



L I M I N A L

PAUL MITCHENER





L I M I N A L

A roleplaying game about those caught
between the ordinary and extraordinary

There's more to the world than most of us know.

Academic wizards and gutter mages, vampires and werewolves,
Men in Black working for a secret religious order and a police division
investigating Fortean crimes. The cities and the very landscape
encompass haunted places and lost bubbles of history, faerie courts
and places of power.

But you know.

There's truth within the legends and folklore.

You stand at the edge of the Hidden World.

Maybe you've seen it and can't ignore it.

Maybe you're from the Hidden World, but with ties to humanity.

Join us on a journey into the Hidden World with Liminal,
a self-contained roleplaying game of fantasy
in the modern day United Kingdom.

About the Author

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LIMINAL







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CHAPTER I



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Introduction



We're outsiders, all of us, we Liminals. We don't fit into the mortal world—we know too much, or can do too much. But we also don't fit into the Hidden World. We're human as well as supernatural, not like the Fae and the vampires. The big factions will use us, control us, spit us out.

In the end, that's what the Crew's about. We're with other people in the same boat. The Crew aren't just my friends. They're my family. We don't just stick together because nobody else gets us, though that's a part of it. We're together so we have a purpose and can help each other. And maybe do some good for the people around us on the way. That's life.

Ygraine Green
Changeling

Liminal is a roleplaying game about the boundary between the modern day United Kingdom and the Hidden World—the world of secret societies of magicians, a police division investigating Fortean crimes, fae courts, werewolf gangs, and haunted places where the walls between worlds are thin.

The game is modern day urban fantasy. It draws from real world places, their local history and character, even their names, and from folklore. Players take on the role of Liminals—people at the boundary between the Hidden World and mundane reality. They have interest in both worlds. Examples of such people include

- ☞ a mortal detective who knows some of the real strangeness out there.
- ☞ a magician who acts as a warden to protect unaware mortals from supernatural menaces
- ☞ someone of mysterious birth who is perhaps half Fae. In any case they are caught up in Fae politics whether they like it or not
- ☞ a dealer in supernatural relics
- ☞ a werewolf who still has many ties to ordinary people

WHAT IS A ROLEPLAYING GAME?

Liminal is a “traditional” roleplaying game, where a number of players take on the roles of Player Characters (PCs), and there is one distinguished player, the Game Master (GM). In the author’s experience, from two and five players, along with the GM, works best.

Each player portrays their PC in the game, saying what they do and acting as their character. The Game Master is responsible for describing the world, and everyone in it except for the PCs. The GM sets up the problems the PCs solve and adjudicates rules and solutions. Characters portrayed by the GM rather than a player are called Non-Player Characters (NPCs).

The player character Liminals form a Crew, with shared knowledge and assets, and common goals. Together, the Crew take on cases, dealing with the affairs of the Hidden World, especially as it effects the ordinary world at large. These cases further both the goals of the Crew and the drives of its individual members.

A Note on Dice

Liminal uses ordinary six-sided dice. Throughout this book, we use the common notation of $Xd6$ to mean the result of rolling X six-sided dice and adding the results together to get a number.

For example, in a skill test, you roll $2d6$ (two six-sided dice, with the results added together), add your Skill, and compare the result with a target number.

The Hidden World

This country is a bloody strange place, pal. People spontaneously form queues. We obsess about social class, drink tea at home, and too much beer down the pub. People from other countries think we're polite but also think we're football hooligans. They're right. We're a funny lot. And I don't just mean our sense of humour.

Then there's history. It's visible everywhere. You don't have to go far to stumble into a building centuries old, even if it's "just" a village church. And look at our culture. Waves of immigrants, Celts, Romans, Saxons, Vikings, Normans... yeah, we learned all that at school and it hasn't stopped. We're finished if it ever stops. I'm evidence of that—for the record, my background's Polish and Jewish. Not that it's any of your business pal.

And everyone's left their mark. Not just buildings. Not just their descendants. But they brought something else with them. Sometimes the ghosts of those who first came here are still about. And not just ghost people, but echoes of vanished places. Vampires came with the Romans, werewolves with the Saxons, if you believe some of the stories. The Fae have always been here, unless they came with the Celts, but they've changed too with the people who came here.

They're all real you know. Some of us have had our eyes opened. And once you notice, you can't stop noticing. It's not a special power—it's just knowing things exist, if you see what I mean. How the hell it stays secret, I'll never work out.

See? Bloody strange, pal. But that's what I've got to deal with.

Aaron Kaminsky,
Former Police Officer

There's a Hidden World of supernatural creatures and magicians. It's not something most people are aware of. Those who know about the Hidden World don't broadcast the fact to ordinary people, but they no longer fit into the everyday world. Some people stumble into it, and see evidence they can't ignore, and the temptation to ignore the evidence can be nearly overwhelming. Others choose to investigate it, sometimes through the study of magic, either before or after contact with the supernatural.

Then there are people from the Hidden World who don't fit in there and so become closer to ordinary mortals, or those who are always a bit "in between". Werewolves and Changelings—mortals with Fae heritage or otherwise touched by the Fae, for example. Or Dhampirs—the rare "vampires gone wrong" who still retain a soul, at least until they give in to their full vampire nature.

SO WHAT'S OUT THERE IN THE HIDDEN WORLD?

- ☞ Magic is real, and so are magicians. The two most prominent societies of magicians are the Council of Merlin—rich and traditional—and the Mercury Collegium—tricksters and thieves.
- ☞ Vampires are real. They're ageless bloodsucking monsters. They look human until they strike. They have schemes and most of them belong to an organisation called the Sodality of the Crown.
- ☞ Werewolves are real. They hunt and roam in gangs. There are many different gangs, but one of them, the Jaeger Family, is trying to bring them together.
- ☞ The Fae are real. Most can appear human or vanish, but there are also Fae monsters who lurk in dark places and under bridges. The Fae serve various courts, each ruled by some manner of noble. Fae Courts often exist in hard to reach Fae realms, separated from the ordinary world. The courts have many rivalries. The two most powerful Fae lords in the country are the Queen of Hyde Park and the Winter King.
- ☞ Ghosts are real. Most are invisible, but older ghosts can take on bodies and become powerful spirits of malice or obsession. There are Ghost Realms, which are echoes of vanished places.
- ☞ The myths and beings of the world of Liminal are often international in origin, sometimes due to the metaphorical (rather than literal) ghost of the British Empire. The term *duppy* applies to some malevolent spirits, whether or not they have a Caribbean origin. *Jinn* and *rakshasas* exist alongside more European faerie monsters.
- ☞ Some people in the Church know. They have an organisation, the Order of St. Bede, made up of both Anglicans and Catholics. They're out there both to protect the everyday world from the supernatural, and to cover up its existence, and the existence of magic which they regard as a sin. An Islamic group, the Open Knot, shares similar aims, and is an ally of the Order of St. Bede.
- ☞ A few people in the police know. There's a national division, P Division, who take on strange inexplicable cases, and they know about the Hidden World. There are even a few magicians in P Division.

HOW HIDDEN IS THE HIDDEN WORLD?

Elements of the Hidden World aren't hard to find for those who know the old stories, and go looking. But most people, at least as adults, don't think to look. How often have you looked for fairies, and how often do you hear strange bumps in the night and think "ghosts?" And even in Liminal, not every disappearance or crime without known perpetrator comes down to supernatural goings on.

There are thousands of ordinary people for every supernatural being or magician. Most, though not all, magic is subtle, and magicians have reasons to stay quiet about their existence. Vampires appear human until they strike, and werewolves don't reveal their beast when in their human form. Fae are masters of illusion. To most beings of the Hidden World, revealing their existence too publicly would also reveal their existence to enemies who would strike them down.

And there is plenty of deliberately introduced false information out there, either to mislead hunters of the supernatural, or so absurd that people won't believe in the truth. The one thing the vampires and the Order of St.Bede have in common is that both are masters of this tactic. There could be videos of supernatural events out there in YouTube, but most people will call them out as fake. After all, how could something so ridiculous be real?

The truly fantastic elements of the Hidden World- the Fae Domains and Ghost Realms- are literally not of this world. To enter a Fae Domain, you need to not just know the place, but also take the exact path and movements to step sideways and enter. Ghost Realms are time-limited; as well as location, you need to arrive at the right time in order to visit them. Often escaping these places is just as tricky as entering them.

And there are cracks. Most who encounter the Hidden World do so just once, and don't talk about it, but there are exceptions. P Division in the police force is one such exception, but there are increasingly others. The wall hasn't fallen yet, but the cracks are widening.

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

Chapter two is all about character creation. If you're a player in a Liminal game, and need to create a player character, this is the chapter for you. It begins with the general process, and goes into detail on skills and extraordinary Traits, which might be mundane or supernatural. The chapter concludes with four examples created by these rules, which are ready for play.

In **chapter three**, we talk about how to create the Crew. This chapter briefly summarises the major factions, and the steps to combine individual player characters into a Crew who work together, and maybe even live together, and have a shared goal.

Chapter four is about the rules of the game, including the basic rules, the uses of Will, how social skills work, physical combat, and advancement.

The next chapter, **chapter five**, is about magicians and styles of magic, along with further Traits for a magician who specialises. If you are creating a magician player character, you will want to look at chapter five as well as chapter two.

We then come to setting material. **Chapter six** looks at the major factions of the Hidden World, and the broad nature of different classes of supernatural being.

Chapter seven zooms in for detail on a number of different locations spread out through the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. The aim in chapter seven is diversity rather than completeness. We present locations from different parts of the country, different people, and both urban and rural locations.

Chapter eight is a chapter for the Gamemaster. It contains suggestions for setting challenge levels, the effect of failures in challenges, and investigative challenges. There is also advice for creating a Liminal series after putting a Crew together and designing individual cases. Another part of the GM toolkit is more detail on handling Fae Domains and Ghost Realms. We also talk about running Liminal outside the United Kingdom.

Chapter nine describes different kinds of fae, ghosts, werewolves, and vampires, as well as more ordinary mortals, both those clued into the Hidden World and mundane people a Crew might rub up against during a case.

The final chapter, **chapter ten**, presents two ready to play cases, one involving the Fae in York, the other vampires in Brighton.



INSPIRATIONAL MEDIA

The key inspirations for *Liminal* are Ben Aaranovitch's *Rivers of London* books and Neil Gaiman's *Neverwhere*. Susanna Clarke's world building involving faeries and the world of faerie is another strong influence, and there is a BBC TV series based on the book. The other works of fiction below all make contributions, some big and some small, and formed my imaginative mental landscape when writing the game. Traditional poems and folklore also feed into the game background.

I've included Bill Bryson's *Notes from a Small Island* as an entertaining introduction to the character of the UK for those unfamiliar with it.

As well as books, there are many TV series involving supernatural creatures and monster hunting. I've listed some of my personal favourites. Most of these series are US based. Two exceptions are *Neverwhere* (on which the *Neverwhere* book is based) and the UK version of *Being Human*; the household in *Being Human* would make quite an unusual Crew, but does get across the element of a Crew being family for those who don't fit in. Vampire and werewolf films too numerous to list fit in tangentially. I can't resist mentioning the wonderfully hilarious *What We Do in the Shadows* as an example of the former, and the wonderfully disturbing *The Company of Wolves* as an example of the latter.

Books, Fiction and Poems

- ☞ The Rivers of London series (Ben Aaranovitch)
- ☞ War for the Oaks (Emma Bull)
- ☞ The Dresden Files series (Jim Butcher)
- ☞ The Twenty Palaces series (Harry Connolly)
- ☞ Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell (Susanna Clarke)
- ☞ Anansi Boys, *Neverwhere*, *Smoke and Mirrors* (Neil Gaiman)
- ☞ The Alex Verus series (Benedict Jacka)
- ☞ The Historian (Elizabeth Kostova)
- ☞ Red As Blood or Tales from the Sisters Grimmer (Tanith Lee)
- ☞ The Moonheart series, Jack the Giant Killer, Newford series (Charles de Lint)
- ☞ Pavane (Keith Roberts)
- ☞ Goblin Market (poem, Christina Rossetti)
- ☞ Dracula (Bram Stoker)
- ☞ Ghost Story (Peter Straub)
- ☞ The Golem and the Jinni (Helene Wecker)
- ☞ Darker Than You Think (Jack Williamson)
- ☞ Hellblazer (DC Comics)
- ☞ Sandman (DC Comics)
- ☞ The Mabinogion (traditional)
- ☞ Thomas the Rhymer (traditional poem)

Books, Non-Fiction and Folklore

- ☞ *Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination*, London: The Biography (Peter Ackroyd)
- ☞ *Angela Carter's Book of Fairy Tales* (Angela Carter)
- ☞ *The Mammoth Book of Celtic Myths and Legends* (Peter Beresford Ellis)
- ☞ *Notes from a Small Island* (Bill Bryson)
- ☞ *The Fabled Coast: Legends & traditions from around the shores of Britain and Ireland* (Sophia Kingshill)
- ☞ *The Land of the Green Man: A Journey through the Supernatural Landscapes of the British Isles* (Carolyne Larrington)
- ☞ *Black and British: A Forgotten History* (David Olusoga)
- ☞ *The Lore of the Land: A Guide to England's Legends, from Spring-heeled Jack to the Witches of Warboys, A Dictionary of English Folklore* (Jaqueline Simpson)
- ☞ *Lonely Planet Great Britain, Lonely Planet Ireland* (various)

TV and Film

- ☞ *Angel* (Mutant Enemy Productions, Greenwolf Corp, David Greenwald Productions, Kuzui Enterprises, 20th Century Fox Television)
- ☞ *Being Human* (Touchpaper Television)
- ☞ *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (Mutant Enemy Productions, Sandollar Television, Kuzui Enterprises, 20th Century Fox Television)
- ☞ *The Company of Wolves* (Palace Productions)
- ☞ *Constantine* (Ever After/Phantom Four Productions, DC Entertainment, Warner Bros. Television)
- ☞ *Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell* (Cuba Pictures, Feel Films, BBC America, Screen Yorkshire, Space, Far Moor)
- ☞ *Lucifer* (Jerry Bruckheimer Television, Vertigo (DC Entertainment), Warner Bros. Television)
- ☞ *Neverwhere* (BBC, Crucial Films)
- ☞ *Sleepy Hollow* (Mark Goffman Productions, Sketch Films, K/O Paper Products, 20th Century Fox Television)
- ☞ *Supernatural* (Kripke Enterprises, Wonderland Sound and Vision, Warner Bros. Television)
- ☞ *What We Do in the Shadows* (Resnick Interactive Development, Unison Films, Defender Films, Funny or Die, New Zealand Film Commission)

CHAPTER 2





Character Creation



My crew come from all walks of life. There's a former police officer still wrestling with his conscience, a fae changeling still trying to work out who she is and where she fits in, and a runaway turned werewolf who lost his pack. Then there's me. A wizard in training who had it all, who unlike the others had a gentle introduction to the Hidden World. Had it all and lost it all. That's not what I'm talking about now.

Anyway, we work to make a life together in between the mundane world and the Hidden one. Make a life, and find a purpose helping other people who are caught in-between competing realities.

Naomi Fletcher
Magician

CONCEPT AND DRIVE

PCs in the game are called Liminals. They occupy the boundary between the ordinary human world and the Hidden World—the world of magic. They include magicians of various kinds, those with fae blood, werewolves, and mundane but clued-in investigators. The type of character you are, along with what you do, is your concept.

A concept will probably suggest a drive. Your drive is what means you get involved with both the human world and the hidden world. It is the reason you might put yourself in danger, get caught up in supernatural politics, solve mysteries, and try to minimise the harm the hidden world might do to ordinary mortals who are unaware of its existence.

Examples of Drives

A drive takes the form of one or two simple sentences. Some examples are:

- ☞ To find out what the Fae courts want with me, and why they keep trying to make deals.
- ☞ To make sure magical power does not fall into improper hands.
- ☞ To destroy vampires. They killed my family.

FOCUS

Any character needs a focus: tough, determined, or magician.

- ☞ **Determined:** A determined character has great strength of will. As well as a bonus to Will ([see page 24](#)), the character can learn those Traits labelled Determination Talents as well as more general Traits.
- ☞ **Magician:** The character knows how to use magic. You must choose this focus if you have one or more magical styles as Traits.
- ☞ **Tough:** A tough character is resilient to physical harm. As well as a bonus to Endurance ([see page 24](#)), the character can learn Toughness Talents.

Shapechangers and Lycanthropes

Shapechanger is listed as a magical style in the list of traits. However, a lycanthrope such as a werewolf who only knows a single shape and knows no other magical styles does not have to take the magician emphasis; they can instead be determined or tough. The magician emphasis only applies to shapeshifting for a character who learns or wants to learn more than one shape.



NPCs do not have a focus. The GM may choose any appropriate Traits for NPCs. They also do not gain the bonuses to attributes from having a focus.

SKILLS

Skills represent a character's training and natural abilities. Most of what a character knows how to do is defined in terms of their skills. Each of a character's skills has a level—a numerical value representing how good a character is at that skill. A level 2 skill is already good enough to usually succeed at ordinary tasks, and the level of an ordinary professional. Higher levels in a skill represent greater expertise.

A character also has a Skill Cap, representing their highest possible level in a skill. For more on skills, see the next section beginning on [page 33](#). For a starting character, their Skill Cap is 4 and they have 17 points to spend on skills. Each point buys one level in a skill.

TRAITS

Traits are specially trained or innate advantages which stand apart from Skills. They often give bonuses to Skills. Supernatural abilities, including the ability to use different forms of magic, are Traits. Some mundane talents, such as greater than normal strength, gracefulness, or intellectual ability, are Traits. Your character concept may well immediately suggest certain Traits.

Note that if you choose to be a magician, and learn one or more magical styles as Traits, you must take the magician focus in the final stage of character creation.

Traits cost 1 point or 2 points, and a starting character has 5 points to spend on Traits. A list of Traits begins on [page 40](#).

LIMITATIONS

Some supernatural beings have limitations. Limitations are restrictions on your supernatural abilities or issues coming from your supernatural nature. A character can have up to two limitations, and there is no need to take any limitations, though certain supernatural concepts strongly suggest specific limitations. Each limitation grants an extra point to spend on Traits.

A list of limitations is on [page 50](#).

ATTRIBUTES

A character's attributes are as follows.

- ☞ **Endurance** measures a character's physical resilience, and how much physical harm they can suffer without critical injury.

Your Endurance attribute is equal to 8 plus your **Athletics** skill. If you have the tough emphasis, add 4 to your Endurance attribute.

- ☞ **Will** measures a character's reserves of inner strength. A player character spends will to boost their dice rolls, and to power magic. Supernatural effects can also drain will.

Your Will is 8 plus your **Conviction** Skill. If you have the determined emphasis, add 2 to your Will attribute.

- ☞ In combat, a character has a **Damage** attribute, measuring how much harm they do. Damage depends mainly on the weapon used, though it is boosted by some Traits.

Damage is measured as a dice, since it varies, plus a flat number. An armed attack varies from d6+1 to d6+4 damage. If you have several means of fighting (you probably won't use a gun for absolutely everything), note damage for each means of attack.

Damage depends on the weapon used. Some Traits give bonuses.

- ☞ Unarmed attacks do d6 damage.
- ☞ An attack with knife, small bludgeon, or improvised weapon, such as a chair leg, broken bottle, or police baton does d6+1 damage.
- ☞ An attack with a bow, machete, or big club does d6+2 damage.
- ☞ An attack with a sword or light firearm does d6+3 damage.
- ☞ An attack with a heavy firearm does d6+4 damage.

More serious weapons such as rocket launchers and grenades are not usually available, but if so, they do enough damage to instantly kill a target.

Guns are not a default; they are not routine to obtain in the UK. For details on guns and other restricted equipment, see [page 51](#).



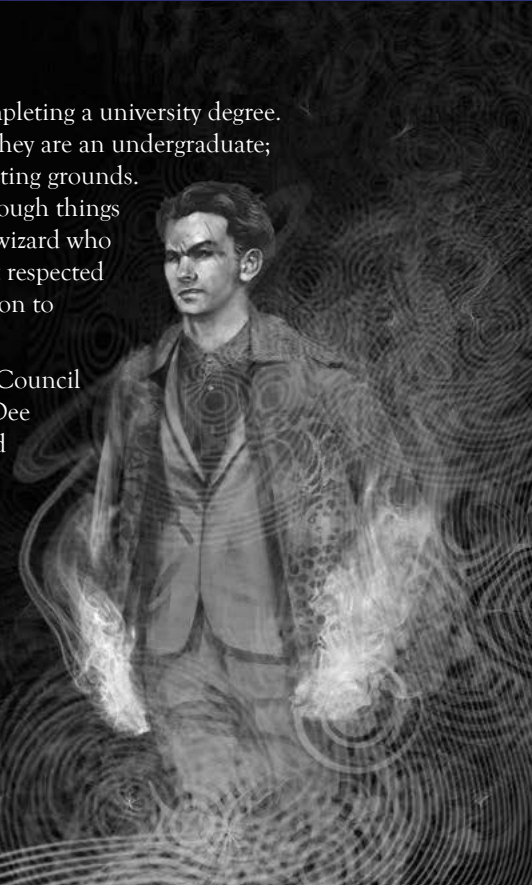


Character Concepts

ACADEMIC WIZARD

Classically trained wizards go on to train after completing a university degree. Such a magician is often spotted by a mentor while they are an undergraduate; the universities in the United Kingdom are all recruiting grounds. Sometimes such training runs in well-off families, though things are more open than they used to be. Nonetheless, a wizard who goes through such an apprenticeship learns the most respected magical arts, and has high levels of academic education to accompany their magical studies.

Typically, an academic wizard is sponsored by the Council of Merlin. The most prestigious place of training is Dee College, Oxford, a hidden magical enclave sponsored by the Council.

- 
- ☞ **Suggested Skills:** Conviction, Education, High Society, Lore, Medicine, Rhetoric, Science
 - ☞ **Suggested Traits:** Bookworm, Countermagic, Divination, Necromancy, Rich, The Sight, Ward Magic
 - ☞ **Suggested Limitation:** Obligated
 - ☞ **Required Focus:** Magician

CHANGELING

In folklore, the Fae are known for stealing human children and leaving Fae children in their place. The children left behind are the offspring of Fae women from dalliances with mortal men. Fae men are also sometimes attracted to human women. Such partnerships are short term affairs, the Fae being fickle as they are.

The offspring of relations between Fae and human, and children brought up in a Fae realm, are known by the same term—changelings. Changelings appear human, but whether or not they have Fae blood often have unusual features such as mismatched eyes or unusual skin markings such as regular coloured spots. Offspring of the Fae can have hidden animal features, and humans brought up in Fae realms lack shadows. Whatever their origin, changelings have an instinct for magic, especially Glamour, and nearly always have the magical vision known as The Sight.

- ☞ **Suggested Skills:** Art, Awareness, Charm, Conviction, Lore, Stealth, Survival
- ☞ **Suggested Traits:** Blessings and Curses, Countermagic, Graceful, Glamour, Presence, The Sight, Silver Tongue
- ☞ **Suggested Limitations:** Marked, Oathbound, Obligated, Uncontrolled Anger
- ☞ **Suggested Focus:** Magician

CLUED-UP CRIMINAL

The Hidden World does not, as the name suggests, exist in the open. It's an occult underground movement, and most people involved in an underground movement are not reputable. It's unsurprising that some criminals are attracted to the hidden world. Some such criminals now have higher callings, keyed to knowledge of the Hidden World or its factions, but others are still free agents.

Most such criminals exist outside of the factions, or as free agents for hire, though the Mercury Collegium is regarded by other factions as a group consisting entirely of criminals.

- ☞ **Suggested Skills:** Athletics, Awareness, Melee, Stealth, Streetwise, Taunt, Technology
- ☞ **Suggested Traits:** Artefact, Breaking and Entry, Night Sight, Quick Reflexes, Silver Tongue
- ☞ **Suggested Limitation:** Obligated
- ☞ **Suggested Focus:** Tough



DHAMPIR

A dhampir almost became a vampire, but retained their humanity. They are extremely rare. Unlike a vampire, a dhampir is not dead. He or she still breathes, their heart still beats, and their blood is warm. The dhampir shares some of a vampire's powers and weaknesses, but not usually all of either. Some dhampirs need to feed as vampires do, and to a typical mortal or even being of the Hidden World, there is little difference between dhampirs and vampires. A dhampir is often partially controlled by their vampire creator.

But the dhampir knows they are still human and not a monster. Or at least they can be.

- ☞ **Suggested Skills:** Athletics, Awareness, Conviction, Empathy, Melee, Stealth, Taunt
- ☞ **Suggested Traits:** Brawny, Frightening, Necromancy, Night Sight, Quick Reflexes, Rapid Healing
- ☞ **Suggested Limitations:** Obligated, Vulnerability, Weakened by Sunlight
- ☞ **Suggested Focus:** Tough

ELDRITCH SCHOLAR

Not all scholars involved in the Hidden World came to it through being recruited as wizards. Some come across the Hidden World in their studies and then go on to take a closer look, verifying its reality. Even for one not a part of the Hidden World, magic and the supernatural is a fascinating subject of study.

- ☞ **Suggested Skills:** Awareness, Education, Lore, Medicine, Science, Technology, Rhetoric
- ☞ **Suggested Traits:** Artefact, Bookworm, Investigator, Rich, Jack of All Trades
- ☞ **Suggested Focus:** Determined

FACE

The face is a diplomat who moves within the Hidden World, acting as a liason between different factions. An effective face is unfazed by different groups in the Hidden World, and can also fit into mundane society. Faces excel in social skills, rather than magic or brawn, but a face on a mission is certainly best accompanied by others with more physical skills.

Most faces are human rather than supernatural beings. Even though a vampire or a Fae Lord can present greater presence than any mundane human being, this presence does not allow trust or subtlety when it comes to dealing with ordinary mortals. Even such powerful factions as the vampiric Sodality of the Crown and the Fae Courts make use of human go-betweens.

- ☞ **Suggested Skills:** Art, Business, Education, Charm, Empathy, High Society, Rhetoric
- ☞ **Suggested Traits:** Agent of Ravenstower, Graceful, Presence, Rich, Silver Tongue
- ☞ **Suggested Limitations:** Obligated
- ☞ **Suggested Focus:** Determined

GUTTER MAGE

Wizards with formal magical training refer to those who know some magic, but lack the academic training, as gutter mages. Some gutter mages hate the name as embodying the snobbery of the establishment, but others now wear it as a badge of pride. The magic of a gutter mage may be crude, but it can be more powerful than the wizardry of the snooty academics. Magic doesn't work completely by formal rules, whatever the ivory tower magicians might say.

Many gutter mages are independent operators, imperfectly taught by a mentor then left to fend for themselves. Some gutter mages cooperate with the Mercury Collegium; most are lone agents or find kindred spirits as part of a Crew.

- ☞ **Suggested Skills:** Awareness, Conviction, Stealth, Lore, Streetwise, Survival, Taunt
- ☞ **Suggested Traits:** Artefact, Blessings and Curses, Divination, Geomancy, The Sight, Shapechanger, Weathermonger
- ☞ **Suggested Limitations:** Marked
- ☞ **Required Focus:** Magician

INVESTIGATOR

Investigators include private detectives, police officers, and journalists. Investigators sometimes come across the Hidden World when they look deeply into something, and a few realise the strangeness is something they must deal with rather than dismiss. Most investigators lack any training or background to deal with what they find, and some break under the strain.

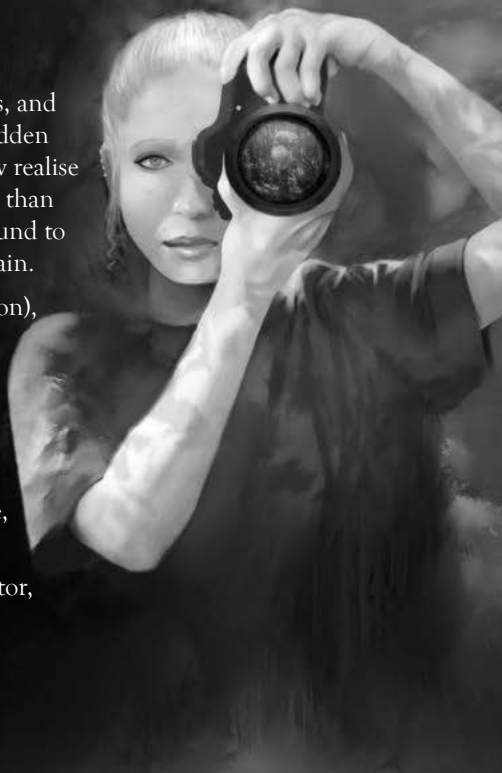
The main exception is P Division (Paranormal Division), a branch of the UK police force which deals with the supernatural. P Division detectives investigate crimes involving magic and creatures of the Hidden World when they intrude on ordinary mortals, and work to keep people safe from supernatural threats.

- ☞ **Suggested Skills:** Awareness, Empathy, Lore, Melee, Shoot, Stealth, Streetwise
- ☞ **Suggested Traits:** Breaking and Entering, Investigator, Sharp Shooter, Fight On
- ☞ **Suggested Focus:** Determined

KNIGHT

Knight is the term used in the Hidden World for a mortal agent of a supernatural power or faction. Fae Courts and the vampiric Sodality of the Crown are the main groups which employ knights. Many knights come from military backgrounds, but despite the name, knights are just as likely to be computer experts, lawyers or accountants as soldiers; supernatural factions often already have supernatural skill in battle, though a mortal soldier may be useful in that they lack supernatural vulnerabilities. Some Knights have supernatural talents from their association.

- ☞ **Suggested Skills:** Athletics, Awareness, Business, Melee, Shoot, Technology, Vehicles
- ☞ **Suggested Traits:** Artefact, Investigator, Sharp Shooter, The Sight
- ☞ **Suggested Limitations:** Obligated
- ☞ **Suggested Focus:** Tough



MEN IN BLACK

The Order of St. Bede is a secret group sponsored by both the Anglican and Catholic churches. It is charged with preserving society from magical threats, and with preventing any firm evidence or confirmation of the existence of magic from reaching the public. A clergyman in the Order who has some magical skill himself is termed a man in black, though the modern organisation also allows women.

- ☞ **Suggested Skills:** Education, Empathy, Lore, Medicine, Rhetoric, Science, Stealth
- ☞ **Suggested Traits:** Bookworm, Blessings and Curses, Countermagic
- ☞ **Required Focus:** Tough

WARDEN

A warden is a bodyguard to a magician. In the Council of Merlin, wardens are highly paid specialist bodyguards. In the Order of St. Bede, wardens serve alongside the Men in Black, the magicians of the Order, and are usually members of the clergy themselves, the equals of the magicians they protect. Wardens may also be sent unaccompanied on particular tasks by their patron magician or organisation.

One with specialised warden training is an asset to a Crew. A skilled combatant in a Crew could also serve the role of warden more informally.

- ☞ **Suggested Skills:** Awareness, Athletics, Education, Lore, Melee, Shoot, Vehicles
- ☞ **Suggested Traits:** Artefact, Brawny, Quick Reflexes, Tough
- ☞ **Suggested Focus:** Tough

WEREWOLF

A werewolf is someone who has undergone an initiation ritual to be able to change into wolf form, and perhaps channel extraordinary powers of strength and toughness, as well as a primal rage. A group of werewolves forms a gang (sometimes disparagingly called a pack), based around strong leadership, shared community, and a shared initiation ritual. There are also a few lone wolves, who have left or been cast out of their gang. Some lone wolves join other groups clued into the Hidden World.

- ☞ **Suggested Skills:** Athletics, Awareness, Melee, Stealth, Streetwise, Survival, Taunt
- ☞ **Suggested Traits:** Brawny, Frightening, Night Sight, Rage, Rapid Healing, Shapechanger
- ☞ **Suggested Limitation:** Uncontrolled Anger, Vulnerability
- ☞ **Suggested Focus:** Tough





Skills

A starting character has a Skill Cap of 4, and 17 points to spend on numerical values. No Skill can be increased above the Skill Cap. If you have a Skill with an associated value of 3 or higher, you can spend one point on a speciality. A speciality is an area of focus within a Skill, and grants a +2 bonus when using a Skill in that area.

Physical Skills	Mental Skills	Social Skills
Athletics	Art	Charm
Awareness	Business	Conviction
Melee	Education	Empathy
Shoot	Lore	High Society
Stealth	Medicine	Rhetoric
Survival	Science	Streetwise
Vehicles	Technology	Taunt

PHYSICAL SKILLS

Athletics

Your Athletics skill measures your agility, fitness, and ability in physical sports. It certainly includes the usual activities seen in athletics competitions such as running, jumping, and swimming, but also climbing and acts of pure physical strength and endurance. Those with athletic hobbies and physically active jobs need this skill. Athletics is also used for defence in ranged combat.

Specialities: Climb, Dodge, Feats of Strength, Run, Swim

Awareness

The Awareness skill measures how alert you are, and how well you notice things. It is also used for initiative in combat, to determine who acts first. Some people are naturally alert. Those whose job involves being on the lookout for danger, or observation, such as police officers and journalists, need good Awareness.

Specialities: Danger Sense, Listen, Reactions, Search, Surveillance

Melee

Melee is the art of hand to hand combat, whether unarmed or using a weapon. The damage you do with Melee depends on the weapon you use. Your Melee skill level also determines how hard you are to hit in close combat. Some people take combat skills such as martial arts or fencing as a hobby. Others need to learn to fight for more practical reasons, and combat is always something that can happen when facing the dangers of the Hidden World.

Specialities: Fencing, Knives, Improvised Weapons, Police Equipment, Unarmed Combat

Shoot

For ranged combat, you use the Shoot skill. Most commonly in the modern world, this means guns. Some shoot as a hobby, whether bows or guns. Beings of the Hidden World usually have combat skills, including Shoot, though it is less universal than Melee. And those with military training, or armed response units in the police know how to shoot.

Specialities: Bow, Pistol, Rifle, Shotgun, Throwing



Stealth

Stealth is the key skill of the criminal, but conversely police officers with covert surveillance duties also need it. Those from the hidden world who visit the mundane world have ways of either staying hidden or blending in. The Stealth skill means you know how to move subtly, without what you are doing being spotted. Sneaking around, acts of sleight of hand, and lockpicking, are part of this skill, as is concealing objects and breaking into buildings without such being too obvious.

Specialities: Appear Inconspicuous, Conceal, Lockpicking, Sleight of Hand, Sneak

Survival

You're comfortable with the natural world, and know how to get by in the wilderness. You can navigate, find food and shelter, and stay safe from dangers and wild animals. Those with "outdoors" jobs have a Survival skill, as do many of the Hidden World, though some are more urban in their interests.

Specialities: Animal Handling, Find Food and Water, Navigation, Safe Routes, Tracking

Vehicles

If you have the Vehicles skill you can drive a car and ride a motorcycle. You can learn how to operate a variety of other vehicles, including boats, planes, and helicopters with relevant specialities. Alternatively, you could take the Vehicle Wizard Trait ([see page 46](#)).

Specialities: Boats, Motorcycle, Off Road Driving, Pilot, Pursuit



MENTAL SKILLS

Art

You know about art and how to create it. Creating good art is hard, and to be a properly skilled artist, you need to specialise. Performance is also a part of the art skill. Artists are more often drawn to the Hidden World than most mortals. Within the hidden world, the fae are absolutely fascinated by art, and the effectiveness of Fae glamours is governed by the Art skill.

Specialities: Glamour, Music, Painting, Performance, Photography, Writing

Business

People running small businesses and those involved in the corporate world know the Business skill. It's the skill of buying and selling, finance and making deals. When dealing with the Hidden World, the business skill is relevant when it comes to making bargains, which can be a vital survival skill when dealing with the Fae.

Specialities: Buying, Fae Bargains, Finance, Property, Selling

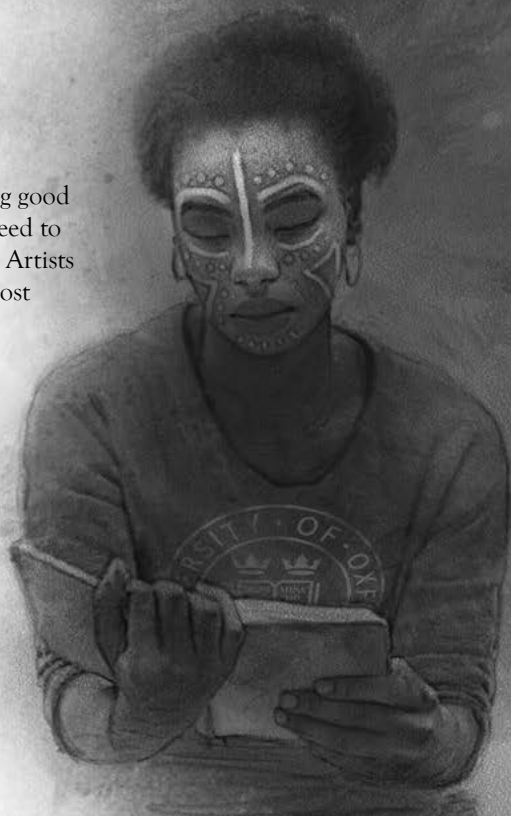
Education

Your Education skill is a combination of formal education, and your knowledge of the world's culture, politics, and history. It's to an extent how "well read" you are. The Education skill represents knowledge of the everyday world in much the same way that the Lore skill is knowledge of the Hidden World.

Specialities: Current Affairs, History, Law, Literature

Languages

In Liminal, a character can speak any language appropriate to their concept; there is no points cost involved. Some beings, such as the Fae, can speak all Earthly languages as part of their nature.



Lore

The Lore skill measures your knowledge of the hidden magical side of the world. Those native to the Hidden World and mortals who have had extensive contact, as well as magicians and students of the occult have the Lore skill. It includes knowledge of both supernatural beings and magical spells, though without a relevant Trait, you can't usually actually cast magic. However, if you do have a magical Trait which enables you to use magic, most tests use the Lore skill.

Specialities: The Fair Folk, Ghosts, Magical Society, Magic Theory, Shapechangers

Medicine

The Medicine skill is used to treat injuries and illnesses, including first aid and trauma care. Some knowledge of psychiatry also forms a part of the skill. At low levels of Medicine, you've received extensive training in first aid. At higher levels, you could be a nurse or doctor.

Specialities: Diseases, First Aid, Forensics, Poisons, Psychology

Science

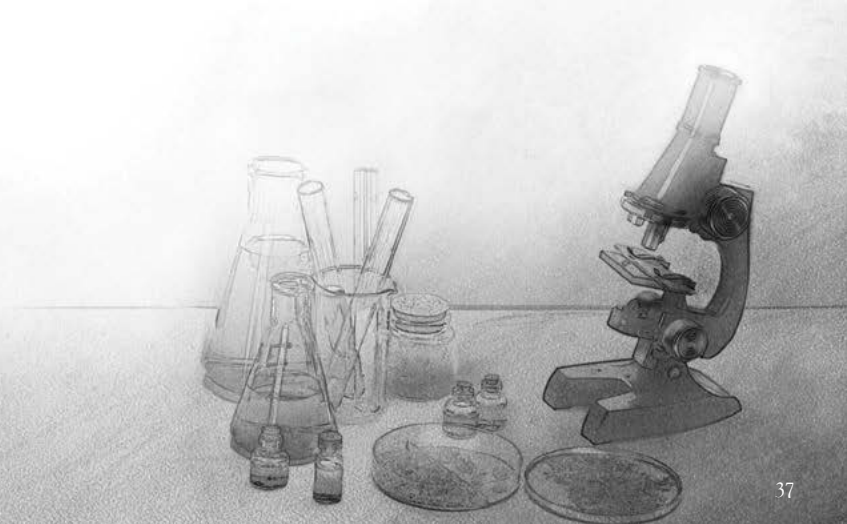
At lower levels, the Science skill is all about a broad scientific education. With high levels of skill, and a relevant speciality, you're a trained scientist, probably with a relevant degree or two. Doctors have a background in science as well as the Medicine skill. Science is generally a rare skill in the Hidden World, but otherwise inexplicable observations can draw in scientists.

Specialities: Biology, Chemistry, Geology, Mathematics, Physics

Technology

You're good with technology, and have significant practical skills. Operation, maintenance, and repair of electronics and machinery are covered by the Technology skill, as are such things as computer security systems. The Technology skill is rare amongst those in the hidden world, but it can definitely provide an edge. Just by being in the everyday modern world, you have contact with and make use of technology.

Specialities: Computers, Electronics, Operate Heavy Machinery, Repairs, Sabotage



SOCIAL SKILLS

Charm

The Charm skill is a measure of your general amiability and ability to get on with people. It is generally the skill of making oneself likeable, though it can also be used to tempt and lie. To an extent the Charm skill is natural charisma, but you can also learn to be more charming.

Specialities: Deception, Flattery, Flirting, Respect, Temptation

Conviction

Your Conviction is your determination and willpower. Religious faith is another form of conviction. You can use conviction to resist attempts to daunt or tempt you. It also affects your Will attribute, and is a useful skill in some forms of magic, though magic requires a relevant Trait and not just this skill. Conviction also applies when resisting magic affecting the mind.

Specialities: Bravery, Confidence, Religious Faith, Resist Manipulation, Resist Mind Magic

Empathy

With the Empathy skill, you're sensitive to other people. You can tell what someone wants, and when they're uncomfortable in conversation or hiding something. The Empathy skill includes those with service jobs that assist people and manipulative vampires.

Specialities: Assess Personality, Know Mood, See through Manipulation, Repressed Emotions, Sense Lies

High Society

People with this skill tend to be rich, influential, and privileged. If you have the High Society skill, you're either someone from such a background, or used to being around the rich and powerful. You fit in well on exclusive social occasions. Besides fitting in, you can use the High Society skill to gain entry to exclusive events, to network, and apply social pressure to persuade someone to appear to accept a particular view or pursue a course of action. High Society is also the skill of politics and gossip. The skill is not only useful in human society, but also in aristocratic cultures of the hidden world, such as fae and vampire societies.

Specialities: Fashion, Fitting In, Gossip, Politics, Social Pressure



Rhetoric

Rhetoric is the skill of argument and speeches, convincing people of facts (whether they are actually true or not). Acts of rhetoric can use logic, or seek to sway the emotions. The most effective rhetoric does both. Lawyers, politicians, and to an extent teachers all make use of the rhetoric skill.

Specialities: Debate, Inspire, Logic, Oratory, Sincerity

Streetwise

You know the streets and the good and bad neighbourhoods. You know how to find people who would rather stay hidden from the public eye and how to stay out of the way of those who would do you harm. Some police officers have this skill, as do criminals who know how to stay out of the way, and those from the Hidden World who hide in human cities.

Specialities: Finding Contacts, Criminal Gangs, Information Gathering, Lying Low, Urban Survival

Taunt

The Taunt skill is the province of both bullies and jokers, those who know how to be annoying and occasionally amusing. With it, you know how to get under someone's skin, either angering or intimidating them. You can use this skill to goad someone into a fight, cause them to make mistakes, or frighten them.

Specialities: Insult, Interrogate, Jest, Provoke, Threaten





Traits

I'm not a victim of circumstance. I'm remarkable. I've abilities beyond any ordinary person. That means I face correspondingly greater challenges. Yeah, that's what I keep telling myself. Are you more convinced than I am?

-Ygraine Greene, Changeling

As well as Skills, a character has Traits. Traits cost either one or two points. A starting character has 5 points to spend on Traits. A character may also take one or two limitations, each of which grants one extra point for other Traits.

In order to learn a style of magic, the character must have taken the magician focus, with one exception. The exception is the Shapechanger Trait; a character can take this Trait to learn a single form (usually that of a large wolf) without being a magician. A magician with the Shapechanger Trait can, however, spend more points to learn other forms.

Similarly, determination talents are exclusive to characters who have the determined focus, and toughness talents are only allowed to characters with the tough focus.

Exceptional Abilities	Determination Talents
Agent of Ravenstower (1 point)	Fight On (1 point)
Always Prepared (1 point)	Inspirational (1 point)
Animal Sense (1 point)	Jack of All Trades (1 point)
Artefact (1 point)	
Big Business (2 points)	Toughness Talents
Bookworm (1 point)	Give and Take (1 point)
Brawny (1 or 2 points)	Prowess (1 point)
Breaking and Entering (1 point)	Supernatural Strength (2 points)
Countermagic (1 point)	
Forgettable (1 point)	Styles of Magic
Frightening (2 points)	Blessings and Curses (2 points)
Graceful (2 points)	Divination (2 points)
Healer (1 point)	Geomancy (2 points)
Investigator (2 points)	Glamour (2 points)
Night Sight (1 point)	Necromancy (2 points)
Presence (2 points)	Shapechanger (2 points)
Quick Reflexes (2 points)	Ward Magic (2 points)
Rage (1 point)	Weathermonger (2 points)
Rapid Healing (2 points)	
Rich (1 point)	
Scavenger (1 point)	Limitations
Sharp Shooter (2 points)	Marked
Silver Tongue (1 point)	Oathbound
Sneaky (1 point)	Obliged
The Sight (1 point)	Uncontrolled Anger
Vehicle Wizard (2 points)	Vulnerability
Words that Bind (1 point)	Weakened by Sunlight

EXCEPTIONAL ABILITIES

Agent of Ravenstower (1 point)

You are part of the Ravenstower faction ([see page 153](#)), and know the old pacts with the Fae. If you declare your allegiance to one of the English Fae, they must spend d6 Will to harm or attack you unless you attacked them first. If they have already harmed you, they lose d6 Will.

This ability unfortunately does nothing to protect you from Welsh, Scottish, or Irish Fae, let alone those from further afield in the world.

Always Prepared (1 point)

If you need a mundane object for something—something not too expensive, legal, and relatively straightforward to get hold of—spend a point of Will and you have it with you. You foresaw the need for it. The GM can say “no” to having an object if it is too tough to get hold of, or too outlandish, but must then refund the point of Will spent.

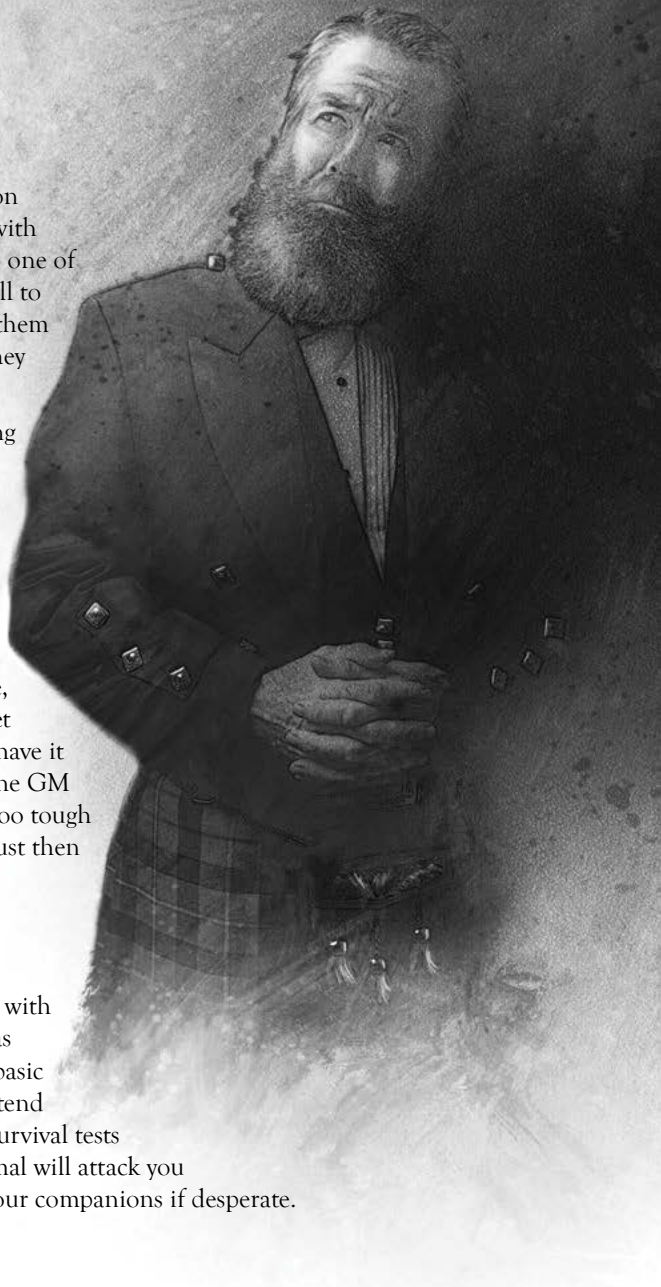
Animal Sense (1 point)

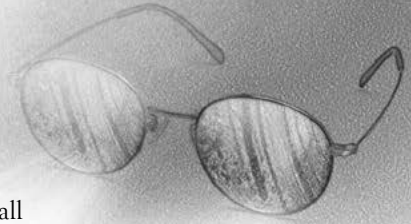
You have an intuitive sense of dealing with animals and can sense what they want, as well as being able to communicate in a basic fashion with all natural creatures. They tend to like you; you have a +2 bonus to all Survival tests when dealing with animals, and no animal will attack you if unprovoked, though it might attack your companions if desperate.

Artefact (1 point)

You have a magical artefact, granting you supernatural talents with a single Skill when you use it. You get a +2 bonus to that Skill, and can spend a point of Will to get a magical result when using that Skill. Such a magical result will exceed mundane expectations when using the Skill, but is usually relatively subtle.

If a GM thinks an artefact is abusive, they are free to disallow it, or increase the cost of this trait to 2 points. Note that an artefact can be lost or stolen; if this is permanent, you regain the character point or points spent on the artefact.





Examples of Artefacts

☞ **Lenses of Otherworldly Sight:**

The lenses appear as a pair of spectacles, but one who wears them has a +2 bonus to all Awareness tests involving vision. Further, one wearing them can spend a point of Will to gain the benefit of The Sight for a single scene.

☞ **The Knife That Cuts:** This knife does d6+3 damage. If one holding it spends a point of Will, it can cut through any object. This effect does not increase its damage in combat, but does breach any supernatural immunity.

☞ **Everfull Wallet:** The term is an exaggeration, but one who carries this wallet has a +2 bonus to their Business Skill. Further, if the purse was closed while empty, its owner can spend a point of Will to have it contain up to £100 when next opened.

