emotional connections to other beings, faeries just do not take it as seriously as mortals. On the other, it actually tends to pass differently in Arcadia (and possibly in some faerie regiones). Some faeries are also mystically linked with the seasons and other such temporal cycles.

Thus, magi who have dealings with the Fae, even if they remain scrupulously out of powerful faerie areas, tend to find that these beings have a strange attitude to time (by human standards). For example, time in this valley seems to flow slowly relative to the outside world, so that even a short visit takes about two weeks in the outside world. Some Merinita magi claim to know spells of Faerie Magic which let them control the differences in time flow and avoid this loss of time; or perhaps it comes from secret knowledge of paths through Faerie.

Storyguides may wish to read Chapter 8, “Faerie Places,” in the *Faeries* revised edition, pages 80-89.

Chapter VI

Story Outline:

Hunters' Contest

This is a relatively straightforward story which can (and usually should) represent the first encounter between the troupe and Cierella and the denizens of her valley (see the previous chapter). It begins when a party from the troupe's covenant are out hunting for unclaimed vis in a wilderness area close enough to the covenant to feel safe from the power of other, jealous Hermetics, remote enough that there may seem to be a fair chance of discovering a rich source that could have gone undiscovered in the past. This search should, of course, be taking place some time between the autumn and spring equinoxes; given the difficulties of operating in real wilderness in the depths of winter, a date in early autumn or early spring would probably be best.

The hunters may prepare by researching tales of strange places in their library, or may head out on a search: they may stumble across the valley completely by chance, or follow faint rumors from common folk met along the way of a hidden place of mystical strangeness, or just possibly, they follow some kind of divinatory indication. (This is up to the storyguide, who should know best what will tempt the magi in charge of the search, and what the players will find plausible.) The final

approach to the valley will be moderately tricky, but not impossible; the characters will likely have to scramble down steep, frosty slopes covered in dense woodland. Once they reach the valley floor, they find more open space, and characters with Second Sight or the like may get a faint sense of power flowing around them, but nothing should appear immediately to interest them. However, having come this far, they should be inclined to at least spend an hour or two searching, and probably to camp here overnight.

This is an opportunity for the storyguide to have some of the lesser faeries described in the previous chapter notice the visitors, and perhaps play a few small and subtle tricks; in particular, the rock trolls may remember their favorite diversion of *The Wandering Rock*. Eventually, even the most cynical visitor should decide that there are too many crows, bats, shadows, and rocks behaving too oddly for this all to be nervousness and coincidence — at which point, the storyguide can move on to the next phase.

This involves Cierella, who has remained hidden while being informed of events by her subjects, making her presence known to the visitors. Of course, she is intelligent and calculating enough to do this a little cautiously.





Cierella and Mortals

How Cierella views visitors depends a great deal on how they behave. She is cool and calculating in consciously assessing them, and hence will much prefer to meet them in person, even if she is unhappy with their initial behavior — although if they behave badly enough, it would suffice in her mind to send in goblins and silver wolves.

Things that impress her:

Politeness — she is a *Lady*.

Wit and stories. (Faerie creativity tends to be limited; they *really* value the *Mortal Virtue Free Expression*.)

News of the outside world.

Service, especially things she cannot do herself. (One who somehow helped her travel abroad might be well rewarded.) This could include demonstrating power over things she cannot control, such as Fire. (But flaunting normal fire will not work — in fact, that would *annoy* her.)

Challenges.

Unusual gifts.

Things that annoy her:

Impoliteness or arrogance, or ignoring her.

Fire (heat, excessive light, etc.), or other reminders of summer.

Hunting without permission, or killing her servants (and even worse, *harvesting* them).

If mortals make a favorable impression on her, Cierella might in general:

Gift them some small favor.

Trade with them.

Set them some task, to be rewarded according to their success and the impression they make.

Try to keep them around, as *guests*.

If mortals make a poor impression on her, she might:

Expel them.

Make fools of them (typically via her servants).

She is not too likely to imprison them, as they would then irritate and annoy her. (This is unlike other Fae, who *do* imprison and torment those annoying them).

Rewards she might offer for whatever reason include things she and other faeries value, which mostly means things of beauty to her, or things she knows that others value, which tends to mean crystals or silver. (However, these may be produced by Glamour, either because she is less genuinely grateful than she wishes to seem, or because she has simply forgotten the difference; to a faerie, the distinction between reality and illusion can be very vague at times.)

She also has access to vis or its equivalent, but she will not be overly generous with this, as she has her own uses for it. It can take strange forms:

Clear crystal lenses of ice from the deepest coldest crevice of the gorge — but don't let them melt! (Intéllego)

Waters that rush, even in a sealed container. If you hold them at the right angle to the light, you can see the swirl. (Aquam)

Rocks that grind, hold these in your hand, and hold them to your ear, and you will hear them grinding against each other. (Terram)

Grey slime, halfway between rock and water and back again. (Muto)

Encountering Cierella

Cierella summons a mist to mask her initial approach and enhance the impression she makes. However, she may well hide many of her powers at first. She fully understands the advantages of being underestimated, and has a faerie sense of whimsy, too. Thus, she may step out of the mists in a simple dress, looking not much more regal than Amenea (who may also be around, at the storyteller's option).

Nonetheless, she can equally well choose to appear as a queen, crowned and clad in finest robes (mostly through Glamour), with the strength of her presence showing through. If she wishes to impress, she can form anything up to an entire royal court out of mists and magic.

She might fill such a court with courtiers (summoned or shaped of Glamour), a throne, and even palace walls (of mist), but if she does, it will have the blanketing quietness of the mists, not the noise and bustle of a mundane palace.

Cierella will be courteous to visitors she does not actively dislike, in a cool, regal sort of way; see the boxed text for some hints as to what she likes and dislikes. She will also answer polite questions fairly openly, although mortals often find it hard to understand faerie perceptions and ideas; for example, if she is asked who she is, she simply replies "Cierella" — titles such as "queen" or concepts such as "ruler of the winter season" seem verbose and abstract to her. Furthermore, she finds persistent, repeated, or impatient questions very impolite.





This can lead to a short session of careful roleplaying, as the visitors (one hopes) tread cautiously around Cierella's court, but at some point, perhaps while they are trying to find a polite way of asking about vis sources, she smiles slightly and says that they are fortunate, for tomorrow, her court will be holding their yearly games, and perhaps these visitors would care to compete? There are prizes as well as honor for the victors.

(Shrewd players may ask at this point what happens to the losers, but Cierella will just shrug and say "nothing — save that they receive no prizes and less honor." Careful questions will confirm that no, there do not seem to be any hidden faerie traps in this offer.)

While Cierella will not force anyone to take part in the games, and she has no interest in keeping prisoners (although interesting *guests* may have to talk or think their way to freedom), she will be rather disappointed if she cannot persuade these newcomers to make the event more interesting, and as she loses interest, the comfort of their welcome may diminish noticeably. Some magi might even conclude that failing to compete would give such offence that it would risk infringing the Code of Hermes.

Overnight

Before Cierella leaves, she will state a few of the rules, such as "no fires." Since it will be drizzling (she will ensure it is so), she will create an obviously glamouroured canvas pavilion for the party. Despite its nature, it will keep out the rain — however, anyone who deliberately sees through the illusion (for example, by using *Intéllego* spells or *Second/Faerie Sight* to investigate the Glamour), will find that the tent no longer protects them (and them only). They will spend a cold

damp night, while the rest remain dry in the tent.

It is very likely that, some while after this, Amenea will come visiting. She will take on the aspect of Cierella and claim to be her, making her statement "I am Cierella" (see her description, page 62). She is jealous of Cierella and her influence over the newcomers, so will attempt to reverse Cierella's rules. For example, where they have been forbidden to create fires, she will now invite the (probably damp) characters to do just that. She will attempt to deceive them as to the nature of the goblins, the wolves, and any other part of the realm that Cierella has described.

This becomes a test of observation, common sense, restraint and Faerie Lore (if any have this). Amenea lacks some of Cierella's traits and quirks, and is impulsive rather than calculating. She is also much less powerful, but is adept at disguising this and pretending that her powers are substantial.

Next Morning

Come morning, Cierella will again visit, especially if she is brought word that anyone has broken her rules: she will be angry but regal, cold rather than hot-tempered. However, she is unlikely to expel anyone, as she really does want people to play her Games. If any made themselves see through the glamour and ended up cold and wet, they will be told that this was rude, as well as foolish; those who have once broken this rule would be well advised to learn now, ready for later.

The visitors will be left to their own devices and allowed to wander between glades, other than the glade where the Games are being prepared — they should come there at mid-day.

If they wander, they may again encounter Amenea in other disguise. She will not repeat her first exercise just yet lest she be caught out. She might appear as an old woman, asking them to help carry her hungry baby — one of the Rock Trolls under a Glamour! Or, they may encounter the silver wolves, out for some friendly sport, such as a run in the forest.

The Games

At noon, the visitors are led to another glade, where they find the ground prepared for the contest. A clearing has been swept clear, and a pair of stands have been erected — whether by Glamour or the hard work of lesser faeries may not be immediately clear. There is also an audience of denizens of the valley, who look moderately interested and sometimes amused, but who will not take sides. There will be a raucous fanfare, and

a troupe of goblins wearing ridiculous ill-fitting uniforms will march in, playing what must be intended as music — appallingly badly. They are followed by silent silver-haired “athletes” (the wolves, who are not in fact contestants). At suitable moments (such as when the storyguide thinks it might startle the characters), the silver wolves will feel inspired to join in and sing along with the goblins — that is, they will howl long and loud. Despite this, the faeries, even lordly Cierella, show considered approval of the musicians, and hope the visitors will also enjoy the music.

Each game player will be handed a velvet mask, and asked to put it on. The faeries will also done velvet masks (although theirs do not bear the “animal magic”). Magi should not resist the change, as it is part of the Game — and by now, the players should realize the importance of going along with the faeries' rules.



The Beast Masks

The masks are unique and individual, and have been chosen to reflect (and distort) some physical, mental or personality trait of the recipient.

When put on, the wearer's head is glamoured into the form of that animal (although still human sized), and their senses altered to be more like the animal's: a “mouse” might find her hearing and smell heightened at the expense of sight, and that another, now an “owl”, suddenly seems very threatening. These are magical masks, and the storyguide should encourage the characters to take on aspects of their assigned animal. This aspect, the animal role, is considered an important part of the Games.

Another aspect of the masks is that distinctive marks or badges on the wearer — for instance the badge of the Order of Hermes worn by most magi

and grogs, and the House and Sigil tokens worn by magi — are disguised and blanked out.

The other team of players are given their own set of masks, and arrive wearing them. For the duration of the contest, all will be addressed as the name of their mask: “Mouse,” or “Rabbit,” etc. If no obvious animal stands out, or two characters are very similar, then pick some lesser aspect, or even pick an animal arbitrarily: for preference the animals should have some interesting Personality Trait. (*The Mediaeval Bestiary* should provide inspiration).

Determinedly foolish magi can force the masks off in a number of ways: PeVi or PeIm, Relm or Mulm to remove or dispel the Glamour, MuCo to transform the body, or even ReHe to drag the fabric off. The faeries will be furious at this and disqualify anyone responsible.



The Other Competitors

An hour or so later, another group arrives in the valley, scrambling down a path which they evidently know quite well. These beings look a little strange (if less so than Cierella's subjects), with the bodies of men and the heads of animals; they also look surprised and annoyed when they see who is already present.

These visitors keep themselves to themselves, rebuffing attempts to engage them in conversation. Most likely, the troupe will take them for other faeries, at least initially, but close observation or eavesdropping may hint at the truth.

Although they are disguised for now, as will be revealed later, the other party come from a neighboring covenant! (In Brittany, a suitable covenant is Fudarus,

domus magna of House Tytalus.) They are regular attendees at what they consider to be a "contested vis source" where the Games are just the faeries' tiresome way of being awkward about the amount of vis they hand over. They have been coming for many years and no longer consider it to be interesting: they just send one of their companions and a number of guards (coincidentally the same size party as the player group).

Food and drink will be brought in — at considerable effort, the Fae have brought mundane food, so as not to trap mortals with faerie food (as trapped mortals are in fact frequently very boring and complain tiresomely!). The wine, however, is faerie wine, and quite intoxicating. It has a Muto Vim effect on those who use magic, making the imbibor heady but

Rules and Scoring

The rules for declaring (and participating in) each round of this contest will be explained to everyone — but only if someone asks the faeries. If no one asks, both sides will be left to figure them out for themselves. If neither side acts, then the faeries will eventually get bored, and explain the rules in order to get things going. However, if the faeries get bored, *both* sides may be penalized by two or three points for “obstructing the contest.”

