

*The heart of a woman falls back with the night,
And enters some alien cage in its plight,
And tries to forget it has dreamed of the stars,
While it breaks, breaks, breaks on the sheltering bars.*
- GEORGIA DOUGLAS JOHNSON (1886-1966)

The Rose Bride's Flight™

AN ADVENTURE FOR **CHANGELING: THE LOST**
USING THE STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM

Written by Jess Hartley **Developed by** Eddy Webb **Edited by** Genevieve Podleski
Layout by Aileen E. Miles **Art by** Abrar Ajmal, John Bridges, Jeff Holt, Saana Lappalainen,
Pat Loboyko, Thomas Manning, Britt Martin, Peter Mohrbacher, Justin Norman, Steve Prescott,
Matthew Stawicki
Playtesting by Michael Grasso, Jenny Anckorn, Melanie Hockabout, Mandy Leetch,
Bill Lynch and Stephanie Phillips

STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM			
SCENES	MENTAL	●●●●	XP LEVEL
II	PHYSICAL	●●○○○	35-74
	SOCIAL	●●●●	

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STONE MOUNTAIN, GA 30087

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Introduction

Oaths, vows and pledges are the heart of fae magic. From the first moment of their submission to the Others' will in Arcadia, the Lost's lives have been influenced by making, breaking, negotiating or refusing to agree to one sort of promise or another.

Ancient bargains between the True Fae and their world spawned the ground rules of Arcadia. When first taken there, every changeling implicitly or explicitly agreed to abide by at least the basic tenets of these bargains, or else perish without the benefit of air's breath, fire's warmth or food's sustenance. From these timeless laws, the Lost's own Contracts were born, vital tools in protecting themselves against their one-time captors.

Recognizing the power of promise, changelings who are fortunate enough to escape their captors often go on to make Wyrd-witnessed vows to one another. These pledges bolster both the individual fae who craft them and Lost society as a whole. They give paranoid escapees who may have little else in common with each other a hope of being able to trust one another and a shared framework of tradition and justice to build their world around.

But with every promise comes a price. No gift is given for free, and the costs of oaths are myriad. Not only does one risk great harm — even death — for violating one, but to maintain their Sanctions, a pledged fae gives over a degree of control of his actions, thoughts, even emotions, to abide by the pledge. Lost who layer on too many pledges may wield great power, but they are also tightly proscribed in their actions, penned in by conflicting loyalties, requirements and bans in order to keep to the word of their oaths.

The Rose-Bride's Plight centers around a traditional pledge — The Heart's Oath — which is intended to heal past difficulties between two of the freehold's Courts by uniting in life-long partnership the individuals who will inherit their Crowns. By binding these future leaders together, the current monarchs hope to mend a historic rift between Spring and Winter, ensuring the health of the freehold.

This adventure poses an opportunity for the characters to learn first hand about the intricacies of pledges and the weight thereof. Within its framework, they will be given the chance to unravel a mystery or two,

A cold war between Spring and Winter threatens to tear the freehold apart. Broken oaths, betrayals and bitter memories have widened the chasm between the two Courts for decades, with each transition from Onyx to Emerald becoming an ever more frigid and hostile affair.

In the past, fanatics on either side have taken overt action against their enemies and tensions have swelled. Members of the freehold fear that if something is not done soon, one party or the other will take drastic action and drive the freehold into a true civil war.

Or worse.

From amidst this turmoil, two levelheaded rulers have emerged and struck a time-honored bargain, pledging to unite their Courts with a wedding between two of their members. But it appears that someone isn't eager to see the decades-old hostilities so easily soothed.

uncovering some of the confusing and often contradictory situations that life among the fae can spawn. As well, this story's challenges offer the opportunity for them to explore some of the Lost's courtly traditions, and perhaps to find a place for themselves therein.

Like most Storyteller Adventure System kits, **The Rose-Bride's Plight** works as a stand-alone story spanning one or two gaming sessions, but it also includes tips and advice for folding it into your current **Changeling: The Lost** chronicle.

WHAT'S INSIDE

This story kit breaks down into three basic parts:

The **Introduction**, which you're currently reading, gives you the overview of the story, the rundown on Storyteller characters and lots of history and back-story to help you bring the setting and characters to life.

The **Scenes** are the heart of the story. They detail the central actions of the tale and help you improvise in the midst of your story. Each includes more specific Storyteller advice and a plethora of options for characters to interact with the scenario presented.

The **Scene Cards** mark the beginning of in-play resources included with **The Rose-Bride's Plight**. Along with the key Storyteller characters' character sheets and the scene flow chart, they are designed to be easily printed. If you can't print this whole kit, just print this section (pp. I-XIV) which will provide the basic information you will need to tell this story.

TREATMENT

In **The Rose-Bride's Plight**, the Spring and Winter Courts of the local freehold have been at odds for decades. The current monarchs, at the strong suggestion of the other Courts, have devised a plan to mend their past and forge a new future together. Queen Aeolian, longtime Verdant Sovereign, and King Maxwell Warden, ancient Onyx Monarch, have agreed to the marriage of their wards and the heirs to their respective thrones. The engaged couple, Aurora of the Spring Court and Todd White of Winter, are scheduled to wed in a small private ceremony on the vernal equinox, three days hence. Tonight, at a party hosted by Queen Aeolian, the happy couple celebrates their upcoming

About the Storytelling Adventure System

If this is your first Storytelling Adventure System (SAS) product, you've chosen a fine place to start. To keep this story kit lean and focused, though, we haven't included a lot of the core premises and Storyteller suggestions that are at the heart of the SAS. Whether you're new to the role of Storyteller or more experienced, be sure to read the *free* SAS Guide, found at the SAS website:

www.white-wolf.com/sas

Here are some of the features available in **The Rose-Bride's Plight**:

Interactive links. Clicking on anything in green will take you directly to the section referenced, or to an appropriate character sheet or prop. It can also take you to an external website that could be useful.

Scenes. Clicking on a scene name in the scene flowchart or the page number in the scene card will take you to the full write-up of the scene.

Bookmarks. This PDF is fully bookmarked, so you can jump to major sections at any time when the file is open.

nuptials with the freehold and guests from both far and near. But tragedy will mar the celebration, throwing those gathered into chaos and turmoil. Recruited by the locals to help prevent the freehold from falling into civil war, the changelings must dig deep into the interpersonal and political web of the freehold to determine the truth of the situation. The investigation must be done quickly. The equinox is only three days away, and with it comes the potential for great joy or tragedy depending on what the characters uncover and the choices they make.

Before she can make her debut at the pre-nuptial ball, Aurora, the Flowering bride-to-be, is found dead, presumably struck down by an unknown assailant. Her liege-lady, Aeolian, blames Warden's agents and vows revenge if her ward's murderer is not found. The Winter King, on the other hand, claims this is treachery on Spring's behalf and insists

that if another bride is not found for his now-mourning heir, he will not relinquish the throne to the Verdant Court at the equinox — a sure promise of civil war and a clear call to the Others.

The freehold is aghast. Who would kill Aurora, beloved Spring courtier, especially if it means destroying the peace they've worked so hard to regain and putting the entire freehold at risk to the Gentry? Some are quick to point fingers. Spring and Winter blame each other,

Foreign Guests

While everything needed to run **The Rose-Bride's Plight** is contained within this adventure kit, the **World of Darkness Rulebook** and **Changeling: The Lost**, references are made to game elements from other World of Darkness materials as well. While enough context and mechanics are given to use these elements without possessing the books from which they came, this chart will allow you to find the original references, should you desire more information about them.

Item	SAS Reference	Originating Supplement
Merit: Pledgesmith	p. 9	Rites of Spring, p. 94
Entitlement: Oneirophysics	p. 10	Lords of Summer, pp. 155-158
Contracts of Separation	p. 22	Winter Masques, pp. 40-42
Fighting Style: Hedge Duelist	p. VI	Rites of Spring, p. 91
Rare Goblin Fruits	p. 53	Rites of Spring, p. 131
Contracts of the Four Directions	p. 48	Winter Masques, p. 134
Contracts of Communion	p. 48	Winter Masques, pp. 32-35

of course, but others have their own hunches as to who — or what — is to blame. And when the dead bride's corpse disappears, even those who did not originally suspect foul play become certain that something is afoot.

The characters may be drawn into the situation by their own curiosity or greed, by Court loyalties, or out of self-defense when accused of being involved in the wrongdoing themselves. Investigating the situation draws the characters deeper into the inner conflict and turmoil of the freehold. Clues suggest the groom is not, in truth, mourning his fiancée's death; perhaps there was more (or less) to the marriage than the characters were led to believe?

When Aurora's body disappears, it becomes clear that something beyond simple assassination has happened. Clues abound. Members of the freehold, including Aurora's motley-mates, share their own insights, some of which may lead the characters to those with direct knowledge of the Spring princess' whereabouts.

With only three days before the equinox, there's no time to delay. Decisions must be made and promises kept or broken. At the brink of civil war, the characters are faced with the ultimate choice — do they reveal Aurora's situation or do they find another solution to unite Spring and Winter for once and for all?

THEME: CONFLICTED LOYALTIES

The tangled maze of freehold politics and Wyrd-sworn pledges is a territory few Lost tread lightly. They are often thrust into a morass of conflicted loyalties such as the conflict between Aurora's love for her beloved and her Oath of Fealty to Aeolian, her motley's loyalty to her juxtaposed with their concern for their freehold's health and safety, and even Micah the Tall's inner turmoil between what is right and what he wants to be right. Often, after escaping from their Keepers and realizing that they cannot return back to their earlier lives, the Lost will seek to surround themselves with other relationships that reinforce a new sense of belonging (as well as relationships forced upon them by pledges or political needs). Unfortunately, these relationships can bring them into conflict not only with differing factions, but also with their own beliefs, desires and aspirations.

MOOD: CONFUSION

Like the Lost themselves, many situations look fairly simple to understand on the surface but further investigation reveals layer upon layer of increasing complexity. Thus one is often tricked into making snap judgments or decisions only to discover the ramifications run far deeper than originally envisioned. **The Rose-Bride's Plight** mirrors that sense of discovery of depth, presenting an atmosphere wherein there is no clear right or wrong, save for those determined by each individual's own personal compass. Each new piece of information revealed is designed not only makes the scenes within this adventure kit more real and multi-dimensional, but also to force characters and players to examine their own views on topics like honor, honesty, faith, and love. The mood is one of being challenged to separate not only truth from falsehood but also multiple warring priorities.

A STORY BY ITSELF

The Rose-Bride's Plight works well as a stand-alone adventure. Run over one or two sessions, the story provides intrigue to uncover, mysteries to solve and faces characters with a tough end-choice to ponder. For this type of a short-run story, the players' characters can be visitors to the established freehold, invited for the wedding celebration only to find themselves thrust into a courtly environment that is both foreign and frightening. With no pre-existing loyalties and little foreknowledge of the situation they're walking into, the characters will still have to make tough decisions with whatever information they can gather in the growing chaos of the freehold.

Alternately, the Storyteller may choose to cast the players' characters as part of the focal freehold, spending a little time painting in background connections with some of the Storyteller characters to establish a sense of pre-existing loyalties from which they may springboard into the story itself.

In a stand-alone adventure, the story will end with the characters' final choices: to pledge themselves or others into loveless marriage to unite the Courts, to allow chaos to ensue or to find another way to bridge the gap between Spring and Winter. After-effects may be narrated as a summary, or simply planned out by the Storyteller for use as a springboard into another stand-alone adventure, perhaps set a few years in the freehold's future.

A CHAPTER IN YOUR CHRONICLE

Alternately, this adventure kit can be used as part of an ongoing **Changeling: The Lost** chronicle. Several possibilities exist for using the story in this way. If you're just starting your game, the freehold in question could be one that the characters have just moved to, and they are learning about the history of their new home as the story unfolds. Or perhaps they have already established themselves within the freehold, forming their own alliances and animosities with the other Lost who populate the city.

If your chronicle is already underway, characters already in play can be substituted into the roles of those outlined here, using this story in as one chapter in your long-running story. Or, as suggested above, the players' characters can have been invited to a nearby freehold as guests at their neighboring group's celebration, and the story played out with the offered Storyteller characters as the residents of that city.

In an ongoing chronicle, the characters' choices may well have far-flung ramifications. Forcing (or supporting others in forcing) a freehold member into a life-long oath may well net them at least one long-term enemy. On the other hand, any pledges they commit themselves to on the freehold's behalf will certainly affect their path forward as well. Heroes or villains, the choices the characters make in this story will color their future in the ongoing chronicle.

It's important to note that the actual reason why the two courts are at each other's throats isn't detailed in the story kit. We've left that for you as the Storyteller to detail, if it becomes important to your chronicle, as another way to tailor this story to your needs.

MOTIVATIONS

Some character groups will leap onto plot threads like a hungry Hunterheart on the scent of prey. Others may require a bit of artful nudging on the part of the Storyteller in order to convince them to get involved in a storyline. If using **The Rose-Bride's Plight** as a chapter in an ongoing chronicle, Storytellers may have a better idea of what will encourage their players' characters into action. However, certain motivating factors are inherent in the story; these may work to get a broad variety of Lost characters involved in the plotline, even if the story not tied into a greater chronicle arc.

Potential motivations for becoming involved in the investigation (and thus in the process of healing the rifts discovered therein) might include:

- **Patronage:** Aiding Aeolian in this matter may well earn characters her patronage. As a long-time Queen of the freehold, being in her good graces could certainly serve the characters well, even if they are of different Courts than her. While King Warden is a bit more difficult to deal with, some characters may seek (and benefit from) his patronage as well.

- **Camaraderie:** If the characters begin as outsiders (visitors to or new members of the freehold), their investigations may well allow them to begin building working (or personal) relationships with established members of the freehold.

- **Reward:** Queen Aeolian's offer is quite clear — the Lost who provides her with the identity of Aurora's murderer can name their own reward. Greedy characters may seek treasure, inquisitive ones request knowledge and those with political aspirations might ask for a position within the freehold far beyond what they have yet to achieve.

- **Justice:** A grave wrong appears to have been committed. Those with noble demeanors or a strong sense of right and wrong may seek to discover the victim's assailant simply to bring them to justice.

- **Fame:** Assuming the characters have not yet made a name for themselves within the freehold (either because they are newly arrived or because they have yet to prove themselves) this adventure presents them with the perfect opportunity to stand out in the crowd of Lost and gain recognition.

- **Safety:** If the above potential rewards are not sufficient to motivate the characters, they may be encouraged to take action out of self-preservation. A freehold provides safety and protection for its members. However, a freehold at war is an inherently dangerous place, for combatants and bystanders alike. And a freehold which no longer upholds the traditions and rituals that keep the Others at bay is nothing more than a target-rich environment beckoning for the True Fae to come shopping.

New Elements

NEW SYSTEM: UNWITTING PLEDGES

Tricking, bullying or sweet-talking someone into an unwitting pledge is an ageless Fae tradition. While many oaths are sworn of free will, with forethought and planning on all parts, not all are. Some are “caught” into **pledges**, having their freely given words or agreements which were not intended as a pledge turned into one. Others are actually tricked or manipulated into giving an agreement (which is then Wyrd-bound), even though it was not their intention to do so.

Changelings can use their connection with the Wyrd to turn any agreement into a pledge. From a formal promise (“I swear, I will never tell you a lie”) to a casual agreement (“Sure, I’ll pick you up at the airport”), any commitment that is recognized by the Wyrd, through one or more parties involved in it having the Wyrd advantage, can be forged into a pledge. All it takes is the application of Willpower by someone involved.

Most Lost (and those who know about them from direct experience or legend) are extremely wary of making any promises, commitments or agreements — and rightfully so. While human society may see oath-breaking to be a serious matter only in extremely formal instances (marriage vows, legal contracts and the like), the Wyrd cares nothing for “circumstances beyond your control.” If you have promised to tend a Woodblood's plants while she is on vacation, and she locks your promise into a pledge, the Wyrd does not care if her house burns down while you're away or if you are taken into an alternate dimension where your demonic overlords won't let you loose to tend to your gardening. A broken pledge is a broken pledge.

Some Lost eschew the use of anything other than formal pledges. Most often the newly returned, these changelings believe that to lock another (be they fae or mortal) into a casual promise with the Wyrd is a form of treachery only suited to the True Fae. Others, however, embrace this ability as a vital tool. When there is little to nothing one can trust, the ability to bind others to their spoken word provides a basis for beginning to trust. It prevents treachery, betrayal and deception — or at least invokes a price for them. Binding humans into secrecy is a pledge



few Lost would disagree with. If a few more complain if that pledge includes servitude or support, they really aren't arguing against the morality of manipulating others into pledges, but rather are splitting hairs about the nature of "proper" pledges versus unethical ones.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Persuasion + Wyrð minus the target's Resolve + Occult + Wyrð

Action: Instant (costs 1 Willpower to initiate the roll which is then used to fuel the pledge or wasted)

Unwitting pledges must be a part of a conversation that could be manipulated into the target saying something that could be construed as a promise. The aggressor must determine the constraints of the pledge before making the attempt to trick the target into it. The target's resistance is reflexive, and they do not suffer an unskilled dice penalty for the Occult skill (so in other words, they don't *add* dice to the aggressor's roll if the target doesn't have any dots in Occult).