Big Business (2 points)

When making an important business deal, or in high stakes negotiations where life and death, or more, are on the line, you have a +2 bonus to the Business and High Society skills.

Bookworm (1 point)

When it comes to library or internet research, you excel. You have a +2 bonus to library or internet investigation within the fields of the Education, Lore, and Science skills.

Brawny (1 point)

You're exceptionally strong. You have a +2 bonus to Athletics for feats of strength, and to Damage.

You cannot take both the Brawny and Supernatural Strength Traits; supernatural strength supersedes brawny.

Breaking and Entering (1 point)

You have a +2 bonus to your Stealth and Technology skills for the purposes of breaking in or breaching technological security systems.

Countermagic (1 point)

You know defensive spells which protect you and others against magical attacks. You can use your Lore Skill as a defence against magic, and can make a Lore skill test to disperse a magical effect. In both cases, this will usually be an opposed roll.

Forgettable (2 points)

Those who don't know you well simply don't remember what you look or sound like; you fade from the memory of those you casually interact with after a week or so. You're even unclear in photographs, tape recordings, or CCTV footage.

Frightening (2 points)

You have a +2 bonus to Taunt tests made to intimidate or scare people. Further, standing up to you after a successful test requires the victim spends two points of Will, as well as the usual effects for not doing as suggested after a social challenge, as described on [page 78](#).

Graceful (2 points)

You move with perfect grace and precision. You have a +2 bonus to Art involving activities such as dancing, to Athletics feats involving balance, and a +1 bonus to all Melee Combat tests.

Healer (1 point)

You can heal twice the usual amount of damage with a successful Medicine check on other characters or yourself.

Investigator (2 points)

You have a +2 bonus to Empathy tests to tell when someone is lying or hiding something, to Awareness tests to find hidden objects or evidence, and to Streetwise tests to find contacts and witnesses.

Night Sight (1 point)

You can see in the dark almost as well as you can daylight, though you can't make out colours or fine details. For that reason, intelligent creatures with night sight still light their dwellings, though the light is dim by ordinary standards—and they don't need the light for most tasks, with the exception of activities such as reading and drawing.



Presence (2 points)

You have an almost supernatural physical presence. This could be due to physical beauty, your voice, or a subtle supernatural aura. You have a +2 bonus to your Charm and Rhetoric Skills for the purposes of making an impression or swaying the emotions. After a successful Skill test, you can spend a point of Will for a subtle magical effect, such as causing a crowd to fall into instant silence, or to persuade someone to temporarily accept an obvious falsehood.

Quick Reflexes (2 points)

You have exceptionally quick reflexes, with a speed at the edge of being supernaturally quick. You have +2 to your Awareness skill for initiative, and to your defence in combat, whether hand to hand or ranged combat. Further, you can spend a point of Will to take a single extra action before anyone else within a combat round.

Between combatants who both have this Trait, if both spend Will, calculate initiative as usual.

Rage (1 point)

At the cost of a point of Will, you can enter a rage. In a rage, you can only attack at close range or move to attack, and have a +2 bonus to Melee Combat and damage. You fight until no other opponents remain, though you can also spend a point of Will to emerge from a rage.

Rapid Healing (2 points)

You rapidly heal from any injury, recovering d6 points of Endurance every hour. This rapid healing even applies when you have negative Endurance. You even eventually come back from the dead unless decapitated or incinerated. You are resistant to poisons and all but immune to disease.

However, Rapid Healing has a downside. Any character with rapid healing has a flaw—one source of injury from which they cannot regenerate damage. You will not come back from the dead when killed through your flaw.

Classically, vampires are vulnerable to wood, and werewolves to silver, but there are many variations even amongst vampires and werewolves. The Fae are particularly affected by bronze.

Examples of flaws in Rapid Healing

- ☞ 1: Fire
- ☞ 2: Silver
- ☞ 3: Wood
- ☞ 4: Bronze
- ☞ 5: Stone
- ☞ 6: Exposed to Moonlight



Rich (1 point)

You're well-off. You perhaps own several houses, and can make ordinary purchases of things worth thousands of pounds without any issue. Travel, accommodation, and even luxurious living expenses are a routine part of your outlay. Some problems can be solved simply by throwing money at them.

Scavenger (1 point)

You don't need money to survive; you, and a small group of people with you, can always find shelter and enough to eat, whether in a city or in the wilderness. In a settlement, you can always get hold of inexpensive useful items you need with a simple look around and perhaps asking some people.

Sharp Shooter (2 points)

You're a highly accurate shot. You have a +2 bonus to your Shooting Skill and to damage with a ranged weapon.

Silver Tongue (1 point)

You lie naturally and with great imagination and fluency. You have a +2 bonus to the Charm ability when it comes to getting away with lies and deception. Further, there is a magical component to this Trait; when you face magical abilities which can tell truth from lies, they no longer work on you if you spend a point of Will.

Sneaky (1 point)

You have a +2 bonus to Stealth for the purposes of hiding or moving without attracting attention, including, for example tailing someone. You also have a +2 bonus to Awareness for skill tests to notice danger.

The Sight (1 point)

You can sense the presence of magic, magical and shapechanged creatures, and illusions. You can't see through illusions, though you know them for what they are. You can, however, see through magical invisibility and see ghosts which have not manifested.

Vehicle Wizard (2 points)

You have a +2 bonus to all Vehicles tests made to drive a vehicle and can drive or pilot anything, however unusual, without a speciality being required; you have an intuitive, maybe magical, sense for such things. No Vehicle specialities are required if you have this Trait.

Words that Bind (1 point)

You have a +2 bonus to Rhetoric when trying to manoeuvre someone into making a promise. Should they break that promise, they lose d6 Will.

DETERMINATION TALENTS

Fight On (1 point)

Once per battle, you can spend Will to reduce the damage you take from an attack. Each point of Will you spend reduces the Endurance loss by one point.

Inspirational (1 point)

Your presence is an inspiration to other members of your Crew. You can donate up to two points of Will to help another Crew member with a skill test, giving the usual bonuses.

Jack of All Trades (1 point)

You know how to do a little bit of everything. If you do not have a skill, and must roll for it at level 0, you do not need to increase the Challenge Level by 2.

TOUGHNESS TALENTS

Give and Take (1 point)

In battle, immediately after you wound an opponent, or when they wound you, you may choose to suffer damage to hurt them. You lose 2 points of Endurance; they lose d6 points of Endurance. This is in addition to the damage you suffer or inflict.

Prowess (1 point)

Your physical powers impress others. You have a +2 bonus to your first use of the Charm or Taunt skill on someone who has seen you triumph in battle or another physical challenge.

Supernatural Strength (2 points)

You're exceptionally strong. For two points, you have a +4 bonus to Athletics for feats of strength, and to your Damage attribute for melee attacks. Further, you can spend one point of Will to perform a feat of supernatural strength, such as lifting up one end of a car or punching through a brick wall.

You cannot take both the Brawny and Supernatural Strength Traits; Supernatural Strength supersedes Brawny.





STYLES OF MAGIC

Blessings and Curses (2 points)

You can use natural magic, blessing or cursing others. Tests involve the Lore Skill. [See page 92](#) for details, including further Traits to specialise in this form of magic.

Divination (2 points)

You're a diviner. You can use the Lore Skill to cast auguries. For details on this form of magic, including further Traits, [see page 94](#).

Geomancy (2 points)

You know the magic of geomancy—attuning yourself to places for information and power. For more details on this form of magic, including further Traits, [see page 96](#).

Glamour (2 points)

You know the art of fae glamour and can conjure up illusions of light and sound. Tests involve the Art Skill. For details on this form of magic, including further Traits, [see page 98](#).

Necromancy (2 points)

You're practiced in necromancy. You can speak to the dead and interact with ghosts. Your necromantic spells use the Lore Skill. For details on this form of magic, including further Traits, [see page 100](#).

Shapechanger (2 points)

For a point of Will, you can change into the form of a particular animal or back into human form. Your clothing and belongings do not change with you, and you do not gain any special ability to communicate in animal form, though you can still understand human speech, and shapeshifters who have shifted to the same shape as you.

In animal form, you have a +2 bonus to all Skills which benefit from your new shape, though some skills will of course no longer be available, since you now lack opposable digits and can't speak. If your form is much bigger or tougher than a human, you have +4 Endurance; if smaller, Endurance now has a -4 penalty.

If you have the magician focus, you can take this Trait multiple times; each time you take it, you learn another animal form. Further, although it costs 2 Trait points for your first form, it only costs 1 point per additional form. For more details, [see page 102](#).

Ward Magic (2 points)

You're trained in the use of Wards, binding magical energies into objects and areas to be discharged later. For details, including further Traits to specialise in this form of magic, [see page 103](#).

Weathermonger (2 points)

You know the magical art of changing the weather. For details, including further Traits to specialise in this form of magic, [see page 106](#).



LIMITATIONS

Marked

Some beings have signs—a Mark—which give them away as a supernatural being. Such signs include the vampire's lack of reflection (or ability to show up on recording equipment) and the hidden animal features of some changelings. Some magicians, and those who have spent too much time in Fae realms, lack shadows. The Mark is an indicator of what manner of supernatural being a character is, and even mundanes will know something is up when they see the Mark, though not what it signifies.

Oathbound

The character finds it hard to tell a direct lie, though they may lie by omission. A direct lie costs the character d6 Will. Breaking an oath causes the same loss of Will, but the loss is permanent until the character makes amends to the one they made the oath to, and their amends are accepted. All Fae NPCs and some Changelings are oathbound.

Obliged

If you're obliged, you're under a debt or oath which carries supernatural power. You have given your service to a powerful magician, Fae, or vampire, and resisting a command costs d6 Will. Attempting to harm them also costs d6 Will. Fae Lords often oblige their underlings, and vampires who create progeny can, to an extent, control them.

Uncontrolled Anger

Fae are notoriously mercurial. Werewolves have difficulty holding their inner beast in check. A character with this limitation has more than just a bad temper; it is an effort not to fly into a disproportionate rage when hurt, insulted, or challenged. Keeping calm and not enacting an over the top response which escalates a problem costs d6 Will.

If a character has the Rage Trait, in a situation where uncontrolled anger comes into play, entering the rage does not cost a Will point, but emerging from it costs 2 Will points.

Vulnerability

Some creatures are vulnerable to a particular substance. Silver is a classic for werewolves, bronze and salt for the Fae, and vampires can be vulnerable to several things including sunlight, mirrors, and garlic. Fire is another common example. In reality, most such vulnerabilities are not clear-cut, and need to be researched for a particular monster, varying much more than the folklore might suggest. Any vulnerability a player character takes could come from the above list of examples or have a similar scope.



When you suffer from an attack including the source of your vulnerability, you suffer an extra two points of damage. Further, such a vulnerability is a source of dread when it is present. Facing up to it, even approaching it, costs you 2 Will points.

Bronze?

In the world of Liminal, the Fae are not vulnerable to “cold wrought iron”; that particular myth has it backwards. It is the earlier metal, bronze, which in the modern age has to be specially wrought, which makes them suffer.

Weakened by Sunlight

A vampire or dhampir is somewhat weakened in direct sunlight, though even being indoors and away from windows is enough to shield them. A powerful ultra-violet light will also weaken a vampire. All Skills for the character have a -1 penalty in sunlight.

Money and Equipment

An ordinary character can have one piece of equipment worth up to approximately £1,000, and up to three pieces of equipment worth up to £100 each. This does not include anything restricted or illegal.

A character with the Rich Trait can have one piece of equipment worth up to about £50,000, and up to three pieces of equipment worth up to £5,000. Restricted or illegal equipment is permitted.

Guns of course count as restricted in the UK. A report of a gun will quickly bring a police armed response unit. A character with a concept indicating a profession where they have access to guns can have one. A character with a Streetwise skill of 2 or more can have a single piece of illegal equipment on character creation.

If during play, you want access to equipment, you can visit a suitable place and buy it. A Streetwise skill test will find a suitable “no questions asked” contact in the case of illegal things, though a failed test might get you into trouble either with the law or an unscrupulous underworld dealer. If what you want costs less than £100 (or £1,000 for a rich character), it can be assumed you can simply buy it.

During play, you might earn money above and beyond what you might expect from your everyday life (where it assumed that most money you earn has to be spent on “mundane” things). Keep a record of any amount above £100 (or £1,000 if you have the Rich Trait). You can use this money to buy more expensive things than you would normally.

Liminal is not a game about ordinary purchases and keeping careful track of money. The Liminal game system does not keep careful track of gear, though major items, such as those described above, can be important. The intent of these rules is to work as guidelines when things you buy might come up in play, without needing too much in terms of records or care.



Sample Characters

YGRAINE GREEN

Ygraine always knew she was different from normal. She grew up with her grandfather who told her nothing of her parents. As a child, when Ygraine commented she could see things which weren't there to others—ghosts and hints of illusions from the Fae—her grandfather simply cautioned her to stay quiet about them and not tell others, especially any adults. Ygraine never fit in at school. Her teachers thought her dreamy, artistic, and unfocused. The other pupils at school merely found Ygraine odd.

And when Ygraine's grandfather died, she was left alone in the world, not fully part of mundane reality and ignorant of the Hidden World. The Fae began to approach her with promises and information. Ygraine didn't trust them, but their help let her survive, albeit often through stealing, and find out more about her world, though never enough. She even learned she had some talent with weaving the illusions of the Fae.

Then she found a home and a purpose with her Crew, the South Yorkshire Irregulars.

- ☞ **Concept:** Changeling of unknown heritage
- ☞ **Drive:** To find out who I really am
- ☞ **Skill Cap:** 4
- ☞ **Focus:** Magician
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Awareness 3, Melee 1, Stealth 3
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Art 3, Lore 1
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 2, Charm 1, Streetwise 2
- ☞ **Traits:** Breaking and Entering, The Sight, Glamour (Vanishing)
- ☞ **Endurance:** 10
- ☞ **Will:** 10
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+1 (knife)

STEPHEN DUNSTAN

Stephen Dunstan ran away from home when he was fourteen. He had his reasons and couldn't go back. His parents wouldn't have accepted him anyway once he fell in with a gang of werewolves and became one of them. The werewolves, roaming over the Peak District were his home, his pack, his family.

But Stephen lost them. He went away by himself on business, and when he came back they were gone. Vanished. There were a few burned bodies. And Stephen burned too, but with rage and a desire for revenge. Although Stephen has now fallen in with the South Yorkshire Irregulars—he knows no other werewolf pack would accept him, nor he them—he struggles to admit they are his new home, even though he needs them and they merit his loyalty.

- ☞ **Concept:** Werewolf without a pack
- ☞ **Drive:** To find out who destroyed my pack and deliver justice.
- ☞ **Skill Cap:** 4
- ☞ **Focus:** Tough
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Melee Combat 3, Survival 2, Vehicles 2
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Technology 2
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 1, Taunt 3
- ☞ **Traits:** Brawny, Night Sight, Rage, Rapid Healing (Weakness: Fire), Shapechanger (massive wolf form)
- ☞ **Limitation:** Uncontrolled Anger, Vulnerability (Fire)
- ☞ **Endurance:** 14
- ☞ **Will:** 9
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+3 (improvised or natural weapons)

NAOMI FLETCHER

Naomi Fletcher's mentor in the Council of Merlin either fell into evil or fell afoul of politics. Naomi still does not know which. Either way, he was declared an Enemy of Merlin and vanished. As the traitor wizard's apprentice, the death sentence also hung over Naomi. She also had to go into hiding. Fortunately, as a mere apprentice, seeking Naomi out was hardly a priority.

But Naomi fell from grace as a potential future member of the elite of the Hidden World to an outcast, forced to fend for herself. She needed people around her to survive and give her a purpose again. This means the Crew; the South Yorkshire Irregulars provide Naomi not just with a measure of stability, but a way to be useful.

- ☞ **Concept:** Part-trained wizard on the run
- ☞ **Drive:** Find out whether my mentor was guilty or innocent
- ☞ **Skill Cap:** 4
- ☞ **Focus:** Magician
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Awareness 1
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Business 1, Education 2, Healing 2, Lore 3, Science 1
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 2, Empathy 3, Rhetoric 2
- ☞ **Traits:** Divination (Gift of Tongues), Ward Magic
- ☞ **Endurance:** 8
- ☞ **Will:** 10
- ☞ **Damage:** d6 (unarmed)



AARON KAMINSKI

Aaron Kaminski was a detective inspector in the South Yorkshire police. His career changed, at the age of 30, when he investigated a break-in and found a vampire feeding on the homeowners. Aaron fled. He lied in his report and resigned from the police. Aaron did not know about P Division, but even if he had, he would not have joined them.

The former detective came to regard his actions as cowardly. He split up from his wife under the strain of refusing to tell her why he resigned; he was ashamed. He found a job working in private security, but used his old contacts in the police to find out about other mysterious cases, and slowly learned about the Hidden World, studying it.

He learned of the crew, the South Yorkshire Irregulars, of others who knew about the Hidden World and were fighting back. It was like coming home.

☞ **Concept:** Former police detective who found out about the supernatural

☞ **Drive:** Atone for my cowardice

☞ **Skill Cap:** 4

☞ **Focus:** Determined

☞ **Physical Skills:** Awareness 2, Melee Combat 2, Shooting 2

☞ **Mental Skills:** Education 3, Lore 1, Technology 1

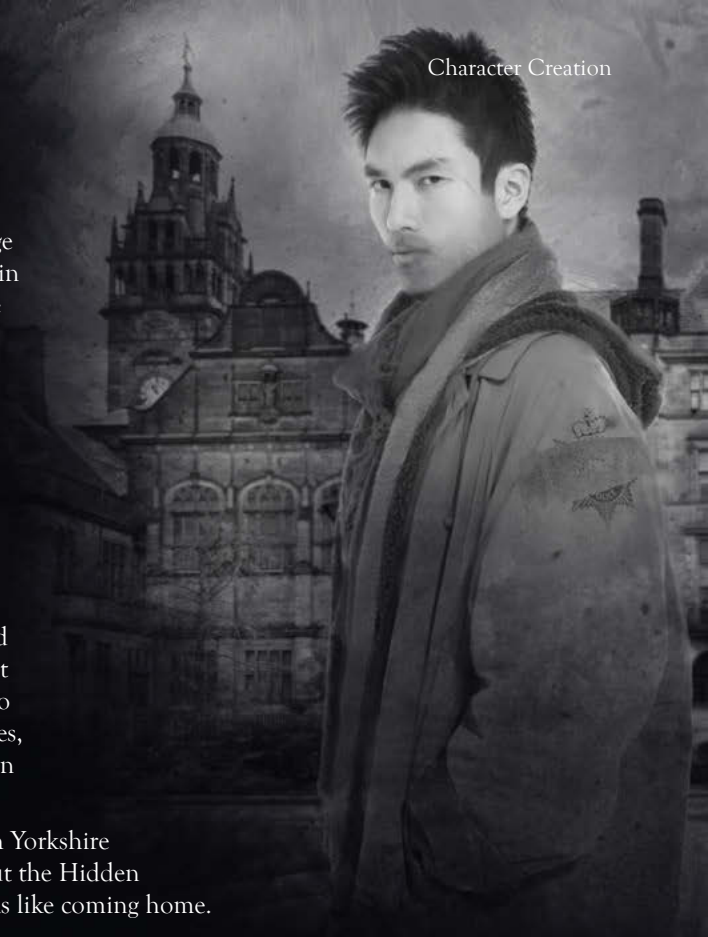
☞ **Social Skills:** Charm 3, Empathy 2, Streetwise 1

☞ **Traits:** Always Prepared, Investigator, Quick Reflexes

☞ **Endurance:** 11

☞ **Will:** 10

☞ **Damage:** d6+1 (police baton), d6+3 (pistol)



CHAPTER 3



34^{re}



Crews and Factions



I lost my “pack”, or rather, they were taken from me. The Crew are my family now. And we don’t have the same goals as my old family. We help people. We’re involved in the world. I think we’re stronger because of that. Maybe a runaway like I was once will run into us and not something nastier.

Stephen Dunstan, Werewolf

THE CREW

The Player Characters in a game of Liminal, regardless of their individual backgrounds, belong to a Crew who works together and who share a goal and place in the Hidden World. A Crew is greater than just the sum of its parts. It has assets which benefit all of its members. To Liminals with nowhere else to go, which is unfortunately a common situation, the Crew is family.

Crews are not big players in the Hidden World. The big players are the factions, as described in [chapter 6](#). Some Crews are almost branches of factions, doing work which a faction can't manage themselves, or that they wish to maintain some distance from.

Crews take on cases—individual mysteries and missions, advancing their own goals and perhaps the work of factions involved. Any case which helps one faction will almost certainly hinder another; Crews can make enemies as well as friends with the cases they take on.

MAJOR FACTIONS

Factions are described in detail on [page 112](#). The major factions are:

The Council of Merlin

The Council of Merlin is an ancient, conservative, and rich group of wizards. They don't necessarily have the influence they once had and pretend to still have, but they are respected and include some powerful individuals. They seek to prevent the “wrong sorts” of wizards from getting out of hand and to gather greater magical power.

The Court of the Queen of Hyde Park

The Queen of Hyde Park is a Fae Queen with a hidden domain in the heart of London. She rules over all of London's Fae, and has reach throughout England. The Queen is a manipulative dealmaker, trading in favours and less substantial services. She uses these deals to increase her influence.

The Court of the Winter King

Whereas the Queen of Hyde Park represents the civilised face of the Fae, making deals and weaving subtle snares, the Winter King's influence is in wild and cold places. He avoids humanity, apart from certain ritual elements of his existence such as the taking of a wife and the midwinter hunts, but he is powerful in his isolation.

The Jaeger Family

The Jaeger family are werewolf nobility, trying to impose their will and exact tribute from individual werewolf gangs. Some have fallen under their sway, but other werewolves do not recognise their authority, and resist their attempts at rule through the imposition of a feudal aristocratic order.

The Mercury Collegium

The Mercury Collegium are thugs, rebels, and thieves who make use of magic. They seldom bother with purely mundane crimes, though sometimes a magical crime will have a mundane component.

The Order of St. Bede

The Order of St. Bede are an organisation dedicated to fighting the supernatural. Both the Anglican and Catholic churches sponsor them. They include some magicians, but regard magic as a sin. They feel that humanity should be protected not just from the Hidden World, but also from knowledge of magic.

P Division

P Division is a specialist division of the UK police which deals with crimes involving magic and creatures from the Hidden World. They are out of the public eye, and mocked by others in the police force who know they exist, but they are not entirely secret.

The Sodality of the Crown

The Sodality of the Crown are a cabal of vampires, and rule over the greater portion of all vampires in the UK. Their reach extends into government, the police, and the military, though P Division believe the police purged their vampiric influence and the Sodality's power is now weakened. Maybe they're correct.



CREW GENERATION

Crew Concept and Goal

Crew generation takes place after character generation, and provides a reason for diverse characters to work together. Every player takes part. The GM has the task of leading the players through Crew creation, and can make suggestions to individual players who need help.

The first step in Crew generation is to come up as a group with a concept, with everyone looking at the PCs present. What do they share, and what means they work together? Some possibilities include:

- ☞ An investigation business. The Crew pool their talents to solve mysteries for clients. These mysteries begin in the ordinary world, but clearly (to the Crew) involve the supernatural. Missing persons cases the police cannot handle come up surprisingly often.
- ☞ A group sharing the same powerful enemy, who have banded together for mutual protection.
- ☞ A deniable branch of a faction such as P Division, who deal with cases that faction cannot touch.

As part of the concept, the group of players and GM should think about where the Crew is based. Even if they wander and have no permanent home, where the Crew begins is important. London and the Outer Hebrides suggest different connections with the world and adventure opportunities, after all.

The next step is to come up with a Crew goal, something the Crew are working towards. The Crew concept may well suggest a goal. A goal can either be a finite task or an ongoing labour. Examples include:

- ☞ The final defeat of a powerful enemy.
- ☞ Protecting ordinary people from supernatural predators.
- ☞ Preserving the boundaries between the Hidden and mundane worlds.

Goals and Drives

There is some potential overlap between a Crew's goal and the drives of individual members of the Crew. One thing to be avoided is a player character's drive being completely at odds with the goal of the Crew; the two should be compatible. After all, if a player character's drive is completely at odds, why would they even be a part of the Crew?

Taking on Cases

A Crew gets involved in a broad range of cases, helping people, solving mysteries and problems. What they do often involves the intersection between the ordinary and Hidden World. So that this is not forced, a Crew needs a reason to take on cases and engage with the world.

For example, a Crew with a powerful enemy needs a reason not to just “turtle” and hide from trouble, but rather to go out, help people, and take on risks.

Sometimes the Crew goal and concept will already provide sufficient reason for a Crew to get involved in cases. If not, they may need an extra push, and perhaps a tweak to goals and concepts. Here are some suggestions.

- ☞ **Sponsor:** The Crew has a sponsor, perhaps someone in the Hidden World, perhaps someone apparently mundane. From time to time they get in touch to give the Crew jobs they must tackle. The final case in a Liminal series may well involve finding out more about a mysterious sponsor. Perhaps the sponsor is not as altruistic as they seem. If the players want a Crew sponsor to be more useful, they may wish to take the Patron asset for the Crew.
- ☞ **It’s a Job:** The Crew advertise discreetly. Those who run into strange trouble, or learn about something curious and Fortean they want experts to investigate, will get in touch. And it’s paid work.
- ☞ **The Faction Game:** Any Crew has relationships with various factions. Factions where the Crew have a positive relationship pass on tips, ask for and give favours, and offer jobs. Factions where the Crew have a negative relationship will make demands. Factions with whom the Crew has a positive relationship, know they can call on them for help in return for later help in return.
- ☞ **Deniable Resource:** The Crew work for one particular faction, in an informal deniable fashion. They have resources and people from different walks of life, and can go where those of that faction cannot or will not go. Should the Crew run into trouble, the faction may be able to do something for them, as long as they are not exposed.
- ☞ **Basic Altruism:** Many cases have a component of altruism, and many Liminals have helping people as part of their Drive. The Crew seeks out and gets involved in cases to help people. It’s that simple.



Crew Assets

The next step is to go around the table, with each player coming up with an asset. Assets provide the Crew with useful resources. The following are some possible assets. With the GM's agreement, a player can invent another asset with a similar scope, though those below are quite open-ended.

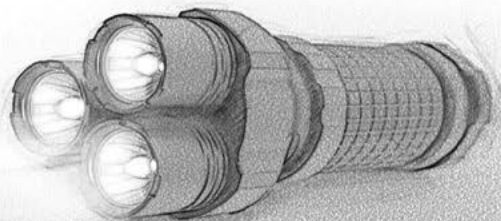
- ☞ **Base of Operations:** The Crew has a stable base. If they choose, everyone who is part of the Crew may live there with a reasonable level of safety and stability. The player who chooses this asset should say where the base is and what it's like in general terms.
- ☞ **Connections:** The Crew has extensive connections in a particular domain, and Crew members can make a Streetwise test to find a connection in a large city, or any other place it seems plausible to the GM. Possible domains for connections include business contacts, criminals, fae courts, government officials, werewolf gangs, and vampire nobles. The Crew can choose this asset more than once for connections to multiple groups.
- ☞ **Equipment:** Members of the Crew may spend up to five times the normal amount on starting equipment. If the Crew develops this asset during play, each member of the Crew gains new equipment at the increased value.
- ☞ **Geomantic Node:** Your Crew has access to a geomantic node ([see page 97](#)), and a geomancer with the Tap Power Trait may use it. Further, all members of the Crew have a permanent +1 bonus to Will from their exposure to this source of magical power.
- ☞ **Hangers-On:** Your crew has a number of mundane associates. They are not your employees or servants, but will generally listen to you and can carry out small favours, though they will not engage in combat unless cornered. The player who chooses this asset should say who the hangers-on are and their relationship to the Crew. If a new player joins the Crew, or a player retires a character to choose a new one, the new character could come from these associates.
- ☞ **Hated Enemy:** Pick a faction. The Crew hates that faction and all it stands for. When working against members of that faction, if any member of the Crew spends Will on a roll, they get a further +1 bonus.

Hated Enemy and Faction Relationships

Quite often a Crew with a Hated Enemy will have a negative relationship with it for obvious reasons. But that is not always the case. The faction may simply not know about the Crew, or the Crew might be deceiving the faction, with cordial relations on the surface.

- ☞ **Hideout:** Your Crew has a hideout or bolt hole which nobody else knows about. The player choosing this asset should describe it and where it is. If the Crew already has a Base of Operations, a player can choose this asset to turn it into a secret base. Otherwise, the Hideout is reasonably comfortable and safe for a few days at a time, but shouldn't be overused.

- ☞ **Informants:** You have a variety of people who pass you information, including gossip concerning big events of the Hidden World, and warnings of when the Crew is in danger from a faction or has made an enemy. Your informants come from many different walks of life, both in the ordinary and the Hidden World.
- ☞ **Laboratory:** The Crew has access to scientific facilities, where any members of the Crew can perform scientific analysis and data gathering according to their skills. If the Crew has a Base of Operations, the facilities could be part of the base.
- ☞ **Medical Facilities:** The Crew has access to hospital treatment, with no questions asked. Medical treatment is free in the UK, so this is not an issue involving money, but injuries clearly coming from violence, especially guns, will draw police investigation without this asset. If the Crew has a Base of Operations and a character skilled in Medicine, the Crew may instead have hospital-level medical facilities as part of the base.
- ☞ **Occult Library:** The Crew has access to an occult library. With a Lore skill test, a Crew member can seek specific information on part of the Hidden World rather than being forced to find a source of information. See [page 202](#) for details on investigation skill tests and why a library is useful. If the crew has a Base of Operations, the library could be part of the base.
- ☞ **Patron:** The Crew has a patron who gives them jobs and feeds them information. They may even help on a case if contacted, though patrons also have their own agenda. The player who chooses the Patron asset should describe who the patron is.
- ☞ **Support:** The Crew has money, perhaps from a bequest or from a cover as a legitimate business. The support gives the PCs enough money to live on without them needing to take on any other work.
- ☞ **Training Opportunity:** The player who chooses this asset picks one of their character's skills. They have trained the other members of the Crew in its use; everyone increases that skill by one level, up to a maximum equal to one less than the training character's skill.
- ☞ **Transport:** The Crew owns a car, van, minibus, landrover, or similar vehicle, of any kind desired which is available to civilians. It is well-insured and can be repaired or replaced if damaged or destroyed. Some Crews might prefer a boat.
- ☞ **Weapons Cache:** The Crew has easy access to weapons such as swords and guns. These weapons are likely to be illegally obtained, and witnesses to their use are likely to bring a serious police investigation. But nonetheless, they still don't need to worry about acquiring weapons.
- ☞ **Workshop:** The Crew has an engineering workshop. They can repair damaged equipment and even make things. For example, if a Crew has a workshop, and learns a particular vampire is vulnerable to ultra-violet light at a certain frequency, it is a simple matter to create a gadget that will produce such light. The same goes for hand weapons made of a specific metal, or shotgun shells filled with a special material.



RELATIONSHIPS AND HOOKS

Factions

For this stage, the GM prepares a list of factions they want to use. Not every major faction has to be in play, and they can introduce lesser factions, either invented or taken from the material in [chapter 6](#). A good number of factions is between the number of players and twice the number of players.

The GM writes “0” next to each faction on their list. Go round the table. Each player (but not the GM) picks two factions from the list, one where their character has a positive relationship, one where they have a negative relationship. Add +1 to the number next to the faction for a positive relationship, and -1 for a negative relationship, but do not go above +3 or -3.

The final number reflects how the factions in play look at the Crew. Positive numbers indicate they look upon them favourably. Negative numbers indicate dislike or hostility. A total of +3 indicates the faction regards the Crew as allies. They will give them jobs and opportunities, and help them in emergencies, but expect help in return. A total of -3, on the other hand, means the faction is an enemy.

Hooks

The final step in Crew creation is for each player to come up with a hook. A hook is something going on in the Crew’s neighborhood which attracts their attention and suggests their involvement in a case. The hook is not necessarily something which involves the factions above; that’s for the GM to decide. The player should not go deeply into what a hook involves, just what is apparent on the surface.

Examples include:

- ☞ Bodies have turned up in a nearby river, completely drained of blood. This suggests vampire activity, of course, but why here and now, and why are they being so subtle? Or is it really something else?
- ☞ A prominent member of the local mundane community went missing on their way home one night. There were no direct witnesses, but people in the vicinity reported mysterious lights. Magic or the Fae? Will the player character Crew be hired to solve the case?
- ☞ A group of thugs have been shaking down small local businesses for protection money, and the police are apparently not acting. Will the Crew get involved? Are those responsible mundane or supernatural? Both bring potential complications.
- ☞ The Crew receives warning that an attack from a group loyal to a hostile faction is on the way. Or maybe it is only an initial foray which alerts them to the bigger coming attack.

Examples of Crews

The South Yorkshire Irregulars

The South Yorkshire Irregulars are more than associates. They're family. Not related by blood, it's true, but by choice. They understand and protect each other in the hostile world. The Crew make their living as a problem-solving agency, dealing with cases where ordinary people and Liminals need help with matters touching on the Hidden World and have nowhere else to turn.

Goal: Help those with lives damaged by the Hidden World

Assets:

- ☞ Common Bond
- ☞ Base of Operations
- ☞ Workshop
- ☞ Equipment

The Edinburgh Inquirers

The Edinburgh Inquirers are an independent institution very loosely affiliated with the Edinburgh University. They're interested in magic, specifically in understanding the scientific laws and principles which govern the Hidden World. Their work is by nature secret. Their number includes magicians as well as scientists. And any unusual case could lead them to investigate.

Goal: Scientific understanding of magic and the Hidden World.

Assets:

- ☞ Base of Operations
- ☞ Laboratory
- ☞ Occult Library
- ☞ Hangers-On



The Norfolk Gentlefolk

The Norfolk Gentlefolk are a long-established criminal Crew. They are not part of the Mercury Collegium, who they regard as enemies even more than they do the law. Those in the Crew all have reasons they've fallen into this way of life, but they keep it up because they're good at it, as much as for any other reason.

Goal: Daring magical heists and cons

Assets:

- ☞ Hide Out
- ☞ Informants
- ☞ Hated Enemy: The Mercury Collegium
- ☞ Equipment

Specialist Crime Directorate 9 (SCD9)

SCD9 are a group affiliated with P Division and taking their cases from that group. There are places P Division cannot go, and things P Division cannot officially get involved with. SCD9 are the solution to this problem. They're not just undercover—they're deniable assets.

Goal: Solving magical crimes which cannot be tackled through the usual channels

Assets:

- ☞ Connections: Police Forces
- ☞ Transport
- ☞ Patron: Superintendent Mark Lloyd, Head of P Division
- ☞ Support





CHAPTER 4





Game Rules



Ordinary police work was full of rules and procedures. Ways to operate efficiently, and ways to guard against abuse by the custodians of the law. They don't always work, but the rules were still good to have. Why am I talking about rules in the past tense? Well, they all go out the bloody window when it comes to the Hidden World. Even P Division are making it up as they go along.

Aaron Kaminsky, former police officer

SKILL TESTS

The Core Mechanic

When your character faces an uncertain situation which tests their abilities, in game terms this is a skill test. Any particular skill test has a Challenge Level.

- ☞ When you make a skill test against a non-player character or another Player Character, they can oppose it with a relevant Skill. The Challenge Level is then their skill level plus 8. We call this an opposed test in the rules.
- ☞ When a skill test is against a situation rather than a character, the GM sets the Challenge Level. For guidance on challenge levels, [see page 199](#). Much of the time, the Challenge Level will be 8; a skilled character will probably succeed.

To resolve a skill test, roll 2d6 and add your skill level along with any bonuses from Traits. If the result equals or exceeds the Challenge Level, the task is successful. If the result falls below the target number, you have failed (but see Using Will, below).

But I Don't Have the Skill

If you must make a skill test where you have no relevant skill, and the test is something anyone could reasonably attempt, simply roll 2d6 without adding any skill level. In other words, you have a skill level of zero. You should also increase the challenge level by two for not having an appropriate skill.

Critical Success

If your roll in a skill test succeeds by 5 or more, you have scored a critical success. You can choose one of the following special effects to go along with the success, though the interpretation of your choice is up to the GM.

- ☞ A companion of yours succeeds in a related skill test without having to roll. This is a good choice when the group of PCs are all dealing with the same hazard.
- ☞ You gain extra information from the skill test. Often this will be because you were gathering information anyway, but you could also find something out incidentally by observing something while performing your main task.
- ☞ You accomplish what you were doing much more quickly than expected. Just how much more quickly depends on the situation and the GM.
- ☞ You look really cool doing the task and impress an NPC bystander or ally.
- ☞ You infuriate and distract an NPC who doesn't like you.
- ☞ You do the task subtly and without attracting attention.

The suggested list of effects for a critical success is different in combat and when doing magic.

The Effect of Failure

When you fail at a skill test, the GM will choose one of four things to happen. Sometimes failure simply stops you in a possible course of action, but sometimes it leads to extra problems, either minor or major.

- ☞ The failure leads to immediate trouble (for example, when gathering information you run into a gang of toughs), but you can try again when the trouble is fixed.
- ☞ You succeed in the task, but take d6 points of damage. This is often the consequence of dealing with physical hazards. You subtract damage from your endurance; for more about damage, [see page 79](#).
- ☞ You succeed, but the task takes much longer than expected or attracts undue attention.
- ☞ You simply fail. Nothing bad happens, but the task is beyond you at the present time. You can't try again until the situation is easier for you or your skills improve.

Rolling Double One

If you roll double one on a skill test, and do not spend Will to raise the result (see below), you gain an additional complication from the failure, but you get to tick an experience box on your character sheet. [See page 85](#) for details.

Assistance

If you help someone else in a task, you also roll a relevant skill test at a challenge level of 8. If you succeed, the person you are helping has a +2 bonus to their test. If you achieve a critical success, your help gives a +4 bonus.

A task can only benefit from one assistant using these rules. When lots of people are working on a task, [see page 78](#).



KEEPING TRACK OF TIME

Scenes

A Liminal game consists of a series of scenes. A scene could be a part of a fight, a party, an investigation, or a debate. The GM should end scenes when they are resolved, and there is no further drama or tension in the scene, and overall scenes should flow organically from one to the other, as decided by the actions of the players and events coming from the GM.

Some game effects, in particular magic, might last for a scene. This means the duration of such an effect is something fluid, but usually at most a few hours; less than an hour is typical. There is generally no need to keep precise track of how long a scene lasts. The duration of a magical effect need not, by the nature of magic, be completely consistent.

Game Sessions and Cases

A game session is the time when the players and GM sit down together and play a game of Liminal. It typically lasts from two to four hours. The amount of time which passes in the fictional world of the characters varies immensely. It might be hours, days, or even weeks if downtime features.

A case is a self-contained plot, taking one or several game sessions. At the end of a case any immediate problems and mysteries are resolved, though there are often long term effects. A game of Liminal might feature a single self-contained case, or it might be a series of cases linked by a story arc. For more details on pacing, sessions, stories, and cases, [see page 195](#).

Downtime

Downtime is the period between game stories, or sometimes within a story if there is a natural break. Downtime lasts for weeks or even months. During downtime, a character heals all damage and recovers any Will spent. They can also continue with their everyday life, if they have one.



Using Will

Boosting Your Results

You can spend Will to improve upon your roll in a test, either to turn a narrowly failed roll into a success or a success into a critical success. If you wish to improve your result after you have rolled the dice, simply spend a number of points of Will to add that many points to your dice roll.

Using Magic

Some Traits and forms of magic require an expenditure of Will to activate. Some magical effects drain Will.

NPCs and Will

Non-player characters have Will scores and Drives. However, the GM cannot spend the Will scores of NPCs to improve rolls or affect yours, though they can spend Will for magical powers and Traits, and to shake off social consequences.

Regaining Will

Once per game session, you can engage your Drive to regain d6 Will. This does not take you above your usual maximum, but if the roll would take you above its usual maximum, or you are already at your maximum and gain no other benefit, tick an experience box on your character sheet.

You can also regain Will by taking a break between work and adventures; for each day of rest and relaxation away from investigating cases, you regain d6 Will.



USING SKILL TESTS

Social Challenges

A social challenge is a test to make another character, whether an NPC or PC, do something or believe something. It works as any other opposed skill test, but the consequences of the result are a little bit different.

If a social challenge against an NPC succeeds, the GM has the choice of either having the result convince the NPC, or giving the NPC a -1 penalty to all actions which contradict the result of the skill test. An NPC who loses in further social challenges has an increased penalty, with the penalty increasing by a further -1 each time they are defeated. An NPC can shake off a penalty at the expense of spending d6 points of Will. Or they could give in. This is up to the GM, and what they think is plausible or dramatic; the penalties are for resistance.

When it comes to a skill test against a PC, they face the same choice: a penalty to their actions, loss of d6 Will to shake off a penalty, or going along with what is suggested.

In the event of a critical success, the usual rules for extra effects apply. Alternatively, if a PC is really pushing it, an NPC who stands up suffers a -2 penalty to actions going against the course of action.

You can even push a character using social skills within a battle (for example, to retreat or surrender), and the usual rules apply, but a penalty only lasts for a single round. Outside of combat, it is up to the GM how long a penalty lasts; usually it ceases at the end of a scene or when the character who inflicted the penalties is no longer present.

Group Tests

For some challenges, every player character present makes a contribution, and success or failure is as an entire group. For such challenges, go round the table, and ask each player which skill they are using—there will potentially be some negotiation as to whether that skill is appropriate and reflects the actions the PC is taking. They then make a test with that skill, at the usual challenge level if the skill is appropriate, or +2 to the challenge level if it makes sense but is not ideal.

To pass a group test, the group needs a number of successes equal to the number of players taking part.

☞ Any player who rolls a successful skill test adds one success to the total.

☞ Any player who rolls a critical success adds two successes to the total.

It is up to the players who goes first and last in a group test. For example, there are arguments for putting the most skilled character both first (to get a success or critical success out of the way), or last (to generate a critical success if other characters have failed, to make up the number).

DAMAGE AND HEALING

Physical Damage

When you take physical damage, you subtract it from your Endurance. Being struck in combat is an example of damage, as is falling, going through a fire, or being poisoned. Damage is rated as one or two dice, perhaps with a flat number as a bonus. If you suffer damage, subtract it from your Endurance.

In combat characters have a damage trait which determines how much damage they can dish out. Magic also has its own rules for damage inflicted. Apart from combat and magic there are two levels of damage:

- ☞ Minor damage is painful and dangerous, but will not kill a healthy or uninjured character. It does d6 points of damage.
- ☞ Major damage has the potential to kill or critically injure someone. It does 2d6 points of damage.
- ☞ Examples of minor damage include a typical fall, a collision in a fairly slow moving vehicle, and exceptionally arduous exertion. Examples of major damage include a fall from a great height, a collision in a fast moving vehicle, and falling victim to a potentially lethal poison.

Non-Lethal Damage

Some damage, such as that from unarmed combat, can be deemed non-lethal. Non-lethal damage does not reduce a character below 0 Endurance, and a character does not need immediate first aid not to suffer more injury.

Outside of combat, you will nearly always have a skill test to defend yourself against suffering damage, whether major or minor. Conversely, a failed skill test in a dangerous situation might do unexpected minor damage if you fail, and it's appropriate to the situation.

Death and Serious Injury

Any damage which leaves your Endurance score as a positive number is superficial, and easily healed (see below). When your Endurance falls below 0, you're critically injured and in big trouble. If you don't receive immediate first aid, you suffer another d6 points of Endurance damage. If your Endurance falls below -10, either because of suffering damage or the results of lack of first aid, you die.

When your Endurance is below zero, you can't easily act, though you may be conscious and able to speak. Any action requires you to spend a point of Will.

Damage and NPCs

The full damage rules are probably too involved to use for Non-Player Characters. Assume any NPC who is reduced to below zero Endurance is dying, and will die unless a healer succeeds in a Medicine skill test to help.

Running out of Will

A character cannot go below zero Will. A character who has zero Will cannot spend Will, whether on improving skill rolls or magic. Some magical effects take place when Will is reduced to zero. If a character who already has zero Will suffers further Will damage from an effect, they are stunned and unable to act for a number of combat rounds equal to the Will damage taken.

Obviously, with no Will, a character cannot soak damage or throw off penalties for resisting social challenges.

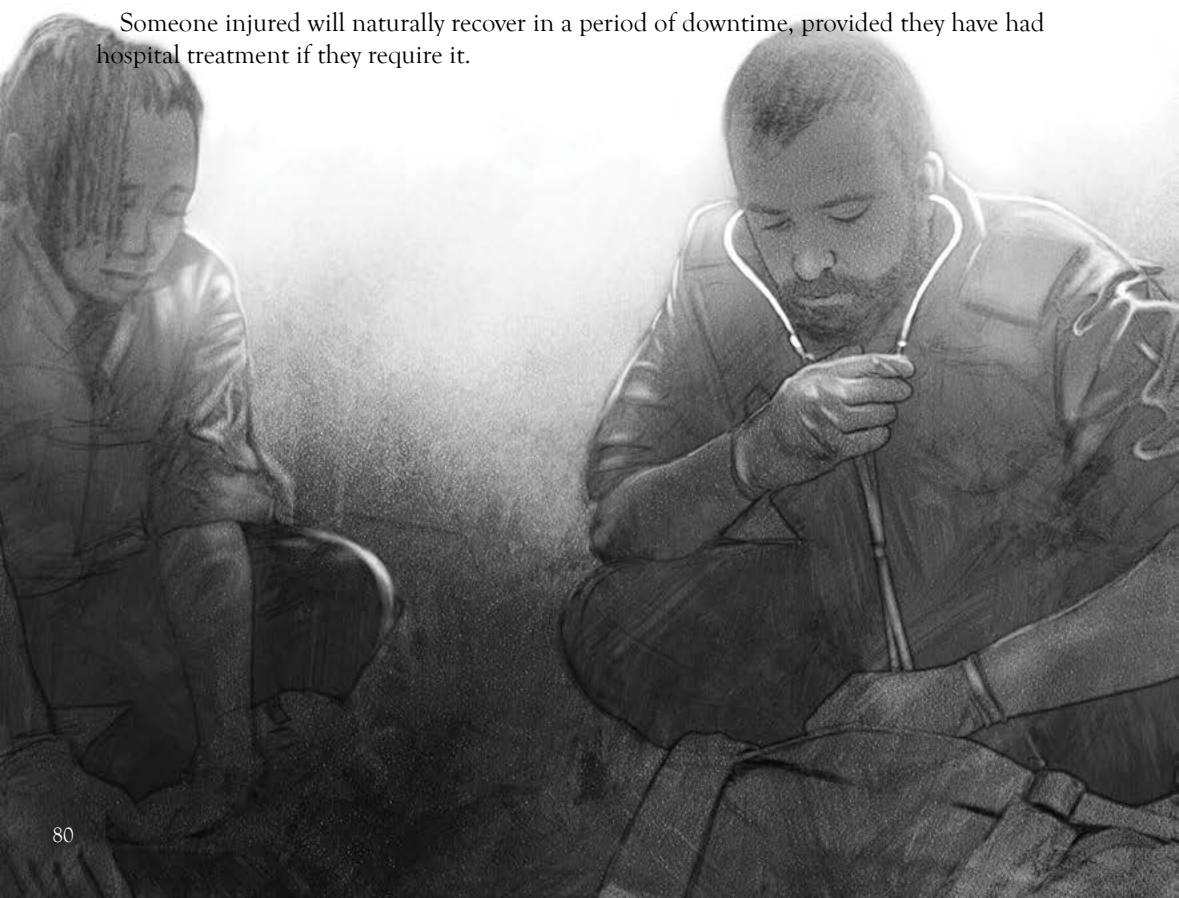
Healing

Applying first aid after a character has suffered damage requires a Medicine skill test at challenge level 8. Add +2 to the challenge level if the character has no safe place to work, or lacks basic medical supplies. A successful skill test has the following effects.

- ☞ A character who has 0 Endurance or below is stabilised. They can be safely moved and will not suffer further damage from existing injuries.
- ☞ Any character recovers d6 Endurance.

A character still at zero Endurance or below after first aid requires hospital treatment and a week of recovery to heal to a state where they have 1 Endurance. Field surgery can also treat a seriously injured character; such treatment takes an hour, and requires a Medicine test at challenge level 10 or higher without adequate facilities.

Someone injured will naturally recover in a period of downtime, provided they have had hospital treatment if they require it.





Combat

Sometimes, we're facing someone or something that can't be reasoned with. A monster, a predator, a danger to everyone. Something that would tear the mundane authorities to shreds if they faced it. Then it comes down to a fight. I'm not going to lie - I relish that.

-Stephen Dunstan, Werewolf

Initiative

At the start of a battle, PCs and any NPC allies roll a special skill test for initiative. This is an Awareness test opposing the enemy with the highest Awareness Skill. A character with no Awareness skill can make a roll as if they have the skill at level 0. For Initiative, there is no need to increase the Challenge Level for a character with no Awareness skill.

The Combat Round

Combat is divided into rounds of a few seconds each. Each round, everyone can do each of the following:

- ☞ Shout out quick commands, taunts, and so on.
- ☞ Draw a weapon, nock an arrow, or load a gun if you have one about your person, and don't already have it in your hand.
- ☞ Move up to 30 paces.
- ☞ Take a single action.

If you succeeded in your initiative test, you act each round before your opponents. If you failed, you act after them.

An action is often an attack, as described below, but there are other possibilities, including:

- ☞ A social skill test to convince an enemy to surrender, or to put them off-balance if they don't.
- ☞ Rapid movement to close range or escape, moving 60 paces instead of 30. If you are already engaged in combat, whether close combat or the target of enemy fire, you need to make an Athletics skill test to manage this.
- ☞ Retrieving a weapon after you have been disarmed. This does not usually need a skill test, but you can make an Athletics test at Challenge Level 12 to grab your weapon quickly enough to be able to take a second action that round.

Movement and Weapon Ranges

When it comes to movement in combat, range can be abstracted.

☞ **Close:** An opponent who is close to you is in range for hand to hand combat.

☞ **Near:** A near opponent is within 30 paces. You can close the distance to a near opponent in a single round (or they to you) as well as taking another action. In near range, thrown weapons are effective.