The basic rules are quite simple:

- **Declaration:** The two sides declare alternate rounds, which are then played, until all players on the side with least members have played one round each, either as a challenger or as a responder. Whichever side realizes or speaks first can make the first challenge; in the event of argument, Cierella will tell the players' group to go first, as they are new to all this.
- **The Challenge:** One who has not yet played must stand forth and declare their choice of contest, which must be different from any previous round. They may challenge the opposition directly (“I will wrestle any one of you — best of three falls!”), or they may put on a solo display of skill, obliging an opponent to match them or do better. While making a challenge in this way, a player may request the assistance of other individuals, from their own side or even from the audience. However, the assistant must be act purely in a supporting role; the contest *must* be a test of the challenger's abilities and those of one responder. Assistants do not count as having played. The faeries consider themselves bound by the

rules to assist if asked; if they are annoyed by the request, or put in danger of harm, they may somehow do something to sabotage the game, but they will usually join in with real enthusiasm.

- **The Response:** One from the opposing team who has not yet played must rise and meet the challenge on the terms set forth. They too may call for assistance from their own team or the audience. (Claiming more assistance than the challenger will look weak, and will bias the spectators heavily against the responder.) Responding counts as playing, so the responder cannot later make a challenge (although he may be called as an assistant).

Incidentally, Cierella is bound by her own rules. Although she will not be amused to be called on as an assistant, she must agree if asked.

If these rules are broken while the players are struggling to guess them, the faeries will stop them and explain — although they may do so in a rather confusing fashion.

In game terms, each round can usually be distilled down to an opposed skill roll, with the skill and characteristic chosen by the challenger. If a botch test is needed, add 3 or more extra botch dice. (Contestants are nervous about performing, the crowd is jeering, the Faerie Aura affects performances...) Some contests may involve multiple rolls and several skills. The storyguide is the arbiter here.

In the event of a tie, the two contestants may play on to a “sudden death” decision, or play a more difficult variant of the challenge, or accept that this





confident, and making their magics seem very Fae.

The Contests

In past years, the contest has been little more than a wrestling match between one of the other group's grogs (a giant-blooded fellow with great strength) and one of the faeries. The faeries have accepted this lackluster performance as fulfillment of an agreed exchange, but this year the faeries have found some real contestants to oppose the regulars.

This year, the games consist of a series of contests of skill and prowess, between pairs of individuals, each drawn from the two groups of visitors: each team member will "play" one game only and be judged alone on that game (although they may have assistance from others — the others will not be judged on that, being only

"props"). The sides alternate in taking the lead, and the lead chooses the nature (skill) of the contest and may impose specific additional rules.

For example, a contest of strength might involve wrestling, or simply lifting (lifting boulders would be interesting, as they would be Rock Trolls and might be ticklish), or an archery contest might aim for some ridiculously small target. Martial prowess might be tested by a duel, or a "sword dance" pairing with one of your own side. A test of agility might involve seeing how many sprites each contestant can catch in a given time (without harming them), while some contests may definitely require magical assistance ("Dive head-first into the earth, and see who buries their head deepest...").

Each side is in fact expected to choose biased rules to favor itself. If they realize this, the players should act quickly and offer the first challenge, especially

round is drawn — whatever feels appropriate and strikes the faeries as most interesting.

All sorts of cheating is possible. Cierella and some of her followers will usually detect it, thanks to their faerie senses on home ground, but will *not* comment on it, although some more excitable faeries may jeer or cheer. If a contestant detects a cheat and points it out, the cheater may be required to stop, or may forfeit the round, at Cierella's whim. However, accusing an opponent of cheating "somehow" without evidence will merely cause a contestant to suffer humiliation, even if the accusation was fully justified.

Scoring

The scoring system will *not* be explained, although the noisy crowd (goblins, crows and howling wolves) will provide feedback — the more points scored in a round, the louder the clamor. Points can be awarded as follows, or at the whim or the storyguide, but the players should only be told the scores after the last round, and neither Cierella nor her followers will explain the decision:

1 point for simply winning a round.

2 points for successfully cheating in a round.

3 points for making a fool of yourself and **capitalizing** on it (laughing and joking, rather than sulking).

4 points for making a fool of your opponent and capitalizing on it (making jokes at their expense while they flounder).

1-3 points for describing and role-playing a flamboyant performance

Rewards

At the end of the contest, Cierella will summarize her judgment of each round, and award vis to the round's winner. She will not speak in terms of points as such, but will say that a contestant "played well" (for a simple winner) "pleased us all by his ingenuity" (for a successful cheat) "lacked the grace to match his strength" (for a winner who was out-pointed by a wittier opponent), or whatever. A suggested rate of reward is 1 pawn per 3 points or part thereof, although this can be adjusted for the vis richness of the saga.

The Opposition

Remember that the other side were not expecting to do other than repeat a fixed set of challenges, predetermined in order and nature, and do not (initially) understand the system itself any better than the players. They are thrown off their stride by the change, and by the requirement to improvise.

If no challenge is forthcoming quickly enough from the players, Rabbit (Big Berin) will start with a challenge to wrestling.

Their preferred challenges, for which they came prepared, in order, are:

Big Berin — wrestling (Brawling).

Julian — magic (Entrancement).

Artur — sword-dance (Sword skill).

Breyon — archery (Bows).

Charles — song (rowdy songs).

However, the need to respond to the challenges set by the players' group is going to throw this. Generally, on each of their rounds, they will put forward the remaining available character with the next best skill, working down the list above.

The character descriptions below assume a saga set in or around France; language skills, area lore, and suchlike can be adjusted for those set in other areas.

Julian (Deer)

Julian is the leader of the opposition team, a companion with a piercing, entrancing gaze.

Characteristics: Int 0, Per +2, Pre +3,

Com 0, Str 0, Sta +1, Dex 0, Qik -2

Age: 45 (apparent age 30)

Size: 0

Confidence: 3

Virtues and Flaws: Entrancement +4, Piercing Gaze +2, Bad Reputation (Cruel Manipulator*) -2, Diabolic Upbringing -2, Cursed (never find love) -1, Uncommon fear (small spaces) -1

Personality Traits: Loyal (covenant*) +3, Manipulative +3, Wary +2, Brave +1

Reputations: Cruel Manipulator 2, local region

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawling (fist)	+1	+2	-1	+1	+3
long sword	+4	+4	+4	+5	+4

Soak: +0

Fatigue levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unc.

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Awareness 4 (alertness), Brawl 3 (dodge), Brittany Lore 4 (geography), Carouse 2 (songs), Charm 2 (first impressions), Entrancement 6 (questionable suggestions), Folk Ken 3 (magi), Guile 3 (strangers), Intrigue 2 (schemes), Leadership 4 (intimidation), Ride 2 (speed), Single Weapon 3 (long sword), Speak Anglo-Saxon 5 (sagas), Speak Breton 4 (peasants), Speak French 4 (merchants), Speak Occitan 2 (travelers), Occult Lore 3 (demons)

Powers:

Entrancement: As per the +4 Virtue on page 45 of the *Ars Magica* rulebook

Longevity: As an important and public figure in the covenant, Julian has been provided with a Longevity Potion — rendering him exceedingly loyal to his masters.

Equipment: traveling clothes and fine cape, jeweled sword and scabbard. (The others carry his gear).

Encumbrance: -1





*In Brittany, the opposing covenant may be Fudarus, and the reputation will be “Voice of Fudarus” — their cruel herald.

Big Berin (Rabbit)

A huge, troll-like figure, with muscular arms and thighs and coarse black hair. Through his hair, one may see tusks and small horns (thanks to his monstrous heritage).

Characteristics: Int -2, Per 0, Pre +1, Com -2, Str +3, Sta +3, Dex +2, Qik -2

Age: 24

Size: +2

Confidence: 3

Virtues and Flaws: Giant Blood +3, Disfigured (tusks and small horns) -1, Poor Hearing -1, Weak-willed -1

Personality Traits: Brave +3, Loyal +2, Reserved +2

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawling (fist)	+5	+8	+2	+5	+9
War Maul	+8	+9	+3	+15	+8

Soak: +8

Fatigue levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Athletics 2 (run), Awareness 2 (body-guarding), Brawl 4 (fist), Carouse 2 (games of strength), Folk Ken 1 (grogs), Great Weapon 4 (war maul), Hunt 1 (large game), Legend Lore 1 (giants), Sing 1 (war songs), Speak Breton 4 (grogs), Speak French 3 (travelers), Survival 2 (Brittany)

Equipment: heavy leather hauberk, war maul, sack with food and trinkets, traveling gear

Encumbrance: 0

Artur (Kestrel), Breyon (Lamb) and Charles (Pike)

Three solid grogs, sent to accompany the others through dangerous terrain.

Characteristics: Int -1, Per 1, Pre -1, Com -1, Str +2, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik 0

Age: 22

Size: 0

Confidence: 3

Virtues and Flaws: Standard grog +0

Personality Traits: Brave +2, Loyal +2

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawling (fist)	+4	+5	+3	+2	+5

Mace & round

	shield	+7	+8	+7	+7	+6
Short bow	+2	+3	n/a	+4	+4	

Soak: +6

Fatigue levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Athletics 2 (running or climbing), Awareness 2 (stand watch), Bows 2 (short bow), Brawl 4 (dodge), Carouse 2 (drinking, games of chance, or rowdy songs), Folk Ken 1 (grogs), Guile 3 (lies to authority), Hunt 1 (tracking), Speak Breton 4 (grogs), Stealth 2 (natural areas), Survival 2 (Brittany), Weapon and Shield 5 (mace)

Equipment: leather scale hauberk, mace & round shield, short bow, traveling cape and pack.

Encumbrance: -1

if there is an odd number of players. The personality traits passed on by the masks (as well as the “natural interaction” between predators and prey) are also likely to affect the nature and success of the contests.

However, the faeries have not explained the judging, which is not based on success or prowess, but on style and flair! They seek novelty and amusement, and so there is also a bias this year, in favor of the newcomers, simply because they are **new**. This may become apparent, especially if someone botches spectacularly, as the faeries **like** slapstick, and this is likely to swing that contest!

The winner will be declared after each contest, with much apparent debate among the faeries, although actually Cierella alone decides.

Revelation

The competition ends late in the afternoon, with Cierella regally awarding prizes to the winners. The participants can now remove their masks, and return to their normal traits.

This is a contest for vis, so she expects to award vis to the winners: the winner of each of the paired contests, from either side, will win a pawn of vis. She will offer each victor a choice: gray slime, grinding rocks, a phial of water, or lenses of ice. (See page 70 for the significance of each.)

Then, Cierella makes a brief speech, saying how much she has enjoyed this day, and hoping to see all of these visitors again, before withdrawing and fading into the mists. Most of her subjects seem to take this as a hint, and also withdraw into the background, leaving the visitors with the distinct sense that they should depart now. (In fact, if they remain in the valley for one more night, they will not suffer anything worse than a few pranks from

minor faeries, but if they stay any longer, Cierella will begin to regard them as *boorish* and *rude*.) However, first, the troupe have to deal with the other visitors.

After a very brief consultation, these others approach the group. With their disguises removed, it can be seen that the both sides wear badges of the Order of Hermes, and that the others bear the mark of the neighboring covenant. They will be angry, as they feel cheated of their rightful collection of vis; they will also have to explain to their masters how and why they have failed. (As they have no magus in their party, other immediate resolutions such as a certámen contest are ruled out.) They will accuse the player party of trespass, and swear that their masters will “deal with you.”



Codas

This story may have been fairly simple, but there are two complications likely to ensue (even leaving aside the story which is the subject of the next chapter).

Legal Actions

Firstly, the neighbor covenant whose emissaries found themselves unexpectedly competing for the vis prizes will take action to reclaim “their” vis source.

Probably fortunately for the troupe, they choose to do this openly and legally under the Code of Hermes. Their options include protesting at tribunal (especially if there is a tribunal coming soon), challenging the magi to a certámen contest, or asking a quaesitor to visit and (after hearing the arguments) to rule on the dispute.

They face the slight problem that they have never “registered” this valley as



a vis source by declaring it at tribunal. This was perhaps because they felt uneasy about extorting vis from the Fae under what some might see as false pretences, or perhaps because they knew that Cierella would always want entertainment and would invite visitors to take part — and they wanted a quiet, easy contest. Hence, the magi of the troupe can plead with complete honesty that they could not have been expected to know beforehand. Whatever the politics of the matter — and politics is always a concern in Hermetic law — the quaesitors cannot rule that this was any sort of act of theft or major violation of the Code. However, rights to the vis granted by Cierella on this occasion, and to participate in the contest in future years, are considerably more debatable.