The power of the unwitting pledge is limited by the net number of the aggressor's successes. No aspect (positive or negative) of the pledge may be greater than the number of net successes achieved by the aggressor. With a single success, the aggressor is limited to Lesser sanctions, durations, boons and tasks (no greater than 1 or -1 in severity.) With two successes, Medial pledge elements can be added, and with 3 or more, Greater aspects can be enforced.

Unwitting pledges count towards the total number of pledges the changelings involved can bear at any given point, just as unforced ones do.

In addition to the standard Persuasion modifiers (p. 83, **World of Darkness Rulebook**), Storytellers can impose the following pledge-specific helps and hindrances to this challenge.

Hindrances: Target is aware of the existence of pledges (-2), for each level of each aspect (sanction, duration, boon or task) of the pledge that is above Lesser (-1 cumulative), Pledgesmith Merit (-1 per level of Merit of target; see **Rites of Spring**, p. 94)

Help: Pledgesmith Merit (+1 per level of Merit of aggressor; see **Rites of Spring**, p. 94), target is an ensorcelled human (+1), target is intoxicated or otherwise influenced to be more pliant to suggestion (+1)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The target automatically knows that they were being talked into some sort of promise against their will. Any additional

attempts to manipulate this target into an unwitting pledge within the next 24 hours automatically fail.

Failure: The unwitting pledge does not "take" and the target may reflexively roll Wits + Occult + Wyrð to determine if they sense the fact that they were being manipulated into an unwilling agreement. Regardless of whether the target is aware of the trick or not, any additional attempts to manipulate this target into an unwitting pledge within the next 24 hours suffer an automatic -4 penalty (cumulative with successive attempts and failures over any 24 hour period.)

Success: The aggressor has managed to bribe, bully, sweet talk or intimidate his target into unintentionally making an agreement that he then binds into to an immediately activated pledge. A side result of this entrapment is that the target becomes aware, at least in general, of what she has "agreed" to do or not do, and the punishment if she should break the pledge. She is not, however, aware that she has been tricked into it, and believes she swore of her own volition.

Exceptional Success: No additional benefit results from an exceptional success beyond an increased threshold for the power of the pledge gained from the net successes rolled.

Note that using this method to trick or force a supernatural into a pledge is a level 5 Clarity sin. At the Storyteller's discretion, exceptionally dangerous, restrictive or long-lasting pledges may be level 4, 3 or even 2 Clarity sins, depending on how closely the Lost's behavior and demands resemble the means and methods utilized by the Others. Forcing a mundane human (who are inherently more vulnerable to such predations) is automatically one step lower Clarity sin (thus a minimum of level 4). Trapping defenseless humans into unwitting pledges is the purview of the True Fae.

*Aeolian attempts to bind an unwitting human into a Reaper's Pledge (**Changeling: The Lost**, pp. 185-186). She spends a point of Willpower and strikes up a conversation with the target. Her starting dice pool is 13 (Manipulation + Persuasion + Wyrð). The human's starting resistance is 3 (Wits 3, no Occult, no Wyrð). Aeolian is further hampered by the Medial Endeavour Task (-1) and the Medial Glamour Boon (-1), although all other aspects of the pledge are Lesser and thus impose no hindrances. Aeolian receives a +3 bonus for her three levels of the Pledgesmith Merit, and she has both intoxicated and ensorcelled the human (+1 for each) for a total of +5*

bonus dice. Thus the Storyteller rolls 13 dice for Aeolian's attempt (13–3–2+5) and achieves 4 successes. This is more than the 2 she needed to achieve the Reaper's Pledge, as no aspect of the pledge is greater than Medial, and the human is bound in the pledge. Aeolian must now make a Clarity check versus a sin level set by her Storyteller (but at least a level 4 sin).

NEW GOBLIN FRUIT: THE MYRSINA

Flesh as white as snow, skin as red as blood, the myrsina might well be mistaken for the stereotypical perfect apple, at least visually. Its odor and taste, however, it is utterly unique. Despite its beauty, myrsina fruit flesh carries the scent and flavor of death; a single bite requires a Resolve + Composure check to avoid vomiting. Fortunately, for those who would gain its benefit, a single bite is all that is required.

One turn after swallowing a bite of a myrsina (and not throwing it back up), the consumer falls into a deep, coma-like sleep. Two turns later, this sleep deepens even further — for the next 12 hours, the individual appears to all examinations to be dead. She does not breathe, her heart does not beat, and her body exists as if in suspended animation. Those who have experienced myrsina say it is as if they fell asleep and woke a moment later, with no memory of what happened around them while they were “dead.” The “corpse” can, of course, be injured or even killed in truth during this time period, taking damage as normal, although she feels no pain during this death-like state. The death-state continues for a full 12 hours regardless of what happens to the individual during that time period. Although it is exceedingly difficult to mistakenly eat (or convince someone to eat) a fruit that tastes and smells so strongly of dust, rotting flesh and offal, it has happened in the past. Unwary victims have woken in morgue drawers, during their own funeral ceremonies or even mid-examination on autopsy tables.

The death-state induced by eating myrsina flesh is so deep and true that it is rumored to fool even the Wyrd. Upon entering this state, all lifelong pledges become undone without technically breaking. The death-state fulfills the end of the oath just as if the individual had actually died, and unless re-sworn upon awakening, the changeling is free of their oath without triggering the sanctions of it. Contracts or powers which detect oath-breakers do not recognize this loophole as having broken the oath. It is, instead, as if it was fulfilled by the individual's pseudo-death. The fruit, of course, cannot prevent the individual who has dodged the sanc-



tion of his or her oath from suffering whatever damage to their reputation may occur should their duplicity become known.

Myrsina are a very rare goblin fruit, not commonly known. Unless one has been specifically taught about the fruit, it requires a successful Intelligence + Occult roll made at a –6 penalty to have even heard of the myrsina (a skill specialty in goblin fruit reduces the penalty to –4) and after that, another test with similar penalties is required in order to be aware of its specific properties.

Background and Set-Up

No one really remembers exactly what set Spring and Winter at each other's throats more than 30 years to the past. The conflict was old by the time Warden took the throne. Any clear right or wrong has been buried under years of betrayals, back-stabbings, clandestine guerilla tactics and petty arguments blown out of proportion for generations. While the rift has varied in depth and intensity over the years, recent history has done nothing to mend it, and tensions are at an all-time high. The wedding is a lace doily atop this freehold's proverbial powder keg — a last ditch effort to make things right before they go totally to hell.

THE RECENT PAST

While contradictory tales are told of the freehold's past, certain events in recent history have driven the tension to dramatic heights. Depending on whether the characters are assumed to be visiting the freehold simply for the wedding, to have recently returned and begun to make their home in the featured freehold or to have lived in the featured freehold for a longer time period, they may have heard some or all of these tidbits. Variations (or more thorough information) may be available through investigation or interaction with certain Storyteller characters during the course of game play.

- Queen Aeolian virtually adopted the newly returned Aurora about six months ago, and the girl has learned much at the feet of her socially adroit monarch-mentor.

- Two months ago, King Warden surprised those gathered at his formal court by announcing the engagement of his ward, Todd White, to the Spring courtier, Aurora.

- Those close to both mentioned seeing the two interact on occasion, but no one really thought of them as a couple.

TONIGHT

The story begins the night of the ball celebrating the upcoming wedding of Todd White and Aurora, heirs to the Winter and Spring thrones respectively. The location is the manorial estate of Queen Aeolian, who is rumored to have stepped back into ownership of her family's mansion after arranging for the destruction of her fetch.



The Cast

MINOR CHARACTERS

Minor players in the story have been provided in an abbreviated form: a glimpse of personality, a snippet of statistics and a bit of background in relation to the roles they play within the tale. This is not to say that any of these individuals may not, depending on your player's actions, take on a larger role, but they are not specifically designed to take the center stage, and should never overshadow the player characters in terms of focus. This story is not one to be told to your players' characters, but instead is laid out as terrain for them to move within, giving them the opportunity to explore the moral dilemmas raised by the scenario both externally and internally.

Those characters who do share the spotlight with your players' characters are those who are most likely to develop into antagonistic relationships with them. This does not mean that they will necessarily come to blows, although that is certainly a possibility.

THE EMERALD COURT AEOLIAN, OATH-WIELDING QUEEN

To some, it may seem strange that the long-standing Queen of Spring is an Elemental, a seeming known for difficulty in accessing human emotions.



Far from a frailty, however, Aeolian has turned her distance from humanity into a boon — many boons, in fact. Unlike Warden who has retained his seasonal crown throughout the years due to cool efficiency, Aeolian relies upon the Oath-Sworn loyalty of certain prominent members of the freehold, tugging at their pledge-strings with ruthless efficiency. Her ability to sense and manipulate emotions has little to do with empathy and more with seeing those around her as a resource to plunder.

Pledge Trap (dice pool 16, no 10-again, with situational modifiers per **Unwitting Pledges pp. 5-7**) — Aeolian levels a hard blue stare upon her target, speaking with the speed and dexterity of a spring breeze. The conversation winds around the two of them almost visibly, and the person she's speaking with slowly begins to nod his head in agreement with her words. No one in the freehold is as renowned for weaving airtight pledges as Queen Aeolian. Perhaps her own vaporous nature allows her to see even the smallest crack or potential loophole in a promise's wording, or perhaps she simply lacks the human emotions that would grant her vows a modicum of flexibility. Regardless, should this cunning **Pledgesmith** attempt to manipulate an unwitting individual into a pledge, her target will be hard pressed to escape unfettered.

Queen Aeolian Character Relationships

Aurora

Flit

Parrymon

Jeremiah Sorn

Madame Night

Squick

Maxwell Warden



JEREMIAH SOMN, VOYEURISTIC DREAM-DOCTOR

Spring is about growth and healing as well as desire and passion. Jeremiah Somn has made a name for himself among the freehold as being the “go-to” person when individuals are sick or injured.

This Fairest Bright One’s skin shines like a starry night sky, and his personality is just as bright. He’s always willing to lend a hand, and gives his services to members

of the freehold and their visitors freely. Or rather, the price he takes is noticed by very few.

Jeremiah is a dream-voyeur. Outside of his professional demeanor, he is shy about interpersonal matters. He indulges in vicarious excitement by exploring the most intimate and private chambers of others’ dream world. Making himself invaluable to the freehold as a healer and psychiatrist has allowed him to indulge himself with no need for risk or retribution. If one is invited into another’s mind to heal their wounds, surely no one will mind (or notice) if one does a bit of exploring while at work?

The Plunge — As a member of the **Oneirophysics**, Jeremiah may slip into a deep dream state at will, just by spending a point of Glamour. This Plunge allows him, while sleeping, to enter into the dreams of any individual he is making skin-to-skin contact with, as long as his target is also sleeping.

Dream Riding (dice pool 9 vs. dreamer’s Wits + Resolve) — *With a self-contented smile, the starry-skinned doctor settles down beside the sleeping form, reaching out to stroke her cheek with one hand as his eyes close. Within moments, his body relaxes visibly and his breathing matches that of his sleeping patient as their dreams merge. After entering another individual’s dream, either through the Plunge or a dreaming-tasked pledge,*

Jeremy can attempt to analyze the dream, learning interesting details about the dreamer’s nature, condition or the current issues plaguing her subconscious. He can also rifle through her subconscious, given time, and pick out particularly interesting tidbits of current or former dreams to view.

Jeremiah Somn *Character Relationships*

Aeolian

Aurora

Madame Night

Parsimon





AURORA, BLUSHING BRIDE

The only thing sweeter than Aurora's cherubic face is the delicate jasmine perfume that surrounds her.

This Fairest Flowering is beloved by almost every member of the freehold, and her popularity has led to her being named Queen Aeolian's ward and most likely successor. She dresses

in green silk and velvet, demure but undeniably sensual. Aurora is

graced with a sense of fragile femininity that attracts attention of all sorts. Some want to protect it, some to possess it, and others to sully it and prove she is not as naive or innocent as she seems. Aurora is often accompanied by the members of her motley — Squick, Madame Night and Jeremiah Somn — as well as an entourage of other admiring friends, fans and would-be lovers.

Sweet Talking (dice pool 7, 9-again, augmentable with Glamour up to 3 per round, max pool of 12) — *She lowers her gaze to the floor at her target's feet as if too shy to meet his eyes. A few soft words pass across her crimson lips, and then she looks up at him through her thick fringe of lashes. She holds his gaze for just a moment too long before tilting her head to the side and smiling sweetly. Those nearby can hear a single honeyed word... "Please?" He almost hurts himself rushing to meet her request.* Aurora's sweet demeanor, beauty and charm make it difficult for others to tell her no. She will, in any situation, attempt to use guile and sheer force of personality to convince others to do as she sees fit, including lying for her, protecting her from harm and supporting her plans, no matter how morally ambiguous they may seem to be. On the other hand, she really does come across as a nice person (albeit in a difficult situation), which only bolsters the effectiveness of her verbal manipulations.

Aurora Character Relationships

Aeolian

Bator

Jeremiah Somn

Madame Night

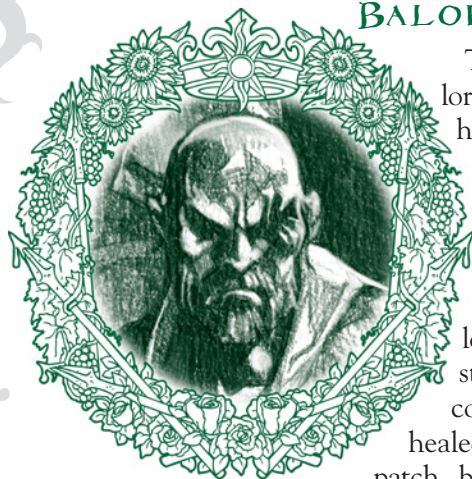
Micah

Squick

Todd White

THE CRIMSON COURT

BALOR, JEALOUS BULLY



The Cyclopean known as Balor may rarely speak, but when he does it is almost certain to be venom-filled and bitter. Balor was quite handsome before his abduction, or so he claims. Now his left eye socket is a gaping hole bordered by four long, equally spaced scars that stretch from brow to chin. He covers the worst of the long-healed wound with a large black eye-patch, but the patch does nothing to hide the callous demeanor and sullen words that have driven away anyone who might have tried to care for him.

Ferret Out Info (dice pool 7, 8-again) — *He leans in close, speaking in a surly whisper to the man in front of him. His face wrinkles in a grimace as he breathes deeply of the now-cringing man's scent. "Y'er lym', ya slimy bastard. Ya reek of it. Now where's it at?"* Although far from socially graceful, Balor's got a knack for gathering information. He's exceedingly good at "sniffing" out information, regardless of whether others intend to share it or not. Among other things, he can quite often tell when others are lying, just from the scent of fear and deception surrounding them.

Balor Character Relationships

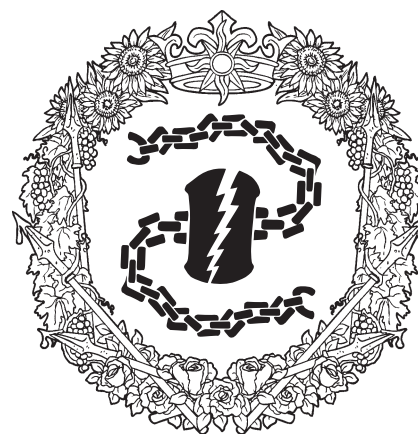
Aeolian

Aurora

Jeremiah Somn

Micah

Tai



THE ASHEN COURT

SQUICK, BOCEYMAN



Fae know that there truly are things that go bump in the night, and Squick is one of them. Capable of taking on whatever visage suits his whim, this Darkling Mirrorskin haunts the shadows and nightmares of wrongdoers throughout the area.

Most in the freehold know him by his childlike demeanor and constant grin, but both quickly fade when confronted with news of children being harmed.

Instill Fear (dice pool 9 vs. target's Comp) — *He grinned at her with the unceasing, gape-lipped smile of a scarecrow. The expression never reached his eyes, however, which glittered like oily pools. He doesn't say a word, just looks at her, and even across the room, you could see the goosebumps start to raise on her forearms.* Squick's role in life is to play the boogie-man for adults who need a reminder that there are things out there bigger and badder than they are. Child molesters, abusive parents, pedophiles and others who take advantage of the young and vulnerable may well find themselves visited by a grinning demonic scarecrow intent on scaring them to within an inch of their life. While he rarely uses this ability on anyone except those who mistreat children, it's always a possibility.