☞ **Moderate:** An opponent in moderate range is up to 60 paces away. You can close to an opponent to moderate range in a single round if you don't take any action, or if you and your opponent both want to close. Moderate range is the distance for most ranged attacks, including bows and pistols.

☞ **Far:** An opponent who is far away is within sight, but up to 120 paces away. At this range, only weapons capable of accurate longer distance fire, such as rifles, are useful.

ATTACKS AND DAMAGE

There are two types of attack.

- ☞ **Hand to hand attack:** This uses your Melee Skill. It is an opposed roll against your opponent's Melee or Athletics (use whichever is higher).
- ☞ **Ranged attack:** This uses your Shoot skill. It is an opposed roll against your opponent's Athletics.

If you succeed in the skill test to make an attack, you do damage equal to your damage attribute. Subtract damage from your opponent's Endurance.

Firearm does d6+4 damage. A knife or small bludgeon does d6+1 damage, and a bow, machete, or big club does d6+2 damage. A sword or light firearm does d6+3 damage, and a heavy firearm does d6+4 damage. Traits such as Brawny and Supernatural Strength add to damage in hand-to-hand combat.

Critical Success

If you achieve a critical success on an attack roll, you can choose one of the following special effects:

- ☞ You do an extra d6 damage.
- ☞ In each round after this one, you act first in the combat, as if you won the initiative roll.
- ☞ You make yourself the next target of an enemy you name. This can be useful to protect a comrade.
- ☞ You disarm an opponent. A disarmed opponent must either draw a back-up weapon or spend a round retrieving their weapon unless they make a difficulty 12 Athletics test.

A GM can also choose special effects from the above list for NPCs who score a critical success.

Going Defensive and Escaping Combat

If you choose not to attack or take any other action, and simply choose to defend yourself, make an Athletics skill test. On a successful roll, all damage against you is halved (round down) until your next action. On a critical success, choose one of the following:

- ☞ You've found perfect cover. No enemy can attack you this round.
- ☞ You retreat safely from the battlefield.
- ☞ You allow an ally to retreat safely from the battlefield.

Situational Modifiers

If both sides in a combat suffer from the same advantage or disadvantage, there is no need to modify any dice rolls; the modifiers cancel out. But you can apply a situational modifier if one character has an unusual advantage or disadvantage. Advantages or disadvantages carry a +2 bonus or -2 penalty. The following are examples.

- ☞ **Cover:** If you have cover against ranged attacks, you have a +2 bonus to defence.
- ☞ **Aiming for one of a group:** Trying to hit one particular person in a group of people close together has a -2 penalty.
- ☞ **Attacking someone you can't see**, perhaps because it is dark or they are magically invisible, carries a -2 penalty, if the attack is allowed at all.
- ☞ **If you attack someone by surprise**, you have a +2 bonus. The attack also takes place outside the usual combat sequence, before initiative. This applies to snipers and those who sneak into close combat.
- ☞ **If you seek to fire a ranged weapon while in hand to hand range of an enemy**, you have a -2 penalty. If the weapon is larger than a pistol, you can't fire at all.
- ☞ **When attacking in close combat**, if you have superior weaponry (for example, a knife against an unarmed opponent) or position (for example, when you have the high ground), you have a +2 bonus.



Mobs

A mob is a group of people unskilled in combat, but dangerous due to their numbers. If the Player Characters face a mob, divide it into groups of roughly equal size, with one group per Player Character facing them.

Mobs adhere to the following special rules.

- ✧ A group which is part of a mob makes a single attack, at a skill level of 1 per 2 members, rounded up, to a maximum skill level of 3 for a mob with 5 or more people.
- ✧ A mob does just d6 damage, or d6+1 damage if they have weapons. People with more dangerous weapons are individual combatants, following the usual rules, and not part of a mob.
- ✧ Each member of a mob has an Endurance score of 3. If you do more than 3 damage against someone in a mob, the excess damage “bleeds over” to another mob member. It is quite possible for a skilled and heavily armed character to consistently take out multiple members of a mob at once.

Dead or Knocked Out?

Most mob members who are victims of lethal violence are probably dead. If a healer character wants to save mob members after an outbreak of violence, make a Medicine test. The amount the result is above 8 is the number of people the healer is able to save. Multiple healers can save more people, but there is only the opportunity for one test per character.

This rule also works for other situations where a healer is trying to save as many people as possible in an incident with a large number of victims.



ADVANCEMENT AND CONCLUDING CASES

Character Advancement

Player Characters improve over time, learning from their experiences. A PC has five experience boxes and three advancement boxes on their character sheet. At the end of a game session, tick an experience box when:

- ☞ Your character learns something new about the Hidden World.
- ☞ You have advanced your Crew's goal.
- ☞ Your Crew has concluded its current case successfully.
- ☞ You learn something new and important about your Crew or one of its members.

Tick an experience box immediately when:

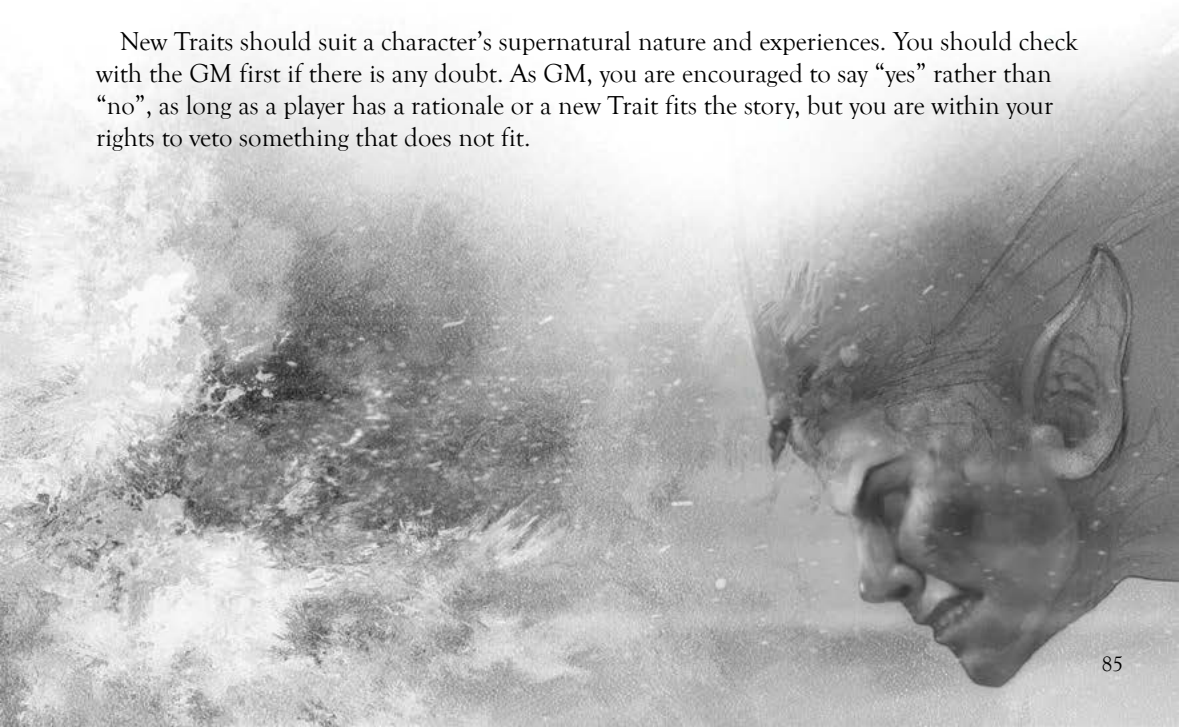
- ☞ You roll two 1s and fail a skill roll and choose not to spend Will to improve the result.
- ☞ You engage a Drive and generate more Will than you can use. You can only do this once per game session.

When all five experience boxes are full, erase the ticks and tick an advancement box. You can raise a single skill of your choice by one, up to a maximum equal to your Skill Cap.

When all three advancement boxes are full, erase the ticks. You can then do one of the following:

- ☞ Increase your Skill Cap by one.
- ☞ Take a new one point Trait.
- ☞ “Bank” a point for a two point Trait later on.
- ☞ Give your Crew a new asset.

New Traits should suit a character's supernatural nature and experiences. You should check with the GM first if there is any doubt. As GM, you are encouraged to say “yes” rather than “no”, as long as a player has a rationale or a new Trait fits the story, but you are within your rights to veto something that does not fit.



Concluding Drives and Goals

Sometimes over the course of a game session, a Player Character may actually have reached a conclusion with their drive, or the Crew may have fulfilled its goal. Both character and Crew may choose to retire or carry on.

- ☞ A player whose character has concluded their drive might wish to retire their character. In this case, the Crew gains a new asset. The player of the character to be retired decides what it is. They then generate a new character to join the Crew.
- ☞ If a player does not wish to retire their character, that is fine. Instead, they can tick two experience boxes and come up with a new drive which keeps them in play.
- ☞ When a Crew fulfils its goal, that may well be a logical point to end a series of cases. After all, the overall story arc of the Crew is resolved!
- ☞ If the group decides to carry on, the Crew needs a new goal. There should be plenty of possibilities suggested by the story so far. Further, to mark such an occasion, every member of the Crew ticks two experience boxes.

Crew and Faction Relationships

At the end of a case, the group should review the list of factions and relationships. Consider the factions. For any which benefited from the outcome of the case, add one to their relationship with the Crew, to a maximum of +3. For any which were damaged by the actions of the Crew, subtract one from the relationship, to a minimum of -3.

New Hooks

Finally, at the end of the case the group should consider any loose ends remaining or further opportunities for investigation. Such a loose end or opportunity becomes another hook for the GM to exploit for further cases.



CHAPTER 5





Magic



There are many magical paths out there. Some magicians focus on one path, others dabble in several. Even the very best magicians only ever master a few. The organisations involved in magic have different views of it and its forms. The Order of St. Bede views magic as a sin, but a necessary evil to fight greater evils. The Order of Merlin are amongst other things theorists and scholars, who see some forms of magic as more worthy of study than others. They taught me, and their views are self-reinforcing; the forms they view as worthy of study are those they study. Oxymorons.

-Naomi Green, Magician

BLESSINGS AND CURSES

If you have the Blessings and Curses Trait, you can curse or bless someone by calling on natural forces or a higher power. Both real spells cast by pagans and true prayers to a divine power use this Trait and work in the same way.

A blessing lasts for a single scene and costs one Will. You must be in the presence of the recipient of this power, meaning they can hear what you say, though they don't have to understand what you are saying. The blessing gives you or another a +2 bonus to a single skill or attribute. The bonus lasts for a scene.

A curse on the other hand is a magical attack you make with your Lore skill. This is an opposed test against the victim's Conviction. It also costs one Will and has the same restriction on range as a blessing. If the attack succeeds, the victim suffers d6+2 damage to Will. If their Will is reduced to zero, a specific curse you name takes effect.

Examples of Curses

- ☞ The victim contracts a deadly illness and dies within the week.
- ☞ The victim falls and breaks a limb.
- ☞ The victim has bad luck; each week they fall victim to a serious and potentially deadly freak occurrence.

Curses are usually permanent effects, but can be removed by a character with the Countermagic trait ([see page 43](#)) or another magician with Blessings and Curses. This involves an opposed Lore test with the character who placed the curse.

During character creation or advancement, you can learn traits to extend what you can do with blessings and curses.

Blessed Weapon (1 point)

A blessed weapon does no extra damage and is no easier to use, but it cuts through magical and supernatural protections and changes as if they don't exist. Any extra Endurance a character or creature gains through supernatural power is ignored.

You can turn a weapon into a blessed weapon for the scene by spending one point of Will.

Hands of the Healer (1 point)

You can heal someone you touch by spending Will. One point of Will spent means you can make a Lore test at challenge level 8 to heal d6 points of Endurance damage. This applies even for characters with currently negative Endurance.

Physical Curses (1 point)

When you throw a curse, you can spend an extra point of Will to inflict d6 damage to Endurance as well as the damage to Will. You can also damage or destroy a mundane physical object with a curse. The object destroyed must be small enough to hold in one hand, but larger objects can be damaged and vehicles disabled.

You must be able to see who or what you curse, and it must be within range of your voice.

Under my Protection (2 points)

You can defend yourself from both physical and magical attacks using your magic. Any attack is opposed by your Conviction skill if it is higher than the skill you would normally use.

You can also place someone else in your presence under your protection. To do this, spend two Will. While under your protection, they defend against any physical or magical attacks using your Conviction skill.

This protection lasts indefinitely until you choose to lift it, even if the one you are protecting is not present. However, you cannot regain the Will you spent placing someone under your protection until you lift it.



DIVINATION

There have been many means of divination in different cultures through history: astrology, card readings, inspecting the entrails of slaughtered animals, gazing at or breathing in smoke from special substances, prophetic dreams, and observing the movements of birds to name but a few. If you have the Divination Trait, you have mastered one of these methods of divination.

In terms of game mechanics, all forms of divination work the same way. You need time to prepare a divination—usually at least an hour. After the preparation, state what you seek to find out about, spend two or more points of Will, and make a Lore test.

Divinations grant information about a person, place or object, and only involve the observable present—not the past, and certainly not the future, whatever stories tell you. Distance is no object. You cannot divine secret thoughts and plans, unless the plans are already in motion and so can be observed. Any information coming from a divination is at the GM's discretion, though a successful roll should at least give information related to what you ask for.

The GM can also pass you information without you asking, perhaps through brief visions or omens. This is entirely at their discretion.

Challenge Levels and Will costs vary according to what you seek.

- ☞ **Will 2, Challenge Level 8:** Such a divination will learn only general information, and the object of the divination cannot be too obscure; what you seek must be known by more than 13 people. There is a reason secret cabals have a maximum size when it comes to their inner circles.
- ☞ **Will 4, Challenge Level 10:** At this level, you can use a divination to learn general information which is secret or obscure, being known by 13 or fewer people. You can also learn specific information which is known by more than 13 people.
- ☞ **Will 6, Challenge Level 12:** At this level, your divination can unearth information which is both obscure and specific.

During character generation or advancement, you can buy traits to do more with divinations.

Foresight (1 point)

Unlike most diviners, you sometimes have visions of the future. The visions and omens the GM might give you can involve the future. Further, you can spend d6 Will and use your usual divination method to get a glimpse of a dark event in your probable immediate future or that of your current location. Of course, knowing it, you may be able to avoid or prevent it. Maybe.

Object Reading (1 point)

You can see into the past of an object you hold, or by extension, a place where you currently stand. Challenge levels and will costs are otherwise the same as for other divinations when it comes to learning information about the past.

Scrying (2 points)

You can do more than answer questions with your divination- you can use divination to see and hear a person, place, or object at a distance. The usual challenge levels apply, and scrying in this way still takes an hour. Someone with the Sense of Eyes geomancer Trait will be able to see you back or block you.



GEOMANCY

A geomancer is mystically attuned to an area or city. To attune, a geomancer must wander the city or landscape, taking note of landmarks and energy flows, and marking certain stones or buildings with a personal sigil. To an outsider, this process of attunement appears to be aimless wandering with occasional acts of pointless graffiti. Attunement takes a complete day.

A geomancer needs the geomancy Trait, and can only attune to one city or area of landscape at a time. An area attuned to is no more than 10km across. When a geomancer is within their attuned area, spending Will brings extra power and extra luck; they draw power from the land as well as their own reserves. Specifically, for each point of Will you spend to boost a Skill, you gain a +2 bonus to the roll rather than a +1 bonus. There is no reduction on Will expenditure for magical powers or other Traits.

NPC Geomancers

Non-Player Characters cannot spend Will to improve skill rolls. Therefore, an NPC geomancer simply has a +1 bonus to all skills when in an attuned area.

Further, a geomancer is aware of the presence and rough location of huge magical effects and entrances to Fae Domains or Ghost Realms in the attuned area. Precisely what counts as a “huge magical effect” is at the GM’s discretion. A geomancer is also aware of major damage to the landscape.

During character creation or advancement, you can learn further traits to do more with geomancy.

Danger Sense (1 point)

You are never surprised in combat when in your attuned area. You always get a warning at the last minute when it comes to ambushes and surprise attacks, and the warning comes in sufficient time for you to shout a warning to any companions. Those launching a surprise attack do not get an extra attack before initiative applies and gain no bonus.

My Enemies are the Land’s Enemies (2 points)

You can spend one Will to strike at someone you can perceive within your attuned area. The attack takes the form of falling stones or masonry, sudden sinkholes, or even in a city, a swerving car. It appears an unfortunate accident. In any case, the strike is a ranged attack using your Lore skill, opposed by the target’s Athletics, and if successful inflicts d6+2 damage.

One with the Land (1 point)

The land protects you from attacks. When faced with an attack which would reduce you to 0 Endurance or Will, the land instead takes the damage for you. This erupts in the form of physical damage to the landscape or city you are attuned to. The damage breaks your attunement; you must reattune to the landscape after using this effect before you can use geomancy again.

Sense of Eyes (1 point)

Within your attuned area, you always know when you are being spied upon, whether by magical or mundane means. You can make an Awareness test to catch a brief glimpse of the one spying on you. You can also spend one point of Will to know where the one spying on you is, or a point of Will to block magical spying.

Tap Power (1 point)

A geomancer who knows how to tap power can, through placement of stones, signs, and sigils, draw magic from the land. When a geomancer does this in an area they have attuned to, they gain d6 Will. This Will increase can bring a geomancer above their usual maximum, but once any Will above the usual maximum is spent, it is gone. Most geomancers spend the energy on permanent or long-term magical effects.

Usually a geomancer can ever only tap power once in an area, but on certain sites known as geomantic nodes, the energy flows mean a suitable building can bring more power, meaning a geomancer can tap into it once per lunar month. Many such energy nodes are marked by neolithic stone circles, though the most famous circles were tapped out long ago. Some are the site of iconic modern buildings. Nearly all such energy nodes in the UK are already claimed by powerful practitioners or factions.

Tap Power and Wards

Tap Power can be a particularly potent ability when combined with magic that requires long-term expenditure of Will, such as Wards. Some of the most powerful magicians in the United Kingdom know these two forms of magic as well as having access to an energy node.

Tapping power is also extremely useful for magicians who desire big and “expensive” magical effects, such as diviners and weathermongers.



GLAMOUR

Glamour is the magic of creating illusions of light and sound. It is the magic of the Fae, though there are some mortal practitioners, usually changelings. To cast glamours, you need the Glamour Trait.

An illusion you create with Glamour lasts for a single scene, and costs from 1 to 3 Will.

- ☞ **1 Will:** A ghostly light illuminating an area. An illusory object, small enough for you to hold in one hand. Sounds as loud as ordinary speech.
- ☞ **2 Will:** An illusion of a being which moves according to your instructions. This being can be no larger than a person. Sounds as loud as shouting.
- ☞ **3 Will:** Light as bright as daylight. A thunderclap. An illusion covering the entire area.

Illusions can hide things, but cannot ordinarily make them invisible (but see below). Illusions vanish when touched or struck, having no solid substance.

If you use an illusion to trick or daunt someone (or several people), or otherwise manipulate their emotions, make an opposed skill test using the Art Skill. A failed roll means something feels “fake” about the illusion and does not affect them. If you know glamour, you can take Illusions as a speciality for the Art Skill.

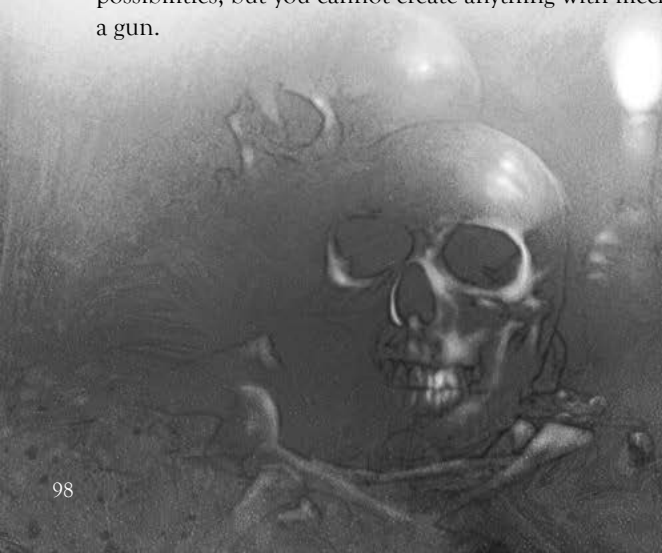
You can spend points from your trait pool to extend what you can do with illusions.

False Face (1 point)

You can weave an illusion about yourself to impersonate a person you have touched in the past. Changing your face (and body) this way costs you one point of Will, and the illusion lasts for a scene. If your disguise is tested, you need to make a relevant opposed social skill test to not be found out.

Persistent Illusion (1 point)

If you spend an extra point of Will on an illusion, it persists when you are no longer in the area, and lasts until the next sunrise or sunset. Further, you can create a solid illusion of an object, which does not vanish to the touch. Money, simple tools, and weapons are possibilities, but you cannot create anything with mechanical sophistication such as a watch or a gun.



Unholy Terror (1 point)

You can spend one Will to overwhelm someone with horrific illusions. This is an opposed test using your Art Skill against the victim's Conviction. If the attack succeeds, you do d6+2 Will damage. If the victim's Will is reduced to zero, they fall unconscious through shock.

Vanishing (1 point)

You can make a person or object vanish from sight. This illusion costs two points of Will, and lasts until someone touches the object, or until a person moves or is touched. Thus one cannot vanish and engage in combat, though magic might be a possibility. Note that someone with The Sight Trait can see through Vanishing.



NECROMANCY

Necromancy is a vulgar art and better suits cranks and mediums than magicians of character. But vulgar though it is, it's extremely dangerous in the wrong hands, both to the magician and anyone else around them. It's a foolish form of magic to attempt to use for crude power, but unfortunately some magicians are most foolish. Such rogues must be kept under control.

I admit though, that necromancy does have its uses, when in the right hands. By which I mean our hands.

-Phineas Morgan, magician of the Council of Merlin.

If you have this Trait, you're a necromancer and can see beyond the veil separating life and death. Normally invisible ghosts are perfectly clear to you, and you can call ghosts and attempt to communicate with them.

When you seek to commune with a ghost, you say the full name of a dead person, spend a point of Will, and make a Lore test at Challenge Level 8. If the shade is available—as will be the case for someone who died in the previous d6 weeks—it comes, invisibly. Only necromancers and those with The Sight Trait can see it. It might communicate only with you or through a telephone or radio.

The ghost will answer three questions truthfully, though it can evade and answer the letter rather than the spirit of a question. It knows only what it knew in life. When the three questions are answered, it is free to act as it wishes. It might return to where it was haunting, disperse, or even remain to taunt you.

Add +2 to the Challenge Level and spend an extra point of Will for each of the following.

- ☞ You don't know the dead person's full name. Add +4 to the Challenge Level and spend two points of Will if you only know a title or persona of the dead being.
- ☞ Nobody still living knew the dead person when they were alive.
- ☞ The dead person is more than d6 weeks old. Add +4 to the Challenge Level and spend two points of Will for a ghost more than a thousand years old.

Note that old ghosts are only available if they died in unusually traumatic circumstances or were killed by magic and were never laid to rest. The GM can veto an old ghost being around to call.

A necromancer can learn further Traits to extend what they can do with their magic.

Exorcism (1 point)

Some ghosts can possess living people when they drain them of Will. Others can inhabit corpses. An exorcist knows a quick ritual to drive the ghost out of a being. This ritual is sufficiently quick to be a single action in combat.

Mechanically, you spend one point of Will to make an opposed Lore test against a ghost's Conviction to force them out of a body, whether living or dead. The exorcism instantly destroys a shambling corpse. Against a revenant or ghost possessing a victim, it is an attack; a successful test inflicts d6+2 points of damage to the spirit's Will. A revenant or possessing ghost is destroyed at zero Will, though it can choose to leave a body before that point.

Repeating the exorcism ritual for several combat rounds is possible, though a new skill test and expenditure of a point of Will is needed each round.

Life Stealing (2 points)

This spell is ancient; some scholars speculate it goes back to a time when the kings of men lived for hundreds of years, as dimly echoed in the bible and Sumerian legend. With a complex chant incorporating many arcane and forgotten words, a necromancer actually drains the life energy from a victim with a successful opposed Lore test made against a victim's Conviction. After the chant, the victim becomes feverish and suffers a -1 penalty to all actions for a week. Over the course of that week, they age by d6 years.

The necromancer, on the other hand, gains extra life. Any disease they suffer from vanishes. They become effectively a month younger. Thus a necromancer who performs this ritual a mere twelve times per year, perhaps spreading the effects over several victims, can effectively cease ageing.

This spell is forbidden by the Council of Merlin; its practice immediately makes one who has performed it an Enemy of Merlin. To the Order of St.Bede, use of this spell makes one no better than a vampire.

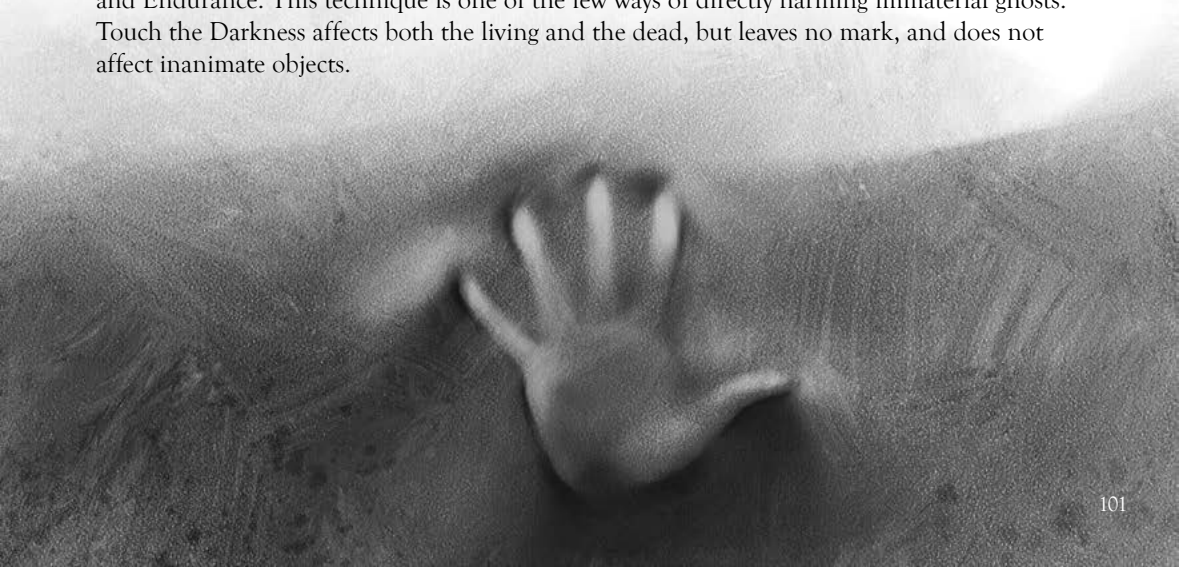
Raising the Dead (2 points)

You can spend one point of Will to raise up a dead body as an undead monster, obedient to your commands. A typical body comes back as a shambling corpse, but a body which has died within the previous 24 hours is a much more powerful revenant. [See page 229](#) for details.

The monster is a permanent creation, unless it is destroyed. However, you cannot recover the Will you spend creating it unless you release the monster from your control, meaning it no longer obeys your commands. However, a necromancer near a geomantic node ([see page 97](#)) is dangerous indeed.

Touch the Darkness (2 points)

At the cost of 2 Will, you expose a being, either living or dead, to necromantic energies. You make an opposed Lore test against their Conviction; if you succeed, they lose d6 Will and Endurance. This technique is one of the few ways of directly harming immaterial ghosts. Touch the Darkness affects both the living and the dead, but leaves no mark, and does not affect inanimate objects.



SHAPECHANGING

There are two types of shapechanger, namely lycanthropes and shapechanging magicians. We deal first with lycanthropes. A lycanthrope can change between a human form and a single animal form. By far the most common lycanthrope is the werewolf, who can become an oversized wolf. Other known, but rare, lycanthropes are selkies, who can take the form of seals, and those who can take the forms of rats or bears. The number of “werebears” in the United Kingdom is probably in single figures, and there are not too many more “wererats”.

To be a lycanthrope, a character must have the Shapechanger Trait. It costs a point of Will to change into an animal, or back to human, and your clothing and belongings do not change in the process. In animal form, a lycanthrope can no longer speak, but can understand human speech and communicate with other shapeshifters in the same form.

A lycanthrope in animal form has a +2 bonus to all skills which benefit from the animal shape. If the animal form is larger than human, as is the case with werewolves, they also gain a +4 bonus to Endurance when in animal form. Further, many werewolves and similar lycanthropes have Traits granting supernatural powers of strength or rage such as Brawny, Frightening, Rage, and Supernatural Strength. Quick Reflexes is another possibility.

A lycanthrope taking on a form smaller or quicker than an ordinary human might take on Traits such as Forgettable, Graceful, Quick Reflexes, and Sneaky. In a small animal form, a lycanthrope has a -4 penalty to Endurance.

Finally, the Traits Animal Sense, Night Sight, and Rapid Healing are appropriate for all lycanthropes. All of these Traits (but not the skill bonus or Endurance modifier) are available in both human and animal forms.

A true shapechanging magician can do more, and has potentially a vast range of powers at their disposal. The Shapechanger Trait costs 2 points, but such a magician can learn further animal shapes at the cost of 1 point each. Most such shapechangers come from an Irish tradition. There are seven traditional forms for such a shapechanger, namely those of the deer, horse, boar, wolf, salmon, eagle, and swan. As well as learning different animal forms, a shapeshifter can take any of the Traits a lycanthrope can learn, whether for large or for small animal forms.



WARD MAGIC

Warding involves creating signs and sigils to craft traps and protections. A ward can be placed on an object or an area. There are broadly speaking two forms of ward. A character with the Wards Trait knows how to create and disable wards. Creating or attempting to disable a ward takes around ten minutes.

An alarm ward alerts its creator when someone not designated when the ward is created enters the area or touches the object. Its creation costs one point of Will. A guardian ward costs two points of Will, and not only alerts its creator, but does $d6+4$ points of damage to anyone who enters the area or touches the object.

Multiple Wards

An object or place can only carry a single ward at a time. Multiple wards will interfere with each-other and discharge, possibly causing damage in the process.

A magician can also create a Ward which affects a class of supernatural beings, such as vampires, the fae, or werewolves.

Wards last until they are triggered. However, the creator of a ward cannot recover the Will spent in creating one until it is triggered. A magician can “key” a ward so that it does not trigger when a character says a particular password, designated when they create the ward.

A ward is clearly visible, and a magician who knows countermagic or another Ward magician can disable it. Disabling a Ward is an opposed Lore test with the ward’s creator. Failure to disable a ward triggers it, doing $d6+4$ damage to the would be saboteur.

Wards as Weapons

A ward magician will sometimes ward a weapon at a cost of 2 points of Will, meaning it does $d6+4$ extra damage for a single attack. A character can only bear one warded weapon at a time; attempting to carry more than one means the wards interfere with each-other, as is the case for multiple wards on the same object.

An ordinary attack roll is needed to use a warded weapon; if the attack misses, the Ward is wasted.

In character creation or advancement, you can learn Traits to do more with wards.

Crude but Effective (1 point)

You can quickly create a Ward, in a dozen or so seconds, at the cost of an extra point of Will. Such a quick Ward requires a Lore test at Challenge Level 8. Within combat, creating a Ward requires a round. However, such a crude ward only lasts until the next sunrise or sunset, unless it is a geas (see below), in which case it lasts indefinitely as usual.

Geas (1 point)

You can enchant a person with a ward so that:

☞ They take damage as usual for a Ward whenever they indulge in a particular prohibited behaviour.

or

☞ They take damage whenever they don't indulge in a particular piece of behaviour either each day or when the opportunity arises.

The damage occurs for each transgression. Creating a Geas costs three points of Will. As usual for Wards, the magician does not regain Will spent for as long as the Geas is in effect.

An unwilling target must be present for the time it takes to create the geas (which is far easier if you have the Crude but Effective Trait), and a Lore test to create it is opposed by their Conviction. The prohibited or mandatory behaviour must be specified when the geas is set. A prohibited behaviour must be relatively restricted and not necessary for survival. For example, someone can be forbidden from eating meat, but not from eating. Conversely, a compulsory behaviour can't be something excessively difficult.

Examples of Geases

☞ Never to harm me or certain other designated individuals

☞ Never to return to a particular building or city

☞ To provide for and look after a particular individual

☞ Never to drink alcohol

☞ Never to cross water

☞ Never to have intimate relations with a partner

Human magicians tend to use a geas for practical ends or in matters of justice; there are plenty of magicians who have used geases as punishment. Fae geases are much more whimsical in tone, but can be just as serious for one afflicted.

Personal Wards (1 point)

You can create a personal ward on your person or object you carry. Such personal wards cost 2 points of Will each and like other Wards are obvious to one with the Sight.

A Personal Ward discharges should anyone hurt or wound you; they suffer d6+4 points of damage, as usual for a Ward. You can also point and say a word of command to discharge a Personal Ward, targetting its energy at an enemy. This requires an opposed Lore test against the enemy's Athletics Skill. If the Lore test succeeds, it does d6+4 points of damage.

You can only have one active personal ward at a time, but can both have a personal ward and carry a warded weapon (see above).

Stone of Truth (1 point)

You enchant an object (traditionally a stone, though anything that can be held in one hand could be used) so that anyone who holds it is incapable of telling a direct lie, though they can still attempt to lie through omission or partial truths. The creation of a stone of truth costs 2 Will, and the magic lasts for a scene, rather than being a long-term enchantment like most wards.

Ward against Evil (1 point)

When you create a ward, you can specify that no undead being or ghost can approach within 10 paces of it, unless they spend d6 Will. A typical ghost will become frustrated in the face of a ward and not return for d6 days, though a ghost who is compelled or driven might still remain.

A variant ward of this type protects against the Fae rather than ghosts and vampires. A geomancer who has attuned to an area ([see page 96](#)) can do much more with this ward, permanently protecting the entire area the geomancer has attuned to at a cost of 4 Will. However, the boundary of the protected area must be marked by posts, stones, or other symbols. Although the beings affected by the boundary cannot touch or move the boundary markers, an ordinary mortal who moves or destroys them can destroy the ward.



WEATHERMONGER

Among the oldest and least subtle forms of natural magic is control over weather and the elements. A character with the Weathermonger Trait can ensure sunshine or rain, and more dramatically can conjure up blizzards in summer and violent storms. You can also summon up fogs and calm the wind.

Mechanically, the art of the weathermonger uses the Lore Skill. A standard change of weather is a task at Challenge Level 8 and costs two points of Will. It affects everything within a mile or so of the character, takes an hour or so to materialise, and lasts for d6 hours. A failed attempt to change the weather either causes undesirable weather or inflicts d6 damage to the magician.

Some weathermonger tasks are harder. Add +2 to the Challenge Level and +2 to the Will cost for each of the following conditions.

- ☞ The new weather comes quickly, within ten minutes or so rather than an hour.
- ☞ The weather is extreme or violent.
- ☞ The weather is unseasonal. Summer snowstorms and winter heatwaves fall into this category.

A weathermonger must be outdoors to exercise their power; there is no “weather” inside a building to affect. Some weathermongers can do more; a weathermonger can spend Trait points during character generation or advancement to do the following.

Call the Lightning (1 point)

When outdoors, when it is clouded, you can spend one Will to make a physical ranged attack using your Lore Skill, calling lightning down from the sky. The attack inflicts 2d6 physical damage.

Command the Four Winds (1 point)

In your vicinity, the winds are at your immediate command. You can conjure up breezes and brief gusts of wind with a simple gesture. The winds surround and protect you; even without deliberately using your magic, you have a +2 bonus to your Athletics Skill for defence against ranged attacks.

You can also spend a point of Will to quickly create a barrier of wind impenetrable to ranged attacks or flight.

Fast Working (1 point)

Your standard time to change the weather is ten minutes rather than an hour. For +2 to your Challenge Level and the cost of an extra point of Will, you can make a weather change take effect in less than a minute or, in combat, two combat rounds.

One with the Elements (1 point)

You're immune to the worst effects of weather. The heat of a desert or the cold of an arctic winter don't affect you unduly. In a rainstorm, you stay almost dry. In a blizzard, you can move normally and don't even leave footprints. You can see through dense fog as if it weren't there. This Trait is in effect at all times and does not cost Will.

The Power of the Land (2 points)

Normally, your powers of weather control are local and affect the weather around you within a mile or so. If you have this Trait, you can dramatically increase your range. For an extra two points of Will, you affect everything within ten miles, for an extra four points within 100 miles, and for an extra six points, you affect all weather within the British Isles or other similarly sized area.

The Will cost to affect the entire country with unseasonal hostile weather will be beyond most mortal magicians. However, a magician who is a geomancer with the Tap Power Trait can build up their Will for a dramatic effect. Moreover, a group of weathermongers who all know this Trait can work together, each devoting Will to the task, though all of them must succeed in Lore skill tests to control the power they unleash.



CHAPTER 6



3.11.18



Supernatural Beings and Factions



It's absurd to call us sexist. Women are allowed to be full members of the Council and have been since the year 2000. The reason we do not have more members of the fairer sex, I suspect, is that most ladies do not wish to join us. They are either inferior magicians or prefer doing their own thing.

As for the wealth requirements, they are merely a way to be sure that a magician who joins us is not driven by a vulgar desire to enrich themselves.

-Augustus Gilbert, official archivist of the Council of Merlin

THE COUNCIL OF MERLIN

The Council of Merlin is an exclusive gentleman's club of rich magicians (and most members are gentlemen rather than ladies) with attitudes to class, wealth, and Britain which go back to at least the 19th century. The organisation is the ancient rump of what was once a very powerful group. The Council of Merlin still has influence with traditionally-minded factions such as the Sodality of the Crown and the Fae courts.

Some individual members of the Council of Merlin have worked with P Division, but the group as a whole does not consider P Division particularly worthy of note. The ancient remit of the Council of Merlin is to keep Britain safe from magicians outside the Council, and to prevent members of the Council from feuding with each other. Some see the role of the Council of Merlin as keeping Britain safe from foreign magicians, and there is an undercurrent of xenophobia in the Council.

HISTORY

The Council of Merlin dates back to just after the end of Roman rule in the province of Britannia. It formed to advise and provide magical aid to rulers, to unify the country, and keep it safe from invasion. Only magicians of noblest character were permitted to be part of this endeavour.

Over its 1,600 year history, the Council's success has been mixed. The Saxons conquered most of England early in the Council's history, but the Council eventually accepted these new rulers and helped them in turn to keep one corner of the country, Wessex, safe from Viking invaders and their magicians. They then helped the descendents of King Alfred the Great unify the country, but the society fell from grace and power. They could not protect England from the Norman Conquest and the machinations of the magicians who would form Ravenstower.

In Norman England, the Council of Merlin introduced a new rule under which they would protect England from foreign magicians, but would not involve themselves in mundane politics and the power games of the nobility. They briefly regained some influence in the time of Queen Elizabeth I, and guarded the coasts from the Spanish Armada landing.

A few magicians assisted during the Napoleonic Wars, but the Council of Merlin stayed aloof from the First World War. During the start of the Second World War, the Council increased its membership to over a hundred magicians and even conscripted magicians to fight the Nazi threat. The Council of Merlin was genuinely effective in fighting German and Italian occultists, even recruiting a few Germans who turned against the Axis powers, but by the end of the war, only nine members of the Council of Merlin remained alive.

After the war, the Council of Merlin achieved its modern form. The official rules of the Council and membership requirements have not changed since 1950, apart from the major revision of allowing women to be members.

ORGANISATION

The Council of Merlin now has just 18 full members. There are a few dozen associate members, academic magicians who have access to facilities and were usually trained in magic by someone in the Council. Most members view the Council's low numbers not as limiting its actions, but a sign of its prestige and exclusivity.

Applying to join the Council of Merlin requires two sponsors within the Council and a single payment of £500,000 to the Council. The application is accepted if nobody within the Council of Merlin declares their opposition to the new member. If there is opposition, the joining fee is not refunded. Some in the Council suggest the joining fee and its non-refundable nature ensures that nobody within the Council is driven by money. Of course, the reality is that it ensures that all full members of the Council of Merlin are extremely rich.

Full membership is as much a matter of prestige within the magical community as it is of practical benefit, though some see the role as supporting their fellow magicians in the UK.

Rules of the Council

Members of the Council of Merlin agree to abide by certain rules, derived from rules in the earliest days of the society.

- ⌘ Every member of the Council has unquestioned access to the library, properties, and magical resources of the Council of Merlin, but these are all to be kept away from one who does not belong to the Council. An associate member has access with the permission of a full member, on a case-by-case basis.
- ⌘ A member of the Council agrees that any dispute with another member of the Council is to be settled either by the Council authorities or by a sanctioned duel.
- ⌘ A member of the Council may only take on apprentices who are loyal to the United Kingdom and of good moral character. On completing apprenticeship, by their master's reckoning, a magician becomes an associate member of the Council.
- ⌘ A member of the Council, whether full or associate, must take no actions which endanger the United Kingdom or the Council.
- ⌘ A member of the Council, whether full or associate, agrees to abide by the oaths with other magical factions made by the Council in the past.
- ⌘ A full member of the Council agrees to join with other members of the Council to track down and capture or kill a magician the Council names as an Enemy of Merlin.

One who breaks these rules will be expelled from the Council or, in extreme cases, be deemed an Enemy of Merlin.

All members of the Council of Merlin can access any records, libraries of arcane lore, and borrow magical items within the library. The Council's main base is in Winchester, but it has a small secret College in Oxford and club houses in Belfast, Glasgow, and London. These club houses provide accommodation for visiting members of the Council and some magical resources.

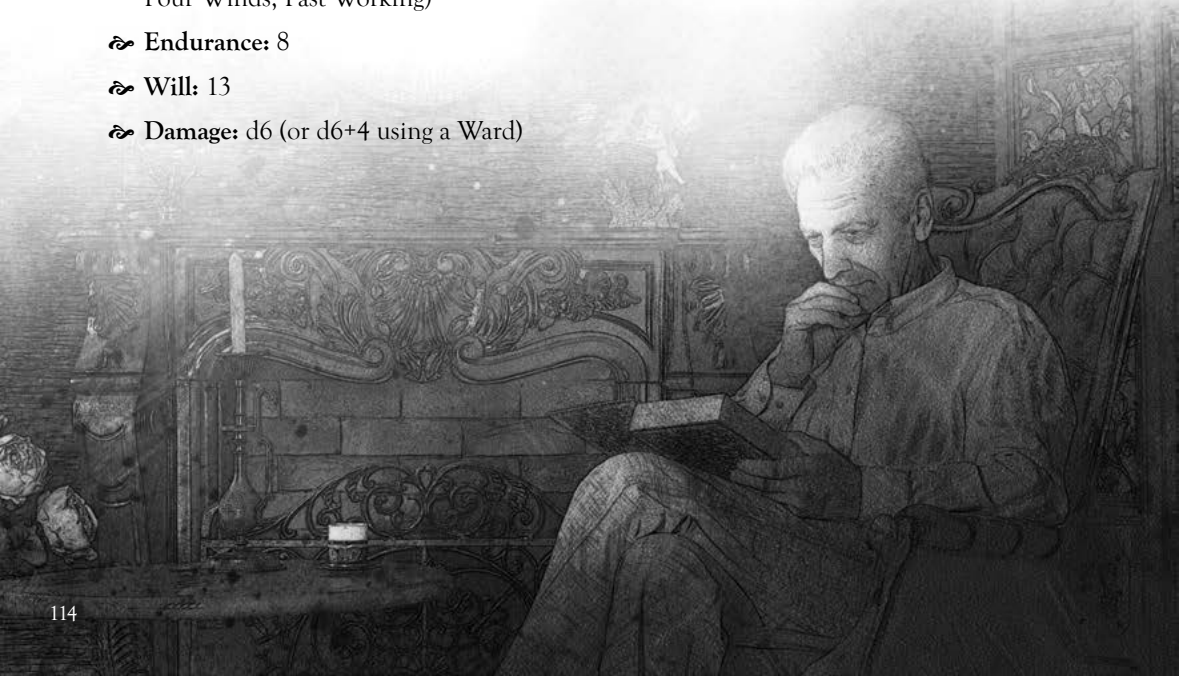
Six members of the Council of Merlin make up the Inner Circle. A new Inner Circle member is selected by unanimous agreement of magicians already within the Inner Circle. Inner Circle members preside over duels and disputes between magicians in the Council.

A majority vote of Inner Circle members can make or break formal alliances made by the Council (see individuals expelled from the Council) and name a magician an Enemy of Merlin. Unanimous agreement by the Inner Circle is needed to change any of the formal rules of the Council of Merlin.

Phineas Morgan

Phineas Morgan is the heavy hitter of the Council of Merlin, dealing with supernatural threats to humanity, including rogue magicians and ghosts. He is a pragmatist and a loner with no distraction from his studies of dangerous beings after inheriting "sufficient" wealth from his family in Ireland. Despite Morgan's manner, some of the younger members of the Council find his work glamorous, perhaps because of the flashy nature of his magic, and Morgan's attempts to disabuse them of that notion only encourages them further. So far, Phineas Morgan has taken no apprentices.

- ☞ **Drive:** The elimination of supernatural threats
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Awareness 4, Melee Combat 4
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Education 3, Lore 4 (Specialisation: Ghosts), Science 3
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 5 (Specialisation: Resist Fear), High Society 2, Rhetoric 2
- ☞ **Traits:** Countermagic, Rich, Necromancy (Exorcisim), Ward Magic (Crude but Effective, Personal Wards, Ward Against Evil), Weathermonger (Call the Lightning, Command the Four Winds, Fast Working)
- ☞ **Endurance:** 8
- ☞ **Will:** 13
- ☞ **Damage:** d6 (or d6+4 using a Ward)



Augustus Gilbert

Augustus Gilbert is an old man in charge of the Council of Merlin's finances and records. Some within the Council whisper that he is more of a bureaucrat than a wizard. Augustus takes the lead in the Council of Merlin's investments and business dealings, and he is certainly the richest member of the group. He is also the most conservative of the senior wizards and consistently blocks new members he deems too radical or otherwise unsuitable on the basis of their background. He is particularly snooty to those he deems "self-made men" from the working class and has only recently come round to the idea of women in the Council.

- ☞ **Drive:** The smooth running of the Council of Merlin
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Awareness 2
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Business 5, Education 5, Lore 4, Technology 2
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 3, High Society 5
- ☞ **Traits:** Big Business, Countermagic, Rich, Geomancy (Sense of Eyes, Tap Power), Ward Magic (Geas, Stone of Truth)
- ☞ **Endurance:** 8
- ☞ **Will:** 11 (more with Tap Power)
- ☞ **Damage:** d6



Professor Clementine Walters

Clementine Walters was the first woman to have become a full member of the council, having joined it in the year 2000. She is in charge of the Belfast clubhouse and the geomantic node in the Titanic museum. As well as being a magician, Professor Walters is an academic who teaches history at Queen's University Belfast. She spends sabbaticals at Dee College in Oxford to pursue research in magic theory. She has a dry sense of humour and does not, it seems to her colleagues, treat the Council of Merlin with complete seriousness, but rather as a means to an end.

☞ **Drive:** Scholarly understanding of magic and the Hidden World

☞ **Physical Skills:** Awareness 4

☞ **Mental Skills:** Education 5 (Specialisation: History), Lore 5 (Specialisation: Magic Theory), Science 3, Technology 4

☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 4, High Society 2, Rhetoric 5

☞ **Traits:** Bookworm, Countermagic, Rich, Divination (Gift of Tongues, Object Reading, Scrying), Geomancy (My Enemies are the Land's Enemies, Tap Power)

☞ **Endurance:** 8

☞ **Will:** 12 (more with Tap Power)

☞ **Damage:** d6



THE FAE

Within a Fae Domain, the laws of nature are different. Time flows differently. The seasons are different to those on Earth, and the time you spend there manifests differently. When you return to the mortal world after spending time in a Fae Domain, you could be back at almost the same moment you left, or months, even years, even decades could have passed.

If you must visit a Fae Domain, there are rules. Don't eat or drink anything there; it causes you to become less anchored in time, though it is not the only thing. To a Fae, breaches in courtesy can merit severe punishment. Accept no gift or favour from the Fae unless you have given a gift or favour. Remember that gifts don't have to be material things. You can give or trade away years of your life, your eyesight, or even a disease; some things you can give away you might want to be rid of.

-Detective Inspector Kira Singh, Magician in P Division, and resident expert on the Fae.

The Fae have always been in Britain and Ireland—to hear them tell it, before there were humans here. They are ageless beings of paradoxical attitudes, capricious yet bound by oaths and their own rules. They mimic human society, but are consistently one or two hundred years out of date. In the present day, most Fae courts have a surface resemblance to formal Victorian parties, at least as far as styles of dress and manners are concerned.

Traditionally, the Fae are beings of the wilderness, far from human habitation or any sign of human civilisation. In the 21st century UK, there is little true wilderness left in most of the country, and some Fae have adapted to a more urban lifestyle. Fae are divided into a number of independent courts. Some Fae of a court come and go in the mortal world, but each court has a domain, where most of its members dwell. These Fae Domains are not fully of this world.

Each Fae court is hierarchical and ruled by an immortal noble lord or lady. The character of the noble reflects the character of the court and the Fae within it. Fae of low ranks are not completely free-willed beings, though where free will ends and begins and lesser Fae become extensions of their lords, is hard for mortals to say. In some courts, the ruling lord has advisors and agents who can act independently. These independent Fae might be loyal to the lord, or scheming rivals, depending on the character of the court.

Getting into a Fae Domain, which is nearly always necessary in order to speak with the noble ruler, can be challenging. A domain has one or several entrances—areas one can simply walk through and find oneself in the domain. But entrances are cloaked with glamour and can only be found deliberately by one with the Sight, a relevant divination, or who is conducted by one of the Fae native to that domain.