One point which the troupe can make, with some force, is that Cierella invited them to take part in the contest, and appears to have approved their actions at every point. The Order of Hermes is traditionally very careful of offending the Fae, while knowing how *complicated* faerie reactions can be. Thus, unless things go *very* badly, the quaesitors are likely to rule that the troupe's covenant should not be penalized for an honest error. Furthermore, if their emissaries were defeated in multiple contests, the rival covenant may suffer some loss of face, and neutral magi will be inclined to say that this mess is *their* fault for being so secretive about a vis source.

On the other hand, well, the rivals do have the basic claim of precedence. They are also well established, and have powerful allies. Although they had not registered the source before, their hand is now forced, and they will do so immediately in the hope of denying others the right to take part.

Depending on how well the troupe handles this, what influence is invoked,

and other factors which may be specific to the saga, various judgments are possible:

- If things goes really badly, that the troupe's covenant are bound over not to disturb this faerie valley, which is a "fief" of the other covenant.
- That the site and all vis pertaining it may go to the holding covenant, and others must avoid the spring games — but may visit the valley at other times.
- That this year's contest was "open" and vis awarded remains with the respective winners, but from now one, it is site holder's alone.
- That the "rights of the Fae" are paramount, and so the contest cannot be denied to Cierella's invited guest, whoever they might be — any may turn up and try to be invited to join in the contest.

The "rights of the Fae" are not especially likely to be respected, as it sets precedent, and many other established covenants will feel that their extraction (extortion?) of vis from local Fae would be affected.

Further Invitations

If the judgment involves the troupe agreeing or being ordered to stay away from the contest in future, and perhaps just when the magi think that the problem has died down, another problem can arise. It turns out that Cierella, who is not bound by the Code of Hermes, rather liked these new visitors. At later dates (though necessarily, of course, in winter), they may receive letters — invariably in rather strange forms — inviting them back.

For example, Cierella might send one of her wolves as a messenger, with a message packet. Unfortunately, a magical

being such as this, with only modest Faerie Might, cannot pass the Aegis of the Hearth spell routinely cast around most covenants. Nor can it speak (they are mute even if they take human form), so it will find itself hanging around the vicinity of the magi's home, trying to dodge hunters and attract attention, until it somehow finds someone to receive the packet.

This in turn will prove to hold two items; a waxed pouch holding a little slimy mud — a pawn of the Muto vis mentioned on page 70 — and a letter, scribed in a fine but archaic hand, and perhaps in some obscure rustic dialect. This addresses her previous visitors by their “animal nicknames” (see the boxed note) — for example:

*To my friends Owl, Mouse, Frog,
Eagle, Fox and Beetle,*

Greetings!

*Too long have you been gone
from here, and the Entertainments
are diminished by your absence; the
other Visitors fail to amuse me!*

*In memory of that
Entertainment, I send a small Gift,
of little value and without
Obligation; I would be pleased if
you would visit us again.*

C

If the troupe choose not to accept such invitations — perhaps with the dispatch of polite refusals by way of reply — Cierella will not in fact be *angry*. Frankly, she is too much of a Fae to remain focused on the subject for long. However, she *will* be *disappointed*, and it is just possible that her mood will become petulant at various times as a result.

If, on the other hand, they choose to go and again participate in the Spring Games, this may risk a violation of the

Nicknames

Cierella's slightly strange attitude to mortals leads her to address them strangely at times. She remembers the names of the animals that took part in the contest, and will write to them under those names, regardless of whether the party told her their “own” names.

The story-guide should keep a record of the participants, and their animal mask, and remind the players if they need their memory jogging.

quaesitorial judgment. (The other contestants will certainly complain if they find they again have unexpected opposition, provoking counter comments from the Fae and all sorts of scenes.) The troupe may feel obliged to engage in some tricky and delicate negotiations.

If they go, they may find Amenea trying to distract them again — for example meeting them ahead of Cierella, taking her place, and leaving them to a false arena, where she encourages them to “re-don their masks” (anticipating that their own magic can do what she cannot).

One option would be to take part, to satisfy the Lady, but immediately send any won vis to the other covenant, with a covering letter to explain the situation.

Alternatively, they may decide to visit Cierella out-of-season, away from the Entertainment, but try to provide some other amusement for her. This would meet with favor from the Lady, and she would offer a modest reward — less than the main entertainment, but still something.

If the covenant can be drawn into this, it makes a good link to the next story.





Chapter VII

Story Outline: Tower in the Rock

This story returns to the location from the previous two chapters, and brings the troupe back into contact with Cierella and her subjects — while also introducing the alternate rulers of the valley. It *must* be run after the troupe have had significant, passably friendly contact with Cierella, probably after the events of “Hunter’s Contest.”

It begins — although the magi will not know this yet — when the Lord of Dark Summer decides to extend his power, and strikes by surprise at the Spring Equinox, as the seasons shift. Normally at this time of year Cierella’s influence is waning but still dominant (as it is for most of the year). His strike succeeds and he takes her prisoner, extending his rule over the valley a little way into the physical world and beyond its normal limited season.

However, this leaves most of the lesser Fae who serve her free, albeit either too weak or too lacking in initiative to act to rectify the situation. Eventually, after about a month, they hold a council. Things are looking bad, with the river reduced to a trickle, and much of their strength faded. Worse, Amenea is strutting around claiming that she is Cierella. According to the Rules, they ought to at least pretend to believe her, but she is not very good at it, and they are tired and

weary of her ways. They conclude that they must ask for help.

The crows have to take the lead, as they are the cleverest. They eventually suggest asking the only beings who they think might be both friendly and powerful enough to act against the Lord; a certain band of mortal wizards. After all, Cierella apparently thought well of them.

A Call for Help

The lesser faeries’ first problem, of course, is to send a message to the magi. This is harder than it may sound, as they not only have problems penetrating the Aegis of the Hearth, they have perhaps greater problems communicating with mortals. Consider the cryptic nature of Cierella’s conversations and letters, and then remember that she is far more intelligent than they...

The First Emissary

The first messenger from the valley is one of the wolves, a group who perform such services for Cierella (see page 65). However, without an actual mes-

sage to carry, this “White Fang” is not very effective.

He reaches the covenant well enough, but all he can do there is hang around and try to empathize with people. He is effectively mute, but will try to get people to follow him, doggy fashion. This is horribly undignified for him. The local dogs are likely to recognize him for what he is; some may be hostile and see him as a threat, either to their status, or as a wolf; others will recognize the humiliating state he is reduced to and “laugh,” in doggy fashion.

Intéllego Corpus or Animál magic could reveal his true nature, but the magi may well not even become aware that anything unusual is happened at this point. Their steward and grogs are likely to treat White Fang as just an unusually bold (and hence dangerous) wolf, and while he is cunning and fast enough to escape hunters, he has no real way to *talk* to anyone.

The Second Attempt

Assuming that this first attempt fails, the crows will discuss the problem and realize that *communication* is needed. They are great conversationalists, so they will send one of their number — Trefle (page 63).

Again, unless the magi realize that there is something happening, he will fail to be understood. People mostly dislike crows, which *are* carrion birds, and magic notwithstanding, Trefle is not so odd that grogs are likely to pay that much attention to him. They will throw stones before they notice that he is talking to them. (The crows do not properly understand the limits of people — all of them can converse together. They understand the effects, such as thrown stones, but not the reasons.)

The Third Attempt

The crows debate further. The sprites, goblins and rock trolls are not much better options — sprites can talk but have poor concentration; goblins are stupid pranksters; rock trolls are, well, rocks. And the faerie lack of creativity makes finding the answer painfully hard.

But eventually, the crows will think to send a *group* of emissaries, in the hope that at least one of them will succeed (as, in fact, one probably will). They will ask the shadow elves to help, but also ask a sprite, Violet, to come along. The sprite will not be happy — areas of low aura drain its strength, and it can hardly fly outside the valley. The shadow elves dislike showing themselves, and hate the light, so their representative, Penumbra (chosen because she habitually stands at the edge of shadow, and so is better equipped to interact with light) will make any approaches at night. Trefle completes the party.

Much of what follows depends on the nature and layout of the covenant and its surrounding lands, but it is probably Penumbra who will succeed in making contact, most likely in the house of a major grog leader or companion outside the Aegis. She *can* speak, although she has a thin, hollow voice. She approaches in the evening, as the shadows close in after Dusk. A house fire offers flickering shadows, but is also the fearsome Light and Fire.

The reaction of the companion or grog to a talking shadow is a matter for roleplaying and personality traits.

Penumbra's Plea

Penumbra asks for help, for assistance. Her mistress has been made prisoner, taken hostage, and moved to a far





off place. She and her fellow servants cannot rescue their mistress, and they fear they will die without her. They have no water, and their valley is withering. She will call the human she addresses (preferably a noble or warrior) a heroic knight, and ask him to help a maiden in distress (her mistress).

She can tell of the other Fae of the valley, although she is not well versed in the complexities of these things, but has been given a message to pass. When she reaches the limits of her understanding (which happens quite soon), she defers to Trefle, who is nearby, along with Violet.

Doubtless, someone will eventually decide that all this strangeness merits the attention of a mage, at which point the troupe should be able to piece together the nature of the situation.

Return to Cierella's Realm

The magi may well be uncertain whether they ought to visit Cierella's valley at all, especially if they came off badly in the earlier Hermetic court case. However, the message is urgent and hints at serious trouble, and the invitation is clear; some combination of curiosity, sense of duty, the hope of reward and the wish to avoid offending the Fae should draw them in. If there is a quaesitor in the group, or if one can be consulted (and in the latter case, the consultation must be quick), she can rule that this response is legal, provided that the magi are careful not to infringe the rights and privileges of

the other covenant — especially as regards vis.

The journey to the valley should be much as normal, but on entering its depths, the visitors should be struck by a sense of brooding trouble.

Amenea

While exploring the valley, the visitors may encounter and be distracted by Amenea, although if they follow Trefle and do not wander they might miss her.

Amenea is taking advantage of Cierella's disappearance to supplant her. However, despite her skill in impersonation, she is doing a less than perfect job of this. She has taken on the role, and fools herself into believing that she is the real Lady; she expects the other faeries to acknowledge this and play along until the real Cierella shows up — although worryingly it has never taken this long before.

Her powers are manifestly weaker than those of the real Lady: Amenea cannot actually control the valley, and especially cannot cure the drought which the early dry Summer will bring. Unless the river is restored, the valley and its faeries will suffer greatly. Rather than working the proper magic to regulate the valley, Amenea is just ordering the faeries around, becoming more and more a bully, as frustration builds upon repeated failure.

This is the state that the visitors will walk into. It should not take long before even the magi see through the deception. If challenged directly (a breach of The Rules), she will break down, acknowledge that she cannot cope, and ask for help.

The Symptoms

To begin with, the valley may seem unseasonably warm and humid, although despite this, it is faded and subdued compared to what people remember. The trees are green, but lack faerie luxuriance (although people may not have seen that, as they probably only came in winter). If a mage tests the local magical balance, the valley proves to have a mere level 1 Faerie aura — markedly less than before. However, the visitors will most likely first realize the extent of the problem when they reach the floor of the valley, and discover the river reduced to a trickle. The mists are gone, too.

The Cause

When they reach the head of the valley, the visitors will discover the obvious primary cause of the trouble. A huge boulder has somehow appeared in a place where it blocks the stream almost perfectly. A marsh is thus forming behind this dam, and may eventually develop into a lake.

Simple solutions such as using magic to deal with the boulder are thwarted by its Resistance — it is Held In Place by the peculiar power of faerie magic, and cannot be moved or shattered without “rewriting its setting.” (Although Free Expression can exert extraordinary power over such faerie phenomena, trying to revise this setting in that way will fail, as the Valley is much too far from Arcadia, where such things may be possible. Trying to move it with spells automatically fails, as during Dark Summer it has the strength of the Valley and the Lord of Dark Summer to bind it. If magi do produce unexpected tricks which somehow succeed in moving the boulder, it will disappear as it leaves its





assigned place, and another similar boulder appear blocking the river; moving the river course will also fail, as its flow is blocked as much by the changed role of Dark Summer as by the actual lump of rock.)

However, Trefle will explain that a gate opens at dusk, through which they can enter another realm. Cierella is held captive within; he does not know much more than this, although he presumes that the nature of her captivity will be "obvious." He does know that the party should return before dawn (when they can leave); if they are late, he fears they could be trapped.