Squick *Character Relationships*

Aurora

Balor

Tai

Todd White





MADAME NIGHT, DISDAINFUL SEER

Abducted from her familial home in New Orleans, Madame Night spent her durance among the ghostly victims of her Keeper's wrath, and learned the power of fear. Gaunt, yet elegant, this red-haired beauty now plumbs the depths of the unknown using a deck of tarot cards rumored to have once belonged to the Mambo Marie Laveau herself. She offers her advice (whether it is asked for or not) to those within the freehold. Many scoff at her claims of predicting the future — but only until one of the fates she's foretold comes true. Few doubt for long.

Reading The Portents (dice pool 8) — A thoughtful look crosses her face and her long, spidery fingers scramble for the silk pouch at her waist. The cards are in her hands and shuffling before he can take a backwards step, and as he lifts his hands to protest, she plucks one from the deck and holds it out towards him. "What's wrong, sugah?" she purrs in a slow, southern drawl. "You afraid of seeing what will come of your choices?" Some people shy from the mysteries of the future. Madame Night has no respect for those who are not willing to face what lies ahead with open eyes and squared shoulders. By consulting her tarot deck, Madame Night can gain insight into the most significant upcoming event which will affect her target in the near future. She regularly uses this ability to keep an eye out for dangers to newly returned Lost or the children in her neighborhood, but can also be convinced, with the proper payment, to focus her ability on the future of others.

Madame Night Character Relationships

Aeolian

Aurora

Squick

Maxwell Warden



THE ONYX COURT

MAXWELL WARDEN, A MOST PROPER KING



Maxwell Warden tends to the freehold that has been under his care, at least during the months of Winter, for almost 20 years. His late wife passed away more than a decade ago, and rumors say that not only was he unfailingly devoted to her during their marriage, but that he has not so much as looked at another in that way since her death.

Warden was not originally antagonistic towards Spring Court; in fact early in his reign long-time members of the freehold may remember a prophecy of him being “fated” to bridge the gap between the estranged seasons. The Fates, however, seemed to work against Warden, and that end has not yet manifested, although Warden swears loud and long that he will be the savior of the freehold, no matter the cost. As he has announced that this will be his final season bearing the Ashen Crown, many believe the marriage of he and Aeolian’s successors is his last-ditch effort to fulfill that destiny. The truth, however, is a bit more dire.

Well-Chosen Words (dice pool 9, 11 when spending a point of Glamour, 9-again) — *Sliding his spectacles slightly lower on his nose, the monarch looked over the top of them at the offending party. “I can see your point. But the end simply does not justify the means. I will look into this matter, and I assure you justice will be done. But as for your actions, I’m certain you see that amends must be made.” The onlookers were amazed as the criminal willing agreed to support the family of the man he’d murdered for the next year as a penance for his actions. If there is one thing Maxwell Warden does well, it is dealing with controversial topics while avoiding offending others. He may not necessarily convince those around him to believe as he does, but he rarely fails to communicate the logic of his arguments in a way that leaves at least the possibility of swaying others to his way of thinking.*

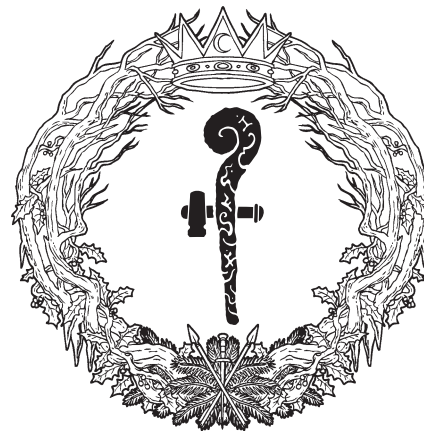
Maxwell Warden Character Relationships

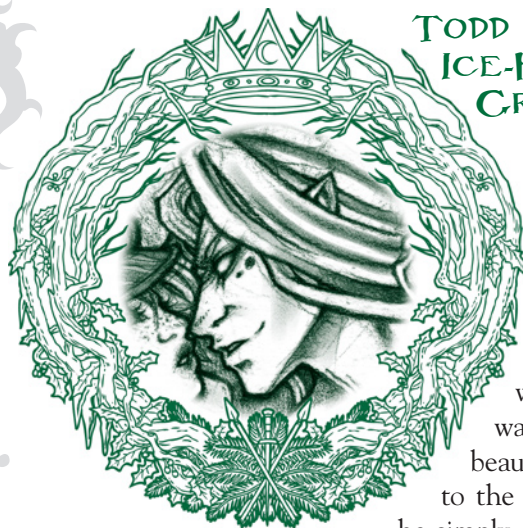
Aeolian

Micah

Tai

Todd White





TODD WHITE, ICE-HEARTED GROOM-TO-BE

Pretty as sin wrapped in crystal, Todd White is the archetypal aloof Winter Courtier. Most folks were surprised to find out that this Beast Hunterheart was involved with Aurora when their engagement was announced. He may be beautiful, from his regal brow to the tip of his ermine tail, but he simply doesn't seem to care about anyone or anything to any significant extent.

Cool and Collected (dice pool 7) — *He looks over the head of the angry Wizeden who is poking a finger in Todd's chest to make her point. "You aren't even listening to me! I told you, I know you did it, and I'm going to find a way to prove it!" The silver-haired fox-man just smiles, looking down at her with a nonchalant shrug. "Go ahead and try. You're wasting your time and mine. Now if you'll excuse me?" Some folks just don't care. Todd is one of them. He's so casual about virtually everything that it's hard for people to imagine that he would lie, and it's almost impossible to intimidate or bully him, or to appeal to his better nature (assuming he has one).*

Todd White *Character Relationships*

Aurora

Balor

Madame Night

Micah





Tai, STEALTHY KILLER

Going unnoticed is what Tai does best. She's plain-faced and soft-spoken to the extent that even those who've been members of the freehold for years often forget she is a part of their city. This Venombite, however, uses her camouflage to carry out the worst of Winter's tasks with a speed and effectiveness that makes her invaluable to her Court in times of dire need.

Back Stab (dice pool 9, initiative 18) —

Your eyes slip across her, like there's nothing there to hold your attention. She's standing against the back wall, well out of the flow of traffic. Then, someone makes the wrong move and she's not there any more. You look, and she's 10 feet away, putting away a slick-looking dagger like she's already shanked someone. Tai is a one-trick pony, but what this Beast does, she does exceedingly well. Seeming to appear from nowhere (Light-shy — Smoke 5), she strikes with inhuman speed (Oddbody — Mirror 4, Buglewort, Fast Reflexes 2) and then disappears again just as quickly until her Court has need of her once more.

Tai Character Relationships

Aeolian

Parsimon

Maxwell Warden



OUTSIDE THE COURTS

FLIT, NOSEY INFORMATION BROKER



Full of kinetic energy and curiosity, some mistake Flit for a harmless social butterfly. Nothing could be further for the truth, however, despite the young Windwalker's antennae and colorful wings. Although many of the seasonal courtiers distrust her Courtless ways, it's said that she knows enough secrets (and blackmail material) about the movers

and shakers of the freehold to allow her free access to all but the most private gatherings that happen in the area. Unfortunately, Flit may well have sold information to the wrong individual this time.

Information Broker (dice pool 5) — *Her wings practically vibrate as she fidgets from one foot to the next. "Yeah, I know a little something about them. What's it worth to you?" Her eyes sparkle as her customer reaches for his wallet.* If there's dirt on someone, Flit probably knows it, and is willing to trade it for something "valuable." Her definition of valuable varies, though, and some consider her a walking goblin market when it comes to information and the prices she asks in return. This petite air-head may have the attention span of a gnat, but she never forgets a juicy tidbit of information, and she rarely gets the short end of a bargain.

Flit

Character Relationships

Aeolian

Jeremiah Sorn

Micah

Tai



LIKELY ANTAGONISTS

The following characters are offered with full character sheets because they are the most likely Storyteller characters for the player characters to come into direct physical (or supernatural) conflict with. This does not mean that these characters will automatically initiate combat upon meeting the characters, or that the characters must fight with them, only that they are the most likely to be thrust into antagonistic situations with the characters which may escalate into hostile encounters.

PARSIMON, HERMIT FARMER

Quotes: *What do you want?*

Ya don't even look, none of you. You see what you want to see, and don't even look beyond the forest to see the trees.

G'wan. Get outta here with your sob story and your whining. Here. Take this with you. It's in my way.

Virtue: Charity. He really can't help but try to help those who are suffering.

Vice: Wrath. Although not one for fighting, Parsimon's tolerance is very low. Even though it is more

likely to manifest as snarling words than swordplay, he's quick to lash out verbally at others.

Background: For all that he looks timeless, Parsimon was not always the ancient hermit he is today. A farm boy at heart, he escaped from what seemed an eternity of servitude raising exotic crops for his Keeper to take on the same tasks in support of his freehold. He took to Spring Court, with its emphasis on growth, like a duck to water, and quickly earned renown in the area for his skill in cultivating goblin fruits and other exotic flora.



Unfortunately, as his fame (and standing in the Spring Court) grew, he found the greedy, self-centered members of the local Lost population to be almost as demanding and thankless as his True Fae captor had been, and slowly grew disenchanted with the fae community as a whole.

He withdrew from court, gradually at first, and then completely, only to find that the path to his doorway was worn bare by those who sought his wares for selfish and often vindictive purposes. When he attempted to be responsible about what his goblin fruits were being used for, he was first bribed and then threatened by those who sought his work for immoral purposes. He retreated even further, leaving his Court for that of the Ashen Mirror, and finally barred entrance to his Hollow to other fae altogether.

Parsimon has discovered over the years that the best way to not be taken advantage of is to be feared. For decades, he's cultivated an air of suspicion around himself as carefully as he's tended to his crops and studies. This effort has worked, perhaps too well. Others from the freehold don't trust him and are quick to jump to negative conclusions about his rare interactions with them. Rumors over the years have named him a loyalist (still raising goods for his Keeper), a privateer (blaming him for every Lost to go missing in the area over the decades) and a madman who simply cannot be trusted to know right from wrong.

Description: Gnarled as an old root and just as bitter, Parsimon could easily be mistaken for a walking debris pile. His hair is a mess of faded straw and withered weeds, and his skin as dry and craggy as bark. He wears a battered straw hat to shade him from the harsh sun in summer and keep the rain out of his eyes during the wet seasons. All knees and elbows, he would be lanky, were he not so bent with age, work and the weight of his own self-worth. His fingers are permanently curled, as if wrapped around the handle of some invisible tool, even when he's not at work. His tools of the trade are never far from his reach: sharp spades for digging, small sickles for harvesting and a pair of clippers suitable for sheering off whatever bits might need pruning.

Storytelling Hints: More than anything, Parsimon just wants to be left alone. He ventures out into the world only to sell the most mundane of his crops to small local vendors, in exchange for whatever necessities he cannot grow himself. All in all, however, he prefers the company of



his plants to that of people, be they fae or human. People only come calling when they want something, he's learned, so he treats any visitors with the gruff assumption that they're going to ask for favors.

Despite his gravelly nature, however, he has a very soft heart. He won't sell or trade his goblin fruits to those just seeking to obtain them, but he's a sucker for a sob story and may well gruffly shove the answer to a despondent Lost's problems into her hands before turning his back and telling her to get out of his sight.

While he looks ancient and frail, this Woodwalker does more physical labor in any given day than most Lost do in a year. He's stronger, more agile and more capable of defending himself than others imagine. Though he prefers to allow his gruff demeanor and bad reputation to chase off most trouble before it escalates to blows, he hates being bullied, and is not opposed to protecting himself.



Parsimon

Character Relationships

Aeolian

Aurora

Jeremiah Sowyn

Balor

Micah

Madame Night

Squick

Tai

Maxwell Warden

Todd White

Flit

VISCOUNTESS OF BROKEN VOWS, KARMIC SERVANT OF THE WYRD



Quotes: *You swore, but you didn't mean it. I heard it from miles away. You won't stay true. I'll be waiting.*

That splintering sound? That was your oath. What a nice doorway the wreckage leaves behind.

Oh, you promised never to raise a hand against your brother? How... quaint. (sound of a well-placed blow) Oops. Which one of you did that hurt more, do you think?

Virtue: Prudence. The Viscountess never acts rashly, and has usually

planned out several potential backup plans for every action she takes.

Vice: Sloth. Whenever possible, the Viscountess prefers to have others take action for her, although she doesn't mind nudging them in the right direction to set things in motion.

Background: It is rumored that the Viscountess was born of an ancient war between the seasons of Spring and Summer, and that in their fury, the two tore asunder the timeless cycle of the year casting the world into chaos that nearly killed off life entirely. Other stories say that the previous rumor was just a lie concocted by the Viscountess herself in order to set those True Fae who favor either of the two seasons against one another. Either is possible. What is for certain is that for centuries the Viscountess has appeared in the mortal world whenever a broken promise has set epic events in motion. Some claim she is simply summoned by the shattering of vows and the chaos that ensues thereafter. Others believe she is called by the potential for destruction inherent in situations where promises may be broken, and sets about influencing the scene to ensure the worst will come.

She has been watching the situation at the freehold carefully, since long before Maxwell Warden even made the pledge which he fears will summon her. She may well be responsible for nudging several of the members (Aurora, Micah and Parsimon especially) into actions that may have put Warden in a nigh-impossible situation: break his oath in regards to cementing peace between Spring and Winter, which would leave him susceptible to her, or stop the changing of the seasonal crowns, which might bring about civil war as well as flagging the freehold to other True Fae for attack.

Description: The Viscountess' voice is the cacophony of shattered glass shards grating against one another. She appears, from a distance, to be a beautiful woman dressed in a diaphanous gown, voluptuous and curvaceous with luxurious hair flowing down around her shoulders. Upon closer examination, however, her True Fae nature becomes clear. Rather than a sound physical form, the Viscountess' features and form slide loosely against each other. Her limbs slip eerily back and forth against her torso rather than being joined to it and her facial features float upon her skin like loosely moored boats on an uneasy sea. When she moves, each strand of her hair groans against the rest, like an out-of-tune violin being played by a hyperactive schoolchild. The discord is louder to those who have recently broken promises, or who have broken pledges in the past, to the point where a very recent oath-breaker may well find the sound maddening.

Storytelling Hints: The Viscountess is, at heart, lazy. She regains Willpower by encouraging (or forcing) others to do her work for her. Some of her favorite techniques include using Fleeting Seasonal gifts to redirect others' actions against their friends (Friendless Tongue and Goblin's Malignance to incite anger in a target and then direct it towards his friend), or appearing as an "authority" to humans and using this role to cause problems and encourage mayhem for those Lost she's chosen to try to nudge into breaking their oaths.

Because she dislikes exerting herself, the Viscountess goes into any interaction with others with Splendor of the Envoy's Protection (Vain-glory 3) activated, making it difficult for others to take action against her. Similarly, she will not engage in physical combat, instead retreating into the Hedge (and from there quickly back to Arcadia) if it becomes clear she cannot manipulate her targets into fighting with one another

to cause a distraction while tempting (Fleeting Spring) one of their number back with her.

Her primary goal at this point is to urge Warden's situation to the point where he breaks the oath he has made on her name. Although she is already aware of his location, this outcome would give her sadistic pleasure as well as a bonus to all her attempts to recapture her escaped former-chatelaine.



Special Abilities

Sense Sundered Oaths: Broken promises of all sorts speak to the Viscountess. Not only can she sense automatically if others have broken any pledges during their lifetimes, but she can tell if they have violated any promises of any sort within the last month, who the promise was made to, as well as how and when it was broken. With a successful Wits + Wyrd roll, she can also sense any existing pledges her target bears. This roll is a contested action versus the target's Resolve + Composure.

Two Birds with One Stone: Laziness inspires efficiency. The Viscountess can wield two Instant action Contracts in the same turn. This ability only works with Contracts, not other Instant actions. It can be used to activate two different Instant action Contracts such as Baleful Sense and Friendless Tongue in a single turn. It can also be used to activate the same Instant action Contract twice against the same or different targets. It cannot be used to lessen the amount of time required by Extended action Contracts.

Slip Away: The Viscountess has the ability to make herself intangible. She cannot use any other offensive or defensive abilities or powers while intangible, but neither can she be affected by offensive or defensive actions of others. This can be used for spying (she remains wholly visible while intangible, but she can hide within walls or solid objects large enough to mask her presence) or as a means of escape. For Storytellers with access to **Winter Masques**, it would be very appropriate for the Viscountess to also have access to all five clauses of the **Contracts of Separation** (pp. 40-42), with Slip Away being a simplified version of Phantom Glory.

Vice Over Virtue: Like all Keepers, the Viscountess of Broken Vows regains Willpower contrary to the ways of mortals and changelings. She regains one Willpower point from indulging her Virtue, but refreshes her whole pool when satiating her Vice.