Just beyond each entrance is a guardian. A guardian might be a vicious Fae beast who must be driven off, but sometimes a more intelligent custodian will set a particular challenge a visitor must pass. One conducted here by a member of the court can avoid having to take part in a challenge. The difficulties of challenges vary considerably. The Fae ruler has some control over the sort of challenges a visitor will face and can vary the difficulty of a challenge when expecting someone she might wish to see.

In the case of a group of visitors, each visitor will face a challenge. If the challenge is simply a violent guardian, there is one guardian for each visitor or a single exceptionally dangerous beast. Numbers grant no advantage when visiting a Fae Domain.

The Queen of Hyde Park

In Hyde Park, London, under the bridge over the Serpentine Lake, is the gateway to the realm of the Queen of Hyde Park. The Queen's realm is an endless landscape of parks, lakes, and pavilions where it is always summer. The Queen herself sits on a high seat in the tallest pavillion, attended by her court. The Queen and her court are dressed in garish coloured clothes which otherwise resemble formal Victorian garments. The Queen and the ladies of the court are unimpeded by the apparently impractical clothes.

Theoretically, the Queen is the ruler of all Fae in London, though some challenge this claim. She feels a responsibility to "her" city. The Queen presents the aspect of a benevolent ruler and seems calm and measured, but she is as dangerously arbitrary as any Fae ruler. Breaches of etiquette will lead to ejection from her realm, and repeated breaches are likely to be deadly. The Queen cannot abide bores.

The Queen is naturally manipulative. She is constantly making deals with other Fae and even mortals and trading such favours; her aim is to have ever increasing numbers individuals owing her increasingly potent favours. Mortals in the know will never accept anything from the Queen in return for an unspecified future favour.

Unsurprisingly, the Queen has enemies. About 1,500 years ago, the Queen's mother, Nimue, was killed by Fae serving the Winter King who stole the sword Excalibur. The Queen of Hyde Park still seeks to recover it from the Winter King's stronghold in the Scottish highlands.



The Winter King

The Winter King, with a domain somewhere in the Scottish highlands, is an old-fashioned Fae. He and the giants who serve him have not much changed since the time before the Romans came to the British Isles, though now only Fae who can pass as human go out into the mortal world.

Exactly where one reaches the Winter King's domain varies from month to month. Indeed, the way is not always even in Scotland, and has in the past been as far south as the Lake District in England or Snowdonia in Wales. The domain is a land of perpetual winter and deep snow, with the King's castle of ice at its heart.

The Winter King's Fae, even those of lesser stature than the giants, do not like humanity, except to hunt them in the wilderness, though they are only permitted to hunt on midwinter's night where the snow lies. The Winter King does not so much dislike humanity as dislike human civilisation, and he sees such a cull as necessary to keep their cities and roads from being too close to the wild places he is most attached to on the Earth.

Each year, the Fae serving the Winter King go out into the world to bring a mortal woman back to the Winter King to be his wife. There are rules to finding the wife; the Fae seeking her cannot directly lie or use force, though they can mislead and misdirect. In the realm of the Winter King, he has the power to make bargains and grant favours which exceed material possibilities, and to some becoming the King's wife might be worth the cost.

A wife of the Winter King may do as she pleases within his domain provided she serves at ceremonial functions, and obeys the many arcane rules. The King's wife may not open certain doors, can only take certain routes at certain times, and must eat food in a certain order, for example. The Fae of the domain are not out to trick her, but do not understand how the wife does not instinctively know the rules, as they do.

When the Winter King's wife breaks a rule—and it is a matter of when rather than if—the King reluctantly freezes her and places her in the Room of Statues within the castle. Within the Room of Statues are over two thousand women, in perfect suspended animation. Perhaps there is a magical ritual which could revive them.



River Spirits

Father Thames, the spirit of the river, was once the most powerful Fae lord in the country, not just receiving the respect of the Fae, but actual worship, as a river god, by mortal devotees. Sixty years ago, he was dead, his cult no more, and the River Thames similarly all but lifeless with pollution. Which was cause and which effect is still debated in the Hidden World.

The river now lives again, and there are now two rival Fae nobles who claim to be gods of the river, Isis and Temese. Isis deals in dreams and memory, and dwells in Oxford. She is a being of mystery and magic. Her rival, Temese, presents himself as a brash young businessman. Temese has no permanent realm, but rather travels up and down the river, accompanied by various lackeys, both mortal and Fae.

Mother Severn is the most powerful and ancient of the British river spirits, and she usually appears as an old woman. She has the title Mother of Monsters. In times past, Mother Severn received human sacrifices, drowned in the river, and gave favours in return, often in the form of a Fae monster—one of her children—sent to destroy an enemy of one who sacrifices in her name. Today, Mother Severn no longer has mortal worshippers, but her worship was always a matter of convenience rather than reverence, and the old rituals to invoke her in return for a victim still work.



GHOSTS

I once knew a necromancer who ate ghosts, absorbing their essence to grant him extra years of life. He was over a hundred years old and looked younger than me. I tell people when I feel like aggrandising myself that I beat him in a magical duel, but that's not quite the truth; it was more like an execution.

He came back to haunt me of course. And getting rid of a haunting is bloody difficult. But the ghosts he'd eaten freed themselves when he died, and it was easy enough to persuade them to tear his spirit to shreds.

-Phineas Morgan, Magician of the Council of Merlin

Ghosts have been around for as long as there have been people. They are not the souls of the deceased, but rather echoes, knowing some of what someone knew when they were alive, keeping some of their personality and habits. They might closely resemble the living person or be little more than a travesty. As a ghost gets older, if it does not disperse, it grows further and further from the living person it echoes, becoming more and more consumed by undead obsessions.

Any death results in a ghost, but unless the death is unusual or traumatic, or if magic was involved, the ghost fades into non-existence over a period of a few weeks. Practitioners of necromancy and some forms of divination can channel ghosts. A typical ghost can speak, including on telephones, radios and television sets, and create small breezes, but has no substance. An ordinary ghost can only be seen in ordinary circumstances by necromancers or one with the Sight.

A ghost may well haunt where it once lived, its place of death, or someone it blames for its death. Ghosts which last longer than a few weeks become much more dangerous. Such a ghost sometimes accumulates dust and detritus to form a material body, capable of interacting with the physical world and hurting others. Destruction of a ghost's body does not destroy it, though forming a new body takes time. Another possibility is that a ghost becomes a duppy—a purely malicious spirit. There are other, rarer, ghostly beings of mysterious origins. The rarest of these, almost unique, is the shadow dragon or nikor.

Getting rid of a ghost is hard. Most magic doesn't work on them. Sometimes it's possible to persuade a ghost that it's dead and should depart, or to learn its unfinished business—which usually seems to be some form of revenge—and accomplish it, sending the ghost on its way. The latter is not always desirable; ghosts are not all wronged victims out for justice, and ghostly vengeance can be out of proportion. Revenge is not always just.

An immaterial ghost can also possess a newly dead victim. These revenants are immensely strong, feel no pain, and are quite mad. Revenants are often out for vengeance, either on who killed them or something adjacent to that. Such vengeance takes the form of death and violence.

Unlike ordinary ghosts, revenants are bound to their bodies. A few revenants actually inhabit their own deceased bodies. These sad few often seek something more subtle than vengeance. Some such revenants do not even realise they are dead. A revenant body is cold, and does not breathe, heal, or feel pain, but neither does it decompose.

Ghost Realms

If a ghost is an echo of a person when they were alive, a Ghost Realm is an echo of a place long gone. Vanished streets and buildings can still exist as Ghost Realms. Ruins appear as they were in their prime. Unlike Fae realms, getting to a Ghost Realm is easy; one just has to be in the right place at a particular time- and Ghost Realms open according to a pattern, perhaps for an hour every night, perhaps for a night every month, year, or several years. The Council of Merlin has extensive records on Ghost Realms, and active magicians such as Phineas Morgan are still working to extend their research catalogue.

Within a Ghost Realm, all ghosts are both visible and material. One can end a ghost by destroying its material form within a Ghost Realm. Of course, material ghosts can also directly harm mortal beings in turn. The Ghost Realm itself is not sentient, but it does swallow people up and is reluctant to let them go. One who stays too long in a Ghost Realm fades and becomes a ghost themselves, trapped there forever. Worse, a few Ghost Realms, such as the realm of the dragon in Portmeirion, are ruled by a single powerful and often malevolent spirit, and all ghosts there answer to it. But most are blind hazards, almost natural phenomena.

Escaping a Ghost Realm is hard. Sometimes the ghosts of the realm will work to prevent escape. But within a realm, a single opening, such as a doorway or window or gap between a ladder and a wall, leads back to the real world, to freedom.

THE MERCURY COLLEGIUM

Don't get me started on the Mercury Collegium. They're swindlers and thieves. Yes, they have a little magic, but that makes them worse, not better.

Phineas Morgan, Magician of the Council of Merlin

We're not academic wizards. We're not rich white men with university degrees like the Council of Merlin. Gutter mages, they call us. But if you want to know the word on the street, or just need a job done...well, then we should talk.

Abigail Nenge, self-proclaimed Gutter Mage and affiliate of the Mercury Collegium

The Most Noble and Distinguished Mercury Collegium, to give the faction its full official name, is more than one thing. It's a loose network and support group for its members, including magicians, ordinary mortals who know the scene, and supernatural creatures of all types. And it's a criminal organisation, dealing with forbidden magic and stolen magical artefacts. Their crimes both use magic and are targeted against magic.

In general, the Mercury Collegium does not get on well with other factions, though they do enjoy selling the secrets of one Hidden World faction to another. P Division want to arrest many of them, and the Order of St.Bede would gleefully eradicate some members of the Collegium. The Sodality of the Crown wants to control them, and the Council of Merlin look down their aristocratic noses at them. They get on best with some Fae Courts and werewolves who oppose the Jaeger family.

It's best not to think of the Mercury Collegium as righteous rebels, though there is an element of that in their thinking. They can be brutal and oppressive, and although they speak out against control, they seek to control magical crime and exploit their junior members. The Collegium is a criminal syndicate who sometimes has good press.



History

The Mercury Collegium sometimes claims to go back to ancient times and to have been founded in ancient Rome in the time of the republic, giving them great antiquity, which exceeds that of the Council of Merlin. Another history found in Norwich dates the organisation back to Boudicea's rebellion against the Romans. Yet more stories relate them to the Hellfire Clubs of 18th century Britain and Ireland or to pagans in Anglo-Saxon Britain who never accepted Christianity. All of these histories are fabrications.

The truth of the matter is that the Mercury Collegium is old, going back at least to Tudor times, when the organisation provided a home for Catholic rebels who knew about the Hidden World. Those involved in the Gunpowder plot belonged to the Mercury Collegium. And the Mercury Collegium claims to have been key to the popular support for the Glorious Revolution when William of Orange came to England.

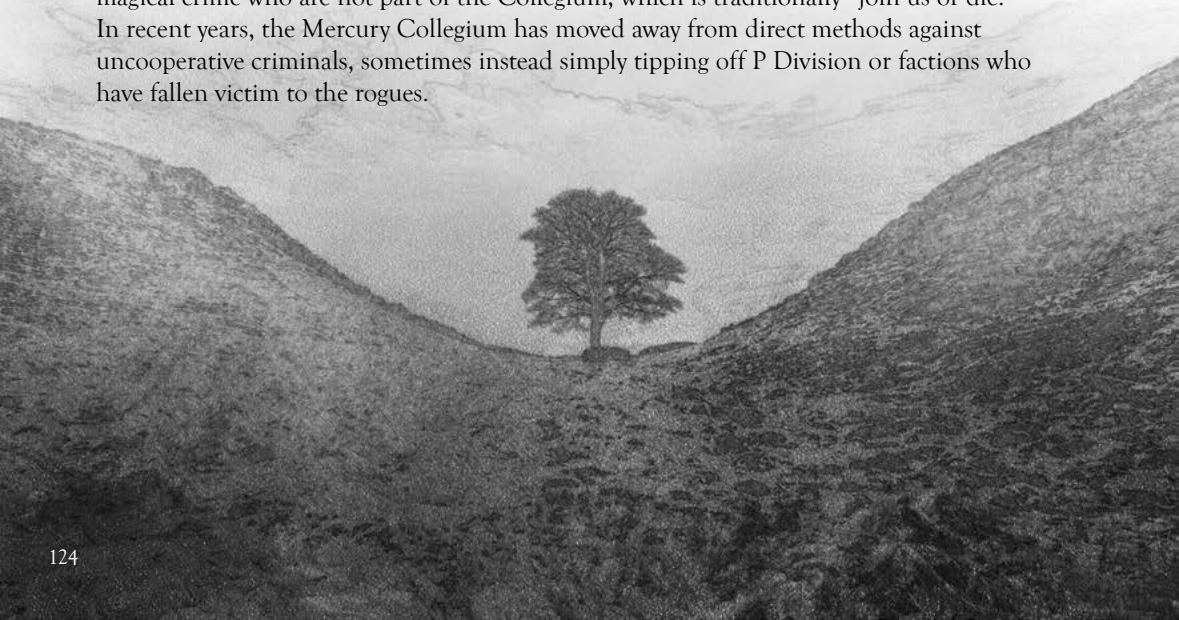
In 19th century England, some of the more unusual street gangs were affiliated to the Mercury Collegium, and this trend continued with some of the crime lords of the 20th century, especially those involved in gambling scams. They were never able to adapt to the big financial crimes which have happened more recently, staying poor and diverse.

Now, in the 21st century, the Mercury Collegium does not know what it wants to be, and whether they are heroes or villains. Do they help the poor and dispossessed, giving them a place to be, or do they simply exploit them? The answer is a measure of both.

Organisation

Members of the Mercury Collegium are sponsored by the organisation in their crimes. The crimes either use magic in illegal activities or are crimes of magic. Examples include thefts of artefacts and selling magical services involving everything from geases to magical assassinations.

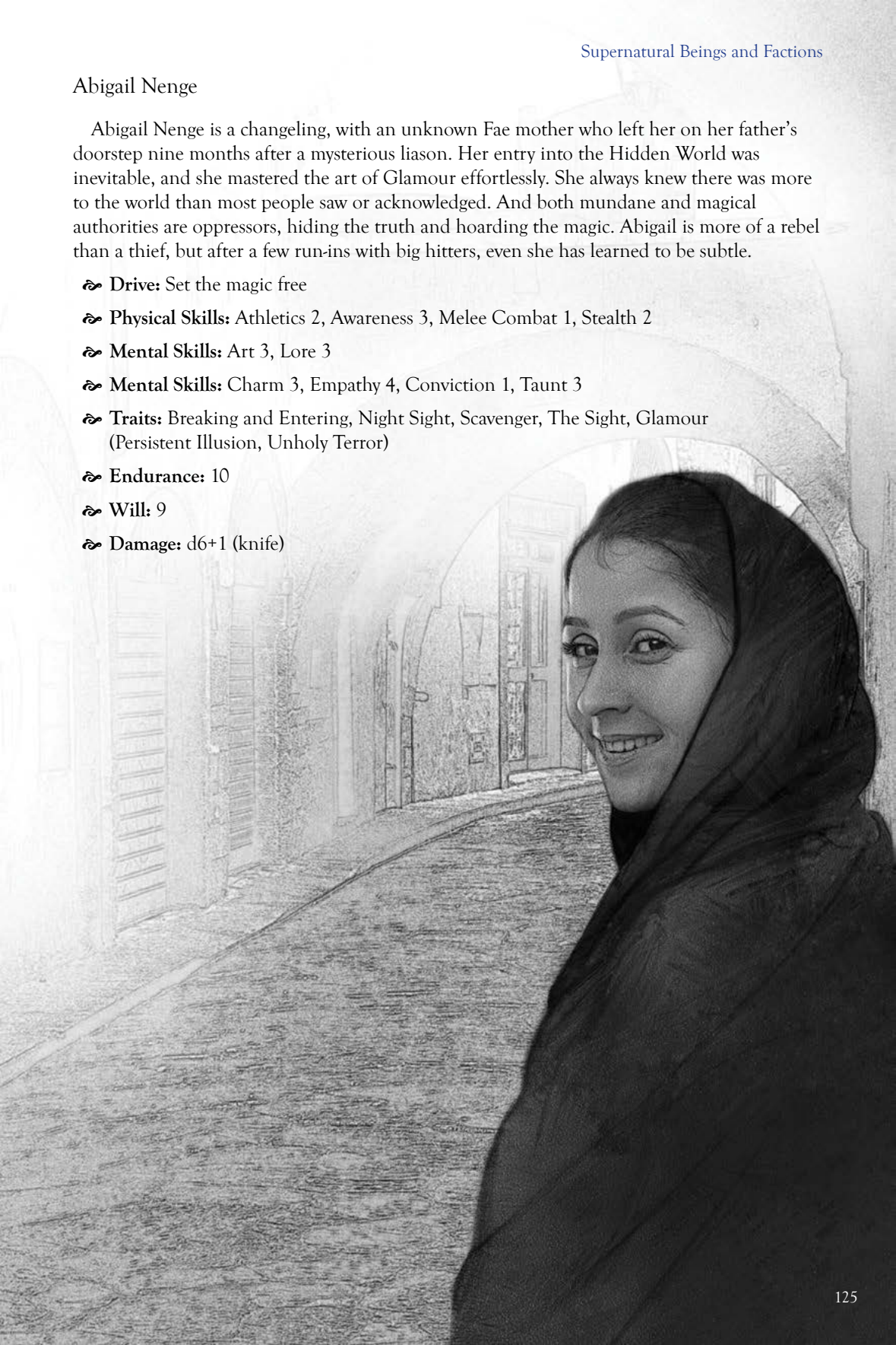
In every city where the Mercury Collegium operates, there is a Guildmaster. The Guildmaster takes a tithe of all earnings members of the Collegium earn through crime. The Guildmaster also directly employs a number of enforcers to make sure ordinary members pay up, and to deliver an edict to any individual operators or Crews involved in magical crime who are not part of the Collegium, which is traditionally "join us or die." In recent years, the Mercury Collegium has moved away from direct methods against uncooperative criminals, sometimes instead simply tipping off P Division or factions who have fallen victim to the rogues.



Abigail Nenge

Abigail Nenge is a changeling, with an unknown Fae mother who left her on her father's doorstep nine months after a mysterious liason. Her entry into the Hidden World was inevitable, and she mastered the art of Glamour effortlessly. She always knew there was more to the world than most people saw or acknowledged. And both mundane and magical authorities are oppressors, hiding the truth and hoarding the magic. Abigail is more of a rebel than a thief, but after a few run-ins with big hitters, even she has learned to be subtle.

- ☞ **Drive:** Set the magic free
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Melee Combat 1, Stealth 2
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Art 3, Lore 3
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Charm 3, Empathy 4, Conviction 1, Taunt 3
- ☞ **Traits:** Breaking and Entering, Night Sight, Scavenger, The Sight, Glamour (Persistent Illusion, Unholy Terror)
- ☞ **Endurance:** 10
- ☞ **Will:** 9
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+1 (knife)



Grant “Tealeaf” Warne

Tealeaf is a grey-haired man with a reassuring jocular manner and a literally forgettable face. He always goes by his nickname, and those who don’t know his reputation assume he is a London-based thief. But in fact, Grant Warne is the deadliest assassin available for hire in the Hidden World and specialises in magical targets. He belongs to the Mercury Collegium and will not act against them—he often works for them, and those who need his services contact him through the Collegium.

Nobody knows what motivates him. Tealeaf is not even certain himself, and some say he sold his soul to the Fae. If so, he doesn’t feel its loss.

- ☞ **Drive:** Kill challenging targets to fill the emptiness and underlying boredom
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Awareness 3, Melee Combat 5, Stealth 4
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Healing 1, Lore 2
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Charm 4
- ☞ **Traits:** **Artefact:** The Soul Knife (Damage +3, applies to both Will and Endurance), Breaking and Entering, Forgettable, Quick Reflexes, Rich, Sneaky
- ☞ **Endurance:** 12
- ☞ **Will:** 8
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+3 (the soul knife, see above)



THE ORDER OF ST. BEDE

The creatures of the Hidden World present a great danger to humanity. Some of these creatures are overt predators, but those who seem fairer, though not evil, still present temptation. Our role is to keep humanity safe from both predators and temptation. Secrecy is a weapon here.

-Reverend Michael Gamble, archivist in the Order of St.Bede

The Order of St. Bede is a Christian order with a complex relationship with the supernatural. Their first duty is to keep humanity safe from supernatural dangers. Their second duty is to keep the Hidden World secret from the rest of humanity. To this end, they learn to investigate, to fight, and even to use magic, even though they regard most of the magical arts as spiritually dirty, if not an outright sin.

Religion in the UK

Within the UK, somewhat under half the population identify as religious. The largest religion is Christianity, and within Christianity, the biggest denomination is that of the Church of England (the Anglicans), followed by the Catholic Church. Other Christian denominations include Presbyterians of the Church of Scotland and Methodists.

Non-Christian religions include Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism, and Buddhism. The largest of these is Islam, and includes over four percent of the UK population. The others are smaller, but still include hundreds of thousands of believers.



For a member of an Order to learn to use magic, endangering their own soul in the process, is a sign of their dedication to the greater good.

The Order has potentially significant resources, having the backing of both the Anglican and Catholic Churches, but they are held back by the need for secrecy. Most in either Church do not know about the Order of St. Bede, and the Order wants to keep it that way. Another problem for the Order is that they do not cooperate with the other major factions of the Hidden World. They regard magicians outside their own Order as almost as dangerous as vampires, and the need for secrecy prevents them from fully cooperating even with other human-aligned factions such as P Division.

The Open Knot

Open the knots of magic but do not tie the knots of sorcery.

Imam as-Sadiq

The Open Knot is not as tightly organised as the Order of St. Bede, but rather is an umbrella organisation for Islamic fighters against the supernatural. They regard magic as a grave sin unless it is employed against magical evil. The Open Knot shares similar aims to the Order of St. Bede and the two groups are allied, and sometimes share intelligence. Indeed, a few people in both groups suggest they should merge.

One policy where the Open Knot and the Order of St. Bede differ is on keeping the Hidden World secret. Many within the Open Knot would openly preach of its dangers, feeling that would better keep people safe—even safe from the temptation of sorcery.

History

Bede was a monk and scholar in Anglo-Saxon England, best known for his work on history and calendar dates. In 1899, the Bishop of Durham unearthed some of Bede's formerly hidden works on the occult. Bede was particularly concerned with keeping magic secret from ordinary Christians, being the horrible temptation he saw it, and in protecting people from supernatural predators. He knew that magic had to be a part of that, sin though it was.

The Bishop of Durham, although Anglican, reported his findings to the Vatican. He felt he had no choice; there were already rumours of the hidden works in certain select circles. In response, the Vatican made Bede a Doctor of the Church, partially to recognise his work, but also to attempt to get hold of his writings, keeping them from the Anglicans. The result after a few years of wrangling was a compromise; the Order of St. Bede was formed to both fight the horrors of the Hidden World and keep it secret, and was a joint organisation between the Anglican and Catholic Churches.

Organisation

There are really two Orders- a Catholic Order and an Anglican Order, each with their own hierarchy. The Anglican Order is dominant in England and Wales. The Catholic Order operates in the Republic of Ireland and continental Europe more than it does in most of the UK. The Anglican and Catholic branches in theory share some resources, and completely share information. However, in some places, especially Northern Ireland, they are rivals.

Each Order has one Preceptory for each bishopric. The Preceptory will advise the bishop on matters involving the Hidden World should the bishop be aware of them; bishops are not always informed. Each Preceptory can act independently and is unaware of the activities of other Chapters in case it is compromised. Typically, a Preceptory contains of around half a dozen agents, including both Men in Black and Wardens.

The Preceptory is also a secret base and chapel, where members can lodge if need be. A Catholic Preceptory will also have a resident priest (though Men in Black tend to also be priests) who knows enough about the Hidden World and the duties of the Order to hear and understand confessions.

Each Preceptory is led by a Preceptor. The Preceptors, both Protestant and Catholic, report to the hidden Preceptory beneath Durham cathedral and the Grand Preceptor of the Order, Cardinal George Raleigh.

Cardinal Raleigh is the only one who knows of all the Preceptories and their activities. By tradition, the head of the Order of St.Bede is a position one holds for life and which alternates between senior Catholic and Anglican clergy, with each man in charge (and so far, as might be expected, it has always been men) choosing his own successor. There is a potential crisis looming over the Order of St.Bede in that Cardinal Raleigh is now rather old and has not found a suitable successor among the Anglicans of his acquaintance.

Furthermore, numbers of Anglican Preceptors are starting to report exclusively to Durham Cathedral, keeping Cardinal Raleigh out of the loop. A schism between the Anglican and Catholic parts of the Order has always been a recurring danger, and it now looms again, even though sectarian conflicts have in general died down following the end of the Troubles in Northern Ireland.



Reverend Michael Gamble

Reverend Michael Gamble does not fit into the usual hierarchy of the Order of St. Bede. He is associated to the Grand Preceptory in Durham and roams the country as a lone agent, feeling himself responsible only there. Anything more would hold him back from his grand purpose in life—his fight against supernatural evil. Vampires, dark Fae, ghosts, and evil magicians are all the targets of his almost divine wrath. Ordinary Liminals at best meet the Reverend's scorn and can help him or get out of his way. Those who get in his way are in league with the enemy.

- ☞ **Drive:** The unending fight against supernatural evil
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Awareness 2, Melee 3
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Education 4, Lore 3, Technology 1
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 4, Rhetoric 1
- ☞ **Traits:** **Artefact:** Relic of St. Bede (+2 to all defences against magic or attacks from supernatural beings), Brawny, Blessings and Curses (Blessed Weapon, Under My Protection), Ward (Geas, Stone of Truth)
- ☞ **Endurance:** 10
- ☞ **Will:** 12
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+4 (sword)

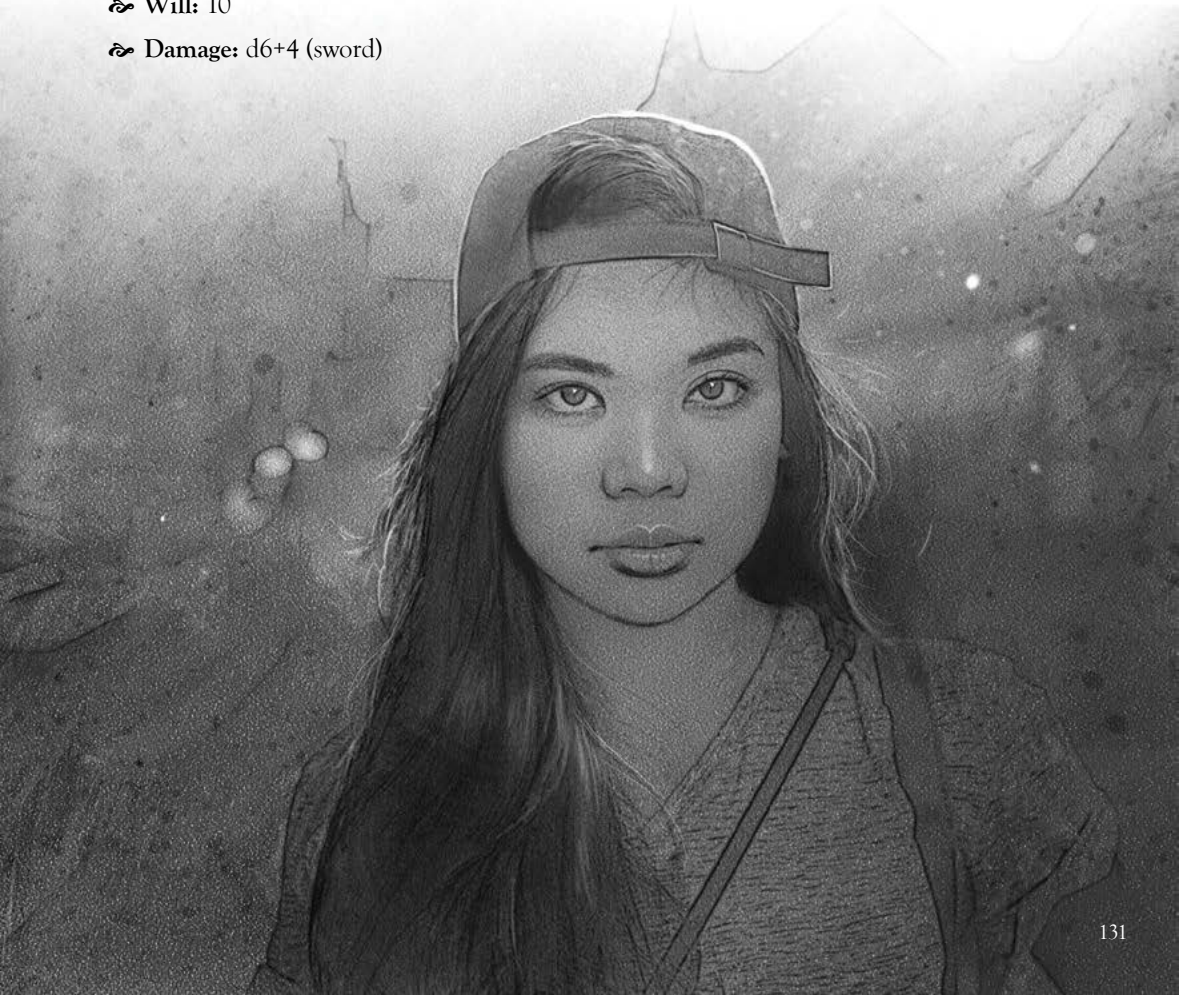


Imogen Cooper

Imogen Cooper is Reverend Gamble's warden—a thankless task, most would say. She is not just the Reverend's bodyguard—indeed, Gamble is quite capable of taking care of himself in a fight. Rather, she looks after him, acting as his spokesman since she is far better at talking to people than he is, as well as making sure of food and lodging on their many expeditions. Imogen also fights at the Reverend's side.

Some within the Order of St.Bede whisper that Imogen's association with the Reverend is based on romantic longing. They're wrong; the relationship between the two is based on mutual respect and sharing the same drive. They just present themselves differently; it is only on the surface that Imogen Cooper is less fanatical than the Reverend.

- ☞ **Drive:** The unending fight against supernatural evil
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Melee 3, Vehicles 2
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Education 2, Lore 1, Technology 2
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Charm 3, Conviction 2, Taunt 2
- ☞ **Traits:** Always Prepared, Countermagic, Quick Reflexes, Scavenger, Tough
(1 point version)
- ☞ **Endurance:** 14
- ☞ **Will:** 10
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+4 (sword)



P Division

Yes, the Home Office assigns funds to a group called P Division. They are the police force branch responsible for Fortean Crimes, the full details of which fall under the Official Secrets Act. They're necessary, and the public cannot know the full details of what they do. No, neither is the Home Secretary briefed. Just think of some of the Home Secretaries we've had over the twenty years I've been in this position; I shudder at the thought.

I see you're not convinced of the necessity. Well, perhaps there is a little I can share with you. I assure you that none of the evidence I'm about to present is fabricated in any way.

-Aidan Crombie, Civil Servant, Home Office

P Division is a division of the UK police force which deals with events and crime labelled as paranormal. The existence of the division is not public, but neither is it a secret as such. It's just not advertised, even within the police.

Nonetheless, Chief Inspectors and those of higher rank within the police know enough to bump any seriously weird reports and crimes to P Division. Police constables who have witnessed strange phenomena may well find themselves reassigned to P Division for training, though those of higher rank can usually stay where they are as long as they generally agree to keep quiet.



History

P Division began with Chief Inspector George Carrington, a policeman who had come across what he referred to as “Fortean crimes” during the second world war. The most obvious of these crimes to Carrington were bodies of the poor and homeless turning up completely exsanguinated, often in cities following a German bombing raid. Carrington came to suspect there were other less obvious deaths due to strange causes, including cases of spontaneous human combustion, and a group of twenty healthy young men being found dead of heart attacks in Coventry.

Such stories were bad for morale and therefore not made public, or even entered into official police records. And when the war was over, such strange events faded in frequency. But Carrington kept tabs on such things, and he was vindicated in 1947.

The early months of 1947 continued the exceptionally cold winter from 1946. Along with a fuel shortage, such an awful winter led to many deaths. Among these deaths were more exsanguinations, more heart attacks, even more examples of people bursting into flames. As they did in the war, the powers that be ignored such deaths, but they couldn’t ignore the death of Ellen Wilkinson, a cabinet minister in the Attlee government.

Wilkinson was found with almost total blood loss. Not quite complete exsanguination. Deliriously, she reported a pale man who drank her blood. She never recovered, and according to official records, she died of a respiratory infection brought on by the cold. But Carrington knew, and he had enough to investigate. He led the police to burn out a vampire and several of its spawn.

Was the vampire seeking control in the Government by attacking a cabinet minister? Wilkinson did not know, but after the attack his fellow officers who were there could not deny the existence of the supernatural. He brought enough evidence back to form a special division to investigate such crimes, and P Division was born.

Since the 1940s, P Division has become clued in, learning more about the Hidden World, and making contact with the other major factions. Sometimes hostile contact, but still knowledge. They learned about magic as well as supernatural creatures. A scientific understanding of the principles involved still eludes them, though P Division has catalogued most of the major approaches and effects.



Organisation

P Division is seen as a career dead-end by those police officers outside it who know of its existence. Police officers within P Division know that the supernatural is real, and they have the job of containing it, protecting members of the public. It's as vital a job as any in the police force. Some members of P Division receive special training, not just in investigating the supernatural or even fighting it, but in magic.

P Division headquarters is not in London, but rather in an isolated location in Shropshire, by the River Severn, a few miles away from the village of Highley and a foot bridge over the river. There was a nearby coal mine, which closed in the 1960s; the mine is also used by P Division.

Police Force Ranks

The police force is divided into uniformed and detective branches. Detective officers dress in "plain clothes" rather than in uniform, and have the title "Detective" before their rank. Detectives include members of the criminal investigation department (CID), the classic detectives, and members of Special Branch who deal with matters of national security. P Division is another detective branch of the police force.

Detectives range in rank from Detective Sergeant to Detective Superintendent. Police Constables are not detectives, but may be in training.

- ✂ **Police Constable (PC):** The rank and file uniformed police officer and the bulk of the police force. Within P Division, any police constables present are in training to enter the division as sergeants.
- ✂ **Sergeant:** Uniformed sergeants supervise police constables, both on the front line and in administration back at the police station. Non-uniformed specialists within the police force begin at the rank of Detective Sergeant after they have received training, which usually takes the form of working for two years under supervision and taking an exam.
- ✂ **Inspector:** Uniformed inspectors have the role of supervising a duty shift of constables and sergeants. Detective Inspectors lead the investigation of particular cases. As a point of reference, British television detective drama main characters are usually Detective Inspectors or Chief Inspectors.
- ✂ **Chief Inspector:** The senior police officer in a station tends to be a chief inspector. Detective Chief Inspectors (DCIs) lead major investigations.
- ✂ **Superintendent and Chief Superintendent:** In charge of entire divisions in the police force. P Division is headed by Superintendent Mark Lloyd.
- ✂ **Senior Ranks:** The most senior ranks of the police force are collectively termed Chief Officers. In London, the senior ranks are Commander, Assistant Commissioner, and Commissioner, with the Commissioner being the one in charge of the entire London Metropolitan police. Outside of London, the senior ranks are Assistant Chief Constable and Chief Constable.

Officially, P Division still investigates Fortean Crimes—strange and unusual crimes, and crimes linked to strange and unusual events. They never mention the supernatural or the Hidden World in official communications to the rest of the police force, let alone the press or the general public.

P Division is a national police force, outside the usual regional forces in a similar way to the British Transport Police. The Superintendent of P Division, Mark Lloyd, answers not to higher ranking officers within the police force, but rather directly to the Home Office, which is also responsible for P Division funds. Only a few of the ministerial staff within the Home Office are aware of the Hidden World, but they are enough to get P Division the resources it needs.

Detective Chief Inspector Kymani Nelson

Kymani Nelson is a scarred man from London, and a veteran of the biggest nastiest action which P Division has taken part in—the “war” against vampires and in particular, the Sodality of the Crown in London. He knows what the bloodsuckers can do and won’t rest until every last one of them is wiped from the face of the Earth.

His obsession has led to a conspiratorial mindset, which sees vampires behind every tragedy in the United Kingdom. Some of his colleagues wonder about Nelson’s stability, but so far he is still able to do his job despite his driving of obsession. And other colleagues have come to believe he’s at least partially correct.

☞ **Drive:** Kill all vampires

☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Melee 4, Shoot 3, Vehicles 2

☞ **Mental Skills:** Lore 3 (Speciality: Vampires), Technology 2

☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 4, Empathy 2, Streetwise 4, Taunt 2

☞ **Traits:** Breaking and Entering, Investigator, Sharp Shooter, Tough (1 point version)

☞ **Endurance:** 14

☞ **Will:** 12

☞ **Damage:** d6+1 (knife), d6+5 (pistol)



Detective Inspector Kira Singh

Kira Singh was one of the first officers trained within P Division, rather than by deals they made with other magicians or factions. At first sight she seems better suited to be an academic than a police detective; she is studious and a little shy. But she becomes animated when she talks about her chosen subject- Fae and faerie tales, which fascinate her. Indeed, she is the P Division expert on the Fae, and gives advice on dealing with them in cases where they are involved.

- ☞ **Drive:** To understand more about the Fae
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Melee Combat 2, Vehicles 3
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Education 2, Lore 4 (Speciality: Fae), Science 1, Technology 3
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 2, Empathy 1, Rhetoric 2
- ☞ **Traits:** Bookworm, The Sight, Ward Magic
(Crude but Effective, Stone of Truth)
- ☞ **Endurance:** 10
- ☞ **Will:** 10
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+1 (police baton)



VAMPIRES AND THE SODALITY OF THE CROWN

If vampires have free will, why are they so evil? True, they must exist by feeding on the blood of living mortals, but they are rational and thinking, rather than creatures of appetite. Some have profound intelligence, but inevitably turned to not just selfish but actively sadistic ends. They relish the suffering of others—this is another appetite, no less significant than literal bloodlust.

There are many theories, but here's mine. Vampires have no souls.

—Reverend Michael Gamble, archivist in the Order of St. Bede

Some stories are true. Vampires are immortal creatures who survive by drinking blood. They are political schemers and manipulators, seeking to control elements of mortal society and outwit their fellow immortal competitors. As well as intellectual acumen, honed in some cases by centuries of experience, vampires have superior strength, incredible speed, and can rapidly heal from injury. A vampire can control a mortal who drinks even a drop of their blood, and some vampires can use necromantic magic.

But they also have weaknesses. Vampiric powers are weakened or do not work at all by sunlight. A vampire must feed and finds it hard to resist an opportunity to cause suffering—it takes will for a vampire to delay the satisfaction of blood and anguish. And lastly, knowledge of their evil is widespread in stories, even amongst mortals who otherwise have no knowledge of the Hidden World.



The Sodality of the Crown

The Sodality of the Crown is the oldest group of vampires in the United Kingdom, and its existence goes back to Roman times, even though the original founding vampires have long since been destroyed by the Council of Merlin. They suffered another blow in 1980 when a P Division operation burned out a nest of vampires who were controlling the Flying Squad in the London Metropolitan Police.

Further operations against London vampires followed, and the latest major nest of vampires, this time working to control banking and the finance sector in an attempt to destabilise the national economy, was destroyed by a rare joint operation involving P Division and the Order of St. Bede in 2015.

What P Division don't know is that this nest had already been given up by the Sodality. The Sodality knew that the web had closed on some formerly profitable endeavours, and that their existence was threatened with exposure. So the leadership sacrificed the London operation, giving P Division what was seemingly an overwhelming victory against them.

In reality, the Sodality of the Crown was barely weakened, though they were forced to move more subtly for a while. They have shifted their core operations to Liverpool. But now they're ready to move on their centuries-long true objective, namely control of the British Royal Family and Government. It sounds comical, even to most vampires, but the leadership of the Sodality of the Crown take the objective with deadly seriousness.

Organisation

The Sodality of the Crown have a cell structure, with each "cell" being a nest of vampires. The nest operates independently and takes care of its own operations when it comes to securing food supplies and gaining a degree of control over some local humans, who are vampire servitors. For as well as food, the vampires seek control. Control and wealth.

Nests vary in size, from small nests of five or even fewer vampires, to a dangerous nest of over twenty. Each nest is led by a Vampire Lord, who can dominate the other vampires in the nest as much as the vampires dominate their human servitors.

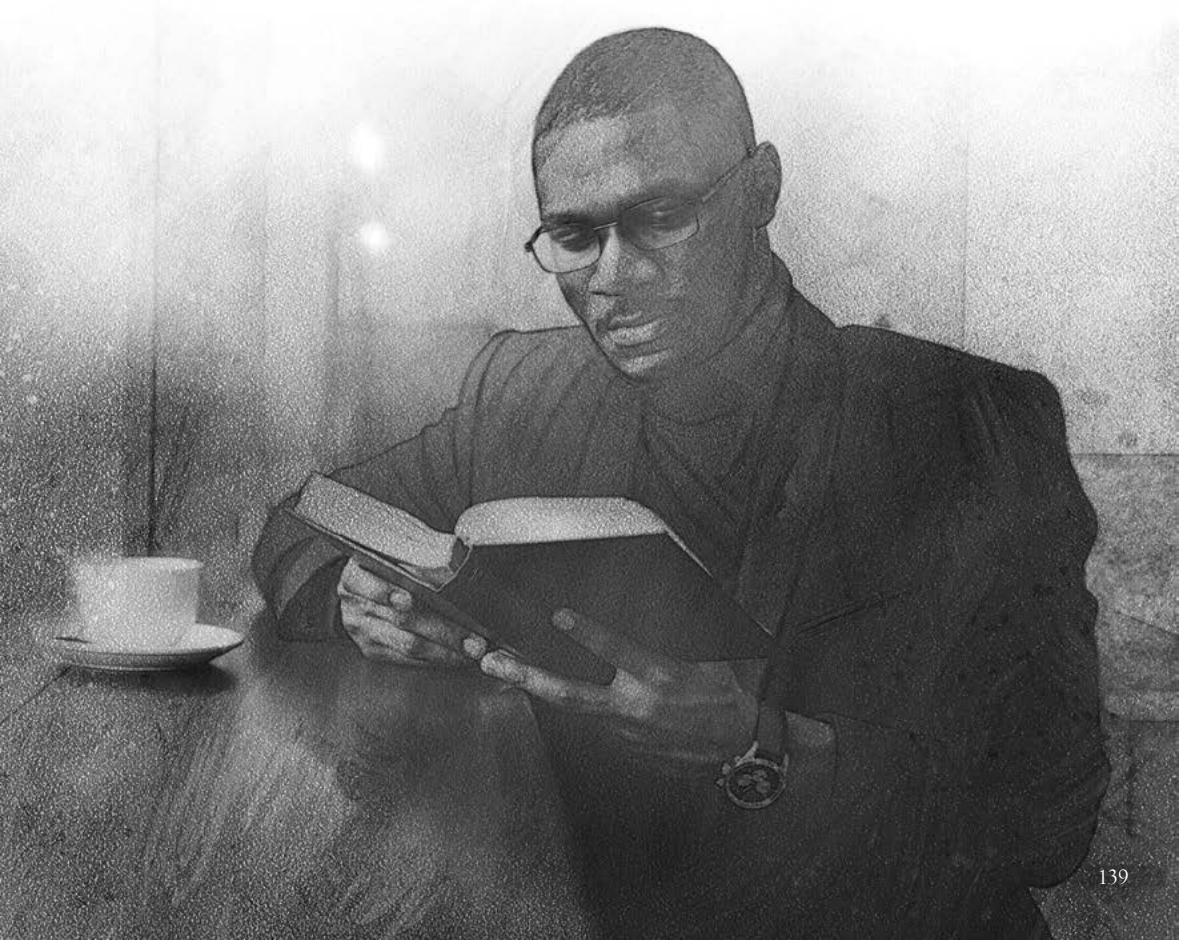
Not all vampire nests are part of the Sodality of the Crown, and some are active rivals. Nevertheless, over half of all vampires in the UK belong to the Sodality.

The nests belonging to the Sodality of the Crown answer to a senior Parliament consisting of twenty-one senior Vampire Lords, most of whom are centuries old. Some hundred or so lesser vampires serve the Parliament directly rather than belonging to a nest. For a politically ambitious vampire—which is many of them—there can be no greater reward in unlife than to join the Parliament, and form a part of the plotting of all vampirekind in the country.

Anton Dupont

Anton is a rogue vampire, always travelling. He preys extensively on a small community, leaves several fledgeling vampires in his wake, and moves on. He claims to have been an aristocrat who escaped Revolutionary France as a mortal. His charm and presence are almost hypnotic. He has little to do with the Sodality of the Crown, but is not actively against them and they leave him alone. In fact, his predations are something of a distraction from their activities.

- ☞ **Drive:** Subtle Independent Predator
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Awareness 4, Melee Combat 5
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Business 2, Education 3, Lore 3
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Charm 5, Conviction 4, High Society 3, Taunt 4
- ☞ **Traits:** Supernatural Strength, Night Sight, Quick Reflexes, Tough (2 points), Rapid Healing (Flaw: Ash or Hawthorn wood), Rich, Presence, Frightening
- ☞ **Limitations:** Weakened by Sunlight, Vulnerability (Garlic, Mirrors)
- ☞ **Endurance:** 19
- ☞ **Will:** 12
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+5 (natural weapons), d6+7 (sword)



Hereward the Wake

Hereward was an Anglo-Saxon nobleman who never accepted the Norman Conquest of England. His rage at the Conqueror was so great that he accepted a “devil’s bargain” with the Sodality of the Crown, a vampire faction made up, they claimed, of Roman nobility and concerned with the correct rule of England. Hereward’s rage at injustice was so great, he claims, that he did not become a vampire, but rather a dhampir outside vampiric control.

As a dhampir, Hereward led a rebellion against the new Norman rulers of the country, from his base on the Isle of Ely in East Anglia. The rebellion failed, of course, but Hereward was a thorn in the side of the Norman nobility and was never captured. However, over the decades and centuries, Hereward’s anger at the “theft” of the country became something cold, and he saw several troubled ascents to the throne and more than one change of ruling dynasty. He also learned to blame the Fae for their part in the Norman Conquest; their pacts with William of Normandy had overwhelmed England’s magical defences.

Hereward became wise and powerful and finally surrendered his humanity, becoming a full vampire in the 14th century, at the time of the Black Death. As a vampire he was even more adaptable and deadly. He took vampire society by storm and quickly rose to prominence in the Sodality of the Crown, encouraging it to make use of the turbulent times to both feed and recruit. Hereward led the vampires in taking advantage of the Peasant Revolt and the War of the Roses.

In the aftermath of the English Civil War, when Oliver Cromwell ruled the country, Hereward saw the chance to finally destroy the pact between the kings and queens of England and the Fae. The guardians of the pact were a faction of mortal magicians, the Ravenstower, who were the magical force behind the remaining royalists.



Hereward turned Richard Cromwell, son of Oliver Cromwell, into a vampire, and set him loose against the Ravenstower. Unfortunately for the vampires, Ravenstower was not destroyed, nor the pact completely broken, but Ravenstower was crucially weakened. And Hereward has learned to play a game lasting for centuries.

Today, Hereward, who calls himself Howard Wake, still has his legendary ability—to older vampires—to adapt to the times. Unlike most vampires, Howard Wake is unaffected by sunlight. He is a prominent Lord in the Parliament of the Sodality of the Crown. Hereward's cold anger is still present and still directed mainly at the Fae, though he now spares some wrath for P Division and vampires who betray “the great cause”.

- ☞ **Drive:** To restore the rightful monarchy of England and its powers
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Awareness 4, Melee Combat 5, Stealth 5
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Business 4, Education 5, Lore 4
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Charm 3, Conviction 5, High Society 5, Taunt 5
- ☞ **Traits:** Supernatural Strength, Countermagic, Frightening, Graceful, Night Sight, Presence, Quick Reflexes, Monstrous Toughness (x2), Rapid Healing (Flaw: Silver), Rich, The Sight, Sneaky
- ☞ **Limitations:** Vulnerability (Silver)
- ☞ **Endurance:** 27
- ☞ **Will:** 13
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+5 (natural weapons), d6+7 (sword). Further bonuses with Rage.

The Queen's Service

The Queen's Service is a vampire cell set up in secret at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham. The hospital's large critical care unit—the largest on a single floor in the world—gives the Queen's Service ample opportunities to feed without suspicious deaths being noted, at least once the hypnotic influence most of the vampires in the cell have come into play. It's not a ruse which can last forever, but it's a rich vein to tap while it does last.

There are opportunities to abduct patients who are flown in from elsewhere for emergency treatment or transplants, another speciality of the hospital. The Queen's Service will occasionally send “presents” in this way to other vampires, and so increase their influence within the Sodality of the Crown, or provide charitable assistance to “poor starving vampires.”



Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham
Part of University Hospitals Birmingham
NHS Foundation Trust

WEREWOLF GANGS

Don't believe everything you hear about werewolves. We're not tied to the phases of the moon, and if a werewolf bites you, even in wolf form, you don't become a werewolf. Becoming a werewolf is a deliberate choice, and that's important to us. There's lots of ways to get there—each gang seems to have a different initiation ritual. Sex and violence and hallucinogens are often involved, but sorry, I'm not going to spill the beans. Even on gangs where some really dark shit goes on, okay?

What's it like being a werewolf? Well, duh, you can change into a bloody great wolf. You can channel the primal rage of your inner wolf, even when human. And there's always a temptation to cut loose with your rage, go wild, rip the throat out of some sneering bastard who winds you up.

—Rebecca “Moonchild” Smith, Werewolf

The first werewolves in Britain were Saxon shapechanging magicians. They came to the country in large numbers with the Vikings. Both Viking berserkers and true shapechangers were regarded as werewolves. Werewolves have been in the UK ever since.

There is no overreaching werewolf organisation, though the Jaeger family (see below) is trying to change that. That said, werewolves are sociable creatures, and form gangs. Each gang has its own code, own traditions, and own initiation ritual—the ritual which turns someone into a werewolf. Some gangs are relatively well-meaning, but others indulge in behaviour which is best described as psychopathic, driven by the rage which is the lot of the werewolf. Most gangs are part of the criminal world. Some gangs are extortionists, taking protection money not from ordinary people, but rather from mundane criminals around them.