Entering the Rock

Dealing with the problem literally requires getting inside things; the gate is the only way. It takes the form of a small hole, a shadow within a shadow. The faeries cannot use it; it leads to places where they cannot exist. Humans must crawl (or shrink) to enter, but as they move inwards, the tunnel gets larger and opens out from a cliff face. What they then see would very obviously not fit inside a single boulder.

Path Into Dark Summer

The tunnel opens high up a cliff, at the start of a path which runs to the right along a ledge and further upwards; the cliff plummets below on one side and rises sheer above on the other. Ferns grow from crannies in the rock. Down below is the roof of a dense forest; the cliff seems to

run down forever, with no sight of a base or forest floor.

There is a twilight gloom everywhere, but human eyes can adjust to it (and spells could help further). The sky is overcast with thick cloud; thunder rumbles in the distance.

The path climbs until the visitors reach the top of the cliff, several score of feet up, and see a forested plateau. Peering through the trees, they can see occasional flickers of light in the distance. A gentle breeze stirs the forest leaves. The trees are large and ancient, and there is a mossy carpet over the ground, into which their roots sink like extended fingers. The cliff runs left and right into the distance, gently curving back as if perhaps the plateau were a huge circle.

There is a level 3 Faerie aura here.

The Stone Animals

The journey across this bizarre landscape unfortunately involves a series of encounters with its denizens, some of them very dangerous. All else aside, all of the animals in the forest are made of stone.

To convert a standard animal to its stone equivalent, take its attributes and add +2 Str, +4 Sta, +10 Soak, and +1 Size (and Body); add +3 damage to attacks (from Str+Size) and -1 to defense (from increased Size). These creatures have a Faerie Might of 10 + (5 times Size), with a minimum of 10; if killed, their bodies contain 1 pawn of Terram vis per 5 Might. Iron has no special effect on their stony forms.

The Lion

First, a larger-than-life statue of a lion (*Medieval Bestiary*, page 37) can be seen

through the trees. It is portrayed lying down, with its head on its paws. (It is no statue, but a stone lion soundly sleeping, and the visitors would do well not to disturb it.)

The Unicorn

A crashing in the brush heralds the approach of something large and heavy. Its footsteps can be felt as it gets closer. The Indian unicorn, which players but not characters will probably recognize as closely resembling a Sumatran rhino (*Medieval Bestiary*, page 41 and 44) has good hearing but poor sight; when it hears people, it will change course and charge. The best option here is probably to climb a tree.

The Beavers

Next, the wanderers come to the edge of a lake in the woods; a stream runs in to the cleared area, but has been dammed — by a neat wall of stone. In the middle of the lake, there is a domed stone building, with no obvious entrance.

The beavers (*Medieval Bestiary*, page 27) responsible are actually quite affable, if not overly interested in matters beyond their lake, and should prove harmless unless severely provoked. They are not so stupid as to castrate themselves — whoever would want stone testicles?

The Fish

In this same lake, and others, you may find (normal size) fish swimming. If



Stone Unicorn

Characteristics: Cun +2, Per +3, Str +5, Sta +7, Dex +2, Qik +3

Faerie Might: 30

Size: +3

Personality Traits: Wild +5, Bad tempered +4, Stony Impassivity +2

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Horn	+11	+11	+7	+15*	n/a
Trample	+4	+8	+6	+10*	n/a

*Target must make a Strength + Stamina roll of 15+ to remain standing.

Soak: +16

Body levels: OK, 0/0/0, -1/-1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Athletics 2 (running), Awareness 3 (hearing)

Ferocity: 2 (when surprised)

Powers:

Bash, ReTe 30, 0 points— the Stone Unicorn relies on its tough skin to avert blows and charges directly at those in its path. Its weight and

strength are such that normal men cannot parry its charge but must dodge; its bulk and fury are such that even those who successfully dodge must make a Qik+Athletics roll of 9+ or be struck a glancing blow for +5 damage and a Str+Sta roll of 10+ to remain standing. The Stone Unicorn may Bash anyone within 5' of its path as it thunders by.

Vis: 6 Terram in Horn.

The Stone Unicorn does not have the powers or weaknesses of the traditional unicorn — its heart is unmoved by a chaste virgin (more likely it will be angered at the intrusion, and charge), and its horn has no power over poison. Its habit is to thunder through the forest, angry that its poor eyes can hardly see in the twilight gloom; it relies on its keen hearing and smell to navigate, and its inexorable strength to clear its path of obstacles.

If it should happen to stop and rest, it will settle into the statue-like impassivity which characterizes all the Stone Beasts in sleep.



caught, they too prove to be living stone (and very heavy!).

See the *Medieval Bestiary* for pike (page 82), frogs (page 77), and general fish (pages 71 and 124-5).

The Gryphon

Beyond the forest lies a plain of tall grass. From a rocky knoll above the plain, sitting up on its haunches, a stone gryphon (*Medieval Bestiary*, page 55) passively surveys its domain. If disturbed, it will be *annoyed*; if undisturbed, it will sit stone-still and may not even be noticed by the strangers moving by. (Per+Awareness of 15+ to spot the unmoving Gryphon from a distance.)

Rescue and Confrontation

Despite their dangers, the woods and their inhabitants are merely on the way to the important business of the visit. Having passed through, the visitors come to what they will quickly guess must be their goal.

The Tower

Beyond the trees, the plateau opens onto a broad meadow with occasional bushes and tall, lush grass. In the distance stands a rocky spire, or else a huge tower. Deciding which it is requires closer inspection, and even then, may be debatable.

As if to emphasize the main feature of the scene, strokes of green lightning

repeatedly descend from the endless cloud cover to the spire. The lightning can also be seen as green flashes behind the clouds. Thunder rumbles almost constantly, but the air is still. It is warm, and near the Tower is like the hottest summer night — tense and sticky.

The walk across the meadow will take some minutes; the grass has sharp edges, and walkers have to fight to push through, so progress is slow. (However, ReHe magic can easily deflect the grass to provide free passage.)

The tower rises smoothly (if craggily) from a solid base of natural bedrock. An immense staircase (a leg-stretching 3' between each step), leads up to a door, 30' high and wide enough for 10 men to walk abreast. There is a huge knocker (out of reach of normal human hands), but the door may be pushed open quite easily — it is counterbalanced and glides smoothly inwards, then drifts shut behind.

Inside, there is a cavernous entrance hall, with doors to chambers beyond, and a great staircase leading up; its segments lead all the way to the top of the Tower. The walls inside are polished granite, or dark basalt, or marble (colored, black, and white). Most of the chambers are empty. Some contain huge marble tables or couches, suitable for someone at least 10' tall. There is a feeling that someone has been here before one, but that one missed them and cannot quite pin down who it was.

Ten-foot statues stand against the walls: knights, lords, servants, maidens. As visitors climb the great staircase, there are balconies on the outer walls, offering a vista over the meadow and forest, and making the looming clouds seem like the roof of some immense chamber. There are immense halls, ballrooms, feasting halls, and other spaces with no fathomable purpose. In places, visitors will come onto balconies looking down on the floor of a

chamber which may be 30-60' below, and a domed ceiling above.

There are treasure rooms, with tables on which stand serried ranks of trophies, of plates and goblets, in crystal, silver and marble. Chests lie open, filled with silver coins, of Emperors long forgotten. There are wondrous items of crystal, mechanisms that can move of their own — yet not living stone like the monsters (and giants) of the realm. Mirrors hang from the walls, so clear you might think them a window to a land beyond; other mirrors stand, turned to face the wall lest any behold what lies within, or be caught!

(Moderately wise visitors may guess that filching treasure from a faerie tower could lead to all manner of complications, besides being dishonest and impolite, and may restrain any less wise com-

panions. If anyone does leave this place with such loot, storyguides should feel free to develop all manner of long term plot complications. Or have the thieves assailed by faerie guards at some point. Or simply have the loot turn to mud and pebbles once outside the faerie realm.)

There is a level 5 Faerie aura within the Tower itself.

Below and Behind

If for some reason the visitors wish to head down rather than up, they must find a doorway. The doors to below ground are small, only 5' high, and are tucked away behind hangings or hidden in the design of the stonework. The storyguide should require the group to spend





Dwarves of the Tower

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +1, Pre -3, Com 0, Str +4, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik 0

Faerie Might: 10-15

Size: -2

Personality Traits: Industrious +4, Shy +3

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawling (fist)	+5	+6	+6	+2	n/a
Hammer	+8	+9	+10	+7	n/a

Soak: +4 (+12 in chainmail)

Body levels: OK, -1, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Awareness 4 (searching), Brawl 4, Craft Item 6 (fine detail), Faerie Guile 3 (stonewall), Faerie Lore 2 (The Tower), Tower Lore 2 (rules).

Powers:

Craft Wondrous Item, XxTe 20, 3 points: the dwarf can add +4 to any craft skill used to produce works of intricately fine detail.

Equipment: workman's tools, long apron. (Most have a forge, hammer and tongs nearby should they need them.)

Encumbrance: 0

Vis: none.

The dwarves are industrious and busy. They do not appreciate being distracted from their tasks: their main task is carving food for the table — fruit,

vegetables, bread and meat, all crafted from crystal or stone. They also create the treasures that fill many chambers. (The giants are not overly interested in these, but it pleases the dwarves to keep busy, so they are encouraged.)

The dwarves will talk, briefly, about their individual work, but would rather carry on working than chatter. If it will make a questioner go away, they will explain the layout of the Tower, and send them to the air-shafts. They know all the paths and tunnels within the walls, but are less clear as to the function of the chambers beyond, and have little or no knowledge of the plain and forest outside.

Unless greatly provoked they will ignore intruders; they do not consider themselves to be guards. However, if they *are* provoked, they have hammers and other weapons to hand, and can find chainmail armor to protect themselves.

Given time and a reward, these dwarves can perform the same magical feats as their Nordic counterparts. They rarely do so, though, and will not offer their services — they have acquired a passion for carving grapes and other effete objects which might offend their northern relatives.

some minutes looking, and may roll a die or two in secret to hint that this is tricky, but in fact, it is mostly a matter of determination and time. Once one door has been spotted, characters may observe that there are others hidden behind pillars in many rooms, and even on the stairways; once one knows what to look for, they are fairly obvious. Behind these small doors are narrow passages within

the walls, again only 5' high, as if built for someone smaller than a man (and certainly smaller than a giant).

Below ground, there are chambers lit by the dull red light of braziers with coals. This is the realm of dwarves, servants of the tower. It is they who craft the wondrous items found throughout the place. They are ugly and squat; many are deformed, with features such as

The Lord of Dark Summer

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +1, Pre +3,
Com 0, Str +9 (+11), Sta +6 (+10),
Dex -2, Qik -2

Faerie Might: 30

Size: +3

Personality Traits: Noble +4, Stony
Impassivity +2

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawling (fist)	+4	+4	+1	+12 (+14)	n/a
Sword	+9	+7	+2	+20 (+22)	n/a

Soak: +15 (+25)

Body levels: OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3/-3, -5,
Incapacitated

Abilities: Athletics 4 (grace), Awareness
4 (alertness), Brawl 5, Charm 3 (first
impressions), Concentration 6 (resist
distractions), Etiquette 4 (the tower),
Faerie Guile 5 (silences), Faerie Lore
4 (Tower Fae), Tower Lore 6 (the
land), Single Weapon 5 (sword)

Powers:

Strength of the Tower, ReVi 25, 0 points:
The Lord is essentially part of the
Tower, and to affect him by magic
you must overcome the land too. He
adds 5 times the local aura to his
Might to resist any magic not native
to the Tower, plateau or forest, and
adds the aura to any soak or resis-
tance tests he must make. (If he
leaves the realm of Dark Summer,
he loses this protection while away.)

Stone's Royal Crown, ReMe 30, 1 point:
The Lord can draw on the strength
of the Tower and add its Faerie Aura
to his Presence if he wishes.

Command Stone, ReTe 30, 0 points: The
Lord can use any Rego Terram effect
up to level 30, at no cost. He is not
penalized for requisites, so can per-
form many of the generalized
Terram-as-solids effects. He can also
command any of the stony beings of
the land.

Alter Stone, XxTe, 1 point per mag-
nitude: He can duplicate any Terram
effect up to level 30 at a cost of 1
Might per magnitude or equivalent.
He can satisfy any requisites so long
as the primary aspect is Terram (for
instance, he can turn the carved
stone food into real nutritious ani-
mal and plant based food such as
normal people might eat).