MICAH THE TALL



Quotes: *Honor demands it, and I cannot deny what is right.*

Might does not make right. Right makes might. When the cause is true, the Fates show their favor.

My word is my bond. Can you say the same?

Virtue: Justice. Always there to champion those who cannot defend themselves, he is willing to put himself into grave personal danger for the sake of “doing the right thing.”

Vice: Pride. Micah feels himself to inherently know right from wrong to the extent that he sometimes doubts others have the ability to do so, especially if their views differ from his.

Background: Micah burst out of the Hedge a few years ago, wielding a bloody sword and wearing little more than torn rags. It took five freehold members to subdue him upon his arrival, all who wear scars from the encounter to this day. Once he was assured of his escape from his Keeper’s care, however, he spent a lot of his first few months engaging in heated arguments and brawls with those who dared to express opinions different than his. About a year after his arrival, Micah disappeared for a few weeks, and returned a changed man. He almost immediately settled down into life at the freehold, and his fury banked down to a fiery drive for defending what is right (rather than what is popular or traditional).

Description: Broad of shoulder and huge in stature, Micah is a mountain of a man. His clothing is all custom made to allow his mas-

sive form sufficient room to move, and he favors simple clothing that borders on historic garb in styling when he’s not actually wearing historical re-enactment costumes. His skin is pale enough for the veins to show through, giving him an almost marbled visage, and his muscles bulge with strength and vitality.

A giant in stature, even when not using his kith’s blessing, Micah the Tall has a reputation as large as he is within the freehold. He will not be party to deception or lies, claims to have never struck a foe by surprise or from behind, and (if rumors are to be believed) has no vices whatsoever. Some respect the Ogre Gargantuan for his strict adherence to his own moral code; others ridicule him for it, claiming it makes him predictable and vulnerable to his enemies. Little do they know that even this noble knight has his own treasured secrets.

Storytelling Hints: Few things in the world are as difficult to reason with as a man who honestly believes he knows best. Micah is willing to discuss, debate or duel over right and wrong, but is exceedingly difficult to convince; changing his mind is almost unheard of. At most, he will agree to disagree on topics that do not directly affect him or those he considers “his,” but in these cases he will still adamantly believe the other individual is wrong.

On matters that do affect himself or those he cares for, he will not relent on his attempts to convert others (be they commoner or king) to his way of thinking. He may let up for a time, make a strategic withdrawal from a conversation and re-attack from another direction at another time, but he will never entirely back down. Hedge duels are a frequent occurrence with Micah, as he attempts to “convince” those who seem to need a physical reminder of right and wrong.

Micah sees the world in black and white — everything is either right or wrong. He believes in Aurora wholly, seeing only the good in her. Therefore, if Aurora is always right, anyone who opposes her must be wrong. Micah supports her actions, even the ones which seem contradictory to his moral code, because he believes she was forced, manipulated or pressured into situations where the “right” thing to do was to do whatever it was that she did.

Micah the Tall *Character Relationships*

Aeolian

Aurora

Jeremiah Somn

Madame Night

Squick

Todd White

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The **Rose-Bride's Plight** features an extensive cast of characters, and focuses heavily on the intricate web of past and present interactions between them. As an aid to Storytellers, below is a brief description of each character, as well as his or her strongest connections with and attitudes towards other characters within the adventure kit.

AEOLIAN

The potential for stormy weather always exists in her silver tousled locks and sky-blue eyes.

Elemental Airtouched. Spring Queen. Mentor of Aurora. Adversary of Maxwell Warden.

- **Aurora:** A tractable girl who knows her place.
- **Flit:** Useful at times, but too unpredictable to be truly counted upon.
- **Parsimon:** Too valuable a resource to allow to slip away.
- **Jeremiah Somn, Madame Night and Squick:** As long as they remain devoted to Aurora, they are known quantities and assets to the freehold.
- **Warden:** He lets his pride get in the way of what is best for the freehold.

AURORA

Fresh with the blush of youth, her skin is as pale as a lily and her hair adorned at all times with still-growing roses.

Fairest Flowering. Spring Court. Heir to the Emerald Throne. Beloved to Micah the Tall. Motley-mate of Jeremiah Somn, Madame Night and Squick. Fiancée of Todd White.

- **Aeolian:** She's not as smart as she thinks she is.
- **Balor:** It's not my fault he's got a thing for me. It's not like I ever led him on.
- **Jeremiah Somn:** He's such a dear, sweet boy. He really needs a girlfriend, though.
- **Madame Night:** She scares me sometimes, but I'd never let her know that.
- **Micah:** What girl could resist a man who believes the sun and moon rise and set in your eyes?

• **Squick:** There's nothing frightening about Squick — as long as he's on your side.

• **Todd White:** I think this is all a game to him. He courts me like I'm a chess piece to be captured, or a bird he's stalking but doesn't really want to eat.

BALOR

As ugly as he is ill-tempered, this one-eyed bruiser is a monster in more than just name.

Ogre Cyclopean. Summer Court. Rival of Micah the Tall and Todd White for Aurora's attention.

• **Aeolian:** No one who's watched her for five minutes could miss how she uses people.

• **Aurora:** She's nothing but a manipulative little tease.

• **Jeremiah Somn:** He healed me once through my dreams. Smirked at me for weeks afterwards. Someone needs to teach him to respect other people's privacy.

• **Micah:** Self-righteous ass.

• **Tai:** Damn effective, when the frost-biters let her off her leash long enough to be.

FLIT

Perhaps it's all the facets in her eyes, or the constant twitch of her antennae, but this butterfly-girl always seems alert to whatever it is others most want ignored.

Beast Windwalker. Courtless. Spy.

• **Aeolian:** She pays me a lot to keep her secrets. You going to pay me more to talk?

• **Jeremiah Somn:** He knows things about just about everyone in the freehold. And he's not that hard to trick into spilling his guts.

• **Micah:** Like any other knight, he's got a weak spot in his armor. You wanna know where? Sure, but it'll cost you.

• **Tai:** She hates being watched, and hates being talked about even more. I can tell you some really interesting things about her. But, oh boy, is it going to be expensive.

JEREMIAH SOMN

Stars as thick and bright as the Milky Way dance along his night-black skin.

Fairest Bright One. Spring Court. Motleymate of Aurora, Madame Night and Squick.

• **Aeolian:** I believe she genuinely cares for the freehold and the Court. It must be hard to be alone up there on the throne.

• **Aurora:** She's a sweet girl, and deserves far better than most of the lowlifes that have been courting her.

• **Madame Night:** I've never let her read my future. I trust that she'd see and tell the truth — I'm just not sure I'm ready to hear it.

• **Parsimon:** I don't envy the man. I think he still pines for the queen he can never truly be with.

MADAME NIGHT

Bone thin, with fingers that flex and skitter like roaches fleeing the light — No wonder she's often mistaken for Darkling.

Wizened Oracle. Autumn Court. Motleymate of Aurora, Jeremiah Somn and Squick.

• **Aeolian:** I've seen dark things in her future, but she listens to no one but herself.

• **Aurora:** Like the rest of us, she does the best she can with the cards she was dealt.

• **Squick:** He walked through Hell and out the other side with me. I'd do anything but go back there for him.

• **Warden:** The Devil comes up whenever I read his future. I do not envy him the choices he must face.

MAXWELL WARDEN

As stiff and slender as an icicle, this white-haired monarch glowers at the world over the top of his frost-rimed glasses.

Wizened Chatelaine. Winter King. Mentor of Todd White. Adversary of Aeolian.

• **Aeolian:** She does not tell me how to run Winter, nor I her Court. But I cannot, will not trust her with our freehold's future. Spring has proven far too fickle in the past.

- **Micah:** A supreme example of Summer's inability to understand the word "subtle."
- **Tai:** You have nothing to fear from the girl. She's harmless, I assure you.
- **Todd White:** The hope of the freehold rests on his shoulders. I cannot allow myself to doubt he can stand the weight.

MICAH THE TALL

As tall and unrelenting as a pillar of stone, he manages not to bend, even under the burden of his own self-righteousness.

Ogre Gargantuan. Summer Court. Beloved to Aurora. Rival of Balor and Todd White for Aurora's attentions.

- **Aeolian:** Heartless. I can't even call her cruel — that would imply she has emotions. She's utterly without empathy for those around her.
- **Aurora:** I'd die for her. I'd lie for her. Since almost the day we met, I've lived for the touch of her gaze upon me.
- **Jeremiah Somn, Madame Night and Squick:** They're good friends to Aurora, and love her almost as much as I do. For that, they have my loyalty.
- **Todd White:** I'd rather cut off my sword-hand than allow him to touch Aurora, let alone marry her.

PARSIMON

Maybe once he was a vital, growing thing. Now he's like an old root — dry, gnarled and good only for tripping up those who don't watch their way.

Wizened Woodwalker. Autumn Court. Hermit.

- **Aeolian:** I loved her once, or thought I did. Thought she loved me too. I've never been more wrong, on either account.
- Everyone else: Damned nuisances. Why won't they just leave me to my work?

SQUICK

All knees and elbows, he moves like his joints are too loose. And when he smiles to reassure you, his lopsided grin stretches way too far across a face the color of burlap-sack.

Darkling Mirrorskin. Autumn Court. Motley mate of Aurora, Jeremiah Somn and Madame Night.

- **Aurora:** She plays games, but she's a good person at heart.
- **Balor:** Yeah, he's a jerk. But when you need to get to the root of an issue, there's no one better.
- **Tai:** The only thing faster than the speed of light is the speed of darkness. Don't blink or you'll miss her, then it will be too late.
- **Todd White:** If he hurts Aurora, he'll regret it for as long as he lives.

TAI

Her visage and voice are carefully cultivated not to draw attention. Only her sheer ordinariness is truly of note.

Beast Venombite. Winter Court.

- **Aeolian:** Who knew so much ice could thrive in Spring?
- **Parsimon:** He's forgotten more about poisons than most Lost will ever know. Makes ya wonder why Aeolian keeps him so close, doesn't it?
- **Warden:** He knows a tool used too often loses its edge.

TODD WHITE

Sleek silver-white hair pulled back in a loose ponytail, without a single strand out of place. His eyes are blue ice, but his smile could melt the heart of any woman.

Beast Hunterheart. Winter Court. Heir to the Onyx Throne. Fiancé of Aurora. Rival of Balor and Micah the Tall for Aurora's attentions.

- **Aurora:** The Princess and a sure path to the throne? Yeah, I'd hit that.
- **Balor:** He's just jealous. All talk, no action, you know what I mean?
- **Madame Night:** Kinda freaky, but, you know... in that zombie-princess kind of way.
- **Micah the Tall:** Why is that Ogre always hanging around Aurora?

VISCOUNTESS OF BROKEN VOWS

She slips along her path with all the grace of a con man's lies, features as fractured as the destruction he leaves behind.

True Fae.

Scenes

A total of 11 scenes are provided within this adventure kit. Some (“A Grave Announcement,” “Fallen Rose” and “The Vow,” for example) are almost certainly going to be part of the story you and your players create from **The Rose-Bride’s Plight**. Others will only come into play if the characters take certain actions, and may be skipped over or stepped around as your players’ characters traverse the plot.

You may find that, depending on the nature of the characters involved and their actions, you want to change or alter some of the scenes or the Storyteller characters described in them. Feel free to do so! Think of the provided scenes as a series of building blocks which can be used, altered, combined in new ways or left out entirely in order to make the best story for your players. If a character provided is not presented in an antagonistic way, but your characters’ actions back him into a corner, feel free to create a reaction for him — fight or flight — even if it’s not detailed in the scene. Likewise, if you’re using this storyline in conjunction with an existing chronicle, feel free to switch out the suggested characters for ones that already exist in your world.

Each of the scenes include a brief summary of what the characters involved may see, hear and even smell while involved in that particular scene. These descriptions are designed to be read aloud to introduce characters the scene at its onset. They can also be provided bit-by-bit as the characters actively seek to explore the scene, at the Storyteller’s discretion. Because fae with low Clarity perceive the world around them in unusual and unique fashions, suggestions for what those with low Clarity might sense are included in each scene’s description. These additional perception notes are noted by the word “clarity” in parenthesis.

SCENE FLOW

The scenes in this adventure kit are not intended to be linear. Although the story begins with “A Grave Announcement” and ends with “The Vow,” there is no one right path between them. “A Grave Announcement” offers likely transitions to six other scenes. Each of those scenes may in turn lead to several other scenes. In some cases, characters may even return to a scene they’ve previously left for additional

investigation. Notes are included in each scene as to whether this is possible, and indicating if returning to a scene changes it in some way.

Regardless of the path the characters take, they have a maximum of three days before “The Vow” comes into play. While they may enter this scene before that 72 hour deadline, it comes into effect (with or without them) at sunset on the third day after the ball — the Spring Equinox. Because characters may breeze through some scenes and spend hours in others, Storytellers are encouraged to keep track of the passage of in-character time. At the very least, players should be notified when they have reached 24 and 48 hours, and when they are nearing the 72-hour mark. This will serve to keep the tension in the situation high even as the characters spend time investigating and interrogating, and will force them to make some sort of a decision — even if that decision is to abstain from action and let the freehold go to war — by the end of the story.

TO PROLOGUE OR NOT TO PROLOGUE

An optional prologue, “Night Magic,” is offered in this adventure kit. In it, the characters are given the opportunity to do a little social networking and exploration before the first conflict of the night arises. This can be especially useful when using this story as the first chapter in an ongoing chronicle. It allows characters to mix and mingle, to rub elbows with some of the important (and seemingly unimportant) attendees, and may give them a chance to interact with different aspects of characters than the ones which will come out after Aurora’s death is announced. Feel free to give players the opportunity to enjoy the wonder that is Lost society at its best for as long as feels appropriate before throwing the first tragedy of the evening at them. For some groups of characters, the prologue may stretch out for quite some time; others may quickly become bored with the subtlety of interaction portrayed there and should be faced with their first challenge right away.

Alternately, you may want to throw your characters right into the deep end, confronting them immediately with the first challenge in the story. In this case, leave the prologue aside and open with the first scene, “A Grave Announcement.”

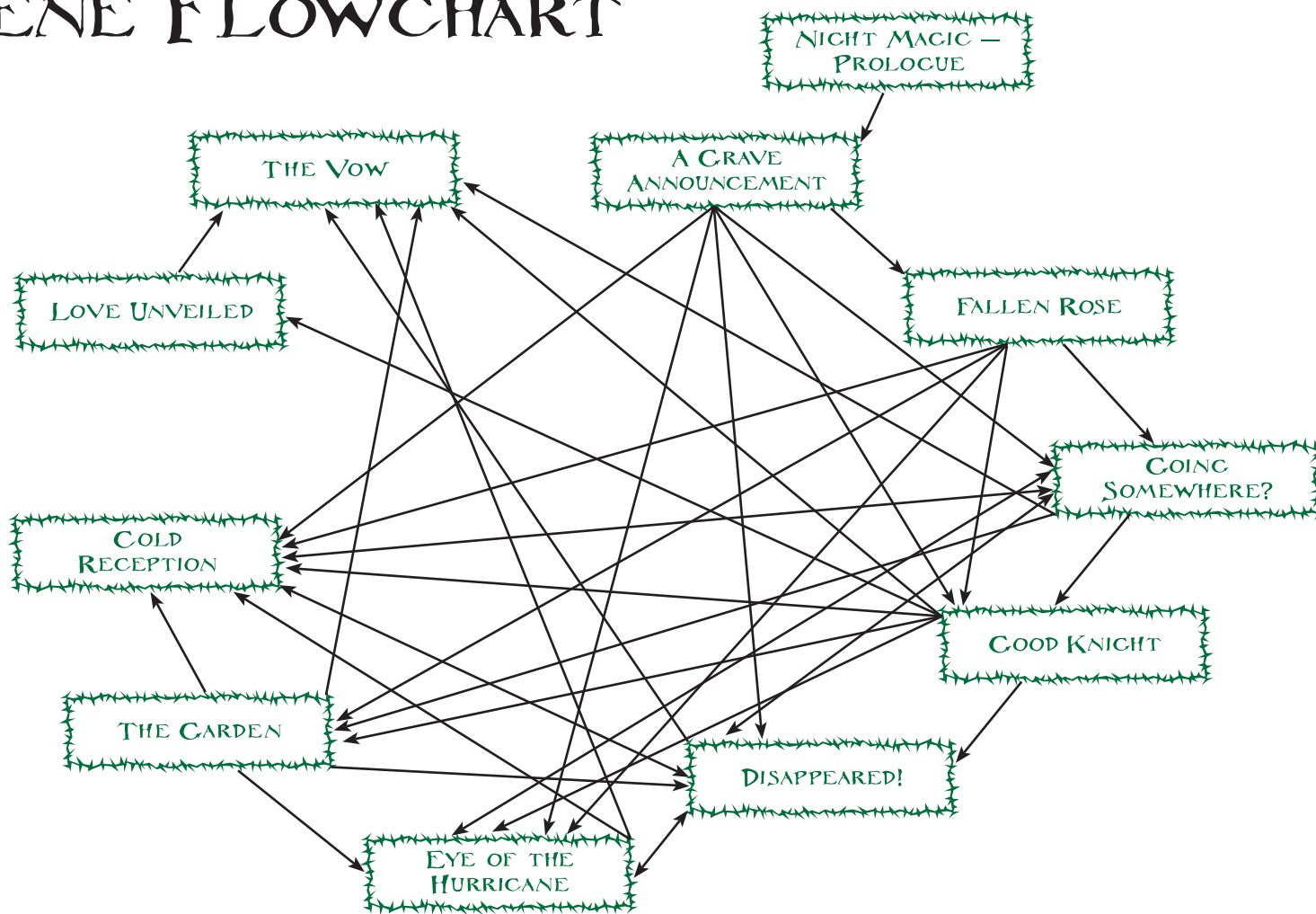
Even if the characters do not play out the prologue, Storytellers are encouraged to read through “Night Magic,” as it contains elements of atmosphere and scenery that may be woven into other scenes to enhance the aura of alien fae ambiance within.