A werewolf has two forms—human and animal. Even in human form, a werewolf can channel rage, and gain immense strength and endurance. The wolf form of a werewolf is bigger than any ordinary wolf. Further, werewolves heal rapidly from injuries, though depending on the gang they belong to, a werewolf is more vulnerable to attacks from silver, fire, or perhaps another substance.

Werewolves do not see their state of being as a curse. After all, extra strength, the ability to recover from injury, the ability to turn into a wolf—they are useful powers rather than the marks of a curse. And the rage can be kept under control.



The Jaeger Family

The Jaeger family claim to be werewolf nobility, tracing back their lineage to early Anglo-Saxon times. Some hint at a relationship to the King Cerdic and to the British Royal Family. They do to ordinary werewolf gangs what some of these gangs do to ordinary people; they take a tribute, under fear of violence. The Jaeger family also doles out rewards to those who loyally serve them. They are slowly moving to control and to an extent unify the diverse werewolf gangs in a single powerful faction.

They have a long way to go, and the family face considerable resistance. Werewolves do not like being told what to do from anyone outside their own pack. Some other factions, notably the Sodality of the Crown, hates the idea of the werewolves unifying. They do not want another rival, and they use individual werewolf gangs at times as shock troops in their own schemes.

Another potential obstacle is that the Jaeger family's claims of a noble lineage are completely invented, and they only began to organise as a group in the 1970s. Still the Jaeger family are powerful. A rarity for the werewolves, they are rich and have some influence in the mundane business world. No ordinary werewolf gang can afford to completely ignore them, even if they defy them.

Hunter Security

Hunter Security is a private security firm run by the Jaeger family. Hunter Security has recently gained some prominent government contracts, including transport of prisoners. They have not yet attempted to turn this into any influence over the UK government, but rather use their firm for recruitment, and to transport their forces in fights for dominance over the other werewolves.

But trouble might be looming. The Sodality of the Crown have begun to take notice of Hunter Security, though they are not yet sure whether to use the firm or destroy it.

The Daughters of the Moon

The Daughters of the Moon are a werewolf gang who roam in the Mendip Hills north of Glastonbury. All members of the gang are women, and many have been abused by men in the past. They are not “man haters” as some other gangs who know of them say, but the Daughters will descend like the wrath of god upon men they hear of who mistreat women and children.

To the Daughters, the gang is a refuge away from a world dominated by men. They have links to pagan groups in Glastonbury, especially those who worship the mother goddess at the Glastonbury Goddess Temple.

Martin Jaeger's Gang

Martin presents himself as a simple middle-aged farmer to the outside world, but he is alpha of a werewolf pack which roams the Lake District. The pack has no name; they know who they are, and Martin Jaeger says his gang don't need a name. He is fond of simple pleasures—the outdoors, beer, and chasing down intelligent prey and tearing it apart with his teeth. Sometimes when he tears prey apart with his teeth, Martin does not even change into wolf form.

Many werewolves are in awe of Martin's brutality, but he is feared rather than respected, and sometimes mocked as a simpleton behind his back. To fit in within Martin Jaeger's pack, one must act with similar brutality to its leader. Many hikers in the Lake District have gone missing because of "animal attacks."

The Jaeger family have sent Martin away from their more dominant holdings in the New Forest and Sheffield, seeing him as a loose cannon. But they will sometimes use him and his gang, unleashing his rage upon werewolf gangs who refuse to fall in line with them. Sometimes the mere threat is enough to make them submit.

Martin Jaeger

- ☞ **Drive:** The thrill of the hunt
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 4, Awareness 4, Melee 5, Survival 4
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Lore 1
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 3, Taunt 5
- ☞ **Traits:** Supernatural Strength, Frightening, Rapid Healing (Weakness: Fire), Night Sight, Rage, Shapechanger (massive wolf form)
- ☞ **Limitation:** Uncontrolled Anger
- ☞ **Endurance:** 16 (20 wolf form)
- ☞ **Will:** 11
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+5 (knife or natural weapons in wolf form)



Shad

Shad (short for “Shadow”; she gives no other name) is a lone wolf, belonging to no werewolf gang, though she has friendly relations with many werewolves opposing the Jaeger family and is close to the Daughters of the Moon. She is in fact not a true werewolf, though she associates with them, but is rather a shapechanging magician of mixed Irish and Nigerian descent. Shad keeps her background and training a deliberate mystery; rumour has it is that she is the very last of her particular magical tradition. Shad is what she is, and she finds questions about her past impertinent.

The shapechanger’s instincts are to oppose those who seek to control others. Her special ire is reserved for the Jaeger family, against whom she has a personal grudge, but she also hates vampires and dislikes the “establishment” factions of the Hidden World, including the Council of Merlin, P Division, and the Order of St.Bede.

Shad might run with a Crew for a particular case against common enemies, but she prefers to operate alone. She could turn up as a mysterious complicating factor who could become an ally. Shad does not explain herself, letting her actions speak for themselves.

☞ **Drive:** I oppose those who seek control over others

☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 4, Awareness 4, Melee 4, Survival 2

☞ **Mental Skills:** Lore 4 (Speciality: Werewolves)

☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 5, Empathy 3, Streetwise 2, Taunt 2

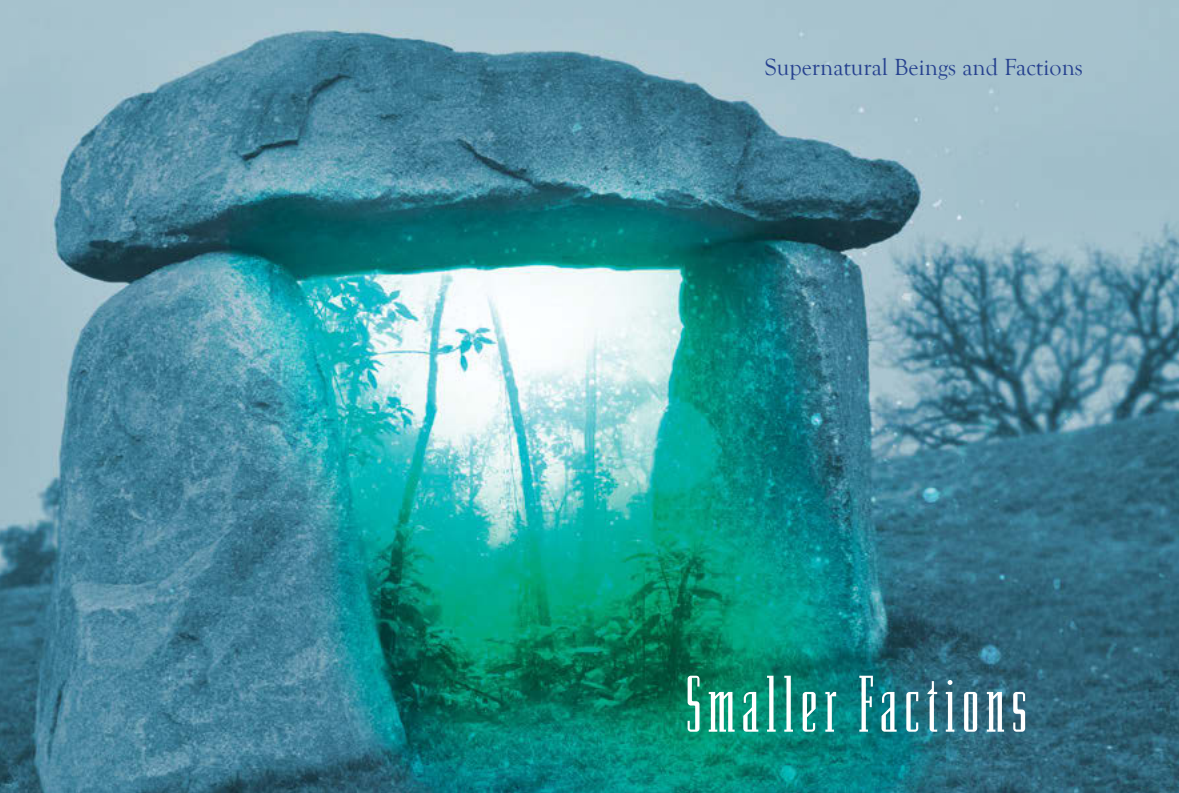
☞ **Traits:** Brawny, Rapid Healing (Weakness: Silver), Quick Reflexes, Night Sight, Shapechanger (massive wolf form, salmon form, sparrow form), Weathermonger (fast working)

☞ **Endurance:** 12 (16 wolf form)

☞ **Will:** 13

☞ **Damage:** d6+3 (knife or natural weapons in wolf form)





Smaller Factions

THE ALDERMEN

So what do you need? Safe and secret passage...that's very easy to arrange. Very easy for us that is—almost impossible for you without our aid. The price is nothing you can't afford—just the traditional two silver coins. Oh, and the names of the other people at your destination, of course. Just for security purposes.

—Iain Baird, Gaitkeeper and Wynder of Edinburgh

Gates and gaits. A gate to the city is both an entrance through its old walls, and a portal to a Ghost Realm, one of its ghost courts. A gait, on the other hand is a route or way, and is used as such in the city of Edinburgh.

The Aldermen are concerned with both gates and gaits. They will open the way—whether it is to Ghost Realms, Fae Domains, or hidden crossings between mundane locations. They can be found amongst the wynds of Edinburgh, the standing stones of Southern England, the side-streets of rain-swept Welsh towns, and the abandoned tube stations of London. The price of a service is always the same—two silver coins. But the cost is often too high—the Alderman accepting the coins is often a ward magician and does so as part of imposing a geas.

The Aldermen claim to have been founded by Bran, of Celtic myth. At the faction's height, they opened silk roads and passages to the East Indies. Every travelling merchant who knew something of the Hidden World sought the advice of the Aldermen on safe and speedy routes. Not all trade routes were purely mundane, and not all mundane routes were free, without advice, from supernatural dangers.

But too many Aldermen secrets ended up in other hands, and their power waned from the height of the Empire in London's docks. They were, it is said, betrayed from within, their secrets stolen and sold. Many Aldermen were murdered, by forces still unknown. The faction

was never the same. The Mercury Collegium in particular waxed as the Aldermen waned, gaining new knowledge and power.

But a few dozen Aldermen still remain, trading their secrets and lost knowledge to survive. The heart of their power is the Aldgate, taking geomantic power from the old Roman wall, and the crossings of paths both ancient and modern. Superimposed “below” the Aldgate is a Ghost Realm, a court of the ghosts of that corner of London, with connections elsewhere. Within the Ghost Realm is the undying head of Bran himself. The leader of the Aldermen, the Portcullis of Aldgate, is known to have taken knowledge and secrets from Bran’s head. Such are the risks he is willing to take to make the faction once more a force to be reckoned with.

Despite the faction now being small and obscure, it still has several branches remaining from its days of power and recognition. The Gaitkeepers and Wynders of Edinburgh are messengers of secrets, and smugglers of people who want to travel without being seen. They once rivalled the inner circle of Aldgate in influence within the faction. The Rivermen know the secrets of Britain’s lost waterways and canals, some of which no longer have a place in the mundane world. According to sinister rumour, they once delivered the enemies of the Aldermen through the Traitor’s Gate, the water entrance to the Tower of London.

The Gibbiters are necromancers who talk to the dead, gaining their secret knowledge. For them, it is not true that dead men tell no tales. They even extract information from the mad ghosts of enemies of the faction, who by tradition were hung in gibbets on smugglers’ docks, drowning at high tide in the Thames estuary. Finally, there are the Crows, the shadowy enforcers and assassins of the Aldermen. To a Crow, no door is locked and no hiding place safe.



HOUSE ANNWN

Those who unleashed the Great Storm are no longer with us, but I believe they felt genuinely sorry for the death and devastation to the landscape. The latter, indeed, seems to me to go against everything they stood for. They also firmly believed it was necessary. Unfortunately, they never gave more than a few hints as to why.

-Ceridwen Evans, magician in House Annwn, Protector of the Land

Annwn is the otherworld in Welsh legend. In some stories, it is a paradise of eternal youth and delight. In other stories, it is a hellish underworld. Such contradictions underly the nature of the oldest and most secretive of the Hidden World factions, House Annwn. House Annwn's membership is made up of magicians with particular strengths in the oldest arts of geomancy, necromancy, weather magic and shapeshifting. They know almost as much of the lore of the Fae as Ravenstower.

The foundations of House Annwn go back to Roman Britain, when the druids were banned, their sacred grove at Anglesey burned by Roman legionaries. A few druids went underground, keeping some of their knowledge alive, sometimes training prominent magicians but never quite revealing themselves. It was House Annwn who taught Merlin, the most famous of all British magicians, though Merlin went his own way, even inspiring his own faction, rather than remaining a part of the House.

When Roman rule ended, House Annwn remained hidden. The increasing dominance of Christianity did not encourage them to emerge into the open. Even today, House Annwn keeps itself secret from most of the rest of the Hidden World. Some of their magical practices, which include necromancy, would attract the opprobrium of the Council of Merlin and the Order of St.Bede.

Magicians within House Annwn have complete freedom to act as they see fit as long as they obey two rules. The first and most important rule is to keep the existence of House Annwn secret, not revealing it to any without the agreement of at least twelve other members. This last condition is highly restrictive as House Annwn has fewer than fifty members in existence.

The second rule is that any magician of House Annwn should train at least one other apprentice. The apprentice is not necessarily inducted into House Annwn, and even revealing House Annwn's existence to an apprentice requires the master to have the permission of twelve others of the House, as mentioned above. Nonetheless, such apprenticeships still preserve the ancient magical ways and serve their purpose. And some apprentices join House Annwn, keeping the old ways just about alive.

House Annwn will hunt down and eradicate any magician who breaks the first rule. Such traitors are sometimes sacrificed in magical rites; there is no point in wasting someone sentenced to death, after all. However, the House imposes no other restrictions on their magicians. There are no moral codes or rules to follow, and no restrictions on dealing with either the mundane authorities or others in the Hidden World, provided they do so as an individual.

As for the second rule, once a magician has trained an apprentice and had them inducted into the House, they are granted access House Annwn's hidden base, *Caer Dirgelwch* on the lower slopes of Mount Snowdon. *Caer Dirgelwch* is guarded by bound spirits and holds most of what remains of the Thirteen Treasures of Britain, powerful and ancient magical artefacts.

The Treasures of Britain

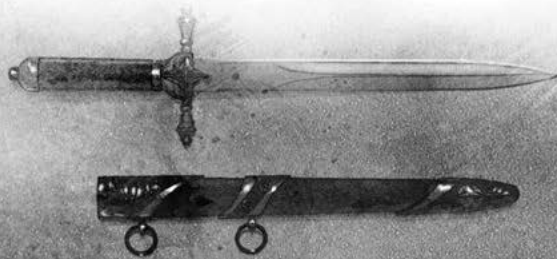
The Thirteen Treasures of Britain include:

- ☞ **The Horn of Bran Galed** - in which can be found any drink.
- ☞ **The Sword of Rhydderch Hael** - which bursts into flame when used by a worthy warrior.
- ☞ **The Mantle of Tegau Eurfon** - making any who wears it invisible.
- ☞ **The Whetstone of Tudwal Tudglyd** - a blade sharpened on the whetstone will cut through anything.
- ☞ **The Cauldron of Dyrnwch the Giant** - which can sometimes revive the dead at the cost of another human sacrifice.
- ☞ **The Chessboard of Gwenddoleu ap Ceidio** - two people playing at the chessboard can put at stake anything to be taken by the winner, even intangibles, similar to such things traded in some deals made by the Fae.

Another key resource of House Annwn is the knowledge the members have of places of power, geomantic nodes so far unknown to other factions. Some of the magicians within House Annwn style themselves Protectors of the Land. These magicians have the ability to combine the arts of geomancy and weather magic to dramatic effect and use their powers to act against those they see as the land's despoilers, sometimes in concert with sympathetic Fae.

The Protectors of the Land were responsible for the Great Storm of 1987, when hurricane force winds swept across England and northern France, unpredicted by weather forecasts. Those involved felt that such dramatic magic was the only way to protect the land from a powerful "vampire king" who was on his way to Britain. In any case, the rules and secrecy of House Annwn meant they were under no obligation to defend their actions.

Of the other factions, the Council of Merlin knows of House Annwn but believes it to be extinct; indeed that they hunted down the last members of the faction in the aftermath of the Great Storm of 1987. Some of the Fae know about House Annwn, but if they have promised to keep it secret, then one of the Fae finds it hard to break a promise. The Sodality of the Crown believes House Annwn exists, but does not know any of its members. The remaining factions have even less idea about it, or in some cases do not care. Either suits House Annwn just fine.



THE FLOWERS OF EXPRESSION

And all the Arts of Life they changed into the Arts of Death in Albion.

-Jerusalem, chapter 3, William Blake

The “Flowers of Expression” are a curiosity in the Hidden World. They are a community of artists who fill their ranks with both Liminals and mundane mortals who at most half believe in the magic they come across. The Flowers do not judge those who would join them by motive, but solely by artistic talent. Nor do they filter conversations around those who are not part of the Hidden World. The more esoteric conversations the mundane members overhear tend to be mistaken for the ramblings of pretentious or over-imaginative hipsters.

Despite the often whimsical and aimless direction of the organisation, the Flowers have one very strong goal – to create art of the most glorious nature, whether it’s a painting that makes the viewer feel their very soul being pulled into the pigment, a piece of music that draws floods of tears from the masses, or a poem that shifts entire perspectives. Raw materials and talent can only take you so far, and that’s where the wonderful world of magic steps in.

Flowers are drawn to talent across the country and will eagerly help it flourish where possible. Accordingly, at the same time they keep an eye out for undiscovered Liminals of an artistic bent, taking them under their wing quickly to help them become the best they can be.

The Flowers of Expression date from the late 18th century and look up to William Blake as their founder. Blake certainly had magical gifts involving divination through visions and Second Sight, as well as profound artistic talents, both in poetry and the visual arts. He was not connected with any Hidden World faction and did not understand his supernatural gifts. Blake expressed a sense of universal humanity and a rebellion against orthodoxy.

Blake certainly did not set out to found a faction in the Hidden World, and he may not have been the Flowers’ first leader, but he inspired artists who followed his philosophy. Up until the end of the 1960s, the Flowers were far more political than they are today, and just as involved in protests and riots as art. Such political involvement died down after 1970, and members of the group have been split over whether this was down to disillusionment or if they had somehow “won”.

More than one musician with chart entries, mystical lyrics, and a cult following has been a member of the Flowers of Expression over the last few decades. There are rumours that one musician believed dead merely vanished from the public eye thanks to a magical gift of a new face and new identity. Of course, it would not be above the Flowers to start such rumours, whether true or not.

There are no leaders as such of the Flowers of Expression. The group is too egalitarian, even anarchic, for that. There are, however, respected artists, and their opinion matters, guiding other members who seek to impress them. There may be no formal hierarchy, but there are expectations and unwritten codes of behaviour. Every Flower who manages to stay part of the crowd, and maintain some influence, knows these rules intuitively.

The Flowers of Expression are the most diverse of any of the Hidden World factions. To their credit, they have never judged people in terms of race, gender, or sexuality, even before such attitudes were considered decent, but the Flowers' openness goes beyond that. They don't officially judge types of supernatural being. Ordinary mortals (though who in this faction could be called "ordinary"?), minor magicians, and changelings are perhaps the most common members, but there are others. Vampires, for example, are welcome as long as they produce art and behave themselves with regards to others in the group. Indeed, they lend a certain edge to some gatherings.

Of the major factions, the Flowers of Expression generally dislike the more stuffy and conservative organisations such as the Sodality of the Crown, the Order of St. Bede, and the Council of Merlin. Although not particularly criminal, they are as cautious of P Division as they are any authority. Conversely, no other faction particularly regards the Flowers of Expression as an enemy; the factions the Flowers dislike tend to ignore them or at worst see them as a nuisance. They are not allied with any other faction, though the Mercury Collegium are close to being friends.



RAVENSTOWER

Mundane history remains silent on how the Fae assisted Duke William of Normandy in his conquest of England, but esoteric history tells of Duke William's compact with the Fae and the Changing Seasons War between the Fae Courts. The Changing Seasons War took place at the same time as the Norman invasion, and meant that Harold Godwinson would have little or no help from English Fae or English magicians. There is a story, which the organisation still hotly denies almost a thousand years later, that the Council of Merlin was bought off.

In any case, the victory of William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings sealed the fate of the Fae alongside the fate of the English people. To seal the pact with the victorious Fae, William had the Ravens' Tower built just outside the White Tower which would become the central keep of the Tower of London. As the fortification of the Tower of London grew, the Ravens' Tower was incorporated.

The Fae ambassador and liason with William's Court resided in the Ravens' Tower. Gradually, the Fae withdrew from mortal affairs. Although appreciative of the acknowledgement of the Norman kings, the Changing Seasons War left the Fae reluctant to involve themselves again in mortal bloodshed. The Ravens' Tower became the domain of court magicians and esoteric investigators.

The magicians of Ravens' Tower themselves withdrew from the public eye, and in fact the tower was no longer seen by most mortals. They became the hidden faction called the Ravenstower. The Ravenstower was not the only faction aligned with the Crown, nor the most powerful, but it was unique through continuing close ties to the Fae. The Fae will speak to magicians of Ravenstower and even respect them if shown respect in turn.

Ravenstower was briefly forced into prominence again during the English Civil War. They supported the Royalists. They believed the ties between the monarchy and the Fae were absolutely essential to England's survival—and in particular, so was the continuation of the monarchy. Before the Civil War, the Ravenstower had established Donnington Castle as its headquarters outside London. They relocated there completely when parliament seized the Tower of London in 1681.

Donnington Castle became the centre of the Royalists' esoteric efforts against the Roundheads. One of their opponents was Richard Cromwell, eldest son of Oliver Cromwell. The story of Richard dying of scarlet fever was a fabrication, for Richard Cromwell had become a vampire, turned by the Sodality of the Crown who had their own interests in the Civil War. Richard Cromwell led a series of stunningly bloody raids against the Royalists before Ravenstower finally captured him. Five years later, Ravenstower was betrayed from within, and Donnington fell into Parliamentary hands. The entire castle was levelled, and the underground crypt where the vampire Richard Cromwell was held was lost to history, as was what happened to Richard Cromwell.

During the Commonwealth, or Interregnum, the Ravenstower worked ceaselessly to maintain the peace with the ominously unsettled Fae. When the Restoration came, Ravenstower sought to make it as if the previous two decades had not, from the point of view of the mystic laws of the Hidden World, ever taken place. Edward Hyde was an agent of the Ravenstower, and his work meant it was legally established that Charles II had effectively been king since the execution of Charles I. Although there were some incidents, for the most part, the work of Ravenstower had its intended effect.

When the Tower of London was again restored to the Crown, the returning magicians discovered that the Ravens' Tower was lost to them. It is still there, somewhere, but even today no magician has seen it since the Civil War. Many have sought to rediscover it and its trove of knowledge and artefacts. All so far have failed.

Today, Ravenstower is an unofficial partner to HM's Government. It lacks official ties, though some few know of them, and know they are the people to go to when disputes need to be settled with the Fae. Those of Ravenstower maintain their loyalty to the monarchy and stand ready to serve. In the Tower of London, the Yeoman Warders know there is a "missing" tower, but not its name.

The magicians of Ravenstower hold it as an article of faith that somewhere within the Tower of London is a single door that will let them re-enter the Ravens' Tower, if they but have the eyes to see and the key to open it. Many have become increasingly interested in the myths of King Arthur and the mythopoeia of William Blake, seeing parallels in the Blake poems and the Grail myth with their quest for the key.

MALCOLM FLEMING

Malcolm Fleming used to be a magician, trained by the Council of Merlin. He attended Dee College at the University of Oxford, and went the whole expected route of an academic magician. But things went wrong in Glasgow. Malcolm always had a particular sensitivity to magic and traced a necromantic ritual in Glasgow to a secret room of the Council of Merlin safehouse. Leading the ritual was the man in charge of the safehouse, Charles Gardner.

Gardner was leading four other Council of Merlin members. Fortunately, they were absorbed in their magic working, and Malcolm was able to disrupt the ritual, but the fall-out caused an explosion, and Malcolm lost his magical power. Malcolm does not know who lived and who died as a result. He does know that the Council of Merlin did not want anyone to know that one of their number was a rogue necromancer. They hushed up the incident, explaining the explosion in Glasgow as an accident and discredited Malcolm in the process. There are sometimes casualties for the greater good.

So Malcolm left the Council and was recruited by Ravenstower. He now works as a deniable asset, hunting down and killing rogue mages in the name of the Crown. He might be bitter after losing his magical powers and now distrusts magicians, but if anything Malcolm's sensitivity to magic is even stronger, and he knows both how magicians work and mystic defences against their spells.

☞ **Drive:** To end the threat of rogue magicians

☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Awareness 4, Melee 3, Shoot 2, Vehicles 1

☞ **Mental Skills:** Education 2, Lore 4

☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 2, Empathy 1, High Society 2, Streetwise 2

☞ **Traits:** Brawny, Countermagic, Quick Reflexes, The Sight, Jack of All Trades

☞ **Endurance:** 10

☞ **Will:** 10

☞ **Damage:** d6+3 (knife), d6+3 (pistol)

Naomi Fletcher

One of the pre-generated characters, Naomi Fletcher ([see page 54](#)), has the backstory that her mentor was accused of black magic and declared an Enemy of Merlin. She was excommunicated at the same time and does not know if her master was guilty or innocent. One possible story hook is to make Charles Gardner, who led the necromantic ritual in Glasgow, her mentor.



CHAPTER 7





Liminal Britain and Northern Ireland



This chapter is not a complete gazetteer of every significant place in the United Kingdom, nor of every site of supernatural interest and rich local history. It could not be in a book of this size and scope. The Liminal supplements will contain more places, and more details on places mentioned here.

Some cities are present, others of greater size or importance are absent. The same is true of features of the natural landscape. The selection of places here is deliberately idiosyncratic, and should give an idea of the variety of places both urban and rural there are which intersect in the Hidden World.

Travel Times

One can normally get by road from most places in the mainland United Kingdom to most other places in a single day, though it might be a long miserable day, especially if rural roads or traffic problems feature. It will take about seven hours to drive from London to Glasgow, for instance, if there is no traffic. With traffic and roadworks, the time could be doubled.

Long distance travel can be faster by train than by road. For instance, a typical train journey from London to Glasgow takes about five hours.



Cities



BELFAST

We survived the Troubles and defeated the vampires. The question now is whether we can break the magical stranglehold of the Council of Merlin. We're going to have to band together and put all sorts of past resentments aside to even have a chance.

-James Deegan, a geomancer based in Belfast

Belfast is a city divided between Protestants and Catholics, and there is tension between the two groups. During the Troubles, as the Northern Ireland conflict is known, a major nest of vampires operated almost openly in Belfast, selling weapons to both republican and loyalist terrorist groups. Armed conflict is always a good thing for vampires.

Fortunately, things are so much better than they were. The peace process is not complete, but it worked. The Council of Merlin, who have a clubhouse in the city, acted against the vampires, and those who still exist are forced to be more subtle. The Council also cemented its hold on the city, demonstrating its power and winning popularity. Belfast is now a safer and more optimistic place.

And it's wrong to see Belfast, its people, and its history entirely in terms of the Troubles. In the 19th century, Belfast was a major port and home of industry, especially ship building and textiles, and it is now taking up again the role of a successful industrial city. Queen's University Belfast, one of the city's several institutes of higher education, came into being in that time. Most of Belfast's architecture also dates from 19th century, but the area has been occupied since the Bronze Age, making it in a sense far older than the cities of England, though it was not a substantial settlement until much more recently.

The famous ship Titanic was built in Belfast, and a striking museum to commemorate the doomed ship opened there in 2012. The shape of the building resembles the bows of ships—or an iceberg. The shape has geomantic significance and allows geomancers based in Belfast within the Council of Merlin to draw magical power.

CAERNARFON

Caernarfon is an old city that grew in medieval times around the Norman castle and city walls, which still dominate the city landscape. The modern city is small, with a population of fewer than ten thousand. The city's historical landmarks attract tourists, though many of the locals resent them. Tourists trample around the area people consider home, demand service, and drive up property prices. They're also excessively curious.

Some people in Caernarfon know that there is more to the world than meets the eye. They know that vampires, Fae monsters, and werewolves are out there, and believe they know some of the signs to tell them for what they are. When speaking of such secrets, if there is any danger they could be overheard by outsiders, the people make sure they speak in rapid Welsh.

Caernarfon, despite its medieval appearance, is older than Norman England. There was a Celtic hill fort here before Roman times. The tomb of the Roman Emperor Constantius, father of Constantine the Great, was once within the Roman fortifications which replaced the hill fort. The Sodality of the Crown believes the tomb is still hidden in the crypts of St. Peblig's Church, a church built on the site of a Roman Mithraeum.

Since 1911, the British Royal Family has held the ceremony of investing the heir to the throne with the title Prince of Wales in Caernarfon castle. Some magicians hold that the ceremony gives a degree of mystic control over the land, similar to that exacted by a geomancer but on a larger scale. Prince Charles, the current heir, is considered to be unaware of the mystical influence he has wielded since 1969.

Caernarfon has inns dating from the 16th century, including the Pen Deitch, the Four Alls, and the Twthill Vaults. The Twthill Vaults is haunted by the ghost of a woman whose family buried her in the cellar to avoid the funeral expenses. The Caernarfon Spiritual Society meet here every Thursday evening to discuss the strange things and superstitions they know.

There is a Crew of Liminals at the core of the Society, though most members of the Society do not know their true nature, nor realise quite how fully some of the strangeness they half imagine and half believe is realised. Nonetheless, the Society has much knowledge of local history and knows that there is truth in folklore and superstitions. They have witnessed strange things and don't discount them as most people seem to, even here.

Welsh

Welsh is a Celtic language, the true language of these parts, and it's older than English, that bastard combination of Saxon and Norman. Ah, but only but one in five of us in Wales speak it these days, even though it's a magical language, the closest of any to the true tongue of the Fae which no mortal has heard.

The English government didn't used to support the language with the Welsh television programmes and bilingual road signs. Even the city of Caernarfon used to be spelled "Carnarvon" since Welsh letters aren't spoken the same way as English ones. But that's changed. It's not the English changing their ways either; we fought for it. Fought hard. Maybe it's enough for us to keep the hidden knowledge within the language alive, something we need to learn the old magics of this land. The magic of Merlin.

Owain Williams, magician, and part of the Caernarfon Spiritual Society

DURHAM

The Fae know they are not welcome in Durham, but during the Festival of Lights every November, they come here still. The Festival is cover, but the Fae know they have to be subtle. Durham during the festival is neutral ground to the Fae, and none may instigate violence. Fae of hostile factions meet and make deals, discussing war and peace. Other Hidden World groups are also beginning to make use of the peace of the Festival, though not yet the Order of St. Bede.

To me the most surprising thing is that the Festival has only been a feature here since 2009, though it is now the largest such in the country.

Ygraine Green, Changeling

Durham is an old city, founded by divine provenance in Saxon times according to legend. Like other cities in the region, it prides itself on its openness and friendliness. To people from the Hidden World who are not clearly allied with the magical powers here, especially the Order of St. Bede, the city is less welcoming.

The foundation legend tells that the bier carrying St. Cuthbert's remains came miraculously to a halt and refused all efforts to move it. The monks accompanying the bier prayed and fasted, and one monk, Eadmer, received a vision that the saint's remains were to be buried on a hill surrounded on three sides by the River Wear.

Today the centre of Durham is still the hill, and the cathedral and castle look out across the city. The spirit of Eadmer watches over the hill, either a ghostly or divine presence. The cathedral was the seat of power of the Prince Bishops in the Middle Ages, so called because of their considerable temporal powers. The Prince Bishops held their own parliaments and raised their own armies. The cathedral is the final resting place of St. Cuthbert and St. Bede.

A secret chamber beneath the Cathedral is the Grand Preceptory of the Order of St. Bede. Here rest the saint's occult writings, both in the original Latin and in partial translation. Only members of the Order are allowed access here, and there are magical wards against intruders. There is little else supernatural in the city; the Order of St. Bede have eliminated any supernatural threats, and the Fae and other magicians know they are not welcome here. Any other supernatural presence would have to be very subtle to avoid attracting attention.

Durham has a university established in the 19th century. Like Oxford and Cambridge, the university has a system based on colleges providing student lodging and facilities. Notably, the university owns the castle, which is now student accommodation.



GLASGOW

Manchester is called the rainy city, but Glasgow is actually even wetter. I'm quite proud of that actually. It's colder here too.

—Agnes Thompson, self-proclaimed Gutter Mage

Glasgow has an out-of-date reputation for violence and poverty. The working class accent—the “patter”—is reckoned incomprehensible by the English. Modern day Glasgow prospers both culturally and economically. The city has a largely pedestrianised city centre built on a regular grid lined with grand Victorian buildings and tower blocks. It is the largest city in Scotland and the third largest in the United Kingdom, after London and Birmingham. The people of Glasgow have a self-deprecating sense of humour, and enjoy putting their home city down, but this sport is not considered appropriate for people from outside of the city. There is pride underlying the jokes.

The origins of Glasgow are lost in myth, but the city goes back over one and a half millennia. The University of Glasgow is one of Britain's oldest, and was founded in the 14th century. The city grew drastically as a result of its use as a port and the industrial revolution. The Subway, Glasgow's underground railway system dates from the late 19th century and follows a great loop beneath the city. The outline of the railway features in geomantic rituals among the city's rival magicians, who ride the entire circle to attune or gather power.

Like many industrial cities in the UK, Glasgow suffered a decline in the second half of the 20th century, and Glasgow's slums became infamous. The east of the city is still deprived, and the poorest people have not benefited from large scale regeneration projects and Glasgow's status as European City of Culture in 1990.

The divide between rich and poor is reflected in Glasgow's magical community. The Council of Merlin has a clubhouse at the edge of Kelvingrove Park in the west of the city, and the Mercury Collegium meets in the back rooms of a number of pubs in the east of the city, most notably The Manticore. Rival geomancers from both groups sometimes clash, and recently a ritual in the Council of Merlin clubhouse went wrong, causing the partial collapse of the building. It is still under repair.

There is a node of power somewhere in the city, and nobody knows precisely where, but attuning to the whole city includes it. Those of a mystic orientation—and many magicians are practical rather than mystic—feel that the key is including and unifying the whole city, symbolically healing its divisions.

Another division in the city is exemplified by its two football teams, Celtic and Rangers. The rivalry between the two is fierce and sometimes violent, and linked to sectarian and political conflict, with the Celtic team fans traditionally being Catholics, often of Irish origin, and the Rangers fans being historically Protestant. Until the late 1980s, Rangers even had an unwritten rule not to employ a Catholic player. Today the divide is not so stark, but it's still a wound.



LIVERPOOL

Liverpool is a modern city shaking off an unfair and unflattering grimy reputation. Liverpool underwent a period of urban regeneration in the 1990s, emerging from a long period of heavy depopulation and serious unemployment. It was the European Capital of Culture in 2008. The city is diverse, with significant African-Caribbean, Black African, and Chinese communities. Some of these populations go back as far as the 18th century. Liverpool has always had significant numbers of Irish people; probably around half the modern population has Irish ancestry.

The city first began to grow into a major port in the 17th century, through trade with the Americas. It took a prominent part in the slave trade in the 18th century, and the trade through goods coming from the industrial revolution in the 19th century. Some of Liverpool's most notable architecture such as the cathedral—the largest in Europe—and the Royal Liver Building date from the beginning of the 20th century.

Liverpool is a haunted city. There are Ghost Realms of empty streets hearkening back to the 1980s, ghosts of factory and dock workers from the 19th century, and angry ghosts of slaves exacting vengeance upon those they still see as their oppressors. A ghost ship, *The Blessing*, sometimes puts in at the Liverpool docks at night, carrying a cargo of the damned. The ghosts can make Liverpool dangerous to travel alone at night.

However, the ghosts are not the city's greatest supernatural threat. That dubious honour belongs to the vampires, who prey on the poor and destitute, and some young people taking part in Liverpool's night life. The Parliament of the Sodality of the Crown and several associated cells operate in Liverpool. The Hidden World at large is so far ignorant of the scope of the vampire infestation in Liverpool, blaming the unusual deaths on ghosts.

Not everything supernatural associated with Liverpool is bad. The city's fabled Liver Birds are its supernatural guardians, and a magician who knows the forgotten rituals can call them from the metal sculptures atop the two clock towers of the Royal Liver Building. They will also, according to legend, come to help when the city is under threat, but should they ever leave, the River Mersey will dry up.

Modern day Liverpool is still a centre of musical culture and has been since the 1960s when the Beatles played at the Cavern Club. The Cavern Club is still open and is one of many live music venues in the city. One of the more ritzy nightclubs, the Night Palace, is run by a vampire cell.

Another area where Liverpool is well-known in popular culture is football. The city has two leading football teams, Everton and Liverpool, with grounds close together. There is a fierce rivalry between the two teams, but unlike many cities with two teams, there is friendliness between fans, and they sit together to watch matches between Everton and Liverpool rather than being segregated into different seating areas.



LONDON

“Ungrateful guest” she calls me! Bah! “Unwelcome guest” she means. I will not bend the knee to her. How long have I been here, in this city? How long does someone need to live here, be a part of it, before acceptance? With all that I’ve done she should be grateful to me, and I’ve found my own place. I’m not just here at her suffrance.

-The Lesny, talking about the Queen of Hyde Park

London is the capital of the UK, and a place where immense wealth and power sit side by side with extreme poverty. It is the most diverse and inclusive place in the country, but it is also a place where many people hurry about their business without talking to any strangers. Prices for accommodation are incredibly high in London compared to the rest of the country.

The city’s famous historical landmarks are too numerous to name here and see a steady run of tourists. The London sites of significance in the Hidden World often also have deep histories, but they are usually more obscure. Fame and the resultant numbers of tourists prevents many important sites from achieving occult significance.

London’s history goes back to Roman times. Much of the older architecture within the historic boundaries, including such famous buildings as St.Paul’s Cathedral, dates back to the city being rebuilt following the Great Fire of London in 1666. Since that time, London has expanded dramatically both in geographic extent and population; London today holds nearly nine million people.

The city is one of the most ethnically diverse places in the world, more so than the rest of the United Kingdom. London is home to many of Irish origin or descent, and German ex-patriots live in the city. There are established African-Caribbean, Arab, Greek, Nigerian, Polish, and South Asian communities going back to the mid 20th or 19th century. Fewer than half the people in London classify themselves as “white British.”

This diversity has an effect on London’s supernatural landscape. Some magicians are trained in foreign traditions of magic. Fae in London include Yakshas and Rakshasas from India, and Jinn from the Middle East. Common Fae won’t necessarily appear as white people in either their human or natural forms. The shapeshifting Loogaroo from the Caribbean is a very special and dangerous form of vampire, who fortunately operates alone rather than as part of a nest like the Sodality of the Crown. Even ghosts can take on a bewildering variety of forms, and the term Duppy from the Caribbean is used for a variety of malevolent spirits.

Much of London can be accessed by the London Underground railway. Portions of the rail network are abandoned and home to the lairs of creatures of the Hidden World who crave isolation but prey on nearby humanity, or otherwise hate the light. There are ghosts from throughout London’s history and lairs of Fae monsters. Although the vampiric Sodality of the Crown has moved the centre of its operations, and most of its people, from London to Liverpool, the tunnels beyond Elephant and Castle Underground station are still home to a large vampire nest.

London has long been a centre of scholarship and science, being home to the Royal Society and various colleges of the University of London, which operate independently and are prominent in their own right. Magical scholarship is no exception here. The Council of Merlin gathers in the Medeis Club, which provides a lounge room with well-stocked bar, lodging, and has a small magical library which members can consult. Women are still a rarity in the Medeis Club; it only allowed women full membership in the year 2000, “moving into the 20th century at the turn of the 21st century” as one wag put it.

Many rogues of the Mercury Collegium also work in London; the wealth, secrets, and interplay of magical factions is irresistible to them. One loudmouth, Larkin, boasts of a scheme to steal the crown jewels from the Tower of London, leaving a duplicate made from Fae magic in its place; he is looking for associates to help with his plan. The Mercury Collegium congregate in an old pub near Fleet Street, the Lion and Unicorn. A werewolf gang, the Mohocks, also uses the pub, and have a loose alliance with the Mercury Collegium.

Then there are the Fae. Those Fae who follow the Queen of Hyde Park are relatively safe as long as one follows the usual strictures of not accepting gifts or making deals without the most careful of possible wording. But despite the Queen's claim to rule over all London Fae, there are independent Fae in London, and a few almost independent courts, most notably that of the being known as the Lesny, who has a similar domain to the Queen's, but based in Ealing Common. The Lesny is sometimes an ally of the Queen of Hyde Park and sometimes a rival. The Queen is unable or unwilling to deal with the Lesny directly, and she refers to him as an "ungrateful guest", but there may be room for a Crew of Liminals to get involved.



MANCHESTER

Manchester underwent explosive growth in the 19th century as a result of the industrial revolution. It was also a hotbed of political radicalism. Many of Manchester's most famous buildings date from the second half of the 19th century. The Town Hall, the Free Trade Hall, and John Rylands Library all show the classical red brick Gothic architectural style of the era.

Today, Manchester, sometimes affectionately called “the rainy city” for its weather, is big, busy, and varied. It has the second largest Chinatown in the United Kingdom, which goes back to the arrival of the first immigrants in the early 20th century, and expanding dramatically in the 1950s. There are also significant numbers of people with links to Ireland, Pakistan, and Africa. The city still maintains its own character and attitude, which has expressed itself in a distinct music scene going all the way back to the jazz scene of the 1950s. More than that, despite its size, Manchester has a definite community spirit.

This community spirit, which some in the Hidden World believe forms actual protective wards, has seen Manchester come out of several crises including the poverty common to many northern cities lasting through the 1980s, and several terrorist attacks. The terrorist bombing of 1996 led to extensive investment in renovation and redevelopment, and the city hosted the Commonwealth Games in 2002. There are many new buildings, including skyscrapers and new shopping arcades. Manchester is also home to two prominent football teams, Manchester United and Manchester City. Manchester University, formed from the merger of two 19th century institutions, is the largest university in the UK.

John Rylands Library, now part of the University, houses a restricted section containing occult books. The librarian, Hugh Burning, belongs to the Order of St. Bede, and keeps a careful watch over who accesses the occult books—or tries to access them. Hugh Burning has the task of spotting University of Manchester students who show an inclination towards occult study or powers and either stopping them or recruiting them.

Another force preys upon the students and other young people of the city, this time those who frequent Manchester's club scene. Since London got too restrictive, with authorities on the look-out for vampires, many have moved to Manchester to hunt and to play. These vampires dwell in tunnels which lie beneath Manchester city centre, including air raid shelters from the Second World War and an underground station from a project which was never completed.

Manchester also has more than its fair share of ghosts for such a comparatively young city. The most haunted place in the city is the striking Urbis Centre, vast wedge-shaped structure of concrete and glass in the centre of the city which opened in 2002. It now houses the National Football Museum, but this is the third use the city authorities have had for the building since it opened. Ghostly black dogs, harbingers of death and bringers of bad luck, congregate around the Urbis Centre on most nights. Why and what this forbodes is unknown, but sometimes visitors to the Urbis Centre who go there alone at night simply vanish, never to be seen again.



OXFORD

The impressions you might have of Oxford—the rich obnoxious students, the pride in history and tradition, the tension between town and gown. They're all true. But there's more to it than that. Not all the students lead a privileged life with a destiny in lucrative careers and the high echelons of politics for one thing. It's only about half of them.

—Naomi Fletcher, formerly associated to the Council of Merlin

Oxford University was the first university in the UK, and it is still known as an elite bastion of academic excellence and privilege. The centre of the city is dominated by the older Colleges, founded in Tudor times or even earlier, which make up Oxford University, the Colleges being institutions which both house and teach the students alongside university lectures and examinations.

Three Colleges dispute the claim to be the oldest one—University College, Balliol College, and Merton College. Merton College has a few traditions arising from fragmented knowledge of the Hidden World amongst its fellows and in some cases undergraduates. The College Grace, said before formal meals, is the longest in Oxford and includes lines in Latin from a Medieval blessing spell. Given the right speaker, it still has power.

One eccentric Merton tradition is the Time Ceremony, which takes place at night when clocks are changed in the UK from British Summer Time to Greenwich Mean Time in late October. Undergraduates in formal academic dress walk backwards around the Fellows' Quad, drinking port. The official story is that the Time Ceremony was invented as a spoof in 1971 by two undergraduates. A few in the Liminal World know that the ceremony is part of a very local geomantic attunement, which boosts the academic abilities of some students who take part for as long as they are on College Grounds.

These magical attempts have attracted a predator, who uses the magical energies generated to hide his own activities. This predator has the name Professor Tristram Hall, and he is a College Fellow of mathematics. Those who know Merton College know that Professor Hall has been there for a long time, but do not realise quite how long—he has been a part of the College for over three hundred years.

Mathematics is not Professor Hall's only pursuit. He is a necromancer and has stolen years of life from undergraduates under his care in order to extend his own. He weaves the arcane words of his life-stealing spell into the arcane mathematics he teaches, where the victim will not even notice them. Professor Hall is not a part of any magical order and lies low. The Council of Merlin, if they even know of his existence, do not interfere, perhaps seeing him as not doing enough harm to justify the risk in taking him on. After all, such an ancient wizard is likely to have considerable power.

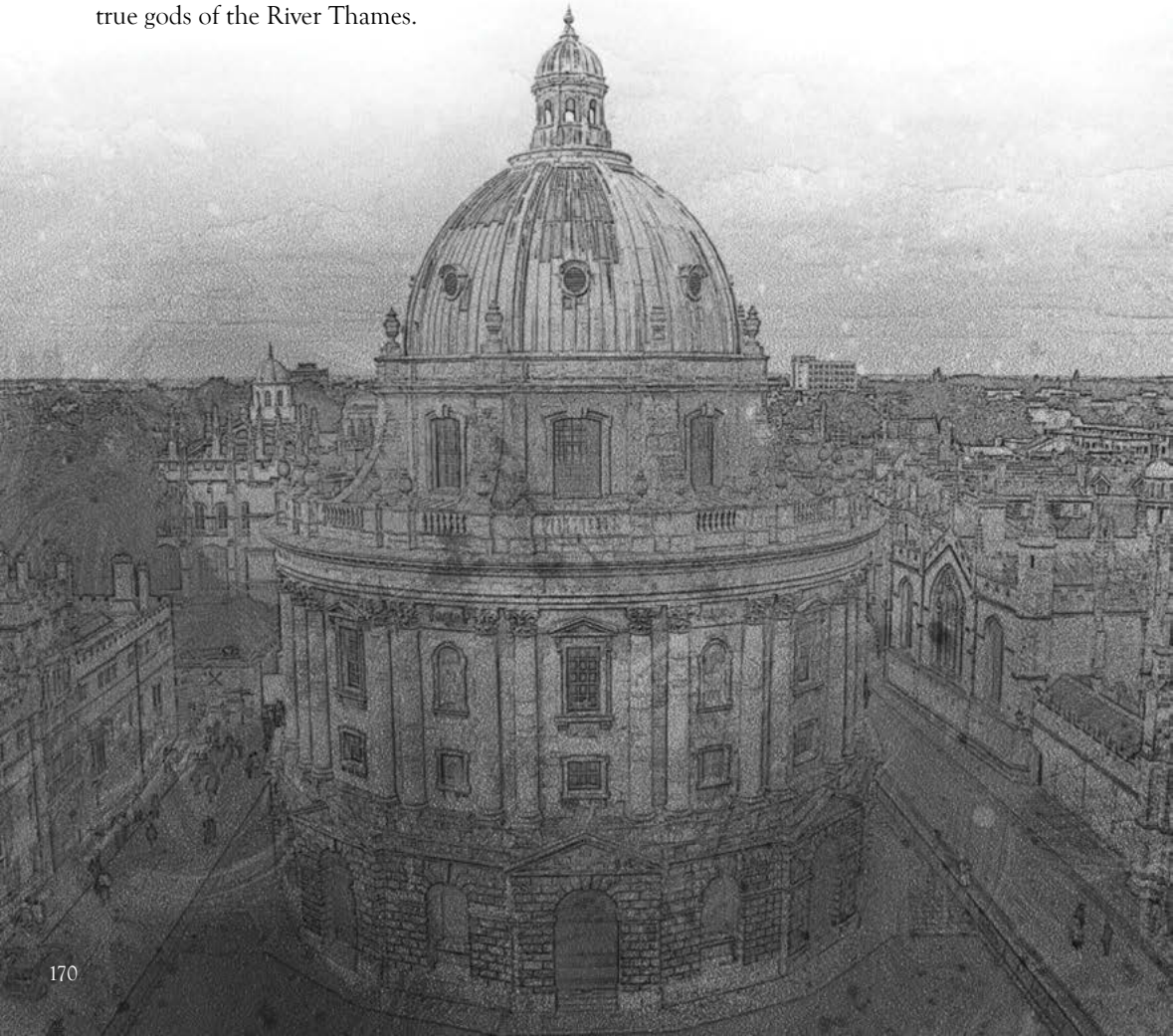
Merton College is not the most magically significant of the Oxford Colleges, however. That honour goes to Dee College, which was founded in Elizabethan times by John Dee, to further the cause of magical scholarship. Dee College, despite its position in the centre of the city surrounded by cobbled streets, goes unnoticed by most people in Oxford, not to mention tourists and other visitors. It is protected by powerful magic created by the Council of Merlin with the aid of the Fae.

Dee College is a graduate institution run by the Council of Merlin. It only takes those who already have degrees and admits suitable students for the study of magic. Oxford University is a major recruitment ground, but the Council of Merlin also monitors other universities, especially Cambridge and the institutions making up the University of London.

The College was never very large, even at its peak, and its structure is arranged round a single quadrangle. In the present day, Dee College has just twenty students, and most of the rooms stand empty. But the College still has the wealth of the Council of Merlin behind it, and training here carries considerable prestige for a magician. Such a strong Council of Merlin presence means that other beings and factions of the Hidden World generally leave the centre of Oxford alone. In particular, the presence of the Council of Merlin allows Professor Hall of Merton to stay safe from other factions.