Summer's Parching Touch, CrIg 30, 3
points: The individual or group tar-
geted is subject to a dry parching
heat. While the Lord concentrates,
those affected must make a Sta roll
of 6+ every round or lose a Fatigue
level; Body levels are lost once all
Fatigue levels are gone.

Stony Aspect, MuCo(Te) 30, 3 points:
Although normally marble flesh, he
can take on the raw stone aspects of
the beasts outside, and gains +2 Str,
+4 Sta, +10 Soak and +2 Damage
for as long as he wishes. His skins
becomes gray and grainy, and his
features coarse and craggy while this
power is used.

Equipment: huge "silver" sword, silver
crown and gems; all the resources of
the Tower.

Encumbrance: 0

Vis: 3 Corpus in body, 3 Terram in bones,
plus all the vis sources of the land.

The Lord of Dark Summer is in
some ways a hot, dry mirror to Lady
Cierella. His court is naturally imbued
with the stillness and impassive nature
of stone. While their lord sits patiently
on his throne, his courtiers stand as stat-
ues all around the walls. For weeks on
end, the only disturbance might be a
dwarf coming to add another carved
grape to a bowl of fruit and scurrying
away again.





ducks' or hen's feet, or but a single eye, or fur covering their whole body, or the head of a beast. (See *Ultima Thule* for more on the type.)

A long corridor circles the basement of the tower, with stout doors off on either side. Beyond these are the workrooms of the dwarves. (There are no obvious living chambers — if the dwarves ever stop for rest, they must do so in their workrooms.)

There are two great chimney-like shafts on opposite sides of the circle. They sink down to great depths, and a gale-like wind rushes upwards. At intervals, small openings allow stale air into the shafts; at wider intervals panels open off, allowing access to landings on the great staircase which climbs the Tower. Magi who have diverted themselves down here may rise quickly through the Tower by floating up these shafts, using only very minor magics.

The Lord of Dark Summer

High in the tower, seated on a throne of black marble, clad in black velvet and silver, sits the Lord of Dark Summer. Standing, he would be 12' tall. He is handsome, clean-shaven, with close cropped hair; a thin circlet of silver surrounds his brow.

The visitors climbing the stairs will eventually reach a balcony which looks over the throne-room; two lesser staircases curve down from the balcony to the floor below, while the main staircase continues. From this vantage point visitors can observe the lord sitting there, without him seeming to notice. Normally he sits, still and impassive, while "nothing" happens around him. He has the passivity and the patience of stone.

He welcomes visitors who approach him, and call for refreshments. He leads

Stone Servants

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre -3, Com -3, Str +7, Sta +8, Dex -1, Qik -1

Faerie Might: 15

Size: +3

Personality Traits: Stony Impassivity +4, Gracious +2

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawling (fist)	+4	+3	+1	+10	n/a
Sword	+10	+8	+5	+18	n/a

Soak: +21 (+30)

Body levels: OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3/-3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Athletics 3 (grace), Awareness 3 (alertness), Brawl 4 (dodge), Concentration 5 (resist distractions), Etiquette 3 (the Tower), Faerie Guile 2 (silences), Faerie Lore 2 (Tower faeries), Tower Lore 3 (rules), Single Weapon 4 (sword).

Powers:

Become Flesh/Stone, MuTe(Co) 30, 3 points: According to their wish, they may become statues or living stone.

Equipment: carved robes and costume, which animate or become statue with their wearer — indeed may actually be part of the living stone. Some are depicted as warriors and bear great swords and carved mail. These warriors in mail have a further +9 Soak.

Encumbrance: 0

Vis: 3 Terram in body.

The statues depict (and become) courtiers and servants, with some knights and guards among them. Throughout the timeless stretches of this realm, they stand inert, unless time returns, and their lord bids them stand down and act for him. Then, they become stone-fleshed living people, and act out all the roles of a noble court.

people to the next room, where there are tables covered with platters of food, goblets of rich dark wine, and marble couches to sit upon. The statues come to life at his command, as servants or warriors.

He is not inclined to release Cierella — he has only just caught her (time passes slowly in this static land), but a good offering might sway him. (It is hard to say what might tempt him, but clever players might come up with something. Whatever they try, he will be slow to respond. Let them sweat.) However, if no one mentions her, then neither will he. Visitors may freely depart his throne room and he will return to his quiet stance; they may explore further without apparent interference. He does not object to visitors wandering around, so long as they cause no trouble.

If visitors transgress too far, he can expel them — the walls will appear to collapse around them, and the intruders find themselves falling amidst a cascade of boulders. Instead of crashing to the ground, however, they will find themselves standing on clear ground, with the tower tall and intact in the distance. If they re-enter, but behave with decorum, he will appear to overlook previous transgressions, or at least remain impassive as they move around quietly.

Cierella's Prison

Eventually, perhaps after too many distractions, the visitors should find that for which they are searching. They may





be slightly surprised to find it so accessible and unguarded, but the Fae of Dark Summer are not secretive or nervous by nature. Rather, they have placed their captive on high.

At the very top of the Tower, where the green lightning strikes, there is a chamber with huge open windows, where a hot wind howls. There is wind up among the clouds, and here it descends to the Tower.

From the high domed ceiling hangs a chain of marble links, supporting an intricately carved ball made of stone bars, within which is another and another and another... And within the meshwork of these nested balls sits the huddled form of Cierella, Lady of the Mists. In here, she is trapped, away from her cold mists, and running water, and the winter sun — all the bright things which are a part of her. Without these, deliberately cut off from any links to her home, surrounded by things which are the antithesis of her nature, she is powerless. She is also weak and weary, and unable to talk, or to respond to questions or suggestions. If someone can heal her, and restore her aspects, then her power will return, and she can break out (water breaks rock!), and escape and depart.

The stone cages are enchanted and have a Magic Resistance of 40; they are immensely heavy and very strong, so that anything pushed in will be caught and sliced in two as the inner cages slide flush against the outer. (If necessary, treat this as a PeTe 40 “slice” effect.)

One way to rescue her is to bring real water to her. Magically created water will not do, but the water (or even wine) skins carried by most travelers will do fine. Water from the trickle that remains of her river would be best. It might be possible to physically hurl a container of water between the bars (thrown “attack” roll of 15+), but magic is the easiest

means. A level 10 Rego spell to hurl liquid or a container of liquid will suffice, but a Finesse roll of 12+ is needed to get the timing right; 9+ if the mage takes the time to study the motions of the spinning cages; 6+ if they use Intéllego magics to get insight into the motions of the cages. If they fail the roll by 3 or less, some liquid gets through but the rest is scattered around the room. It is quite possible that the magus lacks the appropriate skills for all this, and that any grogs or companions will be ill-equipped. But they can make multiple attempts at solutions.

A cupful (or scattered skin full) of water will help Cierella stir and raise her head, staring out with hollow eyes; a whole water-skin will give her the strength to call out for help. Treat her as effectively Incapacitated, and each water-skin raising her 1 Body level, until she is only Lightly Wounded or better, when she will exert her recovered Might.

However, once any water reaches Cierella, the Lord will become aware that his prisoner is gaining strength. Other blatant activities, especially magical, may also alert him. If the players are too slow or complacent, inform them that slow but very heavy steps are audible lower in the tower. A storyguide who wishes to create a strong sense of urgency can say that those steps are now ascending the stairs. One who wants to run a fight scene can have a Stone Servant or two arrive in time to attempt to prevent the rescue.

When Cierella does regain her strength, moss and damp will spread across the inner cage bars. As this spreads, the inner cage will catch and snag on the next set of bars, and Cierella will seem to breath more deeply, catch her breath and look stronger. As the moss and damp spreads, more cages will stop and she will become stronger, and shed her haggard looks, until all the

cages stop, and she can stand within the ball, looking regal and young again. She can then step between the stationary bars and into the chamber.

Dramatic timing suggests that the Dark Lord should now step in and vent his rage upon the trespassers who have spoiled his plan and freed the “wretch” he had rescued and kept “out of pity.” He will use his powers to expel the whole group, Cierella and all, so that the Tower seems to disintegrate around them, and they hurtle to the ground surrounded by the crashing remains of the building, only to wake unharmed on the clear ground, with the Tower standing in the distance.

Cierella will be weak, but relieved, and very grateful. Her dignity will be greatly boosted if some way can be found to offer her strength and assistance in walking, without it seeming that she is too frail to make the trip unaided.

It will not be necessary to crawl the final way out of the tunnel in the stone, for as Cierella reaches this point, she will begin to summon the waters of the valley, and the boulder will burst open, releasing everyone (albeit now soaked). The pent-up waters of the valley will rush down their proper channel, and bury themselves noisily among the boulders; mist will surge out and swirl among the trees near the waters.

Cierella's Celebration

Now, other faeries of Bright Winter will come to take the visitors to rest and recover, while Cierella moves among her people. The next day, a celebratory feast will be held. Cierella will thank those who rescued her and gift them with vis (or other appropriate rewards, if they ask politely).

At the storyguide's discretion, this may become a repeating source of vis: Cierella may invite them to return next year to mark the anniversary. If they do that, they should have a storyteller recount the events leading up to the rescue, after which Cierella will disappear. They can then replay an abbreviated version of the rescue (knowing where to go, and where not to stop, will help). Since this is but a shadow of the real tale, all tasks are a difficulty level easier (–3 to target numbers). She will then again reward her rescuers with vis. Hermetic law will permit the covenant to take advantage of this (unless someone *really* messes up the case), as it is a new source of vis, and does not diminish any other covenant's rights.





Chapter VIII

Brief Encounters

This chapter provides a trio of further faerie encounters, suitable for use as the basis for brief stories or incidents in the course of some larger plot. They are especially suitable as incidents to include in otherwise routine vis hunts, to remind magi that poking around obscure areas with arcane reputations in the hope of finding power or loot is *always* likely to lead to complications.

Dwellers in the Stones

During travels or explorations in a wild area, probably of rocky moors or hills, characters may discover a mound, probably artificial but of ancient construction, on top of which is a ring of equally ancient standing stones with a single, larger central stone. All of this has a detectable faerie aspect. (Specifically, the area within the outer ring of stones has a level 3 Faerie aura.)

These stones have enough of the uncanny about them to make them comfortable for one resident Fae — an amiable but rather solitary character who will

tolerate visitors, but not encourage them. This magic may in fact derive from the mound on which they stand — a mound with another inhabitant.

The first of these two characters is not, on the face of it, an overly impressive figure.

Bustralt is (of course) aware that *someone else* sleeps beneath the mound on which the stones stand. He will work to dissuade anyone from disturbing Hemen the Draugr, if they will only listen to him. Whether the typical Hermetic magus will listen to counsels of caution from a mild-mannered dwarf is another matter.

If Hemen is destroyed, his tomb will, perhaps ironically, prove empty of anything of interest; any valuable grave-goods have long since rotted away. Sometimes, robbing graves and fighting monsters is not actually worth the effort.

Note: Although most of the material in this book draws at least somewhat on Breton myths or geography, these two characters are more Nordic in style. (There are Breton dwarfs, called *Korreds*, but Bustralt may not resemble them much.) If this is likely to be a serious issue in your saga, Hemen might be, say, a Viking chief who died and was buried while on a raid, and Bustralt might be some kind of expatriate.

Bustralt the Dwarf

Characteristics: Int +1, Per -1, Pre -1, Com -1, Str +8, Sta +5, Dex +1, Qik 0

Faerie Might: 15

Size: -3

Personality Traits: Peaceful +2, Industrious -3

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawling (fist)	+4	+4	+6	+5	n/a
Thrown rock	+10	+5	—	*	n/a

*While a small rock might cause only +2 damage, Bustralt can throw anything up to a modest boulder, for up to +10 damage; he could also transform a rock, adding spikes to add +5 damage.

Soak: +7

Body levels: OK, -3, Incapacitated

Abilities: Animal Ken 5 (woodland), Brawl 3 (dodge), Craft: wood-carving 6 (found shapes), Faerie Guile 4 (politeness), Plant Ken 5 (shrubs), Throw Rock 6 (large ones), Valley Area Lore 4 (wildlife).

Powers:

Become Invisible, PeIm 15, 1 point: Bustralt can become undetectable to sight and sound. He will use this if overly bothered.

Know Earth, InTe 30, 3 points: Dwarfs know where all the wealth of the earth is hidden. Bustralt may use any Intéllego type effect on the ground and rocks around, or on stones and rocks brought to him, and he can tell their value. He already “knows” this area and need not expend Might to detail it. The snag is, so far as Bustralt is concerned, there is wealth in a nut, or a mushroom, or a tasty root; to him gold and gems are worthless and uninteresting, and it is almost impossible to persuade him otherwise.