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

While not every player contingency can be planned for, the final scene, “The Vow,” includes brief overviews of “what happens next” for

several of the most likely outcomes of this storyline. Storytellers using this adventure kit as a short-term complete adventure can offer these conclusions to their players as a wrap-up, or they can be used as an inspiration for the next story in an on-going chronicle. Like every other scene in **The Rose-Bride’s Plight**, these are not concrete dictates about what must happen, but rather suggestions and ideas about what might happen after the end of the scenario if characters take certain actions.

SCENE FLOWCHART



OPTIONAL PROLOGUE: NIGHT MAGIC

MENTAL • PHYSICAL — SOCIAL ••

OVERVIEW

This scene takes place during the celebratory ball held at the estate of Queen Aeolian. Characters have the opportunity to socialize, establish relationships and potentially pick up tidbits of information that may prove useful in future scenes.

DESCRIPTION

Outside, the air is crisp with the promise of snow, despite the clear night sky. Winter has not given up its reign, and although the equinox is but three days away, frost is beginning to form on the lush carpet of grass that surrounds Queen Aeolian's estate. The palatial mansion's circular driveway is lined by hundreds of glowing luminaries and filled with all manner of vehicles. Small cliques of individuals stand here and there outside. Some are gathered around the babbling fountain, while others have stopped midway up the sweeping staircase that leads to the tall set of glass double-doors, beyond which the golden light of the party gleams.

The interior of the mansion is warm and brightly lit. An expansive foyer leads into the main ballroom where dozens of Lost of all shapes and sizes congregate. Between the freehold members and visiting guests, you guess there are a hundred or more gathered, dressed in everything from formal gowns, ethnic clothing and historical costumes to jeans and t-shirts. Quiet conversations take place here and there as Lost congregate in small groups. From somewhere out of sight, a string quartet of ensorcelled humans are playing music by Vivaldi, just loudly enough to keep the social discourse from bleeding over from group to group.

All manner of changelings are apparent here. Elven courtiers, some glowing softly, others with skin of night-sky darkness or flame-red hue, laugh gaily or glower snidely at a wrestling match taking place between a hulking

rock-pile wearing plate armor and a ten-legged squid-woman. A butterfly-winged sprite dangles delicately above the head of a grotesque scale-skinned Beast with jaws full of row upon row of razor-sharp teeth. In one corner, leaning against an antique chaise lounge, an ashen-skinned creature wrapped in a burial shroud holds an animated conversation with a near-naked sand-statue, while an arachnid the size of a mastiff messily consumes something still-squirming at its feet.

The estate itself is opulent and expansive. From the marble floors and Persian carpets to the vaulted ceilings and crystal chandeliers, it's obvious that no expense was spared to outfit this mansion in style. Beyond the foyer and main ballroom, additional building wings extend out to each side, with dens, libraries, small dining areas and other living spaces stretching out for what feels like miles of decadently appointed hallways. Beautifully arranged bouquets of fresh flowers waft their perfume into the air as the serving staff in Aeolian's livery make their way around the room, carrying trays of delicious-smelling hors d'oeuvres.

(clarity) There's a feeling of almost anticipatory tension in the air, and a cold breeze seems to creep along the floor no matter where you stand. It's like the feeling you get right before your skin breaks out into goose bumps. Is someone watching you? That group over there — they're laughing. Were they looking your way before you turned around? The feeling doesn't seem to get any better whether you go further into the building or remain on the outskirts.

STORYTELLER GOALS

Atmosphere and foreshadowing. This scene gives the Storyteller the opportunity to showcase some of the surreal beauty and grotesquerie that is the fae world. The performers, guests, servants and host all lend their own unique flavor to this scene. Delights, devilries and depravities unthinkable in human society run amok here, as the gathered fae guests' fantastic natures rival the outlandish feats of the performers brought here to entertain them.

While the surface atmosphere is one of celebration, beneath it runs 30 years of dark, cold freehold history. Spring or Winter Court characters might be rebuffed by members of the rival Court, while being inundated with whispered rumors and innuendo by their own. They may witness subtle or overt hostility between members of opposing sides of the rift, or (if they are not already attached to a Court) be approached by those attempting to recruit them to one side or the other of the social conflict.

CHARACTER GOALS

Recreation and acclimation. Those gathered are here to celebrate, and there are ample opportunities for fun, ranging from a veritable banquet of buffet-style foods and beverages (both mundane and Hedge-spun delicacies) to a live band that takes requests and wandering performers of all skills and specialties. Friendly games of chance might be found, if that is appealing to the characters. Socializing is another option. With close to a hundred Lost gathered in one location, chances are every character can find someone to chat with, and gossip is running high tonight. This social interaction also may serve to give the characters additional insight into the whys and wherefores of the freehold, allowing them to pick up facts, rumors and innuendo about current Court and inter-personal intrigue.

ACTIONS

Within this scene, most of the situations characters will encounter are social in nature. It is unlikely for the situation to devolve into combat, as most of the Lost here are on their best behavior. However, in the course of their social interactions, it is possible for them to accomplish a bit of information gathering which may prove useful or interesting further along.

If you would like, you are welcome to introduce characters who will appear later in the story at this stage by allowing players' characters to interact with them as they are gathering information. Each rumor is followed by the character most likely to be saying it. Note that several Storyteller characters will not be present during this prologue. These include Aeolian, Aurora, Micah the Tall and the Viscountess of Broken Vows.

INFORMATION GATHERING

Dice Pool: Wits + Socialize

Action: Each roll represents a half-hour of social interaction with the gathered guests. A total of four rolls (two hours of social interaction) may be attempted by each player, and each character may garner different (even contradictory) rumors from those listed below. Thus a total of four rumors per character attempting to socialize are possible during this scene.

Hindrances: Ill-dressed for the event (dirty, cheap or torn clothing -1), strangers to the freehold (-1)

Help: Striking Looks (+1 for 2 dots in the Merit, +2 for 4), hold rank or position within the freehold (+1)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: No rumors are gathered for that time period and the total number of rolls possible is reduced from four to three. No additional effect if this happens during the fourth roll.

Failure: No rumors are gathered for that time period.

Success: The character picks up on one rumor from the sidebar.

Exceptional Success: The character gains one rumor from those listed below. In addition, an extra roll may be made to determine if another rumor is gained. Thus the first exceptional success rolled increases the potential number of rolls from four to five, the second from five to six, and so on.

Rumors

- "Aurora? Shallow little slut. White deserves her." (Balor)
- "You need something, come to me. I can get any goblin fruit you want, even the fancy stuff... for a price. I know a guy..." (Flit)
- "White? Don't think much of him, honestly, but if he makes Aurora happy, I suppose that's enough." (Jeremiah)
- "Something bad's coming. I see it in the cards. I'm just not sure exactly what. But trust me. It's bad. And soon." (Madame Night)
- "This marriage is the crowning glory of my seasons of reign here. It will ensure that the past will not happen again, that the future will be more peaceful for the next generation." (Maxwell Warden)
- "My Court? No... I'm not Spring. Not any more. It's really none of your business, is it? Don't you have someone else to go bother?" (Parsimon)
- "White better not pull any of that Winter stuff on Aurora. I'm just saying... it would be bad for his health." (Squick)

- “Well, I’m not married yet, my dear. You wouldn’t deny a dying man a last meal, would you? Come, walk with me, somewhere a bit more private...” (Todd White)

- “Aeolian’s called in favors from all over the globe to ensure that the wedding is perfect. Flowers, gown, decorations. It’s like she’s playing dress-up with Aurora as a doll.” (Overheard in a group)

- “That Parsimon guy? Creepy old hermit. Seriously. No one trusts him. He and Aeolian hate each other. Not sure why she lets him hang around, but she never talks to him, or he to her.” (Overheard in a group)

- “He’s just mean-spirited, I tell you. I heard he’s got a whole warehouse of goblin fruit, but he refuses to use them to aid the freehold, just cuz he’s mad at the Queen.” (Overheard in a group)

- “White? Can’t be trusted. He’s broken more hearts than most Duchy members. Can’t see what Aurora sees in him.” (Overheard in a group)

- “Aurora? Sweet girl. Seriously. I’d do anything for her, most of us would.” (Overheard in a group)

- “Aurora? I don’t know. That motley of hers seems just a little *too* nice, if you know what I mean. I don’t trust what I don’t understand, and I don’t understand that group.” (Overheard in a group)

- “Yeah, we’ve got ogres. It’s like opposites around here, the white knight and the monster.” (Overheard in a group)

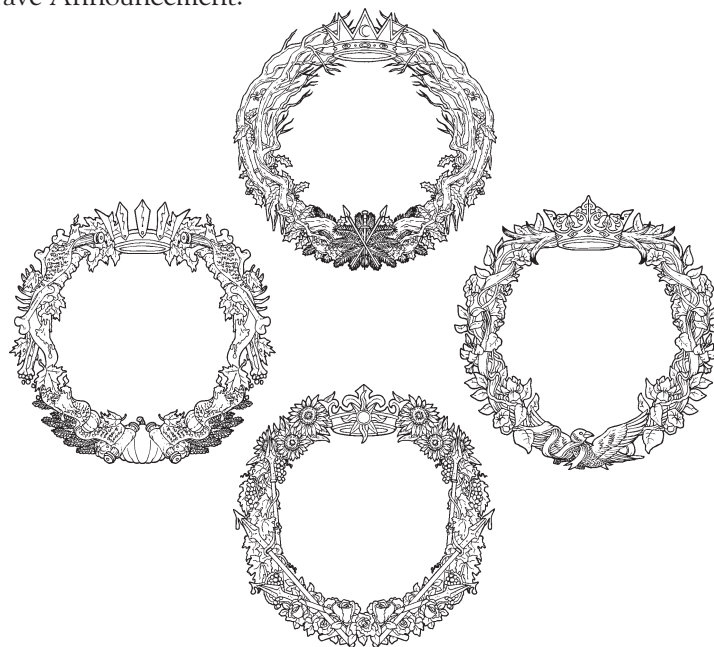
- “Tai? Never heard of her. You sure she’s from around here?” (Overheard in a group)

- “King Warden’s changed. He used to be pretty easygoing, but now it’s ‘I can’t allow’ this and ‘That’s not acceptable’ that. You’d think it was him getting married, not the kids.” (Overheard in a group)

CONSEQUENCES

The characters may gather a number of rumors in addition to meeting with characters who may prove useful later on in the story. For the rumors listed as “overheard in a group,” you may use some of the general physical descriptions of Lost listed in the Description, or, if you are running the story in your own chronicle, attribute the rumor to one of your existing characters. Actions taken in this scene may give positive or negative modifiers to future Social rolls made later in the story against the particular characters interacted with, so you may want to take note of any especially good or hostile interactions the players’ characters may have.

The conclusion of this scene transitions into the opening of “A Grave Announcement.” If the characters do not seem especially interested in gathering information or socializing, feel free to move quickly into the next scene. If, however, they are enjoying the social interaction or rumor gathering, feel free to allow them to do so for a time before interrupting their investigation (perhaps in the middle of a juicy conversation) with Aeolian’s announcement, thus transitioning into “A Grave Announcement.”



A GRAVE ANNOUNCEMENT

MENTAL • PHYSICAL — SOCIAL •

OVERVIEW

The characters are present when Aeolian announces the death of her ward, Aurora. As guests (or members) of the freehold, they are encouraged to investigate.

SCENE PRELUDE

Over the small talk, louder than the music, a moaning wail rises up from beyond the far wall of the ballroom. It rises in pitch and volume until it has drowned out all conversation, and continues to grow louder until it is like a hurricane has taken up residence in the building. The more delicate attendees cover their ears as the chandelier crystals shake and clash against each other and some of the smaller flower vases here and there are knocked to the floor. On the far side of the ballroom, a pair of double doors that stand as tall as the ones you entered through begin to shake, and the frosted glass that shields the ballroom from what lies beyond cracks, splinters and then explodes outwards in a cloud of shards that leaves several guests wounded.

The doors burst outward, falling to the floor on either side of the doorway. In the gaping hole left by their ruin stands a woman whose bearing marks her as nobility, although there is no crown upon her windswept brow. Her eyes flash with miniature sparks of lightning as her gaze sweeps the room and she cries out, “Aurora is dead! Whoever brings me her murderer may name his own reward!” The wind lashes out from around her, slamming shut all the outer doors to the mansion simultaneously. Then, as quickly as it rose, the storm falls silent as Aeolian, Spring Queen, falls into a near-faint into the nearest chair. She’s quickly surrounded by servants and attendees, leaving the rest of the guests milling about in confusion.

DESCRIPTION

The opening of this scene is the same locale as that described in “Night Magic.” After the announcement, however, the arrival of the Spring Queen and her announcement has triggered some changes.

The room is in chaos. The queen’s entrance has toppled candles, flower arrangements and serving staff alike, merging the smell of snuffed flame, crushed roses and violently combined foodstuffs into one chaotic blur. Punctuated by the tinkle of broken glass, Aeolian’s servants begin correcting the damage, while a trio of Lost beat a hasty retreat back down the hallway the Spring Queen emerged from. A small mob surrounds Aeolian, fawning over the nearly collapsed Airtouched monarch. In the opposite corner of the room, a pale crowd has begun to form around the reigning king as well. Warden’s courtiers, including Todd White and Tia, slowly coalesce around him, and that area is soon filled with the hissing susurrations of barely audible but intense conversation. The rest of the room buzzes with the frenzied echo of not-quite-covert whispers of supposition and slander. The Lost mill about in small groups, occasionally making a beeline for one clique or another as the freehold attempts to put meaning to the queen’s words.

(clarity) The room rocks with the weight of Aeolian’s words. While the chandeliers above slowly sway to a stop, the swirling shadows they cast around the room continue to writhe and rock in the corners and beneath the Lost’s feet like twisting shades waiting for someone to lose his footing and fall into their dark clutches. From each corner of the room, gasps of wind swirl the skirts and stir the hair of those gathered; sometimes warm like spring or hot enough to force one to turn away, sometimes crisp as autumn or with an icy winter chill that traces down the spines of those it passes.

STORYTELLER GOALS

This is the jumping-off point for the story. While most scenes will involve challenges to the characters, this one really just serves as a starting point — where they go from here is up to them.

CHARACTER GOALS

This is a hub situation for the characters. There are many choices for them to make, all which will lead them to one or another of the other scenes.

ACTIONS

Because these actions are directional rather than mechanics focused, they’re grouped here in a collection, each with its own inherent consequences.



- They may stay and “work the crowd,” gathering what information they can. In this case, the scene returns to “Night Magic,” with the two-hour time limit being a transition to the “Disappeared!” scene rather than to this one. This affords characters the opportunity to follow up on some of the rumors they’d heard earlier, or to gather rumors if they did not do so earlier. At the end of “Night Magic” (four rolls, each representing a half hour in time) the scene will automatically shift to “Disappeared!” and proceed from there.

- They may attempt to leave, in which case they will transition to the “Going Somewhere?” scene.

- They may approach the queen or king. This will take them to either “A Cold Reception” (King Warden) or “Eye of the Hurricane” (Queen Aeolian).

- They may follow the motley into Aurora’s inner chambers, leading them to the “Fallen Rose.”

CONSEQUENCES

The characters have several options in leaving this scene, as described above — a return to “Night Magic,” a transition to “Going Somewhere?” a move to “A Cold Reception” or “Eye of the Hurricane,” or following the motley to “Fallen Rose.”

FALLEN ROSE

MENTAL ...

PHYSICAL —

SOCIAL ..

OVERVIEW

After seeing a trio of Lost slip down the corridor where Aeolian emerged from, the characters follow to discover the fallen Spring Princess' bedchambers and her body.