There is more to Oxford than its centre. To the south-east are long-established African-Carribean and South Asian communities, along with cheaper housing and the former Morris car factory now known as Plant Oxford. Somewhere in the area is the shadowy house of a rogue magician called Corley, named an Enemy of Merlin by the Council, who sometimes takes sympathy on others who have fallen out with them. The cause of this mutual hatred is lost in history, but Corley is far older than he looks.

On the other side of Oxford, by the Oxford stretch of the River Thames, is an open area called Port Meadow. One who swims across the river here, or who falls in, can sometimes find themselves in the court of Isis, a Fae noble. Isis deals in magic involving memories, dreams, and forgetfulness. One who really wants to forget something or seek out a memory may well come here to deal with her, even though the Council of Merlin forbid all contact with the Fae noble. Isis is a fierce rival of a brash young Fae lord named Temese, since both came to be the true gods of the River Thames.



WINCHESTER

Winchester is a small and pretty city, with varied architecture from several different centuries, and the rich natural habitat of the Water Meadows is within walking distance.

The city was founded in Roman times, and became the major city of the Saxon kingdom of Wessex (the court was mobile in those times, so there was no capital), and then for a while England, though London was always larger. Winchester's history is clearly on display, not just in its buildings, but in features such as the bronze statue of Alfred the Great standing on a plinth in the city centre, and the Great Hall of Winchester Castle displaying King Arthur's Round Table.

The Round Table is not the original one, of course, but does itself date back to the 13th century. It was a magical artefact, which the Council of Merlin built to summon the ghosts of the original knights of the Round Table, but only residual magic remains. The Council of Merlin still has the table magically warded, for all that it is on display to tourists.

The Council of Merlin has claimed Winchester as its headquarters for centuries. Its headquarters and main library are here, tucked away and blending into the architecture of Winchester College, a highly selective private school over seven centuries old.

Winchester Cathedral is one of the biggest Gothic cathedrals in Europe. The original building was founded in Saxon times; the modern Cathedral was constructed soon after the Norman conquest, with further features added over the centuries. The green outside the building, Cathedral Close, is haunted by the ghost of a limping monk dressed in brown. The limping monk is an ancient spirit, having died in Saxon times when he broke his leg fleeing a Viking raid. The ghost still feels shame for his cowardice; his sometimes violent actions are both an attempt to appear brave and make others feel cowardly.

Further ghosts haunt the plague pits at the foot of St. Catherine's Hill, outside the city. The most fearsome ghost is far older, however, coming from the iron age, when a hill fort dominated the surrounding area from the peak of the hill. This dragon, in spirit form, is trapped by wards the Council of Merlin regularly renew; such a spirit is termed a nikor, and is dangerous indeed, though the Council of Merlin believe it to be one of the last two in the country, with the other being permanently trapped in Portmeirion. If it could, the nikor would lead the other ghosts in the area to go to war, perhaps against the dragon spirit trapped in Portmeirion, or perhaps against the living. It cannot be allowed to break free.





YORK

There's so much more to York than tourists and old buildings, than shops and pubs and museums. Do you want to see the real York? No, I don't mean the suburbs where ordinary people live, away from the overpriced properties of the city centre. How drab! Come with me, and I will show you wonders the like of which you have never seen.

-Dorian, a Fae Musician and occasional busker in York

York is a picturesque old city with much of its medieval structure intact. The architecture and numerous museums make it a major tourist attraction. The fabled vanished Ninth Legion of the Roman Empire originally founded York as a base for the conquest of northern Britain. York remained prominent throughout the history of Roman Britain and hosted the visits of several emperors. Constantine the Great, who made Christianity the official religion of the Empire, was proclaimed Emperor by his troops in York.

After the end of Roman Britain, York declined before recovering under the rule of the Angles. When the Vikings invaded, they took York as their capital. Soon after the Norman conquest of England, York revolted, and the Normans substantially rebuilt and fortified it, including replacing the cathedral, York Minster. In 1984 a long-running argument between Dunstan Innes, a Man in Black of the Order of St. Bede, and a hedge magician culminated in the magician calling lightning to strike down Innes when he was in York Minster. Innes survived, but York Minster needed £2.5 million of repairs due to the resulting fire.

York was a prominent medieval city, but became less important in Tudor and later times. One medieval street, the Shambles, is much as it was, with timber-framed houses, though the old butcher's shops have been replaced with expensive gift shops aimed at tourists.

The city walls are intact, though York, like most modern cities, has expanded far beyond them. As might be expected in such a historic city, ghosts are a common sight for those in the Hidden World who can see them, and old soldiers haunt the walls. A particularly harrowing group of ghosts comes from 1190, when the city wiped out York's Jewish population—between 150 and 500 people—who had sought royal protection at York Castle. The original castle was rebuilt from stone in the middle of the 13th century, and the ruins of the central keep, Clifford's Tower still remain. On the anniversary of the massacre, a Ghost Realm opens up on Clifford's Tower.

Besides ghosts, York is home to a group of Fae who congregate in a realm which can be accessed from the Shambles. This realm, the Goblin Market, is a vast 19th century open air fair, with stalls selling wonders and dreams. The food and drink is not only as dangerous as any in a Fae Realm, but also highly addictive. Payment for goods in the Goblin Market is in memories, experiences, talents, unique objects, rather than vulgar cash. But there is scope for profitable commerce for one who keeps their head.





Towns and Villages

CANEWDON

The site of the village of Canewdon, in Essex in the South-East of England, has been occupied since prehistoric times. The village itself dates back to early Saxon times, and it was a base for King Canute during his invasion of Essex in 1016. The Church of St. Nicholas, with a tower erected by King Henry V to commemorate his victory at Agincourt, sits on a ridge and towers both over the village and surrounding landscape.

Canewdon is surprisingly isolated for a village in a densely populated part of the country. It is tucked behind hills, with a walk of over two hours to the nearest town. Buses run to Canewdon just four times per day and stop in the early evening. The people of Canewdon are superstitious, and for a long time people of the surrounding country have told tales of witches and magicians from Canewdon.

One notorious magician from Canewdon was George Pickingill, who lived there until the early 20th century. Pickingill said he had magic powers and did the people magical favours, while claiming to keep the village safe from evil magic forces. The stories of Pickingill, many coming from the man himself, are half true. He was a confidence trickster who lied about his powers and other magic. But he was really a magician and was a member of the Mercury Collegium.

There are darker stories than that of George Pickingill. One local legend says that as long as the church steeple stands, there will be six witches in Canewdon, and if a stone falls, one dies and another takes her place. There is an element of truth in the legend. The tower of the Church of St. Nicholas contains six magical stones, each with a ghostly spirit of a witch chained to it. These ghosts are particularly dangerous as they are quite mad and can still use their powers over the weather. In the time of the 17th century witch craze, a local wise woman chained the spirits to keep her and the village safe from the attentions of Matthew Hopkins, the Witchfinder General.

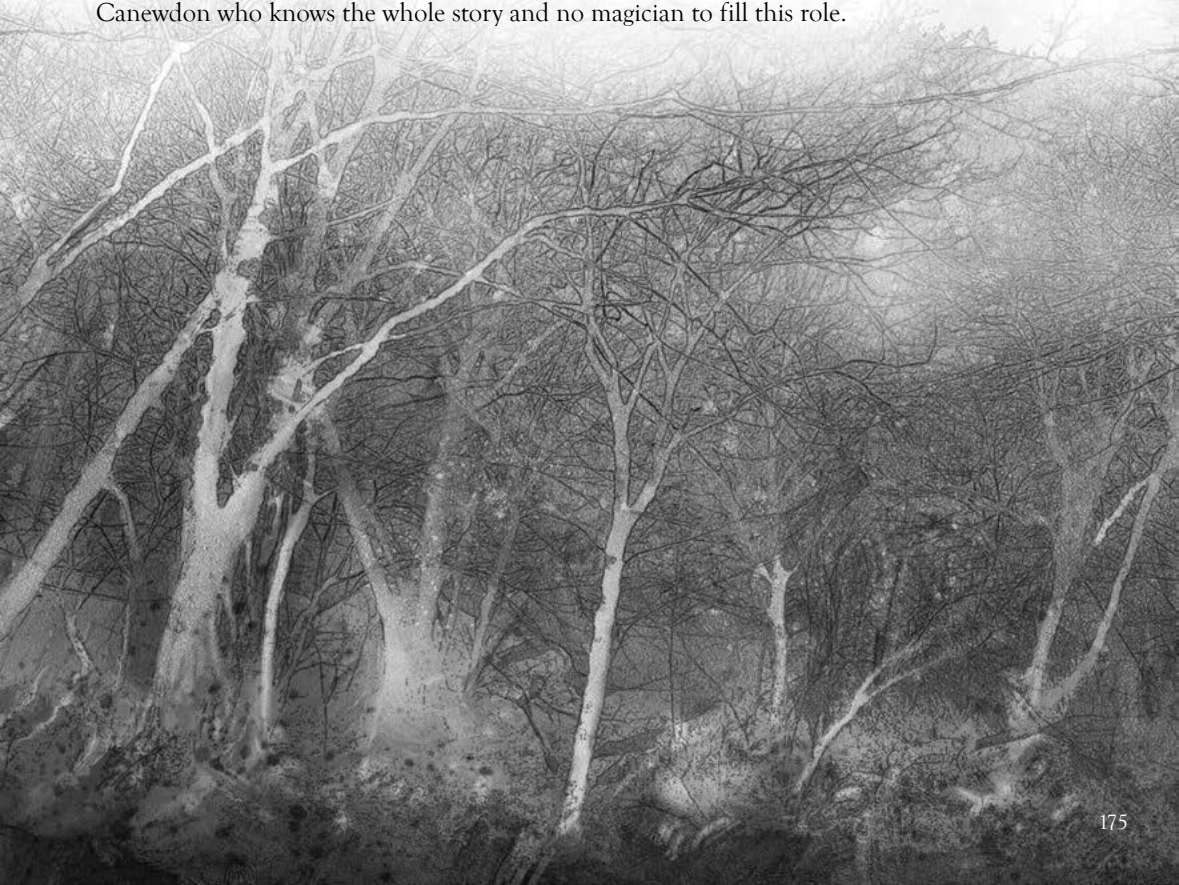
The Witchfinder General

Matthew Hopkins, the Witchfinder General, was active in East Anglia between the years of 1644 to 1647. He and his associates were solely responsible for the English version of the so-called witch craze, which led to hundreds of innocent people in England, mostly women, being executed for witchcraft in a fit of paranoia. At least sixty percent of the “witch” executions in England, not just in the 17th century but throughout recorded history, are due directly to Matthew Hopkins and his associates.

The factions in the Hidden World all claim no relationship to Matthew Hopkins, either positively or negatively. Most speculate that he knew very little, but a brush with the Hidden World led him down a path of fear and brought his extreme misogyny to the surface. There are stories of the Witchfinder General’s ghost haunting Canewdon, a place he never visited in life, but those are surely mere fancies.

The witch spirits are mostly quiet, but rouse themselves on certain nights of the year, or if they feel visitors threaten the village. They fear magicians who come from outside and property developers who would build a new road and end the village’s isolation. Those the witches dislike are likely to meet with accidents.

The worst threat is not necessarily the witch spirits themselves, but a magician who would deliberately rouse them or seek to control them. Traditionally, the wise men and women have been a shield between foolish magicians and the witch spirits, but today there is no one left in Canewdon who knows the whole story and no magician to fill this role.



GLASTONBURY

Glastonbury is a small town in Somerset, with a population under 10,000, which is steeped in myth and history. It has been inhabited since Neolithic times. According to local legend, Joseph of Arimethea came to Glastonbury with the Holy Grail and founded Glastonbury Abbey, one of the country's most prestigious abbeys until King Henry VIII ordered it destroyed. Parts of the abbey ruins still stand outside the town.

Another linked legend is that of King Arthur. The hill outside the town, Glastonbury Tor, is where King Arthur's remains were buried, and King Arthur will rise again when the country is most in need according to one of Merlin's prophecies. On top of the Tor are the ruins of a tower, once belonging to St. Michael's Church, which was destroyed at the same time as the abbey. The tower is largely intact apart from the roof. The last abbot of Glastonbury Abbey was executed—hung, drawn, and quartered—on top of Glastonbury Tor, and his ghost haunts it still.

One who digs into the Tor can find their way into a Fae realm, Avalon. The Fae lord Gwynn ap Nudd, Lord of the Dead and King of Summer, rules Avalon. He has a fierce hatred for the Winter King; some of his courtiers whisper this is because of an ancient feud over one of the Winter King's brides, though the official take is that this is a rivalry between summer and winter. Use of the lord's name, one given him by humans, is forbidden in Avalon.

The King of Summer is even more reluctant than most Fae to let a mortal who comes to his realm leave, and will do everything short of brute force to keep a visitor there. He more often uses gifts than other means, sometimes powerful magical gifts. Many mortals have come to Avalon hoping to trick its lord and leave bearing gifts, but few indeed have managed it. Some, including the ancient poet Thomas the Rhymer, married to one of Gwynn ap Nudd's many daughters, are still there centuries after they first came.

Glastonbury is sometimes seen as the spiritual heart of England and is still a site of pilgrimage. Many different branches of the Christian faith came to Glastonbury following the Reformation. As well as Christianity, Glastonbury is a centre for Sufism and followers of the Baha'i faith in the UK. Glastonbury is also well-known for its association with alternative lifestyles, paganism and new age religions, including druids and worshippers of the mother goddess. These movements have many hangers-on who claim to practice magic, but among them are a few genuine practitioners, separate from any faction, and even one or two changelings associated with Avalon.

Apart from its history and mythical elements, Glastonbury is best known for the nearby Glastonbury Festival, an open air music and performing arts festival with over sixty venues. It takes place on most summers and attracts over 200,000 visitors, as well as the most important current rock stars and bands. For Liminals, the fallow years when the festival does not take place, to allow the land to recover, are even more important. At those times, invisible Fae and ghosts of dead musicians play music over the empty festival grounds.



HINTON ST. MARY

Hinton St. Mary is a tiny Dorset Village, with fewer than three hundred inhabitants. It is sheltered from the cares of the outside world. The people who live in Hinton St. Mary are unaffected by crime and are not forced to concern themselves with problems affecting the country as a whole or matters of national politics. It is not cut off from the modern world, and certainly people from the village take part in society, but it is protected.

The reason for the protection is a geomantic node in the village, extending a subtle aura across it as long as it remains untapped by greedy geomancers. Few in the Hidden World know this secret, but the node has guardians. Barrie and Brenda Loring are a married couple of magical adepts, both trained in ward magic and geomancy. Brenda also knows the arts of the weathermonger, whereas Barrie is a diviner. They follow a family tradition, passed down for generations, of protecting the node.

The Lorings live in the former servant's house of the manor which is next to the village church. Although the church dates from the 15th century, it is not the oldest church in the village. That honour goes to a 4th century Roman building on which were two Roman mosaics. One mosaic was a portrait of Jesus Christ, the other a mythological scene of Bellerophon defeating the Chimera. Both mosaics have been removed and taken to the British Museum in London.

Fortunately for Hinton St. Mary, the mosaics were merely markers for the central location of the node and not a part of its magical power. After all, the mosaics were buried for over a thousand years before they were unearthed. Nonetheless, the Lorings believe the removal of the mosaics was an attack on the magical nature of the village.

Another attack came recently when a rogue magician attempted a ritual in the ruins of the nearby Cutt Mill. The perpetrator triggered the Lorings' magical wards, and the attack failed. Although the attack failed, the Lorings failed to catch the magician responsible. They hope the attack was purely opportunistic and not part of something bigger, but just in case the latter is true, they fear to leave Hinton St. Mary to hunt the perpetrator down. They may require outside help from a sympathetic Liminal Crew.



PEEBLES

I don't live in Peebles. But since my compact with the Fae, as the best mortal knight of my time, I've kept watch. It's immortality of a sort, but it's been a very long time. I wonder if I will ever be allowed to retire.

-Tam Lin, *The Black Baron*

Peebles is a quaint former mill town in the valley of the River Tweed in Scotland. The railway here is closed, but the old railway tunnel and viaduct remain, and the town is peaceful with a strong sense of community. Every summer there is a weeklong Beltane festival in which an eleven year old girl is appointed the Beltane Queen, and other children dress in costumes to portray her court.

The town is dotted with retirement homes. It is not just ordinary mortals who have come here to rest. Older powers come here when they lay down their mantles, for Peebles is a place where they can safely retreat from the affairs of the Hidden World, ceasing their plots and power struggles, allowing their myths to fade from the world. Here they are safe from their enemies, who with long memories might seek vengeance, for Peebles is protected by a powerful compact. Here, retired powers can relax and let down their guard, often for the first time in an extremely long time.

The compact dates from the time of Merlin, who gave up his staff and his power and retired here, converting to Christianity according to some stories. The arrangement is that a being of the Hidden World has the right to retire in Peebles, provided they swear upon their power never to use their power again, no longer interfering in the mortal world. A retiree must blend in with the local population and certainly not harm them. A retiree who breaks their oath forfeits the protection of Peebles.



In return, the Council of Merlin, the Mercury Collegium, and Fae Courts including the Thames, the Severn, the Winter King, and the Queen of Hyde Park will rain down fury upon anyone who breaks the compact and dares harm a retiree of Peebles. Friends and family will not be spared. Death or a fate worse than death is a near certainty. Tam Lin, once a mortal warrior, but long an affiliate of the Fae, is now known as the Black Baron. He lives in Barony Castle, now a Hotel, in nearby Eddleston and keeps a watch on Peebles.

The oldest of the retirees here is Mab, the very first wife of the Winter King, who once went by the title the Queen of Air and Darkness. She is the one who first gave the Winter King his power. She is close friends with a younger Fae lady, Titania, who retired after Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* first had an audience, not enjoying the attention or the light the play showed her in. Titania still believes a rival Fae inspired Shakespeare to embarrass her, but realised she couldn't be bothered to go through the usual rigmarole of learning who did it and exacting sevenfold revenge.

Another famous retiree now calls himself Philip H. His full name is or was Phillippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim. He is better known as Paracelsus, the Swiss doctor who pioneered the use of chemistry in medicine, and incidentally a Rosicrucian alchemist and astrologer who learned enough to make himself stop ageing. Sadly, as part of his compact for being in Peebles, he can't pass on his secret to anyone else.

Friends of the retirees in Peebles can visit and can even bring others along with them. A visitor could learn a piece of ancient knowledge from a resident, as long as they have the patience to listen to long stories and rambling about how things were better in the good old days. A Peebles retiree, however, may not use such opportunities to meddle with the outside world. If they do, they will be banished from Peebles, vulnerable once more to their enemies. If a power retires, they have to mean it.



PORTMEIRION

Of course, the artificial nature of Portmeirion has occult and, in particular, geomantic significance. Nobody who knows anything about magic doubts it, even if the mundanes see it as nothing more than a producer of fine crockery, a TV set, and an odd tourist destination. Portmeirion's founder was one of us, and it's a prison for something which must never get free. Best to leave the place alone.

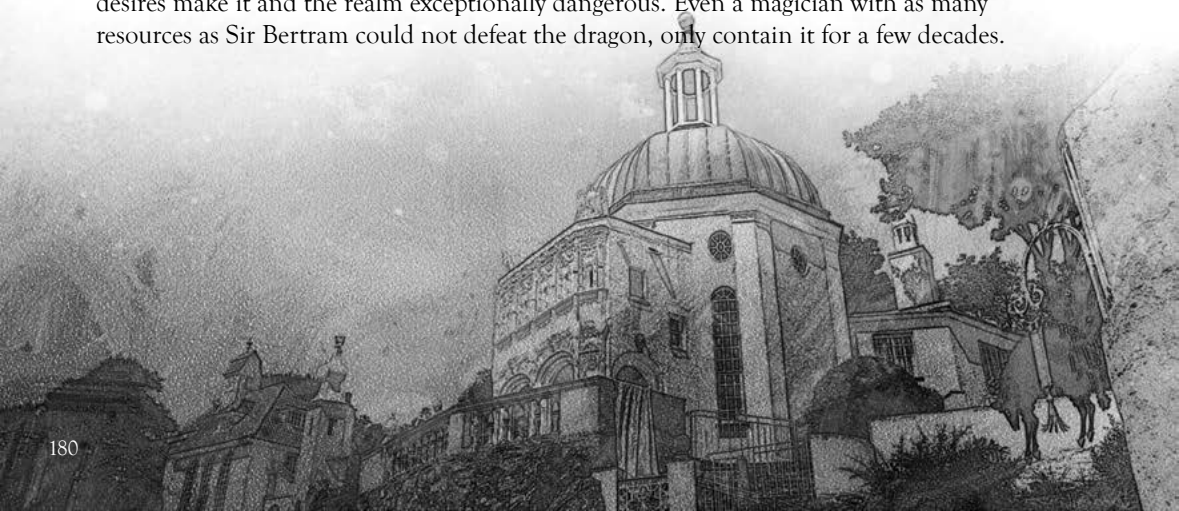
-Phineas Morgan, magician of the Council of Merlin

Portmeirion is an artificial village with Italian-style architecture constructed for tourists on the Welsh coast. It has little apparent purpose beyond being a destination for tourists, though it served as a set for the cult British surreal spy TV drama, *The Prisoner*, in the 1960s. The central mansion was built earlier, in Victorian times, and was converted to a hotel. The surrounding cottages, built according to the whimsy of the architect, Sir Bertram Clough Williams-Ellis between 1925 and 1975, are rented to tourists. Another building, incorporated later as a hotel and restaurant, is the Victorian mansion *Castell Deudraeth*, which was built to resemble a Medieval Castle.

All of the village's artificiality has occult significance. Sir Bertram was a geomancer descended from the Owain ap Gruffedd, king of the Welsh kingdom of Gwynedd, and the first person to bear the title Prince of Wales. He was part of the secretive faction called *House Annwn*. The nature of the village was built to block the way to a Ghost Realm, centred on a rocky platform in the woods which are all that remains of a castle, *Castell Aber Ia*, from Owain ap Gruffedd's times.

A fire which broke out in 1981 in the Hotel Portmeirion destroyed much of its hidden occult library and some of the sigils hidden in its architecture. The restoration was imperfect, meaning places from the past of Wales—forgotten villages and medieval castles—sometimes get out. The centre of the leakage is *Castell Deudraeth*, which sometimes abruptly becomes much more authentic than it should to visitors. And sometimes hotel guests go missing, trapped in this realm which so resembles the past, becoming ghosts themselves.

The real problem though is not the Ghost Realm, but the most powerful of the spirits within. This spirit calls itself simply the dragon and is twisted into a shadowy draconic form, vast and terrifying. Scholars call such a spirit a *nikor* and believe them almost extinct. Perhaps it is one of the famous dragons who once fought beneath the hill of Dinas Emrys in the time of King Vortigern of Arthurian stories. The dragon's stated desire is no less than conquest of the mortal world when it has enough other spirits in its service, though it also has a hatred for "the English Dragon of Winchester." The dragon has no hope of success there, but its insane desires make it and the realm exceptionally dangerous. Even a magician with as many resources as Sir Bertram could not defeat the dragon, only contain it for a few decades.



SALTAIRE

In the mid 19th century, leading industrialist Sir Titus Salt founded a model town to house the workers at his textile mill on the outskirts of Bradford, Yorkshire. This town, Saltaire, was a place of stone cottages far better than the slums in the nearby towns and cities, with wash houses, parks, a library, and schools, as well as almshouses for the desperately poor.

But the town had rules. Sir Titus did not approve of drinking, smoking, or fornication, and forbade them where he could. Certainly Saltaire had no public houses. The almshouses only admitted the worthy poor, who could prove they were unable to work, and those residing in them were not allowed to marry.

Not everyone could obey the rules, and then came some of those who had helped finance Saltaire—a nest of vampires. The vampires had free rein to make sure those who did not fit in vanished. Few noticed their absence, and the vampires were well-fed. A small nest of vampires still resides in Saltaire, even though their food source has gone. But there are still visitors to the preserved old town, some of whom might not be missed.

TAMWORTH

Tamworth is a market town in the centre of England, occupied since Roman times. Whilst in the 21st century it's overshadowed by the much larger city of Birmingham, in Anglo-Saxon times it was the capital of the Kingdom of Mercia, the seat of Saxon kings for over 300 years and home to the royal palace. Over the course of its history, Tamworth has been sacked by Vikings, occupied by Normans, besieged during the English Civil War, and ravaged by the Black Plague. The town was rebuilt after each crisis. To this day, there stands a Norman castle on a mount on the site of the old royal palace, and four cannons sit above the river next to the castle mound.

Tamworth's bloody history makes it home to the ghosts of many soldiers killed in battle, particularly close to the castle. Many rumours have circulated over the years from visitors to the castle about the sounds of clashing swords, or shadowy figures seen out of the corner of the eye, making their way through the castle grounds. On foggy days, the sound of cannons can occasionally be heard echoing through the centre of town.

In August 1959, four children between the ages of six and nine went missing whilst playing in a park by the convergence of the River Tame and the River Anker. Only one of the children, William Reynolds, was found a week later on the riverbank, soaking wet and babbling incoherently about something in the river. He continues to live in Tamworth, far from the river. Thirty years later to the day, three boys disappeared in the same spot. The only trace found of them was a backpack dredged from the bottom of the river three days later. William Reynolds was reported to have gotten very drunk that day. A case file remains open in the records of P Division.





Locations

DARTMOOR

Dartmoor is an area of moorland in north Devon, a landscape of hills and bogs. Many of the hills have granite outcrops, and the landscape can be dangerous when it rains heavily. Some of the granite outcrops are markers to entrances to minor Fae realms, to be accessed by walking around the marker a certain number of times either clockwise or anticlockwise.

The British Army uses portions of the moor for manoeuvres and as a firing range; these areas are marked with red and white posts. The Army also raises red flags on nearby hills at times of live firing.

Most in the army are unaware of any occult significance of the posts, but a consultant from P Division made sure of the placement of the posts. He wanted the posts to be a protection against the mischievous and malicious invisible Fae called gremlins, who delight in explosions and lethal technological malfunctions.

The Fae are not the only supernatural beings linked to Dartmoor. One werewolf family, the Talbots, lives on an isolated farm here, in hiding from the Jaeger family. They have the protection of the famed werewolf hunter, the Hound, who has been active since Victorian times. There are a number of hauntings dotted around the hills and bogs, often coming from hikers who met with accidents, but also a number of ghostly black dogs who delight in causing people on the moor to go astray.

THE FOREST OF DEAN

The Forest of Dean contains an ancient site, dating from before the time the Celts came to Britain, let alone the Romans and other latecomers. This site may even be older than the Fae. In this site are strange limestone outcroppings, hidden caves, and trees thousands of years old. Paths wander and wind here and are impossible to keep track of. This ancient and strange place is known as the Puzzlewood.

The Puzzlewood holds an ancient magic. It is impossible for any to do harm to anyone else here, even if they are a ravaging werewolf or archmage. Divinations involving the Puzzlewood, or those within, simply fail. It is a place of sanctuary, but a fleeting one—anyone who falls asleep in the Puzzlewood wakes up outside of it, within the greater Forest of Dean. The paths within the Puzzlewood change and cannot be tracked, and nothing can be built here. The landscape changes each time one enters.

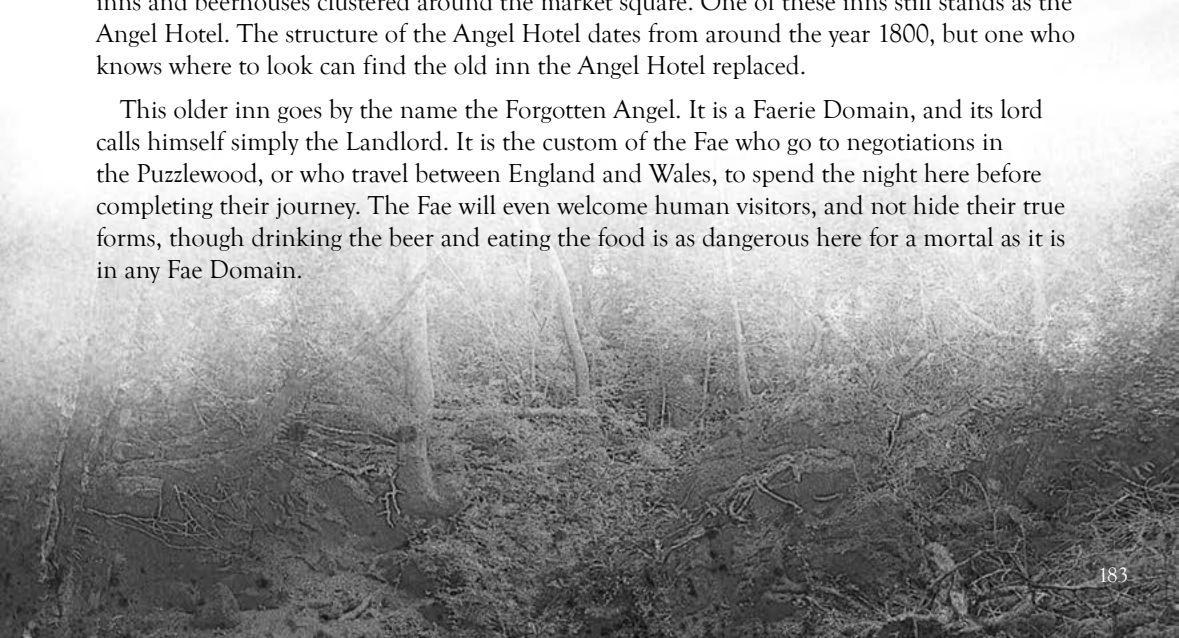
Hostile factions in the Hidden World sometimes arrange parleys and peace talks within the Puzzlewood, where none can harm the other, though all must enter the Puzzlewood at the same time and place. Of course, all bets are off once the parties involved leave the Puzzlewood, and the surrounding Forest of Dean has seen more than its fair share of battles between beings of the Hidden World when negotiations have failed.

In one of the caves within the Puzzlewood dwells an ancient vampire, Aulus Marius Dentatus, who claims to be the first vampire in Britain, the ancestor of all the others here. He has been in the Puzzlewood for centuries, hiding from his enemies. Marius knows many ancient secrets of the ways of the vampires and even has plausible theories about their origin.

But Marius is desperate and mad. He is starving—without being able to harm anyone, he cannot feed, and even a vampire begins to hallucinate after not sleeping for centuries. Although afraid—an unusual emotion for a vampire—he would perhaps even welcome the end of his long unlife. And Marius' enemies have long memories, some being other vampires or other ancient beings—they would welcome a chance to get at him. A Liminal Crew could get caught up in a truly ancient feud here.

The nearest town to the Puzzlewood is Coleford. Coleford is within the Forest of Dean, and it prospered as a market town following the English Civil War. At one stage a number of inns and beerhouses clustered around the market square. One of these inns still stands as the Angel Hotel. The structure of the Angel Hotel dates from around the year 1800, but one who knows where to look can find the old inn the Angel Hotel replaced.

This older inn goes by the name the Forgotten Angel. It is a Faerie Domain, and its lord calls himself simply the Landlord. It is the custom of the Fae who go to negotiations in the Puzzlewood, or who travel between England and Wales, to spend the night here before completing their journey. The Fae will even welcome human visitors, and not hide their true forms, though drinking the beer and eating the food is as dangerous here for a mortal as it is in any Fae Domain.



THE GIANT'S CAUSEWAY

The Giant's Causeway is a natural formation of thousands of interlocking basalt columns on the coast of Northern Ireland. In myth, an Irish giant built the causeway across the sea between Ireland and Scotland so that he and a Scottish giant could meet and fight.

Whatever the truth of the matter, the causeway does provide passage between Ireland and Scotland. One who walks across enough of the columns without treading on any which are not hexagonal in shape will find the causeway abruptly extends all the way across the sea. This causeway, not quite in the real world, may provide passages to other places than Scotland, but it is guarded by a giant, Benandonner.

GLEN COE

Glen Coe is a spectacular deep valley in the Scottish Highlands. The only settlement in the valley is the village of Glencoe, though a 16th century inn, the Clachaig Inn, can be found about two miles away and is a popular haunt of hikers and climbers.

The village of Glencoe is best known as the site of a massacre. After the Jacobite rebellion, the English government wanted peace and control in Scotland. It offered a royal pardon and money to chiefs who pledged loyalty to the crown by the start the year 1692, but severe reprisals against those who did not. The Glencoe MacDonalds did not promptly pledge their loyalty, and government forces killed 38 men and burned the village of Glencoe down. Another 40 women and children died of exposure as a result.

The ghosts of those who died still haunt the area. They seek justice and redress and, as a result, hikers sometimes go missing, victims of the ghosts seeking revenge, especially against the English, or any who work for the government. Those of the Hidden World are especially likely to be victimised by ghostly attacks.

Legend has it that Glen Coe was the birthplace thousands of years ago of Ossian, who was perhaps a mortal bard and magician or perhaps one of the Fae. If he were one of the Fae, there appears to be no trace remaining of his domain. The Ossian legends occasionally draw magical scholars to the Glen despite the danger from ghosts.

HADRIAN'S WALL

Those in the know in the Hidden World suspect that Hadrian's Wall was as much a spiritual boundary of the Roman Empire as a practical military installation. In some ways it was magically much like the pomerium which surrounded the city of Rome. The Fae north of the Wall could oppose the Romans directly, but not those to the south, however the druids of Britain invoked them. They were part of the Empire once the Wall was built.

Of course, all this is ancient history and as much supposition by occult scholars as fact. The spiritual power of the Wall is as spent as its physical structure. But there is still something uncanny about the ground the Wall once stood upon, or where portions still stand.

To a necromancer or one with the Sight, the area around the Wall is thick with ghosts, some very old indeed. These ghosts seldom materialise, but are protrusions of a Ghost Realm just outside the physical world, where the Wall still stands and there is nothing of modern Britain, though even in the Ghost Realm the Wall is crumbling. There are stories of magical treasures hidden in this ghost realm, but seeking such treasures out is dangerous indeed.

LOCH LOMOND

Loch Lomond is the largest of the Scottish Lochs, at least in terms of surface area. There are numerous small islands in its waters. One of these islands, the tiny islet of Inchgalbraith, is entirely covered with the ruins of the castle which once stood there.

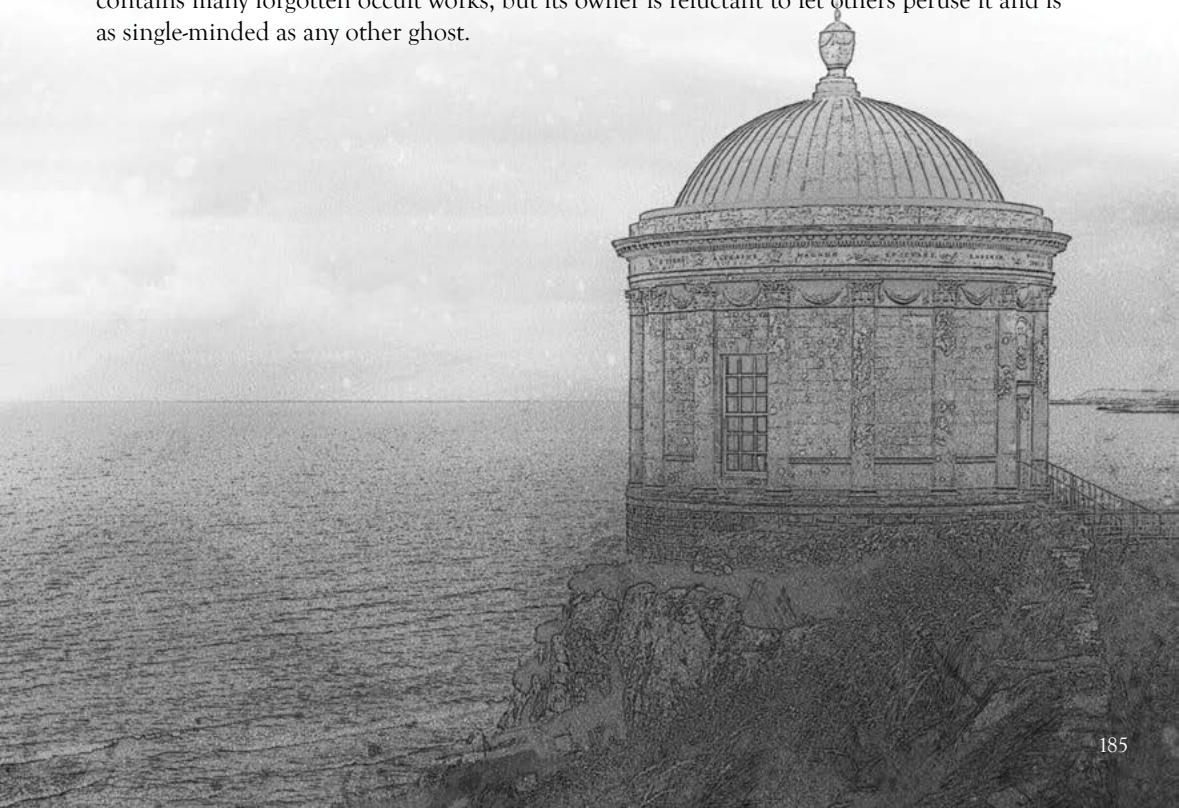
Inchgalbraith is the opening to the Fae Domain of the Osprey Duke, a vassal of the Winter King. One who visits the island and traces out the correct path among the ruins will find the castle abruptly intact, and full of Fae in 16th century dress. The Osprey Duke wants nothing to do with mortals and the real world, and the Fae here will ignore mortals as best they can, unless they do something spectacular to attract attention.

Attracting attention is a needful thing, for one cannot leave the Osprey Duke's castle without his explicit permission. He is sure not to let a mortal who dares to trespass leave without them offering something profound in return. Despite all that, for a mortal who really wishes to visit the Winter King, apart from guessing where in the country his domain will appear, dealing with the Osprey Duke is the most reliable, though not the safest, way.

MUSSENDEN TEMPLE

Mussenden Temple, built in the late 18th century, stands at the very edge of cliffs on the west coast of Ireland, overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. It was once further inland, but coastal erosion has brought the Temple closer to the edge, increasing its supernatural significance even as it threatens the structure's existence.

The temple is an ornate round building and was the library of its founder Frederick, Earl of Bristol and Lord Bishop of Derry. The library is no more, but adjoined to the temple is a Ghost Realm, ruled by the Earl-Bishop, where the library stands intact. The ghost library contains many forgotten occult works, but its owner is reluctant to let others peruse it and is as single-minded as any other ghost.



THE NEW FOREST

A word to the wise. If you're a werewolf and you haven't sworn to serve the Jaegers, don't go near the New Forest. It's nearly as bad as Sheffield. And if you're not a werewolf, don't go near Lyndbury, and bear in mind that the werewolves aren't the only things hunting at night. Don't be fooled by the rich bastards with their big houses and big cars. Even they don't go walking about at night, and for a Liminal who has some idea of what's going on, the place really isn't safe.

Rebecca "Moonchild" Smith, Werewolf

The New Forest is home to many plants and animals rare in modern England and includes bogs, heaths, and deciduous woodland. There are hundreds of neolithic barrows within the forest. It became a National Park in 2005.

King William the Conqueror ordered the planting of the forest as a royal hunting ground. Ninety percent of the forest is still, almost a thousand years later, owned by the crown. King William Rufus, the Conqueror's successor, died in the New Forest in either a hunting accident or assassination, killed by one of his own men. The place he died is still marked by the Rufus Stone.

William Rufus's ghost still haunts the New Forest, leading other ghosts on a spectral hunt on dark nights when there is no moon in the sky. If he were murdered, there was never justice, and that would be enough to explain a ghost so many centuries later.

There are several highly prosperous villages in the New Forest; the area has attracted rich people who desire a rural life and pretty surroundings. As far as the Hidden World is concerned, the most important people living in the New Forest are a branch of the Jaeger family of werewolves, who effectively own the village of Lyndbury within the Forest. Within the village and surroundings, the Jaeger family may do as they wish, without interference from any local authorities.

STONEHENGE

Stonehenge is an ancient stone circle, the best known of many such henges in the country. It was built by Fae giants in the neolithic age, and has been a site of magic and worship for thousands of years. In modern times, its magic is almost all used up, and it is little but a shape on the landscape for tourists to photograph.

Other henges, more obscure, retain more of their power and are suitable places for a geomancer to regularly tap magical energy, though even the obscure henges are nearly all already claimed.



MOUNT SNOWDON

Mount Snowdon is the tallest mountain in the UK outside of Scotland. The mountain has been tamed since the end of the 19th century by a railway going up to its summit where there is a visitor centre and cafe. The foot of the railway is in the village of Llanberis.

Yet there is still wildness in the area around Mount Snowdon, which is lightly inhabited. House Annwn, the most secretive faction of the Hidden World, has a hidden base on Snowdon's lower slopes.

The mountain marks the southernmost point the domain of the Winter King sometimes reaches. In winter, when the fogs descend and the snows fall, when the railway closes, there is passage from the mountain to the Winter King's realm, though the way is guarded by the water monster known as the Avanc.



CHAPTER 8



3/17



Being a Game Master





Game Generation

INFORMATION FROM CREW GENERATION

Before the first game in a series, the character and Crew generation process gives the Game Master lots of tools to use to build the game and engage the players. Specifically, the process yields the following:

- ☞ **The Crew.** The Crew will have an initial location and some assets.
- ☞ **Drives and a goal:** Individual PCs have drives. The Crew has a goal.
- ☞ **Factions:** The faction relationship process shows which factions the players see their characters as having relationships with. Others will be left untouched. The GM can then quietly move the untouched factions into the background of the game. Those the players want relationships with are the interesting ones.
- ☞ **Hooks:** Hooks provide a direct inspiration for the first few cases, as well as indicating the sorts of cases the players might see the Crew taking on.

This information is valuable. As GM, you should use it! Much of this chapter explains how.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

To build a series of cases, the GM needs locations and people. Bear in mind that the most significant monsters are people too. Here's how it goes.

- ☞ Give each faction in play (see above) a Face. This will be someone from the faction the Crew interact with and talk to. A Face is intended to be a recurring character, though if Player Character actions lead to a Face's sticky end, so be it.
- ☞ Some drives and goals suggest further Faces. You should come up with these at this stage too.
- ☞ Some Crew assets suggest places, such as a hospital or library, or Faces, or sometimes both. Faces associated to assets do not usually need the same level of power or detail as a major Face.
- ☞ For each hook, think of two places. One of these locations is where a case involving the hook first begins, and is probably near the Crew's base. The other location is where a case involving the hook immediately leads; that could be anywhere.
- ☞ For each hook, think of an antagonist. An antagonist is a significant hostile character, but is probably only in play for one case, unlike a Face.

To detail a location, think of three facts about it. Such facts could be a set of sensory impressions, an idea of people found there, a general description, or something about its history. Do what you need to in order to give yourself a feeling for the location, so you can describe it to your players. You can always add more detail to locations which come up again and again in play.

The same logic goes for Faces, think of three facts. Some possible facts include a description of their appearance or mannerisms, an idea of their goals, something from their history, something about their family, or any vices. People who only appear in one scene can be shallowly described. Those who play a major role may need more detail, but extra details can be added when the same people come up again in play.

Do not worry too much about the power level of Faces or even hostile antagonists. Faces may well be able to defeat the Crew of Player Characters, either physically or socially. Or they may be weaker, but secure in the knowledge they have their faction behind them. Both are interesting.

As for an antagonist associated to a hook, the Player Characters have tools such as Will to enable them to survive or even defeat their superiors in some encounters. Not every enemy has to be faced in a head-on fight; players are an ingenious bunch and will often find a clever way to take an enemy on indirectly. On the other hand, if the enemy is sometimes weak enough that the Player Characters can soundly defeat them, that's also satisfying for most players.

All that said, important Non-Player Characters do need game mechanics information—Skills, Traits, and so on. These define what a character can do, presents them with a role in the game, and helps with their characterisation. There are lots of examples in chapter 9 to use and tweak as the game demands.

NEW FACES

Sometimes, after a case, a Face will be permanently removed from play. This is often a euphemism for “being killed by the Player Characters,” but there can be other reasons to remove a Face—for example, when they are not working well as an antagonist or patron. If the Player Characters work to remove a Face from a position of influence, make changes to the faction involved. Maybe it grows weaker. Maybe some of the goals of the Faction change.

If the Player Characters have dealt an enemy faction a blow, they have won a victory. This means the GM should not immediately replace a Face they have defeated with another Face of equal or greater power. Wait a case or two before introducing a new Face. Maybe the new Face could be weaker than the old one, and more easily swayed, if the faction is weakened.

A more powerful new Face means something different. It means the Faction is now paying much more attention to the Player Characters. The Faction’s next actions are certain to present new possibilities for plots. And the more powerful Face means the Faction is more powerful; if the new Face is permanently removed from play, that’s going to hurt.

ADDING TO THE WORLD

The game world inevitably grows until a series of cases approaches a final conclusion. Between cases, a GM might like to:

- ☞ Create a hook
- ☞ Create two new places
- ☞ Create a new antagonist
- ☞ Create a new Face

The GM doesn’t have to do any of those; the initial stages of preparation should provide plenty to use. But the GM might want to.

There’s also a warning here about creating too much, both in terms of possible burn-out and in terms of making the world too big. Reusing places and antagonists creates a sense of continuity, though a place the Player Characters have trashed or thoroughly exploited, or deceased antagonist should be replaced. Similarly, a new Crew asset might be associated to an existing Face.





Case Generation

INFORMATION TO BUILD CASES

The GM has tools to build a case, just as they do for building the game as a whole. These tools are:

- ☞ The hooks
- ☞ The two locations associated to each hook
- ☞ The antagonist associated to a hook
- ☞ The faction relationships
- ☞ The PCs' drives
- ☞ The Crew's goal

You can use any of these to build a case. A case often takes the initial form of a mystery. Sometimes, unlocking a mystery is the whole case. Other times, the mystery element will be rapidly resolved, leading to the real meat of the case.

THE BASIC STRUCTURE

At its most basic, a case is the following:

- ✧ **A hook for the case.** Something which intrigues the Player Characters or which they can't afford to ignore. Try to link the opening to a faction relationship, the Crew's goal, or one of the Player Character's drives. The PCs should either want to be involved (and certainly the players should want to be involved), or feel compelled to act.
- ✧ **An opening situation linked to the hook.** The opening situation is the first major thing the characters discover when they start investigating the case. Some opening situations are the immediate aftermath of an active hook; others might take time to get to.
- ✧ **An opening location linked to the initial situation.** Here the PCs can investigate, and possibly face obstacles and danger. The opening situation will sometimes take place here, but not always.
- ✧ **A lead.** A lead could suggest the solution of the case lies in a final location, and possibly the antagonist behind the case.
- ✧ **Complications.** Complications prevent the PCs from following the lead immediately to the final location. This might take the form of opposing NPCs, a physical obstacle, another location, or simply a lack of sufficient information. Further complications can be added in the form of a twist (see below).
- ✧ **A final location.** Here the case can be resolved. The antagonist behind the case is here to be confronted, and the result of the confrontation resolves the case. Here confrontation does not necessarily mean fighting a monster and its minions, though that is a perfectly fine ending. A confrontation might also mean a social showdown or a moral dilemma.

Factions, Drives, Goal

A case will involve factions, drives, or the Crew's goal at its opening and conclusion. You should vary these. Do not use the same faction, drive, or goal at the opening and conclusion of a case. You can also use a faction alongside a drive or goal at both the opening and conclusion.

In a Liminal series, you will of course run several cases. From case to case, rotate the drives of PCs you are choosing to highlight in the case. Remember a drive in a case gives spotlight time for the Player Character involved. Of course, players will try to highlight their characters' own drives over the course of a case, even if a GM does not directly aim things at them. This is a good thing, and also a part of the game; it does not just belong to the GM.

Another thing to rotate from case to case is the factions involved. This is less important in terms of spotlight time than rotating things aimed at the Player Characters' drives, but does provide engagement with the factions in play, along with variety.

To follow this structure, the GM also needs:

- ☞ Knowledge of the antagonist. What are they doing, and why are they doing it? This should be something the Crew finds objectionable. Again, drives, goals, and faction relationships come into play.
- ☞ Ideas of what the Player Characters can find out about the case by research with the initial information. Players may not want to find out more about a case before pursuing a lead, and this is to be encouraged. Can they find out more about the second location, the antagonist, or something which may help them confront the antagonist? Can they simply find out more about the background, and why the case is important? Either or both are good.

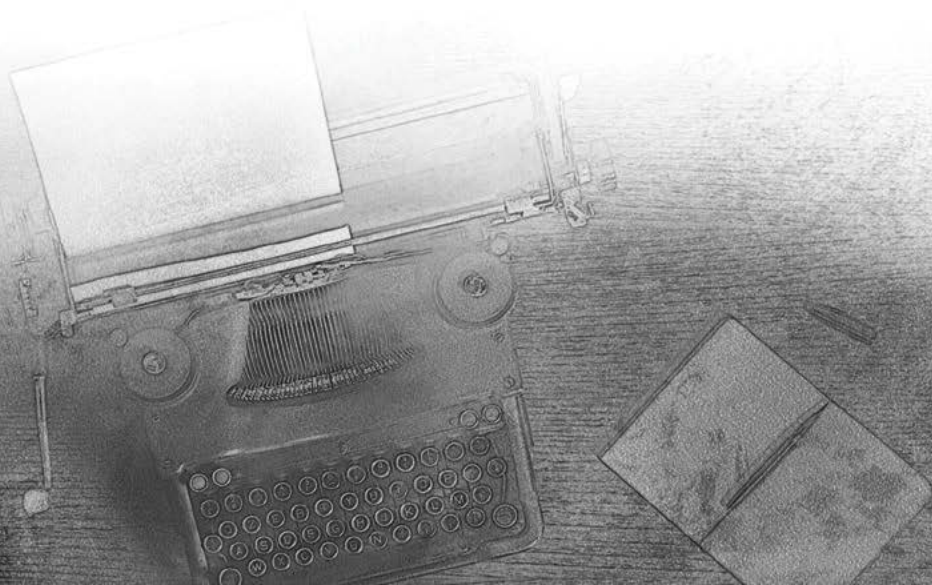
Twists

The basic structure, like all structures, gets repetitive if overused. It is a basis from which the GM can elaborate, improvise, and invent structures of their own. It is a starting point to play with.