Pass through Stone, MuCo(Te) 30, 1 point: Bustralt can merge himself into rock, and by doing so can pass through stone barriers.

Transform Objects, MuTe 15, 1 point: Bustralt can use Glamours to achieve any Muto Terram effect, including turning base elements into gold. (“But why would anyone want to?”) The transformations are permanent unless brought into a dominion aura, blessed by a priest, or touched by Iron.

Work Stone, Mu(Pe,Re)Te 15, 0 points: A dwarf can work earth and hard stone with ease, so that he can do five times the work of a full-sized man.

Equipment: His home contains many small fittings of carved wood and woven fiber, and stores of fruits and nuts.

Encumbrance: 0

Bustralt is a dwarf who lives in the stones. He is small, hunchbacked, and covered all over in long shaggy hair; he is also amazingly strong for his size. Someone who had the power to enter stone and follow him would find he has a fine (dwarf sized) stone house within the largest pillar of rock.

Bustralt is highly unusual for his kind in that he is an exile, and not at all interested in laboring for years over some lump of stone underground; he prefers a relaxed, interesting life on the surface. He is on friendly terms with the animals and plants in the area, can speak their languages, and knows many by name.

He has normal dwarfish powers, but would not be pleased to have to use them; he has foresworn everything related to his old life in the tunnels and mines to live here in the forest. He will not fight unless utterly pressed (e.g. by magic), but will evade and flee as seems possible. Were he to fight, he would actually be quite formidable.





Hemen the Draugr

Characteristics: Cun 0, Per 0, Str +4,
Sta +8, Dex 0, Qik 0

Magic Might: 20

Size: 0

Personality Traits: Bloodthirsty +5,
Vengeful +3.

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawling (claw)	+6	+6	+4	+7	n/a
Longsword*	+9	+7	+10	+8	n/a
Dagger*	+8	+7	+8	+7	n/a

*While armed, Hemen will strike with both these weapons. Both cause *The Wound that Weeps* — see below.

Soak: +16

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5,
Incapacitated

Powers:

Stink, CrAu 10, 0 points: As the spell *Stench of Twenty Corpses*, page 118 of the *Ars Magica* rulebook.

See the Living, InCo 20, 0 points: Hemen can see people without light or any other means, in his quest to slay those who disturb his rest.

The Wound that Weeps, PeCo 10, 0 points: Wounds made by Hemen's foul weapons are affected as if by the spell of this name on page 127 of the *Ars Magica* rulebook.

Equipment: Sword and dagger, chain-mail and helm.

Encumbrance: 0

Vis: 4 Perdo, in his arms.

Hemen was an ancient lord who was buried in this place in times long forgotten. Either old pagan magics, the power

of the land, or his own nature, have transformed him into a *Draugr* (similar to the *hagbui* described in the *Medieval Bestiary* page 115 or *Ultima Thule* page 120) — the undead guardian of his own tomb. He will not rise unless dug out into the raw air of the upper world. If so disturbed, he would wreak havoc and ruin, slaughtering any and all, before returning to his grave.

Hemen appears as a rotting corpse, clad in skins and rough fabric robes and wielding an ancient iron sword and dagger (which will both disintegrate if he is destroyed). He is not interested in anything beyond protecting his tomb, which he regards as his property and territory, and taking revenge on anyone who dares to disturb it. He will be unrelenting and brutal to that end; he otherwise prefers to rest, but he has no wish to give up his guardianship.

In fact, Hemen does not really have a mind as such — just a roiling mass of suspicion, hostility, and latent malice. However, he retains some warrior instincts from life, and understands basic tactics. He will not risk destruction in a frontal assault on strong foes when he can achieve a more certain revenge, with a lot more terror, by ambushes and sneak attacks. He sees anyone using magic as a serious threat, and seeks to eliminate them first in any stand-up fight.

The Wild Boys

This encounter should come into play when a party of characters, for whatever reason, are wandering through

a remote area of unmanaged woodland — which may have something of a bad and uncanny reputation, if anyone has taken the time to ask any humans living nearby. In brief, the party are likely to come under sudden attack.

Wild Boy Chief

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +1, Pre +1, Com -1, Str 0, Sta +1, Dex +3, Qik +3

Faerie Might: 15

Size: -1

Personality Traits: Cocky +4, Aggressive +3, Mercurial +2, Rude +1

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawling (fist)	+8	+7	+9	-1	n/a
Short spear & buckler	+10	+9	+11	+2	n/a
Mace & buckler	+9	+11	+13	+4	n/a
Javelin (thrown spear)	+6	+6	n/a	+6	n/a

Soak: +5 (leather plus tough skin)

Body levels: OK, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Brawl 5 (Dodge), Area Lore 4 (the woods), Faerie Guile 4 (self-importance), Hunt 3 (small game), Leadership 3 (wild plans), Weapon & Shield 5 (buckler), Stealth 4 (forests), Thrown weapon 4 (javelin).

Equipment: Leather jerkin, 3 spears, mace and small shield.

Encumbrance: -2

Vis: none.

These wild woods have become the home of a tribe of wild faeries, who, in the absence of any other rules or controls, live a parody of human warrior life. They are lead by a “chief” chosen by squabbles and rough fighting; they make “raids” upon the wildlife of the area, and upon any unfortunate humans who may enter their woods. They appear to be children, dressed in such leathers as a peasant militia might own; each carries a mace, a sling, and either a short bow or a shortspear. The chief and his lieutenants each carry a small shield, three spears, and a mace. They usually throw their spears before closing and mobbing their

victims; the archers stand back and fire a few arrows before either their opponents close or their own allies get in the way, then join the brawl. However, given strong, determined opposition, they all flee, only to attempt another such ambush a little later.

They have a village, with huts made of woven sticks, but are all male: there are no females (“girls”!) and no offspring — nothing to impose responsibility upon them. They are just like ill-disciplined adolescents. They have no real plans (but many wild schemes!) and no real organization, but are content with their woodland “kingdom”. They are not really brave, and will flee rather than make a stand; if caught, or if they should (perhaps accidentally) capture an opponent, they will boast of their prowess and of their fellows in the tribe.



Wild Boys

Characteristics: Int 0, Per +1, Pre -1, Com -1, Str -1, Sta 0, Dex +3, Qik +3

Faerie Might: 5-10

Size: -2

Personality Traits: Cocky +3, Mercurial +3, Aggressive +2, Rude +1

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawling (fist)	+6	+5	+8	-3	n/a
Mace	+9	+8	+11	+2	n/a
Short spear	+10	+6	+9	+0	n/a
Javelin (thrown spear)	+5	+5	n/a	+6	n/a
Short bow	+7	+5	n/a	+4	n/a
Sling	+7	+5	n/a	+3	n/a

Soak: +5 (leather plus tough skin)

Body levels: OK, -1, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Bows 5 (short bow), Brawl 4 (Dodge), Area Lore 3 (the woods), Faerie Guile 4 (playful), Hunt 4 (small game), Single Weapon 4 (mace), Stealth 4 (forests), Thrown Weapons 4 (javelin).

Equipment: leather jerkin, mace, sling, spear or sling

Encumbrance: -2 (-3 with javelin)

Vis: none.



The aura here can be that of the surrounding area, or may have a modest Faerie aura 3. The storyguide should pick the aura to suit the circumstances.

If there are any other supernatural creatures active in the area, the “Wild Boys” know of and avoid them. Their current chief is named Gorun, and his “sub-chiefs” are Dider and Eliaz; others of the band have names such as Blez, Hegareg, Kenerin, Loig, Teliau, and Vonig.

These beings can represent a “nuisance encounter,” or just possibly a potential source of minor information. They may also be a reminder that not all faeries are either beautiful or wondrous.

Argentaria Devorans

Argentaria Devorans is a dark faerie with an unwholesome taste for human flesh, preying on human greed and foolishness. Fortunately, it is not a great threat to people at large, since it lurks in isolated places. It takes the form of a cave, usually on a hillside, with a stream emerging from deep within, in which may be found nuggets of silver, or sometimes small gems or similar tempting bait. The nuggets are carried downstream by the waters, and may be found by mortals — including grogs, companions, or magi out exploring an area in the hope of some kind of profit.

Argentaria Devorans — The Devouring Silver-Mine

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +1, Pre +3,
Com 0, Str n/a, Sta n/a, Dex n/a,
Qik n/a

Faerie Might: 20

Size: +5 (“Room” sized)

Personality Traits: Hungry +5, Lonely
+3

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Cave Mouth Bite	-3	+8	n/a	+15	n/a

Soak: n/a

Body levels: OK, 0/0/0, -1, -3, -5,
Dispelled (But note that Argentaria
is immune to normal damage!)

Abilities: Awareness 4 (alertness),
Charm 4 (first impressions),
Etiquette 3 (politeness), Faerie Guile
3 (bargains), Faerie Lore 1 (local
Fae), Forest Lore 4 (nearby land),
Human Lore 3 (past victims), Legend
Lore 3 (magical beasts), Speak (local
language) 4 (life histories).

Powers:

Insubstantiality, MuTe 30, 0 points: You
can’t seriously expect to kill a cave?
It’s the hole in the middle...

Infatuation, ReMe(Mu) 30, 4 points:
Any mortal inside the cave, or with-
in 100’ and holding one of the cave’s
silver nuggets, can be affected, gain-
ing an intense attraction for the
Cave, and wanting to enter and stay
forever and talk to it — regardless of
distractions. The effect lasts as long
as the victim is either holding a
nugget, or within the cave. Victims
have one chance to resist — roll Int
+ Awareness 9+, 12+ if holding a
nugget; penalize the roll by any
Greedy personality trait (or equiva-
lent), or add any Generous or
Charitable trait.

The Stones That Gleam, CrTe 20, 2
points: Creates several small silver
nuggets with Moon duration — typ-
ically in or near the stream.

The Crystal Bauble, CrTe 20, 2 points:
Creates a gemstone with Moon
duration — typically in or near the
stream.

Consume the Fallen, MuCo(Te,He,An)
20, 2 points: Changes a corpse into
stone, permanently. This provides
the troll with a strange form of sus-
tenance. The change is instanta-
neous, but Argentaria must wait
until the future victim dies. It can be
reversed with a MuTe(Co) 15 guide-
line effect, but this is of limited
application as it just turns the statue
back into a corpse.

Waken the Statue, ReTe(Mu) 20, 2
points: Animates a stone statue and
controls it so that it can move and
talk, for Sun duration. If the statue
does not return to the cave by sunset
(or sunrise), it will fall still and be
lost to the troll.

Closing the Jaws, MuTe 10, 1 point:
Allows the cave mouth to close or
re-open, or even “bite”; once acti-
vated it lasts a day. This allows the
“Cave Mouth Bite” attack, listed
above.

Control Terram, XxTe 20, 1 point per
magnitude. The Troll can create
effects similar to Hermetic Terram
spells, at a cost of 1 Might per equiv-
alent spell magnitude. Typical spell-
like effects might include: *Fist of
Shattering*, PeTe 10, 2 points; *Hands
of the Grasping Earth*, ReTe(Mu) 15,
3 points; *Object of Increased Size*,
MuTe 10, 2 points; *Pit of the Gaping*





Stone (cf. *Pit of the Gaping Earth*), PeTe 20, 4 points; *Rusted Decay of 10-score Years*, PeTe 10, 2 points; *The Crystal Dart*, MuTe(Re) 10, 2 points; *The Earth's Carbuncle* Re(Mu)Te 15, 3 points; *Wielding the Invisible Sling*, ReTe 10, 2 points. (See the *Ars Magica* rulebook for all of these.)

Equipment: See the notes.

Encumbrance: 0

Vis: 1 pawn of Terram in each stalactite/stalagmite pair.

If those trapped inside resist and attempt to break out, the troll will use its *Control Terram* power to fight back; if

it is losing, it will open its jaws and allow them to escape, then close them again and sulk for an extended recovery period.

The six stalactite/stalagmite pairs marked on the map are a “repository” for the troll’s spirit — its life force. Over time, they grow so that they nearly touch; if they are damaged, they can slowly regenerate. When the stones *just* touch, the tips can be harvested for 1 pawn of Terram vis per stone pair, although doing so wounds the troll. Destroying or harvesting one of these pillars causes the equivalent of 1 Body Level of damage to the troll.

Those who succumb to greed may easily follow the stream back to its source, finding more nuggets along the way. Within the cave, the stream runs to the back where it rises from a small, deep pool; along the way to the pool, the walls gleam seductively, showing the treasures embedded in the rocks. Those who enter the cave are overcome by their greed and become infatuated with their treasure, and will stay within until they die, when they are devoured by the troll.