DESCRIPTION

Aurora's chambers lie at the end of a long and now wind-torn hallway. If this is the first scene the characters have chosen after "A Grave Announcement," they may enter the hallway in time to see the trio of Aurora's motley members disappear into her bedroom.

If the characters have chosen either to speak with King Warden ("Cold Reception") or Queen Aeolian ("Eye of the Hurricane") or both monarchs after "A Grave Announcement," they find the motley already in Aurora's chambers, but the scene otherwise as noted.

If, however, they attempt to leave Aeolian's mansion (through "Going Somewhere?") before investigating Aurora's chambers, they segue into "Disappeared!" instead of this scene and find her chambers empty.

The room itself is as still as a tomb. From down the long hallway between here and the ballroom, the sounds of the rest of the party are filtered and twisted until they're no longer recognizable as people speaking or furniture moving. Instead, only the highest and lowest tones make their way down the hall — it sounds like the squeaking of far-off mice, and the scurrying skitter of their claws on stone floors.

Compared to the opulent ballroom, these private chambers are both smaller and more garishly appointed. The furniture and architecture is still in keeping with the rest of the mansion, but the carpets, paint and decorations are crowded and modern, with none of the elegant style of the outer rooms. A cell phone, desktop computer and television with scattered DVDs lend the room a modern air, while piles of scattered clothing, jewelry and accessories in bright colors are heaped on every vertical surface. The only exception is the bed that forms the centerpiece of the room. Here, the bright crimson comforter stretches out without so much as a wrinkle. Its broad red expanse is interrupted only by a single, prone, female figure.

The young woman's body is deathly pale, in stark contrast to her jet-black hair. The floor-length skirt of her emerald-green ball gown has been tucked demurely beneath her legs, leaving only a glimpse of bone-white ankle between them and her delicate low-heeled slippers. One hand clutches a red rose, the other is out-flung, the pale fingertips fanned out as if in supplication.

From the now-fading rose blossoms tangled in Aurora's hair, a cloying perfume fills the air. The floral scent, however, is not enough to cover the overwhelming odor of death that fills the air. It is as if a fog of rotting flesh and offal hangs in the room.

A group of three Lost, Aurora's motley-mates, gather around the bed, standing in stoic silence as they stare at the corpse stretched out before them.

(clarity) Aurora's body draws the eye, like the entire room was slanted towards her still and silent form. When you look away, you'd swear you saw her stir, ever so slightly. Did her chest rise and then fall, just once? It couldn't have.

STORYTELLER GOALS

This is likely the character's first glimpse of Aurora and first opportunity to really interact with her motley. (Interactions with the motley during "Night Magic" is likely to have been fairly light social discourse, if it happened at all, but may color their reactions to the characters now.) This is a setting full of contradictions: Aurora's beauty and her death, the modern chaos of this room and the opulent elegance of the rest of the mansion, the Princess' perfume and foul stench of death in the air, her murder and the apparent peace of her carefully arranged body.

CHARACTER GOALS

If the characters have entered Aurora's chambers, it's likely that they are (at the very least) curious to discover what has happened to her. Their goal during this scene is to ferret out as much information about her death as possible.

There are multiple sources of information available in this scene. These include her motley (who know more than they are likely to want to admit), physical clues (which may lead the characters after Micah the Tall) and the evidence left behind (the bitten "apple").

If something else sets them on this trail — suspicion about the identity of the Lost who they see going this direction, perhaps, or simply looking

for another way out of the mansion — the motley will react in accordance with how they are treated by the characters (see below for examples).

ACTIONS

Social interaction is likely during this scene, as Aurora's motley-mates are not going to leave a group of unknown individuals alone to root through their fallen friend's belongings. Depending on what tactic the characters use with them, they may befriend the motley and earn their aid, or they may find the motley doing everything they can to prevent them from proceeding with their investigation.

If the characters have had negative interactions with the motley in earlier scenes, are rude or insulting to the motley, or disrespect Aurora's corpse or surroundings in any way, they are likely to be treated with hostility from the motley. This may manifest as subtly as Madame Night pulling a reading from her tarot deck for the offending character and putting as negative a spin on it as possible, or as overtly as Squick instilling fear in him and driving him away from the scene.

If the characters have not interacted before and maintain a professional, but not ingratiating attitude as they investigate, the motley will leave them to their work, especially if the characters are (or claim to be) working under Aeolian's directive. As long as the investigation does not harm Aurora's corpse or her belongings and environ, the motley will just maintain quiet watch on the proceedings.

If the characters have had a positive interaction with the motley, or if they go out of their way to be ingratiating, friendly or sympathetic for the motley's loss, they may well find themselves with allies for their investigation. Not only can the motley possibly provide an extra few sets of eyes for searching (see the modifiers below), but if asked, Madame Night's Tarot deck may provide the characters with helpful glimpses of the future.

SEARCHING THE ROOM

Dice Pool: Wits + Investigation

Action: Extended (5 successes). Each roll represents 10 minutes of searching. After an hour (six rolls), the search has disturbed enough of the room that nothing further can be discovered. The characters can combine their efforts using teamwork (p. 134, **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

Hindrances: The motley is hostile to the character and intentionally hinders his investigation (−3)

Help: The motley aids the character in his search (+3), the character (or a helper) is a young woman with a private bedroom (+1), additional characters aid in the search (+1 per helper)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character misses anything of significance. In fact, he manages to move a pile on top of a potential clue and gets a −1 modifier on his next roll for searching the room.

Failure: The character makes no significant progress in his search.

Success: The character finds a useful clue. As they are offered in order from least to most likely to impact the plot, Storytellers may wish to offer the first clues early in the investigation, and reserve the later ones for further into the character's search. However, if the players are rolling poorly or simply are not suited to such investigations, a single important clue may serve well to nudge the storyline along.

- The vast majority of the movies and books scattered around the room are romantic in nature. There are comedy romances, historical romances, even Shakespearean romances.

- A copy of *Romeo and Juliet* has been bookmarked at Act 5, Scene 3 — the scene where Juliet commits suicide.

- Between the mattress and box-springs, a leather-bound journal is hidden. It's written in a feminine hand with red rose-scented ink. Many of the entries are mundane, but veiled references to "my love" run throughout. There are no dates for any of the entries, nor names used, but it is clear that the writer was being courted in a very romantic but clandestine fashion.

- In one corner, next to a small trash bin full of empty food containers, crumpled shopping bags and discarded cosmetic packaging, lies a wadded-up half-finished letter. It is only a few lines long, but appears to be very politely requesting that "her liege" reconsider a choice. It is written in the same feminine script as the diary.

- A beautiful red-skinned apple with a single bite taken from it lies under the bed. It stinks to the high heavens, and is the source of the death-stench in the room. A successful Intelligence + Occult roll will identify this as a goblin fruit. Additional rolls are required to identify the particular

species and effects of the fruit (see p. 7). If the characters have interacted with or heard rumors about Parsimon, this may take them off to investigate the fae-farmer. As a member of the Spring Court, Jeremiah knows that Parsimon (a former Spring Courtier himself) is rumored to have a Hollow which connects to the grounds outside Aeolian's home. He may provide this information out of support for the characters (if they have befriended the motley) or out of his own ire at the idea that Parsimon may have poisoned his motley-mate. (This segues to "The Garden.")

Exceptional Success: As above, but the character manages to turn up all of the clues listed above.

HACKING THE TECH

In addition to the physical searching of the room, Aurora's computer and cell phone/PDA may be searched for additional clues.

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Computer

Action: Extended (5 successes). Each roll represents 10 minutes of hacking the technological device for information.

The computer and phone/PDA can be searched separately, although both will turn up similar information. However, this means that if one device is disabled, the other may still be hacked or searched.

Hindrances: The motley is intentionally working against the character, giving him bad information (-2)

Help: The motley is willing to cooperate with helping come up with potential passwords (+4)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character misses anything of significance. In fact, he manages to trigger Aurora's makeshift security system or otherwise break the device. No further searching of that device is possible.

Failure: The character makes no significant progress in his search.

Success: The character finds a useful clue. As above, they are offered in order from least to most likely to impact the plot.

- Recently visited sites include locations dealing with modern burial practices (undertaking/autopsies/morgues) in the local area, non-lethal poisons and wedding licenses.

- Most of Aurora's cell phone address book entries are aliases: "Witch," "Frosty," "Spooky," "Snitch," "M," "Doc," "SilverFox," "Nuit"

and the like. Recent calls out include those to "M," "Spooky," "Doc," "Nuit" and "Witch." Incoming calls include all those and several from "SilverFox."

- Extensive emails back and forth with "SilverFox" over the past two months. Most are fairly inane and filled with mundane day-to-day matters. "SilverFox" complements her frequently, and her responses are coy but non-committal.

- A discarded electronic folder in the trash bin is labeled "M." The folder is empty, but the timestamp on the deletion is mid-afternoon on the day of the pre-nuptial ball.

- An entire archive of searchable folklore and mythology are partitioned into one sector of the digital files. Included in the library are several versions of legends such as that of Persephone and Hades, Innana, Osiris, Odin and Baldr, and the Volsunga saga, as well as a variety of different New Testament biblical texts. Also stored are versions of multiple fairy tales: The Sun, The Moon and Talia, Perceforest and Briar Rose. A successful Intelligence + Academics roll or Encyclopedic Knowledge usage will reveal these are all death and resurrection legends or stories where someone appears to die and is later brought back to life.

- Hitting redial on Aurora's cell phone results in a call that is answered by a gruff male voice. After saying "Hello?" in a very confused and suspicious tone, the man hangs up and will not answer the phone again. This number belongs to the cell phone of Micah the Tall. The motley will not likely recognize the number, but a reverse directory search will identify that it is a cell phone number, that it is assigned to the local area and that the identity of the owner is unlisted. However, on a successful Wits + Composure roll, whoever heard the voice recognizes it as Micah's if they have spoken with him earlier, or if they speak with him in the future.

Exceptional Success: As above, but the character manages to turn up all of the clues listed above.

CONSEQUENCES

The characters have several options in leaving this scene. If they recognize Micah's voice and can convince one of the motley or freehold members to divulge the location of his home, they will transition to "Good Knight."



If they seek out the Queen, they will find her still in the main ballroom surrounded by a small die-hard group of her courtiers and may enter into “Eye of the Hurricane” in speaking to her. The majority of the rest of the party-goers, however, have disappeared off into the night, making a return to “Night Magic” impossible at this point.

Should they seek out King Warden, who has already left the building, an inquiry with any freehold member (including Aurora’s motley) will turn up his contact information, giving the characters access to “A Cold Reception.” Similarly, if they recognize SilverFox as a likely alias for Todd White, he can be tracked down in a similar manner and to the same scene.

If their investigations of Aurora’s chamber turn up the apple, and they have met or learned about Parsimon either in this or an earlier scene (and assuming they have not totally alienated Aurora’s motley), he can provide them with directions to Parsimon’s Hollow where they can follow up on this lead by progressing to his home and “The Garden.”

If the characters decide to leave the mansion entirely, they will segue into “Going Somewhere?”

If the characters attempt to remain within Aurora’s chambers for longer than a few hours, they will be graciously, but firmly, escorted out by representatives of Aeolian’s court who are under the queen’s orders to “make her ready for burial.”

This is not a scene characters can return to. Regardless of what path they leave this scene through, if they return it will be after Aurora’s disappearance and various descriptions will have changed, transforming the scene to “Disappeared!” Assume that, should they attempt to return to Aurora’s chambers without a preemptive announcement of the corpse being gone, they are met at the entrance to the ballroom by Aeolian or one of her servants making the announcement that will segue to “Disappeared!”

EYE OF THE HURRICANE

MENTAL ... PHYSICAL — SOCIAL ..

OVERVIEW

At various places in the story, characters may wish to interact with Queen Aeolian at her mansion. All potential interactions with the Spring Queen are represented in this scene, which may be entered at any point that the characters seek her out. Because of this, Storytellers are encouraged to use their discretion, giving out the information contained within only as it seems appropriate to the characters' interaction with the queen thus far.

At their first interaction, the queen is unlikely to provide more than the insights listed as tier one information. Later interactions may warrant characters being given tier two information, especially if it seems that they either are acting as willing pawns for the queen, or, conversely, have gathered enough information on her dubious activities to harm her reputation in the freehold. Aeolian is unlikely to share tier three information, although it is provided for the Storyteller's edification, and certain tidbits of it might be discovered through exceptional manipulation, investigation or other extreme situations.

While these individual interviews with Aeolian may take place at various stages of the storyline, the information for general interrogations is gathered here in one cohesive scene. Characters may return to this scene multiple times as they seek out and question Aeolian one or more times.

DESCRIPTION

Aeolian carries the undeniably noble aura of a reigning monarch upon a throne. She is not a beautiful woman. Her hair is neither silver nor well coiffed, instead tumbling in an unruly mass of storm cloud gray around her broad shoulders. Her skin is ashen-gray, with only the piercing blue eyes lending true color to her visage. Wherever she is, a cloud of attending servants surrounds her.

When Aeolian speaks, it often begins as the quiet yet threatening hiss of a spring storm, but if challenged, she rails with all the volume and intensity of a hurricane. She is capable of both sprightly verbal sparring and overwhelming oral onslaughts, depending on which seems most likely to get her what she desires in a given situation.

Aeolian's scent is not the warm spring breeze many Verdant courtiers are accompanied by. There's a slight scent of ozone around her, and the pendulous humidity that often comes right before a devastating storm. While she's rarely without escort, her own aura drives back that of those around her, sending lighter or more pleasant scents scattering away like cherry blossom petals in a storm.

(clarity) The breeze around Aeolian seems to carry with it disturbingly familiar snippets of scent and sound. For a moment, you are certain you smell the aroma of that dish your mother used to make when you were a child, and then it shifts to the scent your first lover wore. As she turns her gaze upon you, you hear a whimper — was it the sound your first childhood pet made when you ignored it? Or the sob you made the first time your heart was truly broken by another? If she carries those memories with her, surrounding her, what else does she know about you?

STORYTELLER GOALS

This scene, regardless of when it is entered, serves to establish one intractable force which the characters' choices are bordered within. Aeolian is a force of nature, with her own established goals and a bedrock of stubbornness that is founded upon decades of service to the freehold. She will compromise only so far and not an inch further, regardless of what actions are taken by the characters.

CHARACTER GOALS

Information and negotiation. Characters may seek out Aeolian in order to uncover new information or to verify what they've already learned (or suspected). They may also attempt to sway her to their goals, either through social manipulation, bribery or blackmail. Those who endeavor to do so, however, may well find themselves outclassed by this quick-witted and ruthless monarch.

ACTIONS

Aeolian is surrounded by enough courtiers and bodyguards that physical intimidation, while possible, is unlikely to be successful. Her strong-arms will certainly step in and allow their liege to escape if she appears to be overtly threatened. Verbal manipulation, however, is a field they've long since learned to leave wholly up to their mistress — she not only excels at it, she enjoys it greatly.

SWEET-TALKING AEOLIAN

By engaging in verbal discourse, the character lures information out of Queen Aeolian.

Dice Pool: Wits + Persuasion vs. a dice pool of 9.

Action: Extended and contested. 1 success is required for each piece of tier one information, 10 for each piece of tier two, and 25 for each bit from tier three. Players can choose whether to spend successes immediately for tier one information, or to accumulate it towards tier two or three information, but must announce whether they are spending or accumulating successes before rolling again.

Hindrances: Character uses emotional, rather than logical verbal acuity in his attempts (−2), character attempts to bully or intimidate Aeolian (−2)

Help: Character has already gleaned lower level of similar information thread (+1 for tier one, +2 for tier two), character has a pledge with Aeolian (+2), character has professed loyalty/similar goals/done favor for Aeolian (+1 to +4), specialization in Debate or Fast-Talking (+1), character has already gleaned all information in the tiers below (+3)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Aeolian ends the conversation, and all future social interactions (including attempts to gain more information) with her are made at a −2 penalty.

Failure: The character makes no progress towards gaining information. Additionally, due to the queen's verbal acuity, any round where no successes are rolled, Aeolian's successes are subtracted from any of the player's currently accumulated successes. The player's successes may not be reduced below zero in this manner.

Success: The verbal battle rages on. For each success, the character can choose to gain one piece of tier one information, or to bank the success towards gathering tier two (or even three) information.

Exceptional Success: Significant progress is made. Each success rolled on this particular roll counts as two — either being traded for two pieces of tier one information, or accumulating as two successes towards tier two or three information.

Aeolian's Information

Information which Aeolian possesses is categorized in three tiers — that which she is willing to give out freely, that which she may barter or be influenced to give, and that which she would not give other than to save her life.

Tier One Information

- Years ago, before he left the Spring Court, Parsimon and Aeolian were lovers.
- Aurora was bound in an oath of fealty to Aeolian.
- Micah the Tall approached Aeolian asking for Aurora's hand in marriage.
- Warden approached Aeolian, seeking a permanent truce between their Courts by marrying their heirs. Aeolian agreed.
- Aurora requested the queen to reconsider her choice of husband.
- The queen suspects Aurora committed suicide rather than be married against her will.