Further, a case described just by the basic structure is likely to be quite short, taking not much more than two hours. This is either a feature or a bug (for example, for play on a weekday evening or online, I find a session of around 2 hours and 30 minutes to be ideal), but there are ways to make a case more elaborate and feel deeper.

One way to make a case deeper is to introduce a twist, and there are two major types of twist to consider here. The first type of twist is to have another faction involved in a case, carrying out moves of their own and either getting in the way of the Player Characters or providing a further source of opposition. This form of twist is imposed by the GM when designing the case.

The second type of twist is to present an opportunity to one or more players, involving a drive or the Crew's goal in a way which is not directly related to the case, but revealed when pursuing it. This twist will introduce a lead to a third location in the case, with further opposition to immediately following the lead. Pursuing this lead is at best tangential to the case, however. At worst for the players, though most interestingly for the game, it could be hard or impossible to pursue both the lead and the main case.



Classic Twists

The classic twists in mysteries are things not being what they seem at first sight, with the apparently guilty becoming victims and apparent victims becoming guilty. Taken to extremes, this leads to a game being run in almost a film noir style.

To an extent, any case opens with a mystery, but this type of twist misleads players at first as to what is going on. In my experience, such types of twist work less well in RPGs than they do in other forms of fiction and removes investment if part of a steady diet, rather than an occasional or once only thing. In an RPG, a GM needs to play fairly with the players. If this means they quickly resolve a mystery, this is a good thing. They're clever and invested, and should be allowed to triumph.

Another classic twist in a noir style detective story is the person who hired the detective being the villain all along. This is fine, but probably something to only do once over the course of a series of cases. An interesting alternative is for the players to see and know that the one who hires them is villainous, but they still have good reason to take on an offered case despite that.

VARYING CHALLENGES

There are several possible challenges which can arise during in a case. These include:

- ☞ Fights
- ☞ Mysteries to investigate
- ☞ Obstructive NPCs who need to be persuaded to cooperate or worked round
- ☞ Environmental dangers
- ☞ Moral dilemmas

When running a case, try to vary the challenges. A series of fight scenes is not what Liminal is about, though a fight can make a thrilling introduction or finale. Mysteries are at the heart of the game, but are there to move between other challenges and need to be paced with action and investigation.

Challenges can be combined and don't have to be a direct danger to the PCs until they choose to get involved. For example, an NPC trapped in a dangerous environment is a good environmental danger. It's more interesting than just endangering the PCs because there's a choice as to whether or not they choose to mount a rescue.

As well as varying challenges within a case, they can also be varied between cases. Some cases are more cerebral, whereas others are action-packed.

POLICE LINE

DO NOT CROSS

POLICE

Skill Tests

Most crimes are bloody easy to solve. Investigate the scene, ask a few questions of witnesses, and there will be someone screaming, “I did it, pal.” at the top of their lungs. Figuratively, that is.

When the Hidden World is involved, the crime is going to baffle the ordinary police forces, but the trick is knowing just enough about the supernatural to solve it; if you know enough, most of them are just as easy as ordinary crimes.

It’s knowing what to do about it when you know who’s done it, that’s the trick.

Aaron Kaminsky, former police officer

SETTING CHALLENGE LEVELS

For most static challenges, the Challenge Level is 8. Skilled PCs will succeed much more often than not, even without spending Will, which is exactly as it should be. The Player Characters are competent individuals.

Some challenges, however, are tougher. For a tougher challenge, start the Challenge Level at 8 for an ordinary use of a Skill, but add +2 to the Challenge Level for each complicating factor.

Example

- ☞ Climbing down the wall of a house: Challenge Level 8
- ☞ Climbing down the wall of a house at night with no light: Challenge Level 10
- ☞ Climbing down the wall of a house at night with no light, in a blizzard: Challenge Level 12

FAILURE AND CONSEQUENCES

The Challenge Level is one tool the GM has when it comes to setting challenges for PCs. The use of different consequences for failure is another tool. The players also have some control, in terms of choosing to spend Will, but that's their decision and not the GM's.

There are two real principles at play here one is that failure should not be a simple block on what the characters are doing (sometimes called "fail forward") and the other is that the roll of a skill test means something in the game and surrounding fiction. A failure cannot be negated by immediately rolling another skill test. Equally, it should be noted, a success should not be negated by the GM immediately calling for another skill test (sometimes called "let it ride") unless the situation changes.

The four choices for a GM when it comes to a failed skill test are:

The test fails and leads to trouble

The trouble is something which the player or players must immediately deal with, but after the trouble is dealt with, they can try again. This is often a good choice for a failed test, as it leads to something interesting (the trouble) but does not block the players (they can try again). You can use it in a wide variety of situations.

For example: Research could lead to attention from someone inappropriately curious or hostile, exploration could lead to a completely different problem to deal with before it resumes, and a failed social check could provoke hostility, or again, inappropriate curiosity, which needs to be calmed down.

There are two potential down-sides with this option. One is that it throws up another obstacle, which slows down the game. This is not a bad thing necessarily, and might even be useful or irrelevant, but it is something to be aware of if you have pacing concerns. The other thing is that it requires the GM to think of something quickly, and often nothing immediately comes to mind. Nothing coming to mind is no disgrace; simply choose another consequence for failure.

Trouble does not have to be immediate physical danger. For example, an attempt to research lore might fail, with the GM mentioning that the character has still found a tantalising mention of an obscure book in a library with restricted access in a different city. In this way, the trouble presents another opportunity, which a player may choose to pursue or ignore.

The test still succeeds, but in the process the PC takes d6 damage

This is often a good choice for a physical obstacle, such as a difficult climb or journey. It gets things over with quickly, applies a cost for failure, and avoids any issues due to repeated attempts or complications. It also doesn't require the GM to improvise anything extra. The obvious downside is that it only really applies to physical obstacles. "You get what you want in the meeting, but it is so long and tedious that you take d6 damage" feels rather silly.

It's also not a great option to overuse; it can feel like a grind. If healing is readily available before facing other challenges, it can also feel like a bit of a cop-out, with no real penalty as a result of failure. But it's a solid choice if the GM does not want to improvise a new complication, either due to not easily thinking of one in the current situation or because of time pressure.

You succeed, but the task takes much longer than expected or attracts undue attention

This option is in some ways similar to the first option, but does not require another test when the obstacle has been dealt with. It's a good option to use when a Player Character is bound to succeed, but there is a reason to be subtle or time pressure. If there is no such restriction, there is no need to roll at all.

It has similar strengths and weaknesses to the first option for failure, but is more specialised in application.

You simply fail

Not only does a PC fail, but they can't try again unless matters somehow improve for them.

Simply failing is sometimes fine. Sometimes a player is seeking to gain an advantage in a future challenge, which is behaviour you should encourage. But in this case punishing failure in a roll to gain advantage with a complication or damage seems unduly harsh and potentially uninteresting. The roll to gain advantage adds to the situation but is not the main event.

Another time simply failing can be appropriate is at the finale of the case. There is a problem the Player Characters want to deal with, they plan, they get there, they find out a situation they need to stop—and they fail. Dealing with the failure is interesting for future cases. Failure isn't always bad for the game. As noted, the players have resources in the form of Will to improve failed dice rolls, but if they've spent their Will whether through bad planning or bad luck, final failure might be a logical consequence.

There are two times to strictly avoid this choice. One is when failure is immediately fatal. Investigators might die, but should not die as the result of a single bad dice roll. The other is when a skill test is something a character makes to get further in a case, such as overcoming an obstacle on the only clear way to progress or not finding necessary information.

This issue is mitigated by good design of cases with room for improvisation of alternative routes to a conclusion, but a failure on a roll which feels vital to progress, throwing trouble in the direction of the PCs while the obstacle can still be overcome, or having failure still indicating an alternative, albeit inconvenient, route to find out more, is appropriate.



INVESTIGATIONS AND SKILL TESTS

When a PC uses a knowledge or investigation based Skill during a case, the GM should think what they could find out using a relevant Skill and how long it is likely to take. The GM should also ask the player what sort of thing they are looking for—is it for example plans for a location, the supernatural history of a group, a possible weakness of a monster, or something else?

Don't forget that one option for a critical success on a skill test is extra information. Such may be particularly appropriate here. The main ways of finding information are:

Recall of Relevant Facts

Recall of relevant facts: A PC won't get much by trying to think of something they know on the spot, but it doesn't take much time. The GM will give a character a single piece of information on a topic, which won't necessarily be what they're looking for, but will be somewhat relevant.

Although there is less benefit when it comes to an attempt at recalling information than some methods, there is usually no consequence for failure.

Asking Around

Asking around is not about recalling facts about the Hidden World, but about finding evidence and information directly relevant to a case. Social Skills are the relevant ones here. No hard and fast rules apply here, but if information is available, a good course of action is to also give it on a failure, but have the character asking around attract unwelcome attention in the process of asking questions, or otherwise provoke hostility.



Internet Research

Internet research into the actual Hidden World is much harder than it looks and requires at least a few hours and a test at least at challenge level 10. The GM is within their rights to make the difficulty higher. The actual Hidden World doesn't really feature on the internet. P Division doesn't reveal details of cases for fear of ridicule, and when actual information does come up, operatives in the Order of St. Bede and the Sodality of the Crown do their best to make sure it is removed or discredited. The Order employs hackers as part of their cover up duty and will also apply dirty tricks such as accusations of illegal activity against the website owners.

One pursuing internet research will find more information than simple recall of facts; typically d6 somewhat relevant pieces of information on a successful test. As with recall of information, the player cannot specify precisely what they seek.

Library Research

A character in a library can pursue more directed research into a facet of the Hidden World, for example a creature's specific weakness or its powers. Books on matters in the Hidden World are unclear, and information tends to be scattered across several volumes. There are exceptions, but they are in private hands, under lock and key.

A critical success in a library can mean the character has found a volume containing a fair amount of useful information, learning what they wanted to find out and much more—anything the GM has on the situation which they do not specifically need to keep secret.

To make failure interesting, it can mean the character has found a lead—a reference to something incredibly useful in another library which is very difficult to gain access to.





Otherworldly Places

FAE DOMAINS

Fae Domains are places anchored to the world, but not quite of it. A domain has one or more entrances, which are invisible to ordinary people, but a character with the Sight Trait can see. A character who cannot see the entrance can still find it if accompanied by one with the Sight, including any one of the Fae, or if they know its general location and succeed in a Lore skill test. This test is usually at Challenge Level 8 unless for some reason the Fae lord of the domain wants it to be harder than usual to find or simply does not want to see the person or people looking for the entrance.

Within a Fae Domain, the laws of nature are slightly changed. It could be always summer or always winter, or always day or night. The domain might be a small area which loops round, so that travelling too far in one direction leads a mortal back to where they started. And time flows differently too; it is possible that a being does not age or even cannot die while within such a realm.

But remember the changes in nature don't leave the realm being completely and utterly alien; a Fae Domain is still anchored to the ordinary world. Council of Merlin scholars speculate that there could be other Fae realms, far more strange, which are not anchored to the Earth, but we cannot visit them.

Finding an entrance is not all there is to getting into a Fae Domain. There is always a guardian, which might be a monster or monsters to fight. The being or environment could present a puzzle or challenge. The challenge varies according to the mood of the Fae lord, and according to the characters. They sometimes scale upwards for a group of characters with multiple challenges, one for each visitor.

Examples of Challenges in Fae Realms

- ☞ A ravenous monster to fight
- ☞ A maze or trackless area of wilderness
- ☞ A staring contest (using Conviction)
- ☞ A music or poetry contest, often on a specific theme
- ☞ A riddle, where failure to answer the riddle correctly means a monster attacks
- ☞ A difficult climb

People taken into a Fae Domain by one of its inhabitants is untroubled by the challenge.

Within the domain there are rules. Prior research is helpful to find out rules of conduct. Otherwise, the Player Characters can attempt to observe the conduct of those in the domain, and ascertain the rules. This usually needs an Awareness test at Challenge Level 10, along with taking time to observe the Fae inhabitants.

Breaking the rules leads to the hostility of the inhabitants and the Fae Lord. This usually means the Fae are sullen and completely unhelpful. It could mean all doors in the domain are suddenly locked to the Player Characters. Fae with a dangerous nature may well turn violent. At the very least, any business the Crew has in the domain is far more difficult.

Examples of Rules in Fae Domains

- ☞ Always to talk in rhyme
- ☞ Never to turn to the right, only to the left (so to turn 90 degrees to the right, one must instead turn 270 degrees to the left)
- ☞ Never to use a word containing the letter “E” in speech
- ☞ Always to doff one’s hat in greeting when addressing one of the Fae
- ☞ Never to speak to someone without being properly introduced, and to always use full titles when speaking to someone or mentioning someone else
- ☞ Any insult or suggestion of an insult can be answered with a challenge to an immediate duel with pistols or swords

The next obstacle in a Fae Domain is the matter of gifts. When one of the Fae gives a gift, they expect something in return. If no price is specified, the Fae will expect a suitable favour. And outright refusal of a gift is often taken as an insult; it is best to immediately give something in return and insist the Fae concerned accepts it as payment. The gift need not be of equivalent value. A crafty mortal within a Fae Domain will begin the gift giving first, thus binding the Fae in an obligation.

One advantage with dealing with the Fae is that they do not or cannot directly lie, though they can certainly mislead or lie by omission.

The final warning concerns food and drink. Not eating or drinking anything while within a Fae Domain is well-known advice, although the Fae food will have no immediately bad effect. But time flows strangely within Faerieland, and one who eats or drinks consumes some of the substance of that place, becoming more closely aligned with Fae time and less aligned with time from the mortal world.

When a mortal visitor leaves a Fae Domain, they will find time has slipped. To decide the nature of the slippage, roll d6. On an odd result, no time at all will have passed, however long the character has been present. On an even result, d6 weeks will have passed if the character has been there for less than a day. If the character has been there for longer, d6 months have passed.

When a character has eaten or drunk in a Fae Domain, these times are increased to d6 months or d6 years. Spending more than one day there increases the time slippage still further, with d6 years per day spent there.

GHOST REALMS

Ghost Realms are different to Fae Domains, in that getting in is easy. It's just a case of being at the right place at the right (or wrong) time. It's getting out that's the hard bit.

Such places take various forms. Often Ghost Realms are buildings and streets which no longer exist or are in a form very different to the modern day, but they can be larger or smaller, and include ghost rooms, ghost villages, and even ghost ships. The inhabitants of a Ghost Realm are of course ghosts, but within such a realm a ghost takes solid form. It can even hurt and be hurt by ordinary mortals there without the use of special powers.

If one is at a place where a Ghost Realm exists at a time it takes form, that's it—one is transported there. Frequency of appearance varies, and is sometimes tied to the phase of the moon. So does the attitude of a ghost to one entering the realm.



Frequency of Ghost Realm Appearance

- ☞ Every lunar eclipse
- ☞ One night every few years
- ☞ Every night for a week, once every few decades
- ☞ An hour per night once per month
- ☞ Three days per month, when it is the full moon or the new moon
- ☞ A few minutes per night, every night

Attitude of Ghost Realm Inhabitants

- ☞ **Friendly**—treat visitors as welcome guests
- ☞ **Friendly**—so friendly that they never want visitors to leave
- ☞ **Neutral**—ghosts are polite but distant and drift away from contact as soon as they can
- ☞ **Neutral**—inhabitants will completely ignore visitors unless strongly pressed
- ☞ **Hostile**—ghosts try to drive away visitors and will violently defend certain areas
- ☞ **Hostile**—immediate violence

A long stay in a Ghost Realm saps the will; for every full day in such a place, a character loses d6 Will. There is no way to recover Will from within a realm, and worse, someone reduced to zero Will fades, becoming a ghost trapped there forever.

Escape is only possible through a single specific exit, which is often guarded by a powerful spirit. A Liminal who chooses to enter a Ghost Realm usually goes there with the information which also lets them escape, though records are sometimes misleading. An exit from a Ghost Realm is sometimes a door, but openings take other forms—a narrow gap between buildings, a wardrobe, a window, walking between two pillars, under an arch, or under a ladder, for example.

Searching for an exit from a Ghost Realm requires a full day and an Awareness test at Challenge Level 10. Reduce the Challenge Level to 8 if the realm is small, such as a single room, and increase it to 12 if the realm is bigger than a building. Add +2 to the Challenge Level of the ghostly inhabitants that are seeking to prevent escape. Occasionally ghosts might seek to guide a visitor from the realm, or eject them. In this case, reduce the challenge level by 2. Another way to reduce the Challenge Level by 2 is by research first. If the challenge falls below 8, escape is easy and no dice roll is needed, but such a situation is uncommon.

Liminal Outside the United Kingdom



Magicians, ghosts, vampires, shapechangers all can be found throughout the world, though the precise nature of the myths vary. Many cultures have some version of the Fae, and there are other monsters who may or may not fit into these categories. One thing they all have in common is that they stay hidden from mundane reality. Everywhere on Earth, where these beings are active, there is a Hidden World. In some places the Hidden World is deeply buried, in others it is closer to the surface than it is in the United Kingdom.

For a Liminal game set outside the United Kingdom, there will be local factions. Some factions span several or many countries, but few are truly global in scope.

Of the UK factions, the Order of St. Bede is active to a greater or lesser extent wherever the Anglican or Catholic Churches reach, though in some places they are spread very thin. The Open Knot is active in portions of the Islamic World, and in other countries with Islamic populations. Its branches operate independently, more so than the Order of St. Bede, but if it could be said to have a global headquarters, its centre of operations is Istanbul.

P Division is by definition a UK faction. The Council of Merlin and the Sodality of the Crown have interests focused on the United Kingdom and to a lesser extent Ireland. Indeed, portions of these conservative factions have never fully adjusted to Irish independence. Talking of Ireland, Irish and British myths overlap through many centuries of shared history and movement of people.

Werewolves are common throughout Europe and North America, though in other countries other shapeshifters may be dominant. The Jaeger family has a German branch which as active as the family is in the United Kingdom.

The Mercury Collegium is very widespread, with people and branches wherever there have been British colonies. There are many branches in North America, Australia, and South Africa in particular.

The following locations are examples of how Liminal can be expanded beyond the United Kingdom.

BERLIN

Berlin, founded back in medieval times, is once more the capital of Germany. For the second half of the 20th century, following the Second World War, Berlin was divided into two cities, East Berlin and West Berlin, separated by the infamous Berlin Wall. Contrary to common belief, the Fae were never hindered by the Wall. However, the unique circumstances of the city meant most parks, especially in West Berlin, were left wild compared to other cities, so inhabitants could visit nature without crossing city limits.

These pockets of wildness attracted many Fae, creating one major Court branching out from the large Grünewald. Other Fae retreated to bunkers and abandoned subway stations, where common people seldom went, and so Zerfetzte Schar, the Tattered Crowd, took form underground. The two Courts are not at war with each other, but prefer human intermediaries in any communications; they simply do not talk directly.

Compared to most other European capitals, Berlin has an open feeling, and accommodation is affordable. The economy is based around high tech firms and creative industries. There are many research institutions, which are only loosely affiliated with the three large universities. Over 65,000 scientists work in Berlin. It was perhaps inevitable that some of these scientists would become interested in the Hidden World.

Scientists and government contractors collaborate through separate companies and organisations for something that has come to be known as the Program. They seem to seek a scientific understanding of magic and strange relics left behind by Nazi scientists, standing aloof from Hidden World politics, but factions who seek to keep the Hidden World secret will move against it as soon as they find a way to do so without attracting unnecessary attention. So far the Program has kept everything they found under wraps, but that might change, so the Order of St.Bede stands ready to discredit any findings which might be made public. The real risk, however, might be that the findings will be used to create elite soldiers, or even weaponry.

Some older buildings are significant to the Hidden World factions active in the city. The Catholic branch of the Order of St.Bede has a hidden preceptory beneath St. Hedwig's cathedral, an impressively domed 18th century building, and the first Catholic church built in Prussia after the Reformation.

Although Germany and Berlin are both now unified, the old division still has force amongst the Rosicrucians, who are divided in loyalty between the Potsdam Chapter lead by Constantijn Eschenbamer, a very ambitious man not used to being contradicted, and the Innenstadt Chapter under Gerold Grathwol, respected for his scholarship, but who is considered strange as he still dresses in the fashions of East Germany, performs strange experiments and is said to have discussions with city spirits.



The Rosicrucian Brotherhood

These esoteric truths of the ancient past, concealed from the common man, provide insight into nature, the physical universe, and the spiritual realm. Our origins are Egyptian, Brahmanic, derived from the mysteries of Eleusis and Samothrace, the Magi of Persia, the Pythagoreans, and the Arabs.


The Rosicrucian Manifesto

The Rosicrucian Order of magicians goes back to the Middle Ages, becoming famous in the early 17th century when they were exposed by publication of a series of anonymous pamphlets mixing elements of the real Rosicrucian doctrines with satire. The publications led to a number of mundane but esoteric societies calling themselves Rosicrucian, and some of the ideas in the pamphlets appear in Freemasonry.

The real Rosicrucian magicians, mostly hailing from Germany, went even more deeply into secret. The world was not yet sufficiently enlightened for their truths or the mystic doctrine of human perfection and universal enlightenment. Slowly their magical tradition lost its coherence and further fragmented over the years. It seemed like a final defeat when some members got involved with the Nazi Ahnenerbe, seeing that doctrine of racial purity as part of the path to perfection and enlightenment. Other Rosicrucians opposed them, and thus the Order fought on both sides of the occult battles which coincided with the Second World War. Afterwards, Rosicrucianism was completely shattered; few survived, and those few regarded each other as enemies.

Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Rosicrucian Order has had a resurgence—mainly due to the charismatic influence of the Grandmaster Wernhart Lorenz—calling on magicians to come together, heal their wounds, and find the same unification as Germany and Berlin. This summons was to a great extent successful. The Rosicrucian Order is a power again. It has reclaimed the geomantic node marked by the Brandenburg Gate and has instigated yearly gatherings of members. There are over a hundred Rosicrucian magicians in Europe, about half of them in Germany.

Some potential members, calling themselves Welkes Rose, the Shrivelled Rose, still remain hidden, using powers to reach perfection with less ethical means. Current leader, Andor Pschierer, influential within the Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie, specialises in economic growth in the former DDR Bundesländer.



Vampires in Berlin are doing less well than the Rosicrucians. Many vampires thrived under the oppressive regime of East Germany; it was not surprising when dissidents vanished, so they had no trouble finding food or new recruits. It has been hard for older ones to adjust to German Unification. They focus their attentions on Berlin's immigrant population, but the Open Knot are gathering to oppose them and maybe wipe them out completely from the city. The biggest vampire cell is now seeking alliances outside Hidden World groups and seems to have found some understanding with Primogen, a conglomerate in the biotech and pharmaceutical industry.

The final major supernatural faction of Berlin are the wanderers known as the Gebellkette. Like the vampires, they focus on immigrants, transients, and homeless of the city, but as a recruitment ground rather than a source of food. Some of the Gebellkette are shapeshifters able to change into a swarm of flies or a mangy dog, but they have other powers making them suited to survive city cruelty. The Gebellkette have not yet positioned themselves in the supernatural conflict which looks like it could be coming soon but have many hangers-on providing information about weirdness happening in the streets.

FAYETTEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

The city of Fayetteville, known as “America’s hometown” is a fair-sized city in the south-east of the United States. It has a muggy climate, with mild winters and humid summers intense enough to bring spontaneous thunderstorms. Many of the city’s residential areas and shopping developments date from a population explosion following the Second World War, but Fayetteville has an older heart, going back to the merger of the smaller towns of Cross Creek and Campbellton following the Revolutionary War.

Fayetteville’s name also goes back to the Revolutionary War. It is named after a French aristocrat and military officer, General Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, who fought with the Americans for independence. The Marquis de Lafayette later fought for democracy in the French Revolution, though was later forced to flee France during the following Terror. He drafted the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Common Citizen with the help of Thomas Jefferson, a document inspired by the United States’ Declaration of Independence.

The original draft of the Declaration is hidden amongst older court documents in Cumberland County Courthouse, an early 20th century neoclassical building. Nobody in the mundane world or Hidden World knows it is there, but some in the Hidden World know it is somewhere in Fayetteville, though they do not know why. Several magicians, some American and some European, are in Fayetteville hunting for the document, believing it to have magical significance.



Fort Bragg, the largest military base in the world with over 50,000 staff, is just beyond the edge of Fayetteville. The base is hugely important to the local economy and means Fayetteville has a large transient population. Such people provide an opportunity for supernatural predators, and in the case of Fayetteville, the predators are a large cell of vampires, led by a vampire lord who calls himself the Duke of Portland.

The Duke of Portland has the manners and dress sense of an 18th century English aristocrat and maintains contact with the Sodality of the Crown in the UK. His self-proclaimed mission is to reclaim the USA for the United Kingdom, undoing the Revolution, once the Sodality controls the British royal family. He is even more mad and deluded than most vampires, but this doesn't mean he is not dangerous, or that his followers do not cause much human misery.

The vampire cell abducts people who won't be missed in Fayetteville, both as prey for themselves and to ship to vampire covens elsewhere in the country which have grown so large they have trouble feeding themselves without being caught by the mundane authorities, and so are reliant on such deliveries. The Duke hopes that he can build up a network of dependence and gratitude amongst American vampires, swelling his own followers, to build up an army ready to be called when the war comes again.



CHAPTER 9





Many Faces



A woman with dark hair and a serious expression is shown from the chest up. She is in a dimly lit room with a window in the background showing a lattice pattern. The overall tone is dark and atmospheric.

New Traits

Some of the beings in this chapter have new Traits. These Traits are not as a general rule recommended for PCs and have no points cost. Some will be useless for PCs, and others will pull them a greater than usual distance from the human world.

If a player has a suitable concept and really wants one of these Traits, they cost 2 points each, with the GM's permission.

Appear Human

A being with the Appear Human Trait has a form of shapeshifting from their natural monstrous or alien form to a human form. Any manifestation of supernatural powers ends the appearance of humanity while it lasts, but otherwise, they can maintain human appearance indefinitely.

Without further Traits, the being cannot shapeshift to take on different human forms, but rather appears as the same person whenever they take human form.

Bad Luck

The scene after meeting a creature with this Trait, all skill rolls are penalised. For any skill test in the scene, roll 3d6 rather than two, but pick the lowest two dice for the total. This trait is unsuitable for PCs; it would affect the rest of the Crew!

Faerie Tongue

Any of the Fae may have this Trait, which means they may speak and understand any Earthly language.

Immaterial

An immaterial being cannot be affected by ordinary physical attacks, though a Blessed Weapon (see page 92) or magic will still work, as will weapons addressing specific vulnerabilities. An immaterial being in turn can only affect the physical world with special powers or Traits.

This trait is usually the province of ghosts. A PC ghost is not necessarily off limits, with the group's permission, and should have this Trait.

Invisibility

Only an immaterial creature (see above) can take this Trait. Some Fae have a different and more limited way to become invisible through Glamour. Invisible beings can only be seen by a character with The Sight or a similar suitable power (necromancy in the case of ghosts).

Monstrous Toughness

A creature with this Trait has an extra 8 Endurance. A truly exceptional being might have this Trait twice, for an extra 16 Endurance. Even more than most Traits in this section, Monstrous Toughness is not recommended for PCs.

Poltergeist

This Trait only makes sense for a being with the Immaterial Trait. With it, an immaterial being can spend a point of Will to affect the world normally for a single skill roll. This can include physical attacks.

Spirit Dominance

A spirit with this Trait can command any ghost in its presence to enter its service, following its commands. A ghost has no chance to resist the call, though other spirits who also have this Trait are unaffected by the power. This Trait is not appropriate for PCs.

Supernatural Bargain

A being with this Trait can trade anything between two parties, even metaphysical concepts, years of life, bad dreams, illnesses, memories, and so on. Both parties involved in the trade must agree to the terms. The being can also take part in the trade themselves, and use items they have previously gained from earlier trades of this nature.

Items of Supernatural Trade

- ☞ Ten years of life
- ☞ A particular Skill or Trait
- ☞ A terminal disease
- ☞ The services of a Fae monster for a single assassination
- ☞ A royal title in the mundane or supernatural world
- ☞ All memories of a loved one

Terror

Terror is a direct magical attack a spirit or immaterial being makes using the Taunt Skill. It is opposed by a victim's Conviction. A successful attack does d6 damage to Will. If a victim is reduced to zero Will, the ghost can possess them for a scene, using their body as it sees fit unless forced out through magic.



The Fae

I'm not sure whether or not the common Fae count as individuals. I've heard them described as being like insects, but that's not quite accurate. The common Fae have names, but they sound like names invented on the spur of the moment by someone with no imagination. They have some self-determination, but almost always absolutely serve the commands of a court or one of the more powerful Fae; their only choice, it seems, is a choice of master.

It is interesting to contrast the Fae Noble with the Fae Commoner. Fae Nobles are perhaps the only Fae who genuinely have full free will. Whereas the Fae Commoners have invented unimaginative names, nobles often have no names at all, only titles—The Queen of Hyde Park, Father Thames, Mother Severn, the Winter King, and so on.

Then there are Fae beings who seem to fit into neither commoner nor noble category. They are not the Fae middle classes, rather they are monsters. They have no names, and have cunning if not intellect, along with predatory instincts. The Fae nobles don't seem to fully control them, but are able to unleash them upon their enemies.

Of all the Fae, it's the monsters who come up most often in our cases. Fortunately, we have over time found a few ways of dealing with them.

—Detective Inspector Kira Singh, Magician in P Division

COMMON FAE

The Common Fae appear in the modern age either as ordinary people or as elf-like beings, beautiful but artificial, or hideous but a little comic, depending on the taste of the Fae and their court. They show a variety of ethnicities. The innate glamour of one of the Common Fae suffices for them to change between such forms, but not to be able to do anything more startling.

The skills of one of the Common Fae vary according to the master and court they serve, while remaining very much the same within the same group. Common Fae never have technological or scientific knowledge. The following skill set is typical.

- ☞ **Suggested Drive:** Serve my master and court
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Awareness 3, Melee 2, Stealth 2
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Lore 1
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Taunt 2
- ☞ **Traits:** The Sight, Appear Human, Faerie Tongue
- ☞ **Limitation:** Vulnerability (bronze or salt)
- ☞ **Endurance:** 8
- ☞ **Will:** 8
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+1 (small weapon)



GREMLIN

The gremlin is a modern Fae, a creature type which first came into being around the time of the Second World War. Gremlins are small, being little more than two feet tall, and delight in causing technology to malfunction. Gremlins take the greatest delight when technology malfunctions in a nasty lethal way.

Gremlins may well be Fae Commoners warped in a particular way by the instruction of a Fae Noble, losing and gaining skills and powers. An individual gremlin has no other agenda beyond causing chaos.

☞ **Suggested Drive:** Sabotage technology to cause destruction

☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Stealth 3

☞ **Mental Skills:** Technology 2

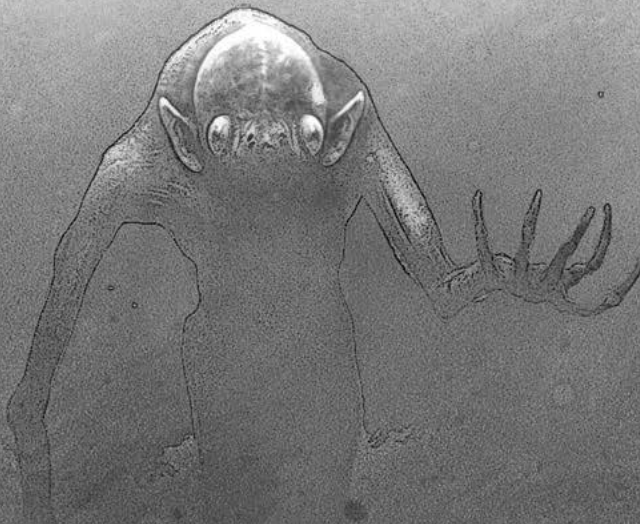
☞ **Social Skills:** Taunt 2

☞ **Traits:** Glamour (Vanishing), The Sight, Faerie Tongue

☞ **Endurance:** 4

☞ **Will:** 4

☞ **Damage:** d6



FAE MONSTER

Redcaps who dye their hats in the blood of those they have ambushed. Kelpies who drag victims into rivers and lakes. Rakshasas and Asuras from India. Various ogres, trolls, and giants. These are Fae monsters. They are instinctive predators, sometimes set loose by Fae lords but not controlled by them.

The abilities of a Fae Monster vary, but the creature below is a good base. Some Fae monsters have the Appear Human Trait to better lure their prey. A Fae Monster who specialises in deception probably has Brawny rather than Supernatural Strength, but instead has the Hidden Face Trait ([see page 98](#)) and the Skill Charm 4.

- ☞ **Suggested Drives:** Hunting human prey, Destroy the enemies of my Fae Lord
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Survival 2, Melee 4, Stealth 2
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Lore 1
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Taunt 3
- ☞ **Traits:** Supernatural Strength, Frightening, Monstrous Toughness, Night Sight, The Sight, Faerie Tongue
- ☞ **Limitation:** Vulnerability. A monster's vulnerability varies; examples include the classic Fae examples of bronze and salt, but there are many other possibilities.
- ☞ **Endurance:** 18
- ☞ **Will:** 8
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+6 (natural weapons or huge club)

Fae Vulnerabilities

- ☞ Bronze
- ☞ Loose salt, or loose sugar
- ☞ Song or dance
- ☞ A wand of Rowan wood, or another type of wood
- ☞ A ringing bell; especially church bells which can be heard from a great distance
- ☞ The Fae's hidden name

FAE NOBLE

The Fae Nobles are the most powerful Fae and lead the others. They include the traditional Faerie kings and queens of European mythology, but also pagan demigods and beings from further afield such as the jinn. The lord of a Fae Court and their senior advisors are Fae Nobles.

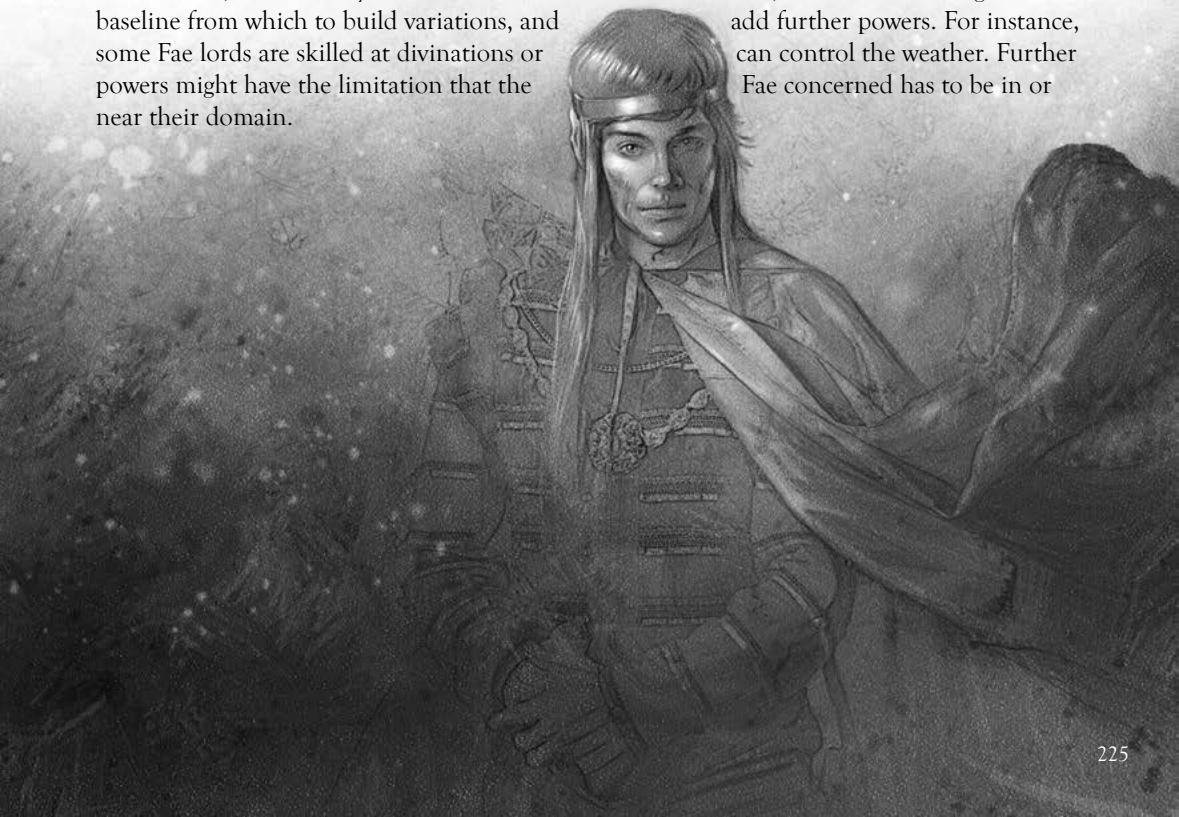
A Fae lord's powers over their followers go far beyond those of a human leader, and they are even to an extent capable of dictating their followers' physical form and skills.

- ☞ **Suggested Drives:** The metaphysical aims of my court, My personal power and majesty
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Melee 3
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Art 5, Lore 5
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Charm 5, Conviction 3, High Society 3
- ☞ **Traits:** Graceful, Presence, Night Sight, The Sight, Glamour (Persistent Illusion, Unholy Terror), Supernatural Bargain, Monstrous Toughness
- ☞ **Endurance:** 19
- ☞ **Will:** 11
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+3 (persistent illusion weapon)

For a ruler of a domain, add the Trait Rapid Healing, with the restriction that the noble involved must be within their own domain, and the surrounding features in the mortal world which define that domain must be intact. For instance, a dammed or heavily polluted river will mean the Trait no longer functions for a river Fae.

Of course, abilities vary from one Fae ruler to another, but the above is a good baseline from which to build variations, and some Fae lords are skilled at divinations or powers might have the limitation that the near their domain.

another, but the above is a good add further powers. For instance, can control the weather. Further Fae concerned has to be in or



CHANGELING

A changeling refers to either a mortal who grew up in a Fae Court, or the child of a union between mortal and Fae. Changelings look human at a first glance, but have a single feature which marks them as other. Changelings who wish to fit into the mortal world have a better time in the present day than they ever did in the past. Now most people don't believe in their existence and, therefore, no longer regard them as an object of superstitious dread.

But it is hard for a Changeling to fit completely into mundane reality. They can see things and know things that most mortals do not. Beyond that, the Fae Court responsible for a Changeling's upbringing or birth feels they own the Changeling, and they should serve the Court, either willingly or through manipulation. The pull of Fae politics on a Changeling is likely to be ultimately irresistible.

- ☞ **Suggested Drives:** Finding a place in both mortal and Fae society, Why tell the truth when it can be avoided?
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Awareness 1, Melee 2, Stealth 2
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Art 3, Lore 2
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Charm 3, Streetwise 2, Taunt 2
- ☞ **Traits:** Night Sight, Silver Tongue, The Sight, Glamour (Vanishing, Hidden Face)
- ☞ **Limitation:** Marked
- ☞ **Endurance:** 8
- ☞ **Will:** 8
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+1 (knife)

Changeling Distinguishing Features

- ☞ No shadow or no reflection
- ☞ Mismatched eyes
- ☞ Spots or stripes on the skin
- ☞ Excessively hairy
- ☞ Never blinks
- ☞ Unusual arrangement of internal organs



Ghosts

Plenty of people say that funerals are for the living. In my experience, that's not quite true. Funerals are so that the dead can see that they are mourned and missed, but the world still goes on without them.

Without funerals, there would be a lot more ghosts around.

-Phineas Morgan, Magician of the Council of Merlin

ECHO

An echo is the weakest and least threatening form of ghost. An echo comes from the recently deceased and may be confused or not realise they are dead. They do not menace those who they did not already hate (and true hate is fortunately a rare thing) in life.

Usually an echo will disperse when the departed has a funeral, and they realise both that they are dead and need not linger. Only a few ghosts have the insane passions to continue after that stage.

☞ **Suggested Drive:** To work out what is going on and what to do next

☞ **Physical Skills:** None

☞ **Mental Skills:** None

☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 1, Taunt 1

☞ **Traits:** Immaterial, Invisible, Terror, The Sight

☞ **Endurance:** 8

☞ **Will:** 9

☞ **Damage:** d6 Will using Taunt

MATERIAL SPIRIT

An older ghost has enough experience and substance to form a material shell out of dirt, dust, and other detritus. This shell looks like the ghost did in life at first glance, but dissolves into its material components should the ghost abandon it or the “body” is killed. A ghost who loses such a body takes a full week to build a new one.

A material spirit has a grand purpose which keeps them going as a ghost, such as a great hatred or the proverbial unfinished business. In the latter case, a material spirit might be persuaded to depart their half life once that purpose is fulfilled.

But older spirits are insane and untrusting, as well as being completely unscrupulous in destroying anyone or anything which might interfere with their purpose. A material spirit might not be evil as such, but that does not make them any less dangerous.

☞ **Suggested Drive:** My great unfinished purpose

☞ **Physical Skills:** Awareness 2, Melee 3, Stealth 4

☞ **Mental Skills:** Lore 1

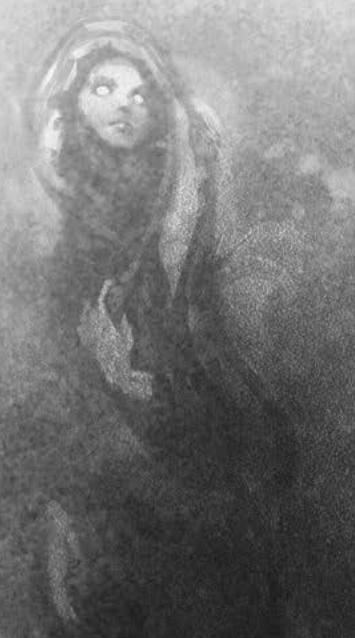
☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 3, Taunt 3

☞ **Traits:** Frightening, Terror, The Sight.
Without a body: Invisible, Insubstantial,
Poltergeist

☞ **Endurance:** 8

☞ **Will:** 11

☞ **Damage:** d6+1 (small weapon)



REVENANT

A revenant is a ghost or spirit which has not formed its own corporeal body, but rather inhabits a corpse. A few ghosts even inhabit their own corpse, not quite realising they are dead. Other revenants are insane killer monsters, as one expects from films. Some necromancers make and control revenants, deliberately calling a spirit to occupy a corpse.

- ☞ **Suggested Drive:** Revenge upon the living
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Awareness 1, Athletics 1, Melee 3
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** None
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Taunt 2
- ☞ **Traits:** Night Sight, Brawny, Monstrous Toughness
- ☞ **Endurance:** 17
- ☞ **Will:** 8
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+3 (unarmed)

SHAMBLING CORPSE

Shambling corpses are the weakest form of revenant, made from an old body and a ghost not fully in control of it but nonetheless bound. They are frightening, even more so than a normal revenant; someone who is unused to seeing a Shambling Corpse must make a Conviction test at Challenge Level 8 or lose d6 Will.

Though in fact, Shambling Corpses are only truly threatening as a group. They form a mob, as described on [page 84](#). The strength of a Shambling Corpse means a mob of them is always considered armed and does d6+1 damage.

DUPPY

A duppy is a purely malevolent spirit, out there to torment the living. They do this not because of a past wrong in life, but because torment is in their nature. Some duppy (the plural word is the same as the singular) are out to cause fear and misery, whereas others simply prefer to kill. The term duppy comes from Caribbean magicians, but it is widely adopted in the Hidden World of the UK.

- ☞ **Suggested Drive:** Spread fear and misery
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Awareness 2, Melee 3, Stealth 3
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Lore 1
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Taunt 4
- ☞ **Traits:** Night Sight, The Sight, Insubstantial, Invisible, Poltergeist, Terror
- ☞ **Endurance:** 8
- ☞ **Will:** 8
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+1 (small weapon)

BLACK DOG

Black dogs aren't like other ghosts. I used to think they were more closely related to the Fae, but they have even less in common there, despite some doubtless intentional confusion introduced by Fae monsters taking such a form. Like ghosts, they're immaterial in form. But they can be seen by those without the Sight, and they're not echoes or spirits of the deceased. I can only conclude they come from elsewhere, from a realm even further afield than other supernatural creatures.

They frighten me. They should frighten you too.

-Detective Kira Singh, magician in P Division

There are many examples of Black Dogs in British folklore. Some come from stories of werewolves. Others are Fae monsters. But there is a type of Black Dog which is some sort of ghost—immaterial in form, and a herald of ill omen.

The appearance of a Black Dog usually means something worse is just around the corner. And the presence of a Black Dog, or worse, a group of Black Dogs, weakens the resolve before a danger is faced. The worst and most feared of the Black Dogs is the spirit known as Black Shuck, who has a special place in the traditions of the werewolf gangs.

- ☞ **Suggested Drive:** Herald of Woe
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Awareness 2
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** None
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Taunt 2
- ☞ **Traits:** Night Sight, The Sight, Insubstantial, Bad Luck, Terror
- ☞ **Endurance:** 10
- ☞ **Will:** 8
- ☞ **Damage:** d6 Will (using Taunt)

Note that although the Black Dog has the Terror Trait, it won't possess a victim, merely sap their Will. They cannot physically attack, fortunately.



NIKOR

The Nikor is an ancient spirit, twisted into the shadowy form of a dragon. There are only two Nikors known to a few magical scholars in Britain, one trapped in Portmeirion, one in Winchester. Both are magically trapped, but would be a dire threat if they broke free.

☞ **Suggested Drive:** Lead ghostly forces to victory in battle

☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Melee Combat 5

☞ **Mental Skills:** Education 3, Lore 5

☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 5, Taunt 5

☞ **Traits:** Frightening, Night Sight, Quick Reflexes, The Sight, Insubstantial, Poltergeist, Terror, Monstrous Toughness (x2)

☞ **Endurance:** 26

☞ **Will:** 13

☞ **Damage:** d6 Will (using Taunt)





Clued-in Mortals

The characters in this section are ordinary human beings with some knowledge of the Hidden World, and perhaps special powers related to it. They are at a similar power level as a starting Player Character and can be adapted as starting Player Characters with the addition of a relevant focus.

CLASSICALLY TRAINED WIZARD

The classically trained wizard has studied magic formally, perhaps as an apprentice, or perhaps at Dee College, Oxford, under the sponsorship of the Council of Merlin. Such a wizard takes an academic approach to spells and magical theory and usually has a degree in another subject which they gained before moving onto magical study. They view themselves as the elite wizards of the Hidden World, with other magicians being half-trained dabblers, using powers they do not understand.

The template here suggests a wizard who has specialised in Wards. There are obviously other possibilities.

- ☞ **Suggested Drives:** Order and control over the magical world, Scientific curiosity about magic
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Awareness 1
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Education 3, Lore 4, Science 2
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 3, High Society 2, Rhetoric 2
- ☞ **Traits:** Bookworm, Countermagic, Ward Magic (Personal Wards)
- ☞ **Endurance:** 8
- ☞ **Will:** 11
- ☞ **Damage:** d6 (or d6+4 using a Ward)

GUTTER MAGE

Not all magicians go through a background of formal magical theory and higher education. Most are not so privileged and some have a far more intuitive approach. The academic wizards sometimes call these people Gutter Mages, and though a slur, some have taken this label for themselves.

The template below is for a mage with skills in weather magic and divination, but apart from one trick does not go far in specialising in either area. Many Gutter Mages are broad rather than deep in this way, but they don't have to be.

- ☞ **Suggested Drives:** Magic is for the common good, Seek fortune and notoriety
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Melee 2
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Lore 3
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 4, Streetwise 3, Taunt 2
- ☞ **Traits:** Divination, Weathermonger (Command the Four Winds)
- ☞ **Endurance:** 9
- ☞ **Will:** 12
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+1 (knife)

KNIGHT

A Knight is a human servant of a supernatural faction, often with the training in modern world skills the faction lacks. The knight presented here has a varied skill set rather than being a specialist, as well as sufficient combat skills with which they can stand their own. The one area the presented Knight is weak in is social skills; they are trained as a soldier of their chosen faction rather than a Face.

- ☞ **Suggested Drives:** To distinguish myself in the service of my faction, To further my faction's cause, To win my freedom
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Melee 3, Shoot 2, Vehicles 2
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Business 2, Lore 1, Technology 2
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 1
- ☞ **Traits:** Breaking and Entry, The Sight, Sharp Shooter
- ☞ **Limitation:** Obligated
- ☞ **Endurance:** 10
- ☞ **Will:** 9
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+2 (machete), d6+5 (pistol)



MAN IN BLACK

The Man in Black is an operative of the Order of St. Bede. The Blessings and Curses Trait for magic is based more on their inner faith than occult knowledge, but they still know that such commands over the world are potentially sinful.

- ☞ **Suggested Drives:** Keep the innocent safe from the Hidden World, Suppress the knowledge of magical sin, Fight supernatural evil
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Awareness 2, Melee 2, Shoot 2
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Education 3, Lore 2
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 4, Empathy 1, Rhetoric 1
- ☞ **Traits:** Blessings and Curses (Blessed Weapon), Countermagic
- ☞ **Endurance:** 8
- ☞ **Will:** 12
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+1 (knife), d6+3 (pistol)

MONSTER HUNTER

The Monster Hunter suggests a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing. They know dangerous supernatural predators are out there, and have a mission to hunt and kill them. They have combat training, especially as a sharp-shooter. But perhaps they don't really know much about the Hidden World, and how they can be played, sent after the wrong target, or broken if they become too much of a nuisance.