At the back of the cave, by the pool where the stream arises, are the corpses of those who have succumbed to the troll, long since transformed to stone and with their life forces absorbed to become part of the monster. Most have previously been animated by the troll’s magic, and hence are not in corpse-like attitudes, but rather seated, or holding some other pose. There are many small pebbles lying around in the stream.

The cave has a Faerie aura of strength 4; the area outside the cave has the aura of the larger surrounding area.

Warning: While not the most powerful of opponents, Argentaria is tricky and tough, and could wipe out an entire party

if they are unwise, careless, or unlucky. Storyguides may need to drop hints if things seem to be going badly wrong.

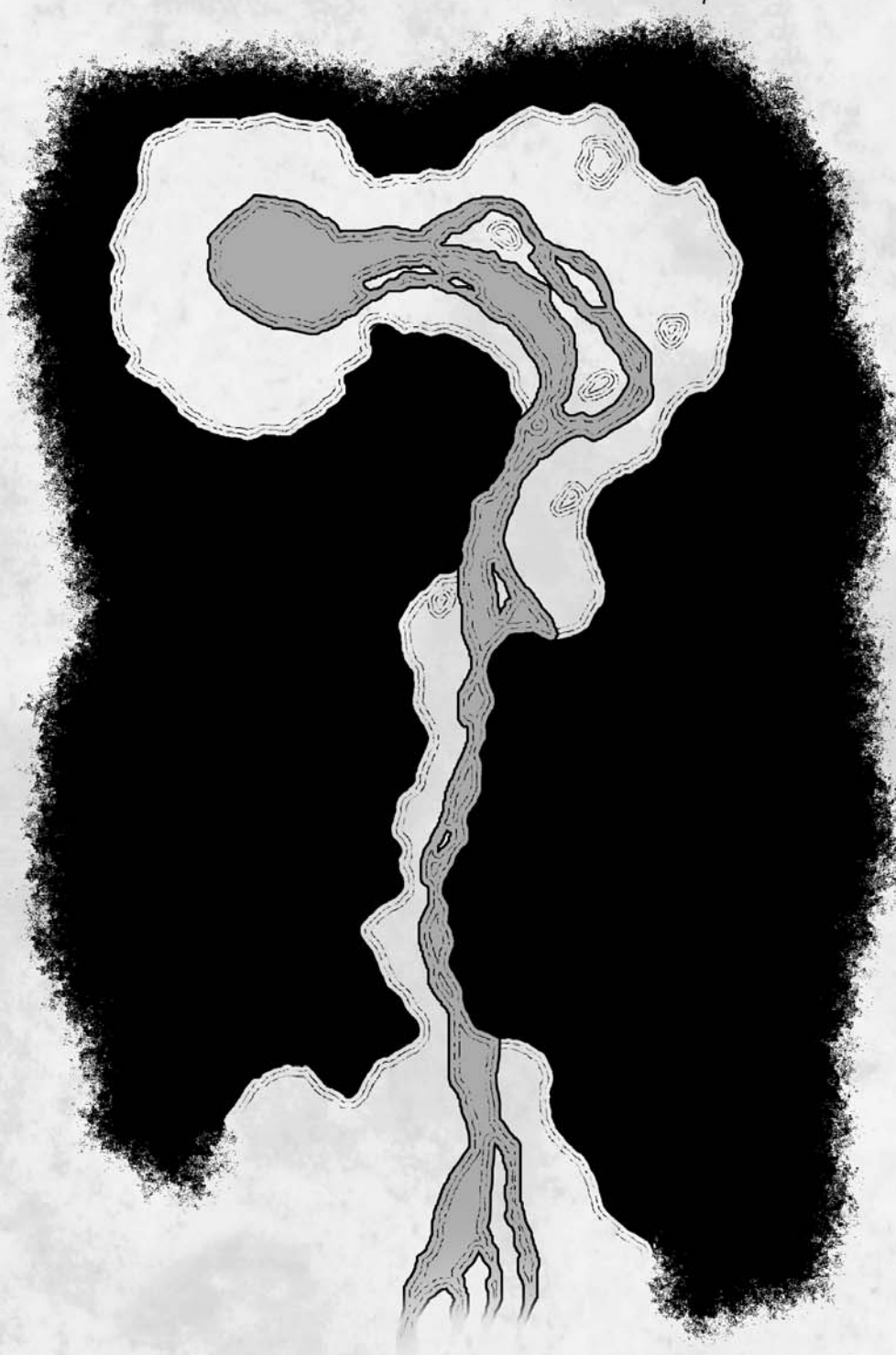
Conversation

When mortals enter the cave, the troll will use their own greed to *Infatuate* them if possible, and then quietly close its jaws, so that all are trapped within, infatuated or not. Although Argentaria’s primary interest is to capture and consume people, it is also lonely here, and will talk to those within; it can converse by transforming a corpse-statue into viscid earth, and animating it. (If there are no statues left, it can slowly form its own rock into a suitable shape.)

Those who are infatuated will be keen to please it, and will sit in conversation with the troll, satisfying its desire company and knowledge, until they unknowingly suffocate, or perhaps starve if the troll allows air in.

If drawn into conversation, Argentaria knows of the rocks around it, and the waters that percolate through, and of the small animals that come and

MAP OF THE DEVOURING MINE





go occasionally (it does not prey upon these). Over the years it has learnt a fair amount about people, although mostly from greedy sinners; its information is rather dated, as it only rarely gets visitors. It also has a limited knowledge of the area around the stream, as it can send a statue out from the cave, but cannot animate the statue for longer than a day (Sun duration); hence, it has explored no more than half-a-days' slow (statue paced) walk around the cave.

Threatening the Troll

If trapped victims resist their greed and the troll's wiles, and become troublesome, it will attempt to subdue or kill those disturbing the peace (using its *Control Terram* powers). Otherwise, it is content to wait until its victims die anyway.

It has never before encountered one such as a magus who can resist its charms (the *Parma Magica* will achieve this), and will be surprised by the phenomenon, trying different effects. It will easily notice the deflection of resisted effects (like *The Crystal Dart*, with its magically altered crystal), as opposed to un-resisted effects.

Although the troll cannot be harmed by most normal attacks, short of demolishing the entire rock system of which the cave is part, it has two vulnerabilities: the stalactite/stalagmite pairs mentioned above, and spells which can cause pain or wounds to rocky beings.

Substituting Arts for Unusual Forms

A living rocky being such as this cave can be hurt or wounded by improvising spells across the normal spell guidelines: use the *Corpus* guideline effects and levels, but substitute the magus' *Terram Art* score; if the aim of the spell is to affect the whole troll, add 5 levels to increase the target from Individual to "Room," but not if only part of the cave is affected. Not all *Corpus* effects will make sense — the storyguide must judge this.

As an example, the Troll will open its jaws if it suffers "pain" — "cause pain" is a *PeCo* level 10 guideline, so a *PeTe* 10 spell will cause pain to part of the troll, *PeTe* 15 to the whole troll.

A desperate magus trapped inside may reduce the range from Near to Touch and try a *PeTe* 4 spontaneous spell, but this must still penetrate the Troll's Faerie Might, so range is not the greatest problem!

If the troll is overcome and threatened sufficiently it will surrender its riches, and offer silver, but since this is but transformed substance, it will revert into pebbles (at the end of the day or of the month, depending on how much metal was extorted from it). A wiser magus may extort vis: 4 pawns initially, and thereafter 1 pawn per season if the magus returns to demand more.

Chapter IX

Appendix: Brittany

As the Introduction and Chapter II explained, while the stories in this book could be set almost anywhere, they take Brittany as a “default” location and an inspiration. This appendix provides a brief overview of this region, for the use of storyguides who wish to set their sagas here. See also *Ordo Nobilis*, pages 118-126, and the Select Bibliography below (page 111).

Basic Facts

Brittany is a region in the northwest of what is now France. In Roman times, it was a province of the Empire under the name of “Armorica”; later, being fairly wild and remote, it became something of a refuge for the Celtic peoples, who preserved their language (Breton, which in the 13th Century is still very close to Cornish) and much of their culture, even while they were being converted to Christianity by missionaries from the British Isles.

It gained independence from the Carolingian Empire in the 9th Century, and fought off the Norse invaders who established themselves in Normandy to the east. Brittany achieved the status of an independent dukedom, but subse-

quently came under the control of the Angevin Empire, and in the *Ars Magica* era it owes allegiance to the kingdom of France. However, Brittany retains a substantial degree of practical independence, and its Duke may stand aside from the politics of Paris if he chooses. Its chief town is Rennes.

(In our history, this situation more or less continues until, in the 14th Century, a bitter war between nobles backed by England and France leaves Brittany battered but still somewhat independent; it only becomes fully united with France in 1532.)

As of the year 1220 AD (1359 AA on the Hermetic calendar), the duke is the 29 year old Pierre Mauclerc (also known as Peter de Dreux; see *Ordo Nobilis*, page 123), who is married to Alix de Thouars; they have a three year old son, Jean. Pierre, a French noble, acquired this position by marriage, but was confirmed in it by the king of France after the death of his father-in-law. Pierre’s name means “Bad Clerk”; it would appear that he studied for the priesthood, but then gave up that idea — so he may be expected to be literate, with a smattering of scholarly and theological knowledge.

(In our history, he rules until 1250, marrying twice more as all of his wives die before him — not an uncommon pattern in the period, and not implying anything





especially sinister. He joins crusades to the east in 1239 and 1248, and dies on the return voyage from the second. His son succeeds him.)

As this history may suggest, France currently dominates Brittany politically, but there is a long tradition of linguistic and cultural dissent from the French crown. As a generalization, noble characters in this area will speak French, peasants will speak Breton — and those who have to deal with both (merchants, for example) will really need to speak both languages.

Troupes looking for further ideas related to this setting, and unable to find enough regarding Brittany, may find that Cornish or even Welsh myths are close enough to be useful.

Hermetic Power

In *Ars Magica* sagas, the Hermetic politics of the region are likely to be dominated by Fudarus, which is located at the western end of Brittany. Given that this is the domus magna of House Tytalus, it can be expected to be aggressive and competitive; the troupe may have to tread carefully. However, there is also likely to be at least one other covenant; although the Normandy Tribunal in general is short of vis, Brittany is a land rich in magical sites and resources.



The Uplands

Brittany is a land of hills rather than mountains, but much of it is nonetheless fairly craggy and wild — especially in the **Ars Magica** era, when the oak and beech forests remain largely intact and there are few good roads. The granite landscape is carved into gorges and deep valleys where rivers find their way towards the sea. On the open high ground, the forests sometimes gives way to wild moorland.

Nonetheless, farmers can make a living in this country. Where the soil is good enough, peasants grow cereal crops; elsewhere, they pasture cattle. There are also a fair number of apple orchards (leading to the Breton tradition of cider production).

The Coastline

Brittany has a long, heavily indented coastline, and despite the numerous rocky cliffs and outcrops (especially to the north and west) and the tricky currents, which together make it dangerous for inexperienced sailors, many of its people make their living from the sea. That coastline is dotted with fishing villages, and many of the larger towns are in fact ports, seeing regular traffic from Britain, other parts of France, and beyond. Breton seafarers trade with Cornwall, fish in the Bay of Biscay, and transport pilgrims to Spain.

The southwestern coast of Brittany is rather less wild than the northern parts. In addition, the same powerful tides and currents which make navigation so tricky also bring vast quantities of sand, transforming some bays into broad golden beaches. However, these in turn can prove treacherous; in addition to quicksand, the sheer breadth of such shallow-sloped sand flats, combined with the

height of some Breton tides (nearly 50' in Mont-Saint-Michel bay), can mean that the sea sometimes comes in faster than a man on horseback can flee.

Major Towns

As previously mentioned, **Rennes** is the chief town of Brittany, and the seat of the duke's rule. It lies inland, towards the east of the region. Further east still, **Fougeres** lies on the border with Normandy, which is why it has an especially large, strong castle.

Most of the other substantial towns are on or near the coast. The two greatest ports are probably **Brest** and **Quimper**, in the west. **Saint-Malo** is the main harbor on the northeast coast; the town is sited on an island just off the coast, which makes it especially defensible.



Places of Interest

The following are a few locations which either inspired elements in this book or which could be interesting settings for further stories.