Tier Two Information

- Aeolian still thinks of Parsimon fondly and allows him to retain his Hollow, which is has a doorway on her estate grounds.
- Aurora's oath was given very shortly after escaping the Hedge, before she wholly understood the nature of pledges.
- The queen refused Micah's request, wanting a "better" husband for her ward.

- Warden seemed desperate to negotiate the wedding and insisted on the Heart's Oath being a part of it.
- Aeolian agreed to Warden's offer, in exchange for "future favors."
- Aurora begged Aeolian to allow her to marry Micah, who she claimed to love.
- Aeolian plans on allowing the investigation of Aurora's death to go on until the equinox, hoping to stall Warden so she can reign for another season, as she doesn't have a properly compliant (to be read as pledge-bound) heir any longer.

Tier Three Information

- Parsimon is still sworn in fealty to Aeolian after all these years. (Actually he isn't, but Aeolian believes him to be.)
- Aeolian tricked Aurora into swearing a lifelong fealty oath that essentially gave the queen control over every aspect of her ward's life, upon penalty of death.
- Aeolian tried, and failed, to bind Micah in an oath similar to that she held over Aurora.
- Flit later sold Aeolian the tidbit that Warden's Keeper had been the Viscountess of Broken Vows, and the Spring Queen filed the information away for future blackmail purposes.
- Aeolian intended to barter the "future favors" Warden owed her into the opportunity to pledge-bind his heir into a fealty oath similar to Aurora's.
- The queen not only refused to reconsider the marriage, but threatened to bind Micah in an oath as well, if Aurora did not put up a good front about complying with the proceedings.
- If necessary, Aeolian is prepared to frame the Winter Court for Aurora's death, to maintain her power-hold on the freehold.

CONSEQUENCES

Depending on what information they are able to get out of Aeolian, characters may leave this scene with a more complete view of the situation (at least so far as the queen herself understands it.) Their information gathering, however, is not without its peril. For every third roll a player makes for his character to try to ferret information out of Aeolian, she will in turn make an attempt to Pledge Trap (see pp. 5-7) the character into a vow of Commendation (p. 189, **Changeling: The Lost**). This is far less binding than that she has extracted from Parsimon, Aurora and others, but will suffice to ensure the character does not take overt action against her as his new liege-lady.

From here, characters may segue to a variety of scenes depending upon when they have approached Aeolian. If they are speaking to her immediately after "A Grave Announcement," or have spoken with both her and Warden but not left her mansion, and they have not yet examined Aurora's chambers, they may segue to "Fallen Rose" at this point. In this circumstance, they also have the option of approaching Warden, moving to "A Cold Reception" or attempt to leave ("Going Somewhere?"). If they gain information about Parsimon from Aeolian, they may also attempt to find his garden Hollow ("The Garden") with a +2 bonus for Aeolian's directions to the doorway.

If they have sought out Aeolian at a later time, their options are similar, although "Disappeared!" will take the place of "Fallen Rose."



A COLD RECEPTION

MENTAL • PHYSICAL — SOCIAL ...

OVERVIEW

Whether at the pre-nuptial celebration or afterwards, characters may seek out Maxwell Warden or his heir, Todd White. They will find the two together, accompanied by a small circle of other Onyx courtiers. The king is a busy man (and decidedly on edge at the moment, fearing that his well-laid plans have begun to come unraveled). He will agree to meet with the characters only once, whether that is at Aeolian's mansion or afterwards in neutral location such as a city park gazebo or nearly empty restaurant. After this initial interview, Warden will refuse the character's requests for audience until he appears on the equinox evening, during "The Vow."

DESCRIPTION

A subtle rush of sound masks your conversations from outside ears. It's not loud enough to make it difficult to hear the voices of your companions or the Onyx courtiers, but between your group and the rest of the world there's a quiet push of north wind, an almost inaudible roar that drowns out your words in a rumble of white noise.

Like a blizzard steals color from the landscape around it, the presence of this knot of Winter courtiers seems to leech the brightness and depth from its surroundings. Most are dressed in shades of grey or white, although even those wearing colors seem somehow pallid and monotone, like all the contrast has been stripped from them. Warden himself stands implacably tall, his spine ramrod straight and manners just as unyielding.

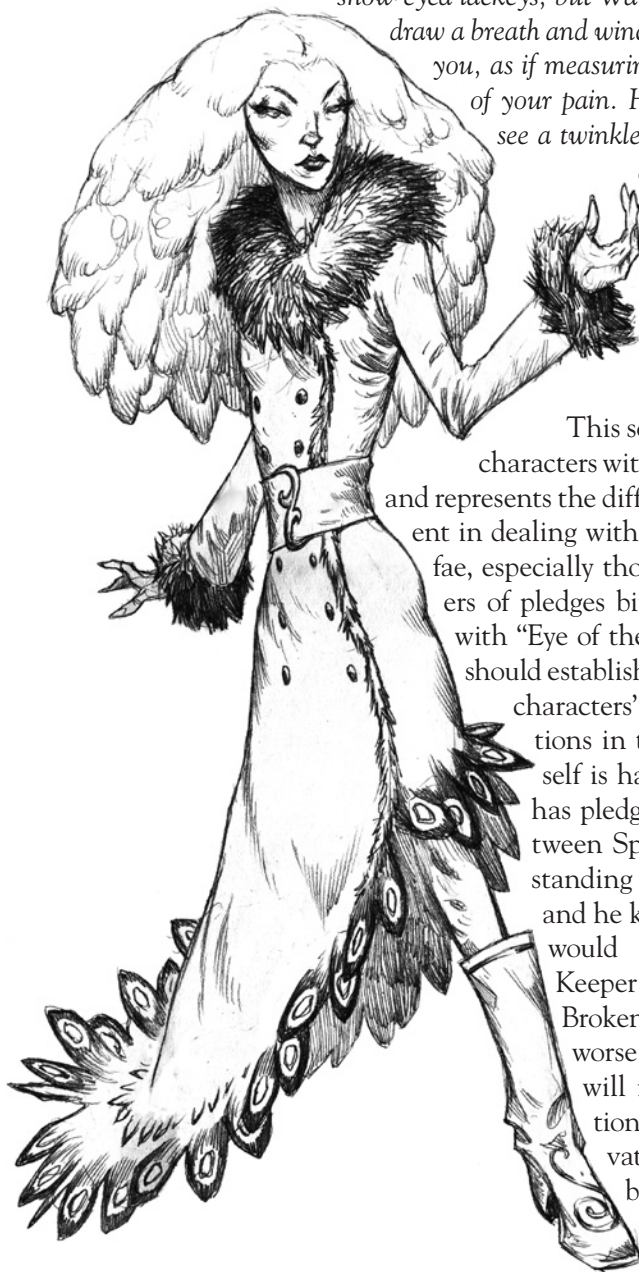
The air is as crisp and as fresh here as a landscape covered with a blanket of new-fallen snow. The closer you stand to Warden, the more evident the phenomenon becomes, blanking out even your own familiar Mantle and that of your companions in an olfactory white-out.

(clarity) The air here hurts your lungs, and it feels like you're inhaling shards of ice with each breath. They don't seem to notice, this mob of

snow-eyed lackeys, but Warden does. Each time you draw a breath and wince, his eyes seem drawn to you, as if measuring the depth and intensity of your pain. He doesn't smile, but you see a twinkle of amusement in his eye as he watches you inhale and cringe. The bastard's enjoying this.

STORY-TELLER GOALS

This scene is designed to leave characters with a feeling of frustration, and represents the difficulty that can be inherent in dealing with high-Wyrd, low-Clarity fae, especially those with layers upon layers of pledges binding their actions. As with "Eye of the Hurricane," this scene should establish a firm boundary for the characters' role and potential actions in this story. Warden himself is hampered by the oath he has pledged (to ensure peace between Spring and Winter before standing down from the throne) and he knows that to fail in this would mean summoning his Keeper (The Viscountess of Broken Vows), a fate he fears worse than death. While he will not share this information, it is his highest motivating factor, and should be considered in every action he takes and every word he speaks.



CHARACTER GOALS

The characters are likely here either to determine if Winter is responsible for Aurora's death or to persuade Warden to compromise.

ACTIONS

No matter how impassioned their pleas, Warden cannot bend too far. He will begin by listening politely to their request and answering any non-personal questions they may ask of him. No, neither he nor any of his courtiers had anything to do with the girl's death. No, he doesn't know who did. Yes, he is having his own investigators look into the matter. No, he doesn't expect them to get to the root of the matter before the equinox. Yes, he was serious about not allowing the transfer of the seasonal Crowns until a formal peace has been established between Spring and Winter. No, he's not joking — he never jokes.

Eventually, it will become clear that Warden will not consider any compromise that does not involve binding the two Courts together in a formal and long-term pledge. While he will not raise the alternative, he will consider and respond affirmatively to the option of a pledge-sworn truce, but only if it is as binding (in duration and sanction) as that of a Heart's Oath.

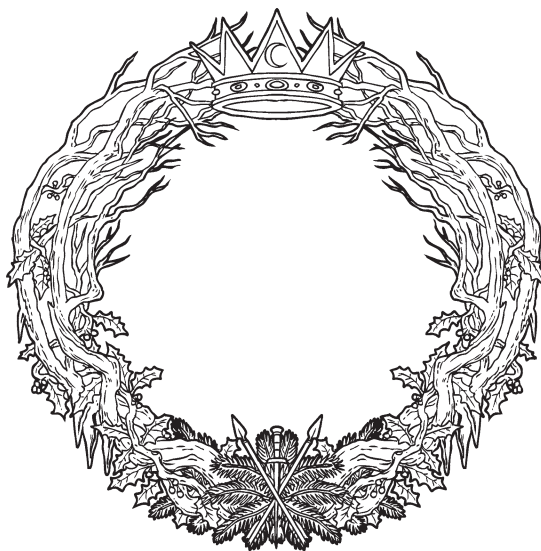
Characters interacting with White will find him insipid and self-centered. He will not come out and say it, but his actions and reactions

make it clear that he is not at all mourning his fiancée's death, nor does he seem overly concerned about who killed her. He has some concern about what the next three days will bring, but only because if Warden refuses to give up the throne, he can't inherit it next winter. He will hit on any of the characters who seems particularly vulnerable or responsive to it, not out of any true attraction, but because it may give him power or influence over them. (White is clearly on the path to becoming a full member of the Duchy of the Icebound Heart — **Changeling: The Lost**, pp. 297-299 — a conclusion that characters may or may not draw themselves.)

CONSEQUENCES

From here, characters may segue to a variety of scenes depending upon when they have approached Warden and his Winter companions. If they are speaking to him immediately after "A Grave Announcement" or have spoken with both he and Aeolian but not left the mansion, and they have not yet examined Aurora's chambers, they may segue to "Fallen Rose" at this point. In this circumstance, they may also approach Aeolian, moving to "Eye of the Hurricane" or attempt to leave ("Going Somewhere?").

If they have sought out Warden at a later time, their options are similar, although "Disappeared!" will take the place of "Fallen Rose."



GOING SOMEWHERE?

MENTAL •• PHYSICAL •• SOCIAL •

OVERVIEW

As the characters leave the ballroom, they encounter Parsimon, a decidedly nervous-looking Woodwalker, making his own departure. The Wizened radiates nervousness and suspicious behavior, and beats a hasty retreat unless stopped. As the characters make their own departure (either after Parsimon or towards their own vehicle), they also encounter a mysterious figure watching Aeolian's mansion.

DESCRIPTION

Inside the doorway, the ballroom is much as it was before. Outside, the night is very dark, Aeolian's storm having apparently knocked over the luminarias formerly illuminating the building's entrance. Most of the vehicles have left the property, or are in the process of doing so, and almost everyone between the door and the driveway seem intent on making a quick escape from the Queen's wrath. The distant sounds of revving engines as impatient guests make their departure merge with the once-relaxing burble of the fountain. Those who have not yet reached their cars seem to be attempting to do so in a quiet rush, only questioning whispers passing between them as they go.

The air at the top of the stairs is fresh, as if scoured clean by the Queen's tantrum-storm. As you descend the stairs, however, the odor of exhaust, animal excrement and fear pools around the circular drive, hovering in the damp air from the central fountain.

(clarity) Without the luminarias' light, the area outside of Aeolian's home seems not only dark, but dangerous. Shadows writhe at the peripheral of your vision, each seeming just deep enough to potentially hide the form of some lurking madman waiting to strike again. There, behind you. Was that a footstep on the stair? Did those bushes just rustle? It's probably just a neighborhood cat... right?

STORYTELLER GOALS

This scene directs the characters' paths across that of one of the major players in this story. Parsimon has been an unwitting accomplice to Aurora's attempt to dupe her way out of her marriage to Todd White, but now realizes not only what has happened, but fears that the blame will likely be shifted directly to him for "poisoning" the princess.

Parsimon will not defend himself physically during this scene. Cowed by his perception that this is Queen Aeolian's territory and that the worst will automatically be assumed of him, he will do everything in his power to escape short of taking physically offensive action. This includes using his Contracts to distract the interrogating characters (Darkness, Eternal Spring) or to ferret out their feelings in hopes to find a way out of the situation (Fleeting Winter, Fleeting Autumn). His major goal, while outside of his Hollow, is to avoid giving up incriminating information and to escape.

The characters also may have the opportunity to interact with Micah the Tall as the ogre stands watch over the rest of the fleeing guests, waiting for his opportunity to return to rescue Aurora.

CHARACTER GOALS

Information gathering. If the characters begin to interact with Parsimon before he makes it down the stairs, they have the option to interrogate him while he still feels he's under the eye of the Spring Queen. However, if they wait to approach him until he's already descended the stairs, he'll try to bolt for his Hollow. If they try to follow, there is a chance they will notice they (and the building) is being watched by Micah the Tall, and they will have to decide whether to attempt to follow the Woodwalker or turn their attentions towards the waiting Ogre (at which point the scene ends and transitions to "Good Knight.")

ACTIONS

The following passage may be read slowly, with pauses after each paragraph. Characters may intercede in the narrative at each break. Where and when they do so will have an effect on the actions available to them in this scene, so take care to allow them to step in rather than hurrying the narrative.

- As you reach the doorway, another Lost's path intersects yours, leading to an awkward fumbling as the gnarled Wizened struggles awkwardly

to make his way outside at the same time you are attempting to leave. He lowers his head, ducking even deeper into his straw hat's shadow and averts his eyes as if this will keep your gaze off of him.

- Keeping his head low, he reaches for the door's interior knob with one bark-skinned hand that shakes like dry branches in strong wind, and pulls the door open with surprising strength for a man of his wiry stature.

- There is a moment of awkwardness as he tries to slip past you without touching you. His hat slides to one side, and the look he gives you is one of obvious fear as he all but dashes through the doorway to the landing at the top of the stairs.

- Once outside, the Woodwalker quickly begins to descend the stairs. He makes wide berth around a couple who have stopped to kiss partway down, and then scuttles sideways to avoid a small group gathered in conversation on the mid-point landing.

- His indirect path takes him quickly down the stairs, but when he reaches the bottom, instead of making a beeline for one of the vehicles parked in the drive, he glances quickly over his shoulder back up the stairs. The light from the ballroom window illuminates his upturned face for a long second, then he pulls his hat back down over his eyes and begins moving again.

- He slips down a narrow pathway that seems to curve back towards the house, and then turns sharply to the right, disappearing into some of the estate's thick shrubbery.

INTERROGATE PARSIMON

Assuming they catch him before he escapes, a character can attempt to interrogate Parsimon. The Attribute and skill used will vary depending on whether she attempts to use guile (Wits + Persuasion), brute force (Strength + Intimidation), subtle threats (Manipulation + Intimidation), charm (Manipulation + Subterfuge), seduction (Presence + Persuasion) or sheer physical intimidation (Presence + Intimidation) to query the Woodwalker.

Dice Pool: Pertinent Attribute + Skill (see above) vs. 7

Action: Extended and contested (7 successes, each roll representing 5 minutes of effort)

Through physical or verbal means, the character attempts to pry information out of Parsimon. After 6 rolls (30 minutes), Parsimon panics and makes a break for the door to his Hollow (see "Catching Parsimon," below).

Hindrances: Parsimon has exited the building (-1); (friendly attempts) Parsimon has exited the building (-1), the characters have had negative interaction with Parsimon in the past (-1 to -3)

Help: The character claims to work for one of the monarchs (+1); (hostile attempts) the character is obviously armed (+1), the character is wielding an unsheathed weapon (+2), the character is greater than Size 5 (+1); (friendly attempts) the character is female (+1), the character is plant-like in nature (Flowering, Woodwalker, Woodblood, etc.; +1)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Parsimon reveals nothing, and the character is distracted for long enough for the Woodwalker to attempt his escape. End this action immediately. Characters can attempt to catch Parsimon (see below).

Failure: Parsimon reveals nothing.

Success: Parsimon gives up one piece of information.

- He was once Spring Court, serving Aeolian, and loved her to the point of near-worship.

- Aeolian tricked him into a life-long pledge which kept him from pursuing any of his carnal desires or truly behaving as anything but her minion, while her actions were unhampered. This led to him leaving the Emerald Court for Autumn.

- He retains his Hollow, with an entrance here on Aeolian's estate. It was originally put there to be close to her. Now, she lets him come and go out of guilt.

- His specialty is growing and harvesting goblin fruit.

- Aurora approached him several weeks ago seeking help with her "situation." She claimed to have been trapped into a pledge by Aeolian that would end only in her death.

- Parsimon gave Aurora a myrsina, a goblin fruit that would mimic death to the point of ending (without breaking) pledges that end with one party or the other's death. He had used the fruit to free himself of Aeolian's pledge without her knowing. He thought Aurora would use it discreetly to end her pledge, never imagining that she'd attempt to fool the entire freehold with her "death."

Exceptional Success: Parsimon either breaks down or is swayed utterly, depending on whether the character was using hostile or friendly methods at the time the exceptional success was rolled. He reveals all of

the information above and is either cowed by or firmly allied with the characters for the remainder of the story.

CATCHING PARSIMON

If the characters do not begin to interrogate Parsimon before he reaches the bottom of the stairs, or if he makes a break for it during their interrogation, they may attempt to catch up with him before he reaches the doorway to his Hollow and begin (or restart) interrogation. Only one attempt to catch him may be made. If they fail to do so or if they succeed, and he attempts to flee again, he automatically succeeds in escaping to his Hollow.

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Athletics vs. 7

Action: Instant and contested. Because the distances here are so small, only a single attempt may be made, rather than an extended contest.

Hindrances: Parsimon has exited the building (-1), character is heavily armored (-1 to -2)

Help: Specialization in running (+1), character has gone out of his way to get between Parsimon and bottom of stairs/escape route (+2)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Parsimon escapes into his Hollow so quickly that a search must be made to attempt to locate it to follow.

Failure: Parsimon escapes into his Hollow, but the character(s) are close enough behind to follow.

Success: Parsimon does not manage to escape, and the scene can enter or transition back to “Interrogate Parsimon” (see above).

Exceptional Success: Parsimon does not manage to escape, and the character has sufficient control of the situation to either enter or transition back to “Interrogate Parsimon,” or to follow the Woodwalker at his leisure into Parsimon’s Hollow.

CONSEQUENCES

The characters may come away from this scene with sufficient information to realize that Aurora is not dead and that she faked her own death. They may also learn a great deal about why. They may also have the opportunity to follow Parsimon into his Hollow (a potentially dangerous gambit) or to turn their attentions over to Micah as he watches the building.

Should the characters follow Parsimon (by stealth, speed or because he has invited them) into his Hollow, they may transition to “The Garden.”

If the characters lose Parsimon or decide not to follow him into his Hollow, read the following:

As the Woodwalker slips out of sight, a movement near to the building catches your eye. Just outside of one of the building’s windows, a tall figure is standing with his back against an oak tree. His height is great enough that his head almost brushes the lowest branch of the oak, which must be at least eight feet off the ground. His attention seems focused entirely on one of the building’s windows.

If the characters have already progressed through “Fallen Rose,” they may recognize the curtains as being the same garish pink as those in Aurora’s bedroom. Should they move to interact with the figure (Micah the Tall), this action segues them to the scene titled “Good Knight.”

If the characters choose, they may return to Aeolian’s mansion at this point. This action will take them directly to “Disappeared!”

If the characters choose to leave the site, they will receive a phone call from either one of the freehold members with whom they have exchanged contact information, or whoever invited them to the celebration in the first place. The message is fairly simple:

Aurora’s body is gone! The Queen has stated that anyone who was present and does not return for questioning will be hunted down as possible accomplices. She’s also offering a great reward to anyone who finds and returns her ward’s body for proper burial.

Further inquiries reveal that Warden claims it’s all a Spring trick to avoid the wedding, and says that if Aeolian doesn’t provide an appropriate ward for Todd White to marry, he won’t turn over the throne at all. Hopefully this will be sufficient motivation for the characters to return to one of the scenes, either “Eye of the Hurricane” if they return to Aeolian’s home to investigate, or “A Cold Reception” if they seek out the Winter King or his ward.

If not, as with any time they completely leave the scripted scenes and cannot be brought, at the end of three days time from the initial celebration (“A Grave Announcement”) they will be brought into “The Vow,” where they can choose to interact with the final scene or not.

GOOD KNIGHT

MENTAL •

PHYSICAL ...

SOCIAL ..

OVERVIEW

Micah the Tall is fully aware of Aurora's plans to dupe the freehold into believing she's dead, and is waiting to aid her in making her escape. He is waiting outside the mansion for her signal to aid her in her escape so that they may elope together.

DESCRIPTION

The night is quiet, devoid of animal sounds, and only the quiet departure of the last of Aeolian's guests' vehicles disturbs the otherwise silent night. Micah is standing in the shadow of a tall tree just outside the window to Aurora's chambers. From his height, he can see in the tall window, although little beyond the ceiling is visible from the perspective of normal-sized individuals.

The oak's trunk is massive, but appears dwarfed compared to the gigantic ogre, whose upper arms and thighs are easily as big around as the tree's major limbs. The smell of clean leather and well-oiled steel are like cologne on the ogre's pale skin, but for those close enough to pick it up, there is also an underlying delicate scent of flowers — jasmine, perhaps? Or is it rose?

(clarity) He's big. Really big. Look at the size of that sword. He could probably cleave that tree in one blow. I'm smaller than that tree. Boy, he just looks like he's itching to use that sword. Is he reaching for it? That's got to be the biggest peeping tom I've ever seen. Wait, he's looking at me. Did he hear me thinking that? He can't read minds, can he?

STORYTELLER GOALS

The interaction with Micah has a couple of possible purposes within the story. First, it gives martial characters a target. If Micah is defeated in honorable combat, he will be bound by his honor to aid the characters to the best of his ability. Those who have heard rumors earlier in the story about Micah's nature may be able to use this to their advantage.

CHARACTER GOALS

Micah offers the characters both the potential for more information and a possible ally: He knows the secret of Aurora's "death" and much of the reasoning behind it.

ACTIONS

Micah will not go out of his way to interact with the characters, but he will also not abandon his post outside Aurora's window unless convinced (by words or defeat) to do so. Characters can walk away from him, or can attempt to determine what he's doing out there (and thus gain additional insight into the situation).

FIGHT MICAH

The belief that his cause is the source of his physical prowess sustains Micah, but it also gives him a weakness — if defeated in honorable combat, he honestly believes that the cause of his victor is greater than his, even if he does not understand why. Thus, by defeating Micah in honorable combat the characters will be able enlist his aid.

If character defeats Micah in one-on-one combat without apparent aid from other characters, he will answer their questions (although not offer anything beyond what they ask him) and will take any honorable actions requested of him on their behalf. He will not engage in obviously dishonorable behavior (killing innocents, etc.) regardless of defeat.

If the character loses but fights with honor, Micah will be more kindly disposed towards him, offering a bonus in later attempts to persuade Micah.

PERSUADE MICAH

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Persuasion vs. 7

Action: Extended and contested (7 successes required; each roll represents 10 minutes of persuasion)

Hindrances: Character attempts to bully Micah (–1), character insults Micah's honor (–4), character insults Aurora (–4), complimenting Todd White (–1), mentioning Aurora's upcoming wedding in a positive light (–2)

Help: Character appeals to Micah's sense of honor (+1 to +4), character enlists aid on Aurora's behalf (+2), character appears to know or

suspect that Aurora is alive (+1), insulting Todd White or Maxwell Warden (+1 to +2)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character has managed to insult Micah's honor (or Aurora's) to the extent where he challenges them to honorable combat to defend his (or her) good name.

Failure: No progress is made towards convincing Micah.

Success: The character is persuasive and makes progress towards convincing Micah to reveal the details of the situation. They learn one of the following pieces of information:

- Aeolian tricked Aurora into swearing an oath of fealty shortly after the girl escaped from the hedge.
- Aurora was unaware of the depth or breadth of her vow until well after swearing it.
- Micah and Aurora fell in love not long after meeting.
- When Micah approached Aeolian to ask for Aurora's hand in marriage, the Spring Queen laughed at his request, telling him that her ward was "too valuable" to marry him, and that she had other plans for the girl.
- Shortly after this, Aurora and White's engagement was announced.
- Aurora was despondent for a few weeks after the engagement. Micah feared she would commit suicide rather than marry White. She visited Parsimon, in hopes of finding something to make her death painless and quick.
- Parsimon, having been a victim of Aeolian's Pledgesmithing himself, offered Aurora a myrsina, although he made her pledge never to tell anyone but Micah about the fruit's ability.
- She told Micah about the goblin fruit she'd gotten from Parsimon, and her plan to fake her own death in order to escape from Aeolian's clutches and her fealty pledge.

• Aurora and Micah are planning on eloping this evening. His highest goal, at this point, is to get her safely away from his anticipated vengeance of Queen Aeolian. Nothing the characters can do or say will dissuade him from this goal; he's seen the results when Aeolian's plans are thwarted, and will do anything (including sacrifice himself) to get Aurora away from her.

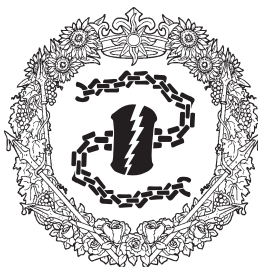
Exceptional Success: Micah is convinced, and reveals the all of the details of the situation to the character.

CONSEQUENCES

Micah and Aurora plan to elope, effectively removing themselves from the story. Their goal is to put as much distance as possible between themselves and the freehold. If the characters either defeat Micah in honorable combat or otherwise sway him to their cause, he may be willing to take them to meet Aurora, which will segue them to "Love Unveiled." If the situation with Micah goes poorly, however, he will not willingly do so, and the characters will have to rely on other means if they wish to attempt to track down Aurora and her love. Details on how this may be accomplished are offered in the overview of "Love Unveiled."

Otherwise, once the characters depart this scene, they may choose to return to Aeolian's mansion to speak with her ("Eye of the Hurricane") or to investigate Aurora's chambers ("Disappeared!"). They might also choose to contact King Warden ("A Cold Reception"), or to try to follow Parsimon's path into his Hollow ("The Garden").

If the characters choose to leave the site entirely, go to the Consequences section of "Going Somewhere?" for ideas on how to bring them back into the story.



LOVE UNVEILED

MENTAL ••

PHYSICAL •••

SOCIAL •••

OVERVIEW

The characters have followed Micah to Aurora, and finally have an opportunity to speak with the “dead” Fairest face-to-face.

If Micah has not voluntarily led them to her, they will have a more difficult time catching up with the pair. If they are following him directly after meeting him under Aurora’s window, they will need to make a series of four Wits + Stealth rolls versus 6 dice to shadow the ogre around Aeolian’s manor grounds to where he is meeting Aurora. If, instead, they are trying to track down the couple at a later time, more strenuous efforts may need to be taken. Possibilities include supernatural tracking such as Mindfinder (*Contracts of the Four Directions* •, p. 134, *Winter Masques*) or speaking with the wind via *Contracts of Communion* (pp. 32-35, *Winter Masques*). Alternatively, mundane methods such as utilizing police influences to put out an all points bulletin or hacking financial computers to track their credit card usage may also allow the characters to pinpoint their location, at the Storyteller’s discretion.

The physical location of the meet up is inconsequential. It could be anywhere from the outskirts of Aeolian’s estate grounds to a rest area several hundred miles from the freehold, depending on when the characters track the fleeing couple down. If the characters wait more than a day before attempting to track them, however, their efforts will likely fail. With enough of a head start, the two are crafty enough to ensure they will not be found, at least not before Warden’s 72-hour deadline is up.

DESCRIPTION

Micah hovers protectively near Aurora, guarding her both from outside and from any potential threat you might offer her. The girl looks unhealthy when you first see her, but as your conversation continues the blush of health returns to her cheeks and her eyes regain much of their sparkle.

(clarity) The bond between these two is almost visible... No, no, it is visible. You can see it whenever they’re near each other, a sort of glowing

golden aura that seems to reach from one to the other, merging and overlapping at the edges. When she frowns, his glow dims, as if he feels her pain, and visa versa. It’s as if the two have already become a part of one another.

STORYTELLER GOALS

This scene is designed to allow the Storytellers to really up the personal factor on the conflict of pledges. It’s an opportunity for the characters to be directly presented with the obvious love and affection between Micah and Aurora, and the harm it would do to each of them were Aurora forced to marry Todd. By allowing the characters to interact directly with the escaping lovebirds, they are presented with a very real and vivid choice: do they keep the couple’s secret and let them escape (potentially implicating themselves by doing so), or do they smash any hope the pair has of salvaging a happy ending to their story and drag them back to the freehold that has already treated them like pawns in their political war?

CHARACTER GOALS

This is the characters’ first chance to get information directly from Aurora, and she’s quick to offer them all sorts of explanations as to why she had to do what she did. She paints Aeolian as a cold-hearted, manipulative tyrant who took advantage of her almost as soon as she stumbled out of the Hedge.

ACTIONS

A CUNNING PLAN

For the most part, discussions which involve Aurora returning to the freehold will fall on deaf ears. The characters can attempt standard (Intimidation, Persuasion or Manipulation) or supernatural persuasion (Contracts or unwitting pledges). Unless one of the pair is killed, incapacitated, driven off or otherwise separated from the other half, both must be convinced before the couple will return. This involves separate challenges for each.

Each attempt uses the standard dice pool for that type of action, but all efforts to sway either of them to return will face at least a base –4 dice penalty. Other cumulative factors that might come into play include:



Hindrances: Suggestion involves Aurora marrying Todd White (−4), character shows hostility towards or threatens Aurora (−4), both are currently unconvinced (−2)

Help: Characters pledge to protect Aurora (+2), characters pledge not to make Aurora marry Todd White (+2), suggestions involve Aurora and Micah marrying (+4), character has defeated Micah in honorable combat (+2), plan includes revenge on Aeolian (+1), one half of the couple has been convinced (+2), Micah or Aurora has been tricked into a pledge to return (+4)

CONSEQUENCES

Unless convinced to do otherwise, after this scene Micah and Aurora elope, effectively removing themselves from the story. Their goal is to put as much distance as possible between themselves and the freehold, and nothing others do or say will convince them to return to it. Even Aurora's ties to her motley are not sufficient to call her back, as she fears Aeolian will quickly find a way to re-establish her pledge-bonds should she return.

If the couple is convinced to return and Aurora is convinced to go through with the wedding, they will insist on certain contingencies. Aurora will demand that Micah be protected from any implication of guilt in her deception or running away, and will insist that the others tell everyone that he came to track her down and return her on the freehold's behalf.

Once the characters depart this scene, they may choose to return to Aeolian's mansion to speak with her ("Eye of the Hurricane") or to investigate Aurora's chambers ("Disappeared!"). They might also choose to contact King Warden ("A Cold Reception"), or to try to follow Parsimon's path into his Hollow ("The Garden").

If the characters choose to leave the site, go to the Consequences section of "Going Somewhere?" for ideas on how to bring them back into the story.

DISAPPEARED!

MENTAL ...

PHYSICAL —

SOCIAL —

OVERVIEW

As if Aurora's death wasn't a harsh enough blow to the freehold, her body has now gone missing. This short scene brings the characters back to Aeolian's estate and Aurora's chambers, where they may find more clues as to the mystery surround the Spring heir's death and disappearance.

DESCRIPTION

This scene takes place in Aurora's chambers, after the girl has woken from her goblin fruit-induced "death" and escaped with her love, Micah the Tall. If characters attempt to investigate Aurora's chambers at any point other than immediately upon leaving "A Grave Announcement," they will enter this scene rather than "Fallen Rose." If no announcement about Aurora's disappearance has been made to herd them back here to investigate, they will find her body missing and her chambers in disarray, and may well find themselves answering for the whereabouts of her corpse (one more motivation to encourage them to solve the mystery surrounding her death).

The description of the room is much like "Fallen Rose," until they look at the bed:

The bed forms the centerpiece of the room. Here, the bright crimson comforter stretches out without so much as a wrinkle. Only an indentation on the comforter indicates where Aurora's body once lay. A single rose, its petals bruised and scattered, is spread across the bed.

(clarity) Something's wrong here. The air is heavy, like in a tomb, and it feels like something's missing. The body, of course, but... you look around, searching... what's gone? What's not here? That's the secret, isn't it? What's been taken?

STORYTELLER GOALS