- ☞ **Suggested Drives:** To kill creatures of darkness, The thrill of the hunt
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Shoot 4, Stealth 2, Survival 2
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Technology 2
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 2, Streetwise 2
- ☞ **Traits:** Breaking and Entry, Quick Reflexes, Sharp Shooter
- ☞ **Endurance:** 9
- ☞ **Will:** 10
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+6 (heavy rifle) or d6+2 (machete)



P Division Detective

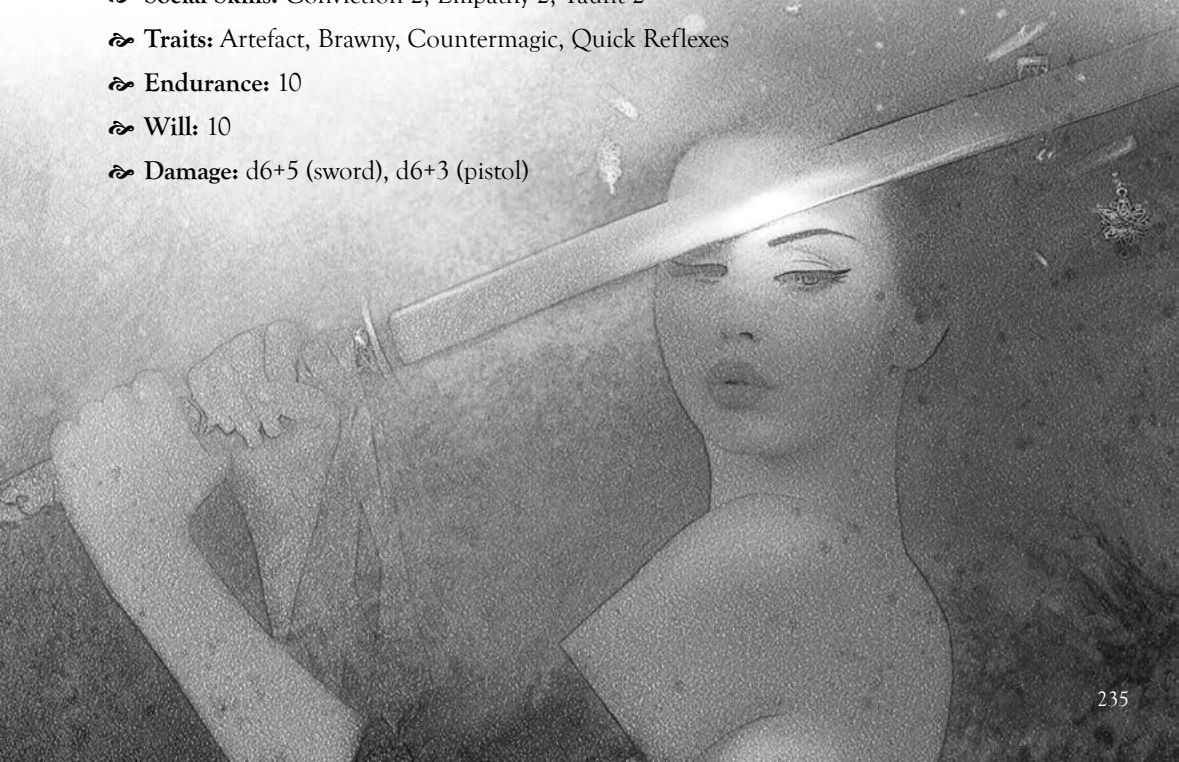
The P Division detective below is primarily a determined investigator with some physical skills. They are aware of the Hidden World but have no magical Traits. This template can be tweaked for a P Division Detective with different strengths or with supernatural abilities.

- ☞ **Suggested Drives:** The truth is out there, Crime must be punished even if the criminal is a supernatural being
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Awareness 3, Melee 2, Shoot 1, Vehicles 1
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Lore 2, Technology 2
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 2, Empathy 2, Streetwise 2
- ☞ **Traits:** Breaking and Entry, Investigator, Jack of All Trades
- ☞ **Endurance:** 9
- ☞ **Will:** 10
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+1 (police baton), d6+3 (pistol)

WARDEN

The Warden is a bodyguard for a magician or someone else important in the Hidden World who might be vulnerable in combat. The template below is tough and alert, with a range of physical skills.

- ☞ **Suggested Drive:** To keep my charge safe
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Awareness 4, Melee 3, Shoot 2, Vehicles 1
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Lore 1
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 2, Empathy 2, Taunt 2
- ☞ **Traits:** Artefact, Brawny, Countermagic, Quick Reflexes
- ☞ **Endurance:** 10
- ☞ **Will:** 10
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+5 (sword), d6+3 (pistol)





Ordinary Mortals

Not everyone the Crew encounters and interacts with over the course of the case is a part of the Hidden World. Mortals without contact with the supernatural still make up a majority of the world and can help or complicate cases. Some of these mortals learn about the Hidden World, and become a part of it, becoming Liminals themselves.

Building Mortals

An ordinary mortal character has 10 to 12 points to spend on Skills, with a Skill Cap of 3, possibly along with a single Trait.

ACADEMIC

An academic is a potential expert consultant on a case, but unlikely to be directly involved. The typical academic is a lecturer or professor attached to a university, but there are other experts.

If using the template below, add a single speciality in Science or Education to represent an academic's expertise. The academic here is not aware of the Hidden World and has no Lore Skill. For an expert on such matters, replace Science with Lore.

- ☞ **Suggested Drives:** Make advances in my chosen research speciality, Knowledge must be shared, Show off how clever I am
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** None
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Art 1, Education 3, Science 3, Technology 1
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Rhetoric 2
- ☞ **Endurance:** 8
- ☞ **Will:** 8
- ☞ **Damage:** d6 (unarmed)

DOCTOR

Cases can be dangerous, and there is always a chance a Crew member needs medical treatment. You don't generally need the details of a doctor character to manage this, but a doctor might take a special interest in the Crew after treating them, or the Crew might sponsor a doctor to treat them and keep quiet.

- ☞ **Suggested Drives:** Hippocratic Oath, Heal everyone who needs it, Career ambitions
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** None
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Education 1, Medicine 3, Science 2, Technology 2
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 2
- ☞ **Traits:** Healer
- ☞ **Endurance:** 8
- ☞ **Will:** 10
- ☞ **Damage:** d6 (unarmed)

JOURNALIST

Journalists, especially those who have an inkling the supernatural exists, are more likely to be a nuisance than anything else. That said, journalists make handy contacts, having all sorts of access to current news and informants.

- ☞ **Suggested Drives:** Discover the truth, Make it big with a big story, Free lunches on expenses
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Awareness 2
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Art 3 (Writing 5), Education 1
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Charm 2, Empathy 1, Streetwise 2
- ☞ **Traits:** Jack of All Trades
- ☞ **Endurance:** 8
- ☞ **Will:** 8
- ☞ **Damage:** d6 (unarmed)



PETTY CRIMINAL

All sorts of people find themselves involved in crimes, both big and small. A character with the template below is at the small end of things, working on the streets for themselves. They are most likely to be involved in petty theft and burglary. As well as stealing, they know how to contact people to shift stolen goods.

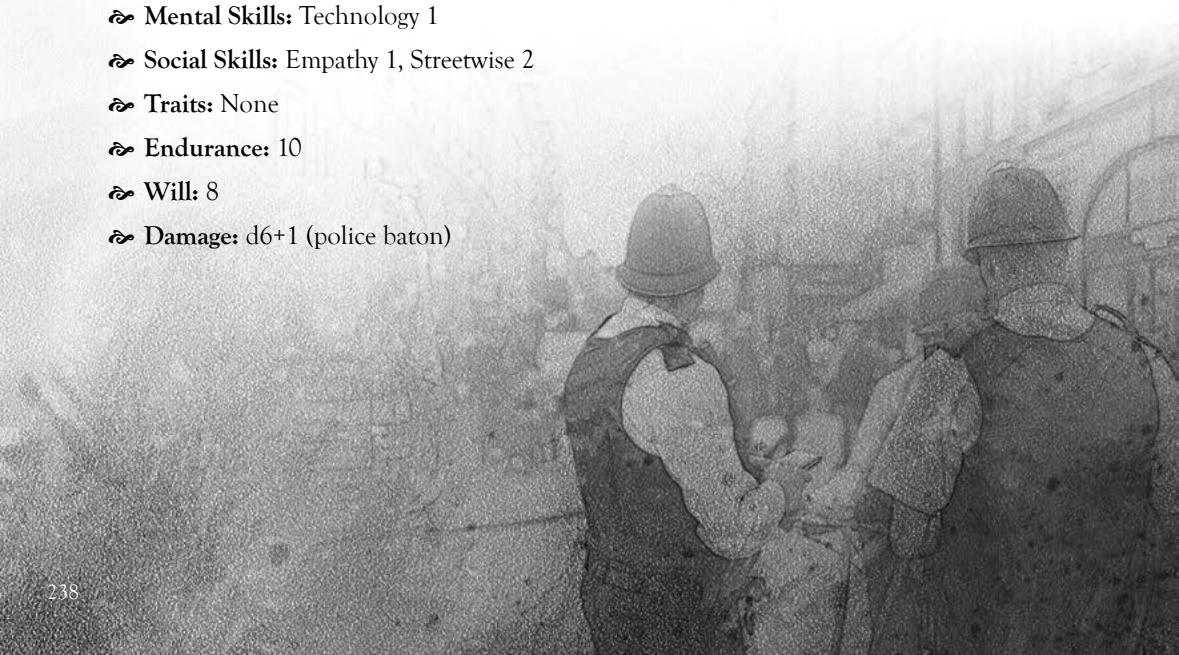
- ☞ **Suggested Drives:** Bad debts and no other options, Get rich quick or die trying, The thrill of defying the law
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Stealth 2
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Business 1, Technology 1
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Streetwise 3, Taunt 1
- ☞ **Traits:** None
- ☞ **Endurance:** 8
- ☞ **Will:** 8
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+1 (knife)

POLICE OFFICER

The police officer below works for both police on the beat and detectives, though not specialist detectives such as those in P Division. In the UK, police officers are not routinely armed with guns, though police on the beat have batons and handcuffs, and those on riot duty have shields. Armed police officers are part of a rapid response unit coming out to deal with threatened gun crime.

For an armed officer, add the skill Shoot 2, with d6+3 damage. Other police officers are trained and skilled drivers; for such people, add the skill Vehicles 2.

- ☞ **Suggested Drive:** Uphold the law, Crime doesn't pay, Exert my authority
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Melee 2
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Technology 1
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Empathy 1, Streetwise 2
- ☞ **Traits:** None
- ☞ **Endurance:** 10
- ☞ **Will:** 8
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+1 (police baton)



SOLDIER

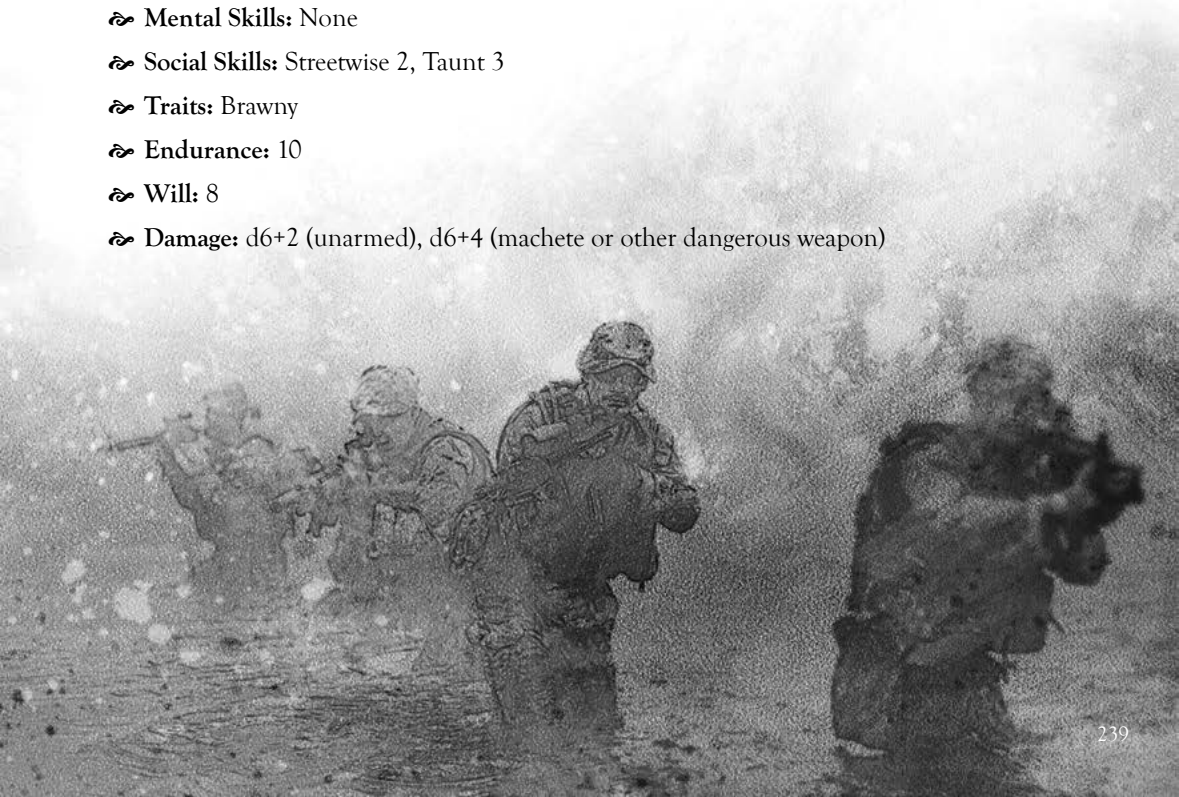
Typically, the armed forces will only get involved in a case if things go absolutely horribly wrong for the Crew. But sadly, disasters happen. Most soldiers have further skills than those listed below, depending on their training and how they specialise. Examples of further skills include Survival 2, Vehicles 2, Healing 2, and Technology 2.

- ☞ **Suggested Drives:** For Queen and Country, Cameraderie with army buddies
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Melee 2, Shoot 2, Stealth 1
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** See above
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Conviction 1
- ☞ **Traits:** None
- ☞ **Endurance:** 10
- ☞ **Will:** 9
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+3 (pistol or rifle)

THUG

Most thugs work in groups and form a mob, as described on [page 84](#). They are hired muscle there for a particular job. But sometimes a thug will be more prominent, with their own desires and skills for violence and intimidation. Such a thug is described here.

- ☞ **Suggested Drives:** Instincts for violence, I like being scary, I've got to do something to make a living
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Awareness 1, Melee 2
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** None
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Streetwise 2, Taunt 3
- ☞ **Traits:** Brawny
- ☞ **Endurance:** 10
- ☞ **Will:** 8
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+2 (unarmed), d6+4 (machete or other dangerous weapon)





Vampires have some of the traditional weaknesses (mirrors, garlics, silver) from fiction, and are weakened but not destroyed by sunlight. The listed powers grant them superior strength, speed, and toughness, but no overt magical powers.

They do not have to be built this way. Vampires might have necromantic powers, shapeshifting, or weather control, though a full range of such powers is the preserve of a vampire lord. These may be instead of some heightened physical skills, or for a particularly deadly vampire as well as such skills. Further, vampiric weaknesses might vary, either taking traditional examples from folklore (for example, being unable to cross running water or having to sleep in a coffin with earth from their home) or other newly invented examples.

It is assumed in *Liminal* that vampires have fangs and drink blood and can pass as human unless their fangs are extended. The blood has a certain resonance and is symbolic of the vampires feeding from life, their powers being all about fear and control. Some vampires might be further marked and less easily able to appear human.

The way a vampire makes another vampire is shrouded in mystery, but it involves a magical ritual, the physical death of the mortal becoming a vampire, and the consumption of vampire blood. Only a vampire lord can make more vampires, and there is much more to it than just being bitten by a vampire.

VAMPIRE FLEDGLING

A vampire fledgling is a newly made vampire, still rash and bloated with their new power, and not yet in a stage of cold vampire rationality. Fledglings are strong but foolish, with their mortal morality burned away and replaced with bloodlust, but not yet reaching the stage of cold vampire self-control and rationality which prevents them from acting on their immoral urges.

The fledgling is an impatient monster. Only the cleverest and luckiest survive this stage to become full members of vampire society.

- ☞ **Suggested Drives:** Thirst for blood, Rejoice in newfound power and break from morality, Demon in human form
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Melee Combat 3
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Business 1, Education 2
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Taunt 3
- ☞ **Traits:** Brawny, Night Sight, Quick Reflexes, Rapid Healing (Weakness: Silver)
- ☞ **Limitation:** Weakened by Sunlight, Vulnerability (Garlic, Mirrors), Obligated
- ☞ **Endurance:** 11
- ☞ **Will:** 8
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+3 (natural weapons)

Dhampir

Occasionally—very rarely—a new vampire keeps their human soul. These rare creatures are called dhampirs. They might seem a blessing in fighting their undead brethren, but they are not to be trusted. In my limited experience, every dhampir I've come across gives in to its bloodlust and monstrosity sooner or later, becoming a vampire like any other. Dhampirs represent a false hope.

Reverend Michael Gamble, Order of St. Bede

Sometimes the ritual to create a vampire goes wrong, with the fledgling retaining free will and human morality, but being outwardly a vampire. A “typical” dhampir is similar to a fledgling in terms of powers and skills (if something as rare as a dhampir can ever be called typical), but also has a degree of Conviction, and a drive involving keeping their humanity. They tend to lack the full range of vampire vulnerabilities.

LESSER VAMPIRE

Lesser vampires are somewhat wiser than vampire fledglings, no longer overwhelmed by the need to feed and act on their desires—though they certainly choose to feed and indulge themselves. However, as well as indulging their destructive passions, the lesser vampire has begun an ultimately more dangerous vampire pastime. They have learned to plot, though such plotting is limited by being bonded in service to a vampire lord, at least for the moment.

- ☞ **Suggested Drives:** Grand destructive passions, Nascent ambitions and plots
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 4, Awareness 4, Melee Combat 3, Shoot 2
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Business 2, Lore 1, Education 2
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Charm 1, Conviction 2, Taunt 4
- ☞ **Traits:** Brawny, Frightening, Night Sight, Quick Reflexes, Rapid Healing (Weakness: Silver), Monstrous Toughness
- ☞ **Limitations:** Obligated, Weakened by Sunlight, Vulnerability (Garlic, Mirrors)
- ☞ **Endurance:** 20
- ☞ **Will:** 10
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+3 (natural weapons, pistol)

VAMPIRE LORD

The vampire lord presented here has great powers of social dominance, as well as incredible speed, strength, and toughness. Optionally, these social powers could be replaced by more overtly supernatural ones, such as shapechanging, weather control, or necromancy. Either way, the vampire lord is one of the the most dangerous enemies presented in this chapter, matched only by a Fae Noble. The vampire lord is personally powerful, intelligent, and patient, as well as having control over a good number of less vampires in its nest.

- ☞ **Suggested Drives:** To dominate all those around me, Political ambitions in the Sodality of the Crown, Centuries long plots and schemes
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 5, Awareness 5, Melee Combat 5, Shoot 3
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Business 3, Education 3, Lore 3
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Charm 3, Conviction 5, High Society 3, Taunt 5
- ☞ **Traits:** Supernatural Strength, Night Sight, Quick Reflexes, Monstrous Toughness (x2), Rapid Healing (Flaw: Silver), Rich, Presence, Frightening
- ☞ **Limitations:** Weakened by Sunlight
- ☞ **Endurance:** 29
- ☞ **Will:** 13
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+5 (natural weapons), d6+7 (sword), d6+3 (pistol)

SERVITOR

A servitor is similar to a knight, but lowlier, serving a vampire lord rather than a faction, and as good as a slave to their lord's bidding. Servitors are often ensnared with the promise of future vampiric immortality. Occasionally a vampire lord will even deliver on such a promise, but most regard their servitors as tools or cannon fodder, to be used and disposed of accordingly.

Servitors gain some supernatural powers in the service of the vampires, from repeated drinking of the vampire blood which also dominates them.

- ☞ **Suggested Drives:** To serve the vampire lord, Seeking vampiric immortality
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Melee 3, Shoot 2, Vehicles 2
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Business 2, Lore 1, Technology 2
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Taunt 2
- ☞ **Traits:** Brawny, Night Sight, Quick Reflexes
- ☞ **Limitation:** Obligated
- ☞ **Endurance:** 10
- ☞ **Will:** 8
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+4 machete
or d6+3 pistol



A woman with dark face paint and a purple top against a blue background.

Werewolves

Werewolves in Liminal are people who, through a ritual used by their particular gang, can change into the form of a massive wolf, far larger than an ordinary wolf but not clearly unnatural. Even in human form, werewolves have superior strength, toughness, and healing powers, though they are vulnerable to silver.

The creation of new werewolves is not a casual thing; it requires the one becoming a werewolf to make a deliberate choice and undergo an ritual. Lycanthropy does not spread through werewolf-inflicted wounds. Nor is it a curse. Werewolves are prone to profound anger management issues, but this is not linked to the phase of the moon for most werewolves, nor do they go into a murderous rage in wolf form. Unless they want to, that is, which is the case more often than it should be with some werewolf gangs.

WEREWOLF IRREGULAR

A werewolf irregular has undergone a ritual to join a werewolf gang, but is no longer fully a part of that gang, and they seek to lead a normal life. They have not fully embraced their werewolf nature, making them more limited in their powers, but equally they are not so prone to the werewolf rage and are more adept at socialising with ordinary people.

- ☞ **Suggested Drives:** Trying to lead a normal life, Serving the pack from a distance
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Awareness 1, Melee 2, Survival 2, Vehicles 2
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Lore 1, Technology 2
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Charm 2, Conviction 2, Streetwise 2, Taunt 1
- ☞ **Traits:** Rapid Healing (Weakness: Silver), Night Sight, Shapechanger (massive wolf form)
- ☞ **Endurance:** 13
- ☞ **Will:** 10
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+1 (knife or natural weapons in wolf form)

WEREWOLF SOLDIER

The werewolf soldier is a loyal member of the pack, capable of working for them and fighting with them. They can channel their werewolf powers, but are prone to outbursts of anger which are normal among werewolves, but more than alarming for mundane humans who might witness it.

- ☞ **Suggested Drives:** Loyalty to fellow gang members, Seeking esteem and status in the gang
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Melee 3, Survival 2
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Lore 1
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Streetwise 2, Taunt 3
- ☞ **Traits:** Brawny, Rapid Healing (Weakness: Silver), Night Sight, Rage, Shapechanger (massive wolf form)
- ☞ **Limitation:** Uncontrolled Anger
- ☞ **Endurance:** 14
- ☞ **Will:** 8
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+3
(knife or natural weapons in wolf form)



PACK ALPHA

The pack alpha leads a werewolf gang, usually through a combination of fear and respect. They are fierce and dangerous, in control of their rages, and capable of thinking as well as inspiring through action. The pack alpha also conducts the rituals which makes someone new to the pack a werewolf.

- ☞ **Suggested Drives:** For the good of the pack, Keeping control of the gang
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Melee 4, Survival 2
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Lore 2
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Charm 2, Conviction 2, Streetwise 2, Taunt 4
- ☞ **Traits:** Supernatural Strength, Frightening, Rapid Healing (Weakness: Silver), Night Sight, Rage, Shapechanger (massive wolf form), Monstrous Toughness
- ☞ **Endurance:** 19
- ☞ **Will:** 10
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+5 (knife or natural weapons in wolf form)



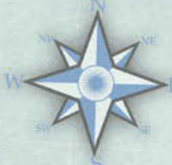


CHAPTER 10



GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND

- 1 Belfast
- 2 Caernarfon
- 3 Dartmoor
- 4 Durham
- 5 Giant's Causeway
- 6 Glasgow
- 7 Glastonbury
- 8 Glen Coe
- 9 Hadrian's Wall
- 10 Highley
- 11 Liverpool
- 12 Loch Lomond
- 13 London
- 14 Manchester
- 15 Mussenden Temple
- 16 The New Forest
- 17 Oxford
- 18 Portmeirion
- 19 Saltaire
- 20 Stonehenge
- 21 Mount Snowdon
- 22 Winchester
- 23 York
- 24 Canewdon
- 25 Hinton St. Mary
- 26 The Forest of Dean
- 27 Peebles
- 28 Tamworth



English Miles

Scale 1 : 7,500,000

The background is a monochromatic blue image of an antique map. The map features a grid of latitude and longitude lines, with various geographical labels in Latin, including "Macedonia regio" and "Macedonia". A compass rose is visible in the lower right corner, and a magnifying glass is positioned over the map, focusing on the "Macedonia" region. The overall aesthetic is historical and scholarly.

Sample Cases



Goblin Market

THE HOOKS

Buskers are going missing in York. A few bodies have been found with their heads bashed in by a creature of frenzied strength. The Crew, if they solve mortal problems in the Hidden World, are approached by a young woman, Drusilla Hawkins, who claims to be responsible for the deaths and to have lost her soul.

Alternatively, the Player Characters may be looking into the deaths of the buskers, and identify Drusilla Hawkins as a possible witness or someone who needs warning, being a frequent site as one of their numbers. They will find it easy to see she is nervous, and once she realises they know about the Hidden World, she explains her situation.

BACKGROUND

Drusilla Hawkins happily spent much of her spare time busking in York, until she came across a young man, a fellow busker, whose talent impressed her with the range and variety of musical instruments he could play. In fact, he said he could play anything. His name was Dorian.

Drusilla asked Dorian how he had learned such a variety of instruments. He took her by the hand and promised to show her, leading Drusilla into a Fae Realm, the Goblin Market, and to his lord, the Seller of Dreams.

The Seller of Dreams asked the bedazzled Drusilla what she wanted. Before Drusilla knew it, she had sold her soul for the petty price of being the best busker in York.

The Seller of Dreams fulfilled Drusilla's promise in a simple way; he loosed a Fae monster in York to indiscriminately kill buskers, apart, of course, from Drusilla. As for the soul, he has a vampire cell in mind, which would value Drusilla as a fine addition. At the start of the scenario, he has just made a sale.

CHARACTERS

Drusilla Hawkins

Drusilla Hawkins is a postgraduate student in Music at the University of York. She is studying to achieve a PhD in Performance and, until recently, spent much of her spare time busking in York city centre, honing her skills and enjoying the act of casual performance. Money was never really a factor. She plays a variety of instruments, not all of them practical, and lately has been playing classical pieces on the violin.

Then, as noted above in the background above, Drusilla became central in the present case through making a deal with the Fae which went wrong, as they inevitably do.

- ☞ **Drive:** Be the best musician I possibly can be
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** None
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Art 3 (Specialisation: Violin), Education 3, Technology 1
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Charm 1, Empathy 2, Rhetoric 2
- ☞ **Endurance:** 8
- ☞ **Will:** 8
- ☞ **Damage:** d6 (unarmed)

Dorian, Fae Musician

Dorian appears as a handsome young man with sandy coloured hair. He can play every musical instrument ever invented with technical perfection, but cannot compose or invent new music himself. But for him, music is a tool for temptation.

- ☞ **Drive:** Bring unwitting mortals to the Seller of Dreams
- ☞ **Physical Skills:** Awareness 3, Melee 2, Stealth 2
- ☞ **Mental Skills:** Art 3 (Specialisation: Fae music), Lore 1
- ☞ **Social Skills:** Charm 4
- ☞ **Traits:** The Sight, Appear Human, Presence
- ☞ **Limitation:** Vulnerability (discordant music)
- ☞ **Endurance:** 8
- ☞ **Will:** 8
- ☞ **Damage:** d6+1 (knife)

The Seller of Dreams

The Seller of Dreams is a Fae merchant of ambiguous gender in a rainbow-coloured cloak. He or she has a stall selling orbs, all containing a different dream, and a line of sales patter where she or he offers personal experience and fulfillment of ambitions. It is hard to say no to the Seller of Dreams.

The Seller of Dreams is a Fae noble ([see page 225](#)) with the listed Skills and Traits, and the Drive ‘Sell inappropriate ambitions for too high a price’. The Seller of Dreams also has the Trait See the Heart’s Desire, described below. Like Dorian, the Seller of Dreams is vulnerable to discordant music; simply playing a musical instrument which is out of tune is painful to him or her.

See the Heart’s Desire

A being with this Trait can tell the Drive of anyone they converse with. They can also spend a point of Will to intuit a lead as to how a character can fulfil a Drive, if it is possible.

Magdalene

Magdalene is a vampire and representative of a cell operating locally. She is a lesser vampire ([see page 242](#)) with the Drive ‘Schemes and plots’. Although not a vampire lord, the special circumstances of having bought a soul means she can turn Drusilla into a vampire follower.

The Buskers

Some of York’s buskers are listed below. The first three are dead at the beginning of the scenario, but more will die as events proceed. The deaths are all by the same method - blunt force trauma to the head from behind.

- ☞ **Stephen Applebee**, singer and guitarist, modern chart songs. Homeless and a full-time busker.
- ☞ **William Quick**, mandolin player, folk songs. Teacher.
- ☞ **Virginia Wheatley**, saxophone player. Telephone sales assistant.
- ☞ **Frances Boyes**, cello player, classical music. Student.
- ☞ **Barry Bateson**, keyboard player, improvisational jazz. Student.
- ☞ **Sanjay Patel**, singer and guitarist, singing 1960s chart songs. Barman.

The Redcap

The Redcap is a Fae Monster ([see page 224](#)) with the glamour trick of Appear Human ([see page 218](#)). He is a hulking ogre, bearing a club, with a woolly hat dyed red in the blood of those he has killed. In between killings, he lurks in the Goblin Market. He takes on human form in the mortal world except when he attacks, but even in human form wears a characteristic red woolly hat.

INITIAL SITUATION

Drusilla miserably explains her problem to the PCs and asks if they can help. There are two things for the Crew to investigate—the Fae Monster and the Goblin Market. The PCs can, if they haven't already, learn of the attacks on musicians. Finding the Redcap or Dorian, or asking any Hidden World contacts in York reveals the way to the Goblin Market.

Further specialised research could reveal the weakness of the Seller of Dreams and those who serve the being to discordant music.

FIRST LOCATION

Most probably, the Player Characters will initially seek to get to the Goblin Market. The key is to dance in a particular hopscotch pattern down the Shambles, at which point buildings change, and everything opens up into an old-fashioned marketplace, where there are tents and late medieval-style half-timbered shop fronts selling all manner of goods. Those doing the selling tend to resemble goblins and trolls out of stories, though some wear more comely illusions. All wear late Victorian style costumes.

The powers that be are aware the Crew are on a mission and put obstacles out there to stop them in the shape of a powerful guardian—a Fae monster ([see page 224](#)) taking the form of a fearsome troll. Should the troll be bested by the heroes, they are free to peruse the market.

Stalls include:

- ☞ Food and drink, including golden wine, exotic fruit, and sweets shaped like animals. The fruit is extremely addictive and, once consumed, one who goes without the fruit for a week loses d6 Will. A skilled doctor or magician can find a cure.
- ☞ An old goblin woman selling shining crystal flowers. The flowers only shine when in or near a Fae Domain and are incredibly fragile.
- ☞ Fabulous clothes of startling colours and the finest of materials. These clothes are actually made of persistent glamour, and so will soon turn into the rags the glamour hides.

Prices are negotiable, and not usually in the form of money, though a mundane object might work if it is personal or unique. The usual payment for minor items is memories, dreams, and old ambitions.

LEAD

Asking the right questions in the right places in the market reveals:

- ☞ The location of the tent of the Seller of Dreams.
- ☞ The thuggish servant of the Seller of Dreams, the Redcap, the times he comes and goes from the market, and his habits.

COMPLICATIONS

No stall owner will give information to someone who is not a customer. This is one of the unwritten rules of the market and can easily get the PCs into trouble.

There is enough information available here to track down the Redcap. This is something else the Crew must do; solving the main case will not stop the monster on the loose until every musician who performs on York's streets is dead or too scared to go out. After three nights without prey, the Redcap ceases his rampage, becoming bored.

When the Player Characters track down the Seller of Dreams, he is in his tent with several Fae Commoners ([see page 222](#)) working as both servants and guards. There is a measure of privacy to discuss sensitive issues. The Seller of Dreams will not simply give Drusilla's soul back, even if threatened or a price is mentioned. He no longer has it, for he sold it. But the Seller of Dreams will sell information on who has it.

FINAL LOCATION

The vampire Magdalene now owns Drusilla's soul. The Seller of Dreams will make the characters pay for any more information, specifically:

- ☞ The vampire "owning" Drusilla's soul now simply means they will claim her as a vampire soon, and the Fae will not stop them, as they sometimes do in York.
- ☞ Magdalene's address in York, where she hides during the daytime.
- ☞ The fact Magdalene has two cohorts, fledgling vampires ([see page 241](#)).

The showdown of the scenario could take place in one of two places—either in the vampires' suburban house (with an incongruous pale pink colour scheme and heavy curtains bearing a floral design), or somewhere in York when they move to abduct Drusilla.

There are possible further repercussions involving the Fae and deals the characters made, and the vampires if they ever learn of the characters' attack. But those are issues for other scenarios.



The Book of Blood

THE HOOKS

Richard Hedrig, noted collector of arcane paraphernalia, has had one of his books stolen. The book in question is an ancient Egyptian relic of dubious legality, which explains a range of necromantic rituals to drain targets of blood and transfer their powers to the ritualists—of obvious interest to vampires. Hedrig approaches the Crew to ask them to recover his book, as he knows it is a tome of great power.

Hedrig may be replaced, if this is not the Crew's first adventure, by another already established NPC contact. The action of this case takes place in Brighton, a cosmopolitan seaside town of about 150,000 residents on the coast approximately 50 miles south of London.

BACKGROUND

The vampire Isabel Marsh recently came to Brighton in the hope of establishing herself after falling out of favour in her London nest for drawing too much attention with blood sacrifices. Isabel seeks to establish herself as a key player in the local nest; to do this she intends to stage a demonstration of her power to impress the nest leader, Thibaut Mastret.

To this end, Isabel has enthralled a young mortal, Ben Bailey, to steal the Book of Blood from Hedrig and drop it off at her hideout. She has arranged her demonstration in two night's time. Isabel expects that Hedrig will be unable to recover the book in time and, in any case, Bailey will have no memories of the incident. Bailey, though unknown to her, is a budding artist, and although his conscious mind is unable to remember what happened, his subconscious still recalls Isabel's appearance, so he has been drawing sketches of her since the robbery.

CHARACTERS

Isabel March

Isabel March is an up-and-coming vampire ritualist who seeks to establish herself in the Brighton scene. She lost favour in her London nest due to too-obvious displays of power and now seeks to make amends with a similar effort in Brighton. She is a Lesser Vampire ([see page 242](#)) with the Drive ‘Be accepted by my vampiric brethren’.

The vampire is accompanied by two silent Servitors who she brought with her from London to protect and feed her at all times.

Ben Bailey

Ben is a well-meaning artist who has come to Brighton to find buyers for his work and connect with the local scene. He paints watercolours and pencil sketches by the beach and takes zero-hour contract jobs, including delivery work and labouring on building sites, to make ends meet. He recently met a beautiful, strangely-dressed woman (Isabel March) and was enamoured with her but is unable to remember her name or even what she looked like. In fact he has no memory at all of the last two days, after waking up on the beach following the robbery.

Thibaut Mastret

Mastret is the leader of the Brighton vampire nest. He is careful to keep the vampiric presence in the town secret, although he is known to other factions active in the town. That is not to say Thibaut wouldn’t welcome a bit more power and recognition from his nest colleagues in London. He is ambivalent about Isabel’s arrival, fearing she will be more trouble than she’s worth, but has agreed to allow her to demonstrate her usefulness to him.

Thibaut Mastret is a Vampire Lord ([see page 242](#)) with the Drive ‘Keep the Brighton nest strong’.

Father Fian McCall

Word of the book’s disappearance has already spread to the Order of St Bede, who have despatched Fr. McCall to investigate and try to recover it into ‘safe’ hands. Assuming that this is just a straightforward robbery, McCall, although backed by a group of St Bede heavies, is expecting a simple theft by unaware mortals and is likely to be out of his depth once the vampiric link is uncovered.

McCall has the same skills and Traits as a Police Officer ([see page 238](#)) and the Drive ‘To recover the Book of Blood’. His accompanying heavies are Thugs ([see page 239](#)).

INITIAL SITUATION

Hedrig explains to the Crew that his book was stolen while he was transporting it between his bookstore and the warehouse in which he keeps his most dangerous books 45 minutes drive away inland in Horsham. He had arranged despatch with a local firm and helped load the van himself, but the following morning it appeared that the van had never arrived at the warehouse. The van was later found abandoned by the side of the road. Most of the contents were recovered but the book was not. The police are investigating—as are the van firm—but they expect a simple carjacking, probably from local youths.

Digging around in the transport firm, Rawls Rentals is a small firm using rental vans and zero-hours delivery drivers to transport items. Appropriate credentials or skill checks will reveal their list of drivers for that day and eventually lead to Ben Bailey and an address in a small flat on the far side of the town, away from the seafront.

FIRST LOCATION

Their investigations will lead the Crew to Bailey's flat. It is a pokey, one-bedroom, ground-floor flat on the far side of the town. They will find a sleepy, confused Bailey there, amidst piles of artist's materials and a series of sketches in pencils and charcoal that he seems to have made, all of the same woman. Bailey will be as helpful as he can, although if they approach later in the day he is likely to be stoned or drunk, and he can reveal:

- ☞ He woke up on the beach the morning after the theft took place, with no memory of the last few days.
- ☞ He has been taking occasional jobs for Rawls Rentals, as well as other labouring and delivery jobs, to make ends meet while he tries to focus on his art.
- ☞ He has been very confused since his memory lapse and indeed has tried a range of approaches (mainly involving alcohol and drugs) to try and recover his memory.

The sketches of the woman that litter Bailey's apartment have all been created in the past two days. When he woke up on the beach and returned home, he found someone there, and now every time he tries to draw he ends up drawing the woman.

He has no recollection of the woman or even meeting her.

The woman in the sketches is indeed Isabel March, and Bailey has been drawing her ever since he ran into her and she enthralled him to steal the book.

LEAD

Circulating the sketches around various contacts will be enough to get the background on Isabel March that she is a lesser vampire from a London nest who has not been seen in the capital for several weeks. Similar magical investigation can also reveal this fact. Investigations or divination will also reveal that Isabel often frequents the Black Horse, a bar on the seafront, and has been sighted around there.

More mundane investigation such as tracking Bailey's phone GPS or movements on CCTV will reveal that after stealing the book from the van (and abandoning the van), he met Isabel March at the Black Horse and handed the book over to her.

At this point in their investigations, Father McCall will catch up with the Crew, initially sending his team of enforcers in while hoping to beat the information out of Bailey. They can be driven off easily enough (they are not expecting a show of force) but if questioned will reveal that they are investigating the disappearance of the book and seek to see it kept safely by the Order.

COMPLICATIONS

The Black Horse bar is a public front for the town's vampiric operations, but on arrival the PCs will not find any vampires there. Isabel March will not be present, but a crowd of goths and bikers will greet them with suspicion, especially when they start asking around for an attractive patron.

Judicious use of social skills (or less judicious use of intimidation) will reveal that many of their patrons (the vampiric ones, in essence) are not present at the bar tonight—there appears to be a party going on at the end of the Palace Pier which they were not invited to. Several of them have been told to go along later when the noise has died down—and they have been promised a great party.

Enough interest may draw the ire of the bar's patrons, who are all enamored of their vampiric leaders, but a suitable skill check will lead them to be pacified and yield details of the party. A few bad rolls may lead to violence or capture, in which case the final scene will contain the Crew as the sacrifices when they wake up!

The Pier

Brighton Pier is properly known as Brighton Palace Pier and is the only one of Brighton's piers still in operation. It is a popular tourist attraction and features souvenir stalls, a fairground with rides and sideshows, and an entertainment venue known as the Palace Ballroom.

FINAL LOCATION

At the end of the Pier, with all the magical energy around, it is easy to see a party taking place in the Palace Ballroom. The Crew will need to bribe or sneak their way in, but once in it is easy to pierce the veil and realise that although it appears to be a small, polite party to celebrate the birthday of a patron, there are numerous oddly-dressed pale-skinned thirsty-looking individuals.

Isabel March appears on the stage, holding the book and leading a group of six people in chains—now including a glassy-eyed and enthralled Bailey—along with other NPCs the Crew have interacted with in Brighton. Isabel explains that the Book of Blood holds incredible power and will show the assembled vampires what it can do by enacting the Ritual of the Dead.

At this point the players should catch sight of Father McCall at the far side of the ballroom with a loaded pistol. They have a moment to react to prevent either the ritual or McCall's shot, as Isabel holds a curved dagger to the throat of the nearest sacrifice.

Try to stress to the Crew that to attempt to take on all the vampires here may be a bad idea. There are at least five vampires here of various power levels, and all are well connected. The Crew may yet decide to try and take out the nest directly, but this action should certainly have consequences in the Crew's relationships with other factions—not least if Father McCall gets caught up in the situation.

The finale can be a complicated scene to play out, so it helps to have an idea of the various factions at work and what their goals are in this scene. The Ritual of the Dead will bathe the room in blood and almost certainly have consequences in the mortal realm, which will draw unwanted attention to the vampires and of course kill the six sacrifices.

Father McCall knows he is out of his depth, but will seek to disrupt the ritual, possibly by trying to destroy the book or create enough of a distraction. His band of toughs (if they survived their encounter with the Crew) are ill-controlled and likely to start a fight if they can.

Isabel March seeks to demonstrate her power through an unignorable show of strength. She thinks the ritual will demonstrate her power as a blood mage and force Mastret to accept her. However, if it looks like she will not impress him, she is ready to flee, if needed, by turning into mist form and fleeing across the sea.

Mastret is sceptical about Isabel's power and wary of unwanted attention, but is impressed that she has managed to gather such resources herself. If it looks like Isabel will reveal, or has already revealed, his nest (which she has almost certainly done by involving the Crew) he will attempt to ensure its survival, if needed, by striking a deal with the Crew to help them deal with March. McCall will have no truck with such a deal, but he is in many ways the weakest faction at work here.

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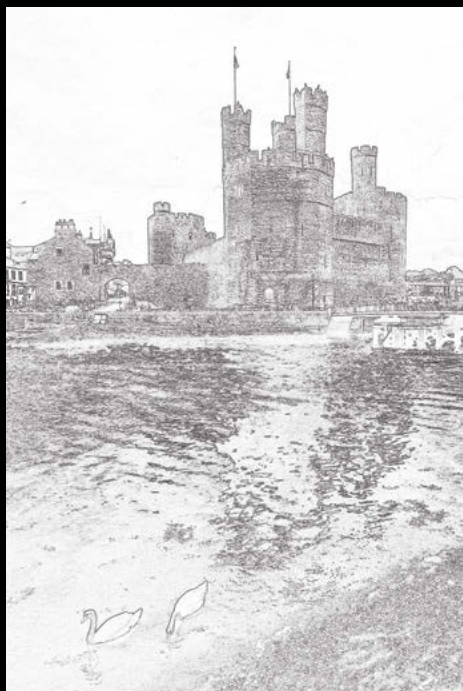
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A misty landscape with a wooden pier leading to a bright light on the water. The scene is atmospheric and ethereal, with a soft glow emanating from the light source. The pier is made of dark wooden planks and leads towards a bright, rectangular light source on the water's surface. The water is calm, reflecting the light and the surrounding mist. In the background, there are small islands or peninsulas covered in greenery, partially obscured by the thick mist. The sky is a pale, hazy white, and a small, bright sun or moon is visible in the upper right quadrant. The overall mood is serene and mysterious.

L I M I N A L

PAUL MITCHENER







ЛОСН ЛОМОНД



Afterword

A book is a journey. Or several journeys- the journey of writing it, the journey from me the author to you the reader, and your journey through the book. And since this book is a role-playing game, I hope you'll use the book as a point from which to embark on further journeys of your own, with friends.

As I write this afterword, my journey with this particular book is almost done. The art is ready, layout is done, and the book just awaits its final proof reading and indexing. It soon won't be my book anymore, but yours, which is as it should be. I really hope you like it!

The journey does not end here though, and this is merely a pause. There are other books in the Liminal line to come, and the idea fills me with glee.

This book began as an idea I couldn't leave alone, something I kept toying with when I should have been writing other things. It's personal to me, and isn't just the story of the Hidden World. It's a picture of Britain; its present rooted in its history, its diversity of people and places represented. It was important to me to do it right, and only you can judge the extent to which I succeeded.

I did not make the journey of making Liminal alone, not by a long way, and when I had the main concepts in place and started talking about the book, I was encouraged by the considerable enthusiasm of others. I'd like to thank them all! The first person I'd like to thank here is Marjory Frauts, my partner, who aids and abets my many odd interests, many of which went into Liminal.

Then there are the others writing for the Liminal game line- Becky Annison, Richard August, Paul Baldowski, Neil Gow, Guy Milner, and Newt Newport. They're not just writers for the line- they're friends who have at times gone beyond the call of duty with their help. Thanks also to Stephanie McAlea for her work and patience with me, and to the Smart Party for inviting me onto their podcast to talk about urban fantasy.

It's impossible to write this introduction without mentioning Jason Behnke. I wouldn't have made this book without him, and as you can see, his work is absolutely incredible. The success of Liminal is thanks in large part to his art, and his excitement and support have lifted me up to better places. Liminal is as much his as it is mine.

Finally, I would like to thank the Kickstarter backers, and those who shared news of the project. The Kickstarter, it's fair to say, was successful beyond any ambitions I'd entertained before launch. Without them this book would not be possible, let alone others planned for the Liminal line. I'll mention in particular Nigel Clarke as the very first backer, my friends in Sheffield, on the UK convention scene, and who I play with elsewhere. I'm especially humbled by those backers who trusted me with ideas which went into the book, in some cases very personal ideas. Thank you for your trust.

It is customary with Kickstarters to thank the backers by name. I follow this custom with absolute pleasure.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Paul Mitchell". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the text "absolute pleasure."

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Wilson, Simon Peakall, Luke Spry, Mark Carter, Steven Warble, ren, Thomas Shey, Mike Roberson, Ian, Johnathan Darnill, Mike Shaver, Paige Leitman, Matthew Jordan, Philippe Niederkorn, Alistair, James French, TheLetterB, Zachariah Shuman, Bentley Burnham, Carl Gilchrist, Daniel Ketzer, Jon Terry, Stephan Hamat-Rains, Paul Cesar Maia, Ryan Kent, Wajanai Snidvongs, Chris Eves, AJ Carruthers, Richard McGillivray, Michelle Schulz, Isaac ‘Will It Work’ Dansicker, Mario Zucco, Josh Fox and Becky Annison, Andrew Doucet, Matt Johnson, Owlglass, Steven, Avi Hecht, Götz Weinreich, Sandfox, Robert DeBroeck, Ginger Stampley, Nathaniel Gullion, Peter Slaney, Adam Longley, Taylor Fisher, Joshua Diiorio, Jeremy Wunders, Ross Salerno, Carl Rigney, Daniel Ellebracht, Jack Kessler, Steven Schwartz, Joann Koch, Christopher Anderson, Steven Lord, Bryant Durrell, Christopher L. Jennerman, Mikailos, Black-Thing, Heimi, Mark W Roy, Nikos Katsifarakis, Christian Kuhn

Detectives in P Division

Bethany Duck, Penda Tomlinson, Jenny Bradbury, andy smith, John Dodd, Christopher Mackie, Roger Hall, Bryce Leland Carlson, David Starnier, Jon Hodgson, Badukd0, John Bonar, Scott W Hill, FGFantasy, Marco Generoso, Tobia Bianconi, Andrew Hows, Chris Challacombe, Megan Kate Parsons, Richard Plemons, Duane Woolley, Robert Carnel, Curtis Y. Takahashi, Dennis Malloy, Roberto Castagnaro, Leslie Brown, Nathan Mitchell, Nathan Hill, Matthew, Kiryatan

Hedge Magicians

John R Davis, Aaron Griffin, purpledragonwitch, Dave “Wintergreen” Harrison, Janet Gilbert, Ray Otus, Andrew Kenrick, Chirag Asnani, Martin Greening, David White, Derek Lynch, Scott A, Daniel White, Simon Taylor, HopperUK, Eric Rossing, Svend Andersen, Céline Badaroux Denizon, Niels Oskam, Rob Arcangeli, Stoo Goff, John Di Pietro, Jr., Mark Bottomley, Timothy Vert, Craig Karas, Neall Raemonn Price, Marvin Langenberg, Gary Matthews, Nicola Urbinati, Simone B., Rachel Liell, acejt, Megan Tolentino, Douglas Gould, Tim Singh, Frank Tilley, Kerri Miller, Dylan Fuller, Timolution, Fábás Tamás, Michael Macaulay, Graeme Doherty, Tom Ana, Kristopher Rodrigues, adumbratus, Alexander R. Corbett, QuidEst, Robert Avnet, Richard Gorski, Philip, P Tracy, Sean Rourke, Jason Bratley, Craig Wright, Lisa Hunt, Gavin Jones, sashawood, Jon Rowan, Kirt Dankmyer, Vincent Usher, Stefan Schloesser, Tristan Danner, John D Kennedy, Simon Ryves-Webb, Dennis Bach Larsen, Andrew Moreton, David Ungar, Leron Culbreath, Thomas R., DeLeslyn Brumfield, Malcolm Coull, Ulrich Pennig, Nathan Nolan, Vicki Derbyshire, DivNull Productions, Theodore Miller, D Howard, Benjamin Davis, Gearsoul Dragon, Dom Camus, Vee Pike, Yan, DTM,

Bieeanshee, Ron, Frank Reding, Sarah Doombringer, Mark Diaz
Truman, Dominic Mooney, robdeobald, chris stewart, Madeline, Sarah Erskine, Mark
Redacted, Michael Sheppard, Michael Pineda, Patrick Croson, Krister Persson, Cioncreeze,
Fabio Bertone, Ben Hall, Mitch A. Williams, Sol Foster, Eleanor, notyours, Eloy Lasanta, Ben
Feehan, Anthony "LibrariaNPC" DeMinico, Jared Williams, Elstren, Hans Messersmith,
Daniele Di Rubbo, Gord Hatt, Ryan Pope, Edvard Blumentanz, Shane Norton, Storybrewers
Roleplaying, malarky, Nicole Sparks, Guido 'Maicol' Campanini, Craig Hatler, M A,
Stephanie Bryant, Tim Gray, Cake, Justin Jones, FIG, Ian McFarlin, Alex

Clued-Up Mortals

Paul Baldowski, Darren, Christopher Annandale, Nieka Fields, Paul Moore, Kaiju, W!,
Brittany Molenda, Zevalin Shujaa