Quintin (“The Town”)

As Chapter II says, the town used as a basis for some of the stories in this book is based on Quintin, in Brittany: there is a good French-language web-site on the town and its history at <http://www.quintin.fr/>. Quintin was not only the name of the town, but also of the district, and as of 1220 AD, in the history of the real world, its lord was Geoffroy Boterel. Actually, at this date, it may not have been much more than a castle and a cattle market, around which the commu-



Ys

It is said that, in perhaps the 5th or 6th Century, the greatest town of western Brittany was Ys, on the Bay of Douarnenez, which was built and ruled by King Gradlon. There are many tales about Gradlon, some of which suggest that he was well acquainted with the Fae, at least before he was converted to Christianity.

There are even more stories about Gradlon's daughter Dahut, some of which suggest she was a sorceress who could command dragons to capture passing ships for the city, while others show her as merely lecherous and susceptible. She certainly became enamored of a mysterious stranger who came to the city, but unfortunately, her lover — who may have been a demon — used her to acquire the key to the sluice gates in the

dykes around the city, which he then opened.

As Ys was actually below sea level, it was destroyed in the ensuing flood. Only Gradlon survived; at first, he tried to save Dahut, but his confessor, Saint Guenole, appeared to him and told him that he had to hurl her from his horse in order to escape the waters.

It is said that fishermen still sometimes hear the bells of Ys, sounding below the waters. There are also hints that Dahut survives, transformed into a mermaid, faerie, or ghost. All this might be of interest to Hermetic investigators, but given the strong hints of faerie, Dominion, Infernal, and non-Hermetic magical involvement, they might be well advised to go carefully.

nity grew up over time. (This was probably helped when, around 1250, Boterel deposited a relic of the Virgin Mary in the town. He had brought this back from the Holy Land after going on an unsuccessful crusade.) It stands on the river Gou't.

The Castle and the Walls: Quintin did have a castle in the Middle Ages. In 1638, when it was referred to as the "Château des Laval," it was demolished and replaced with a more comfortable house built on the lakeside. Similarly, only fragments of the old town walls have survived to the present day — but the place was, evidently, adequately fortified in its time.

The Well: This part of the setting involves a little dramatic license, replacing a "fountain" with a slightly simpler well associated with a saint (and occupied by a goblin). The Fountain of Our Lady ("La Fontaine Notre Dame") existed and

still exists; its precise age is uncertain, but assuming that it (or something similar) was around in the 13th century is not impossible. It was moved to its present, open air site at the beginning of the 20th century; it was previously sited under the altar of a chapel at one end of the town's main street, known as "Our-Lady-Between-the-Doors" because it was built against the double turrets of the town's western gate. It is decorated with a statue of the Virgin crowned by the Angels. The chapel was demolished in 1912; traces of paint suggest that the statue was originally highly decorated.

There does seem to have been a persistent tendency in Brittany to "replace" pagan deities and fairy legends with Christian saints; the idea of Fluven the goblin comes from this.

The Long Rock: This is a menhir, called simply "La Roche Longue" in

French. In older local records, its location is described as the “Field of the Long Rocks,” implying that there may once have been other such Neolithic monuments, since destroyed.

The Cathedral City

In the text, the town is noted as having a cathedral city within a day or so’s walk. If the town in question is Quintin, the city is Saint-Brieuc. This is sited on the junction of the Gou’t and Gou’dic Rivers, near Saint-Brieuc Bay on the English Channel. (The nearby harbor of Le Légué serves as its port.) It was named after the Welsh monk St. Briocus, who came to the region as a missionary in the 6th century. In the 20th Century, it has become a tourist and market town of modest size.

The Forest of Brezeliande, or Broceliande

There are numerous substantial forests in Brittany, although they are but relics of the older, greater forest which once covered most of the land. (This has largely been cut down by the hand of man, becoming farmland or moorland.) Near Quintin, there is the Forêt de Lorge; further east is the Forest of Broceliande.

In the 12th and 13th centuries, the latter is widely regarded as perhaps the most magical place in Brittany. Among other wonders, it is reputed, in French legends, to contain the tomb of Merlin the wizard. However, not all visitors seemed to be able to locate such things (and some poets are quite cynical on the subject); perhaps the tomb, and other interesting things, are hidden in magical regions? This same legend speaks of the fairy Viviane, or Vivien, the French

counterpart of the figure known in British stories as Nimue — the “Lady of the Lake” who may have given Excalibur to Arthur, and who probably also enchanted Merlin.

Certainly, any Hermetic magician could take an interest in finding this tomb (or indeed in proving its nonexistence), even in the face of serious difficulties. Merlin is regarded as one of the most powerful pre-Hermetic magicians, although most legends say nothing of his death, and some Hermetics hold that one such as he would surely have entered Final Twilight rather than succumbing to mere mortality — or perhaps evaded both. Merely resolving the question would earn one the high regard of Hermetic scholars; locating a physical tomb which could generate such legends would also be a noteworthy accomplishment; contacting the *ghost* of Merlin would be a truly extraordinary accomplishment, if terribly hubristic. Viviane/Nimue would appear to have been a faerie of extraordinary power, able to overcome even Merlin; if *she* is still active, and should she be encountered in some regio deep in the Breton forests, even the greatest Hermetic would be well advised to remain very, very polite.

(See *Heirs to Merlin* for more on the legend of the great wizard.)

Ancient Stones

Brittany is noted for its large number of prehistoric monuments — mostly standing stones and the like. Those at Carnac are especially famous, being arranged in long lines across the countryside. In Mythic Europe, of course, such monoliths often mark places of magical or faerie power (a theme taken up in this book).





The Valleys

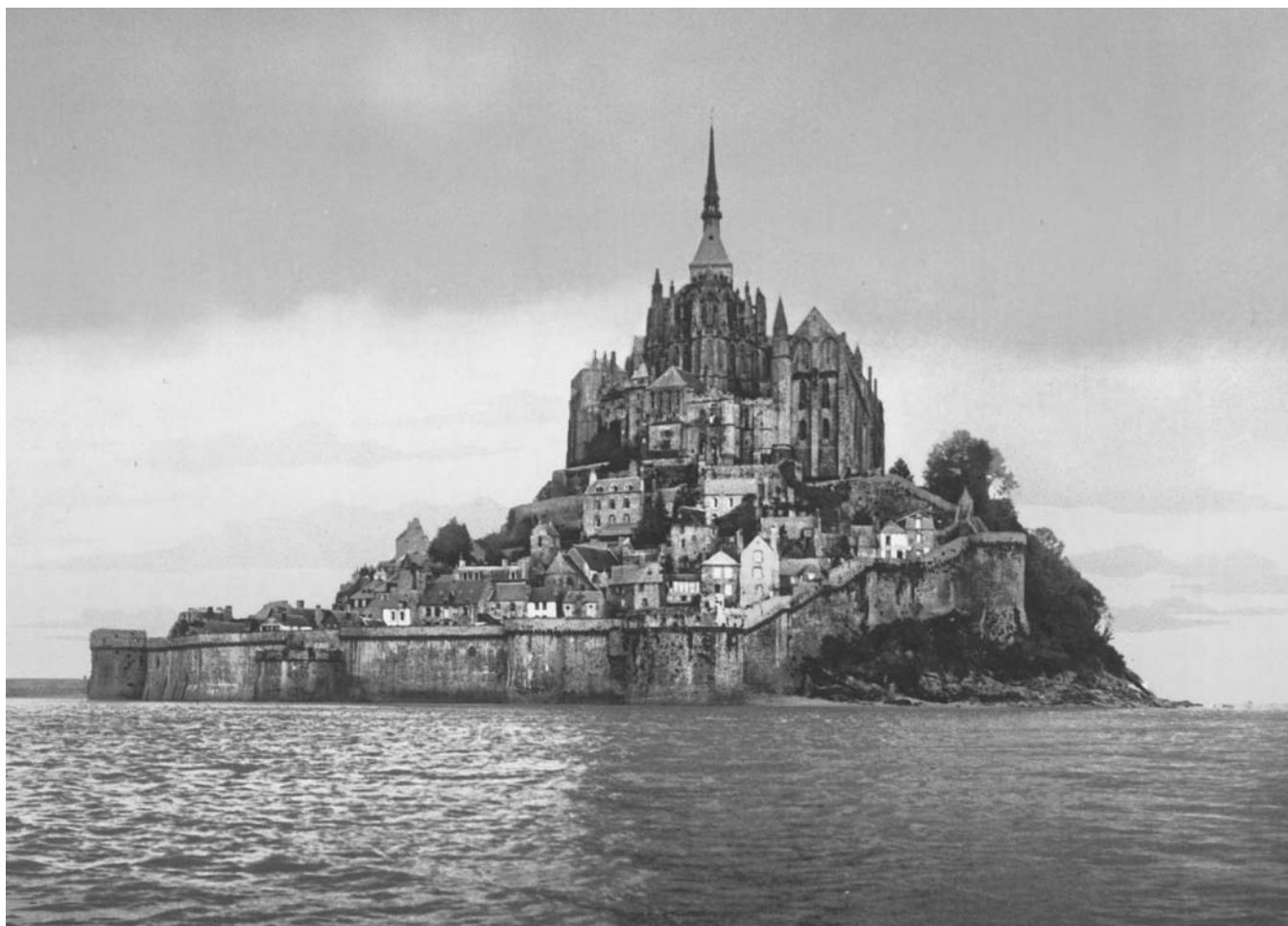
The faerie-infested valleys described in chapters V to VII are based on descriptions of the region of the Forêt de Dualt. The lesser valley is based on the Gorges de Corong (which does indeed have standing stones nearby); the larger is based on the Gorges de Toul Goulic, a valley through which the River Blavet runs. To the southwest of this gorge, between Trémargat and Kergrist-Mo'lou, the landscape is studded with great boulders — the inspiration for the rock trolls in these stories.

The valleys are described in the Michelin Guide to Brittany; they can be found on a map of Brittany, at latitude 48 20'N, 3 15'W, about 16 miles south of Guingamp.

Mont-Saint-Michel

Mont-Saint-Michel is a rocky outcrop in the estuary of the river Cousenon, which forms the border between Brittany and Normandy. In the 8th Century, the Archangel Michael appeared to Bishop Aubert of Avranches while he was on this island, ordering him to found a shrine there. This grew over the centuries into an abbey, which has been expanded and enhanced (and fortified).

By the 13th Century, this has become one of the great religious centers and pilgrimage destinations of western Europe. Building is still underway in the **Ars Magica** period, but the great church, seeming to reach up to Heaven from the top of the rock, is already an impressive sight. There is insufficient space here to



do the subject full justice, but suffice to say that Mont-Saint-Michel is an important religious location, with, in game terms, a very high Dominion aura.

Selective Bibliography

The following books either served as references or inspirations during the creation of *Faerie Stories*, or could be used as the starting point for research into similar themes or this specific location.

The Michelin Green Guide to Brittany. (One of a major series of regularly updated tourist guides, invaluable as basic introductions to specific areas.)

Edwards, Gillian, *Hobgoblin and Sweet Puck, Fairy Names and Natures*, London: Bles, 1974.

Evans-Wentz, Walter Y., *Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries*. Gerrards Cross: C. Smythe, 1977.

Russell, Geoffrey Burton, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1972.

Spence, Lewis, *British Fairy Origins*, Wellingborough: Aquarian, 1981. (A reprint of an old, academically discredited but entertaining work by an occultist. See also Spence's *The Fairy Tradition in Britain*.)

Westwood, Jennifer, *Albion; A Guide to Legendary Britain*. London: Granada, 1985.

In addition, a search of the Web may find a range of information, of varying

Land of 1,000 Shrines

Brittany is a land of faith as well as magical and faerie power. Its people revere hundreds of saints, although many have never been formally canonized by the church hierarchy. Some are unknown outside a single village.

Seven of the most import were missionary leaders who came from the British Isles around the 5th Century, and who were subsequently adopted as patron saints of the major Breton bishoprics; Saint-Brieuc (Saint Brioch), Saint-Malo, Dol-de-Bretagne (Saint Samson), Vannes (Saint Patern), Quimper (Saint Corentine), Saint-Pol-de-Léon (Saint Paul the Aurelian), and Tréguier (Saint Tugdall). Tradition tells devout Bretons that, at least once in their lives, they should make a pilgrimage, the *Tro Breiz*, or "Tour of Brittany," to the seven cathedrals. At times, thousands of pilgrims may be on the long circuit of roads which encompasses these shrines. It is said that those who did not perform the *Tro Breiz* in life were fated to do so after death (perhaps as a ghost, perhaps physically in their coffin beneath the ground?), but such a one would only be able to cover the length of their coffin every seven years



accuracy and usefulness. (Celtic regions and faerie lore do attract *off-beat* theories.) Parts or all of some older books, in the public domain, may actually be available on some sites; for example, a copy of Evans-Wentz's book has been placed online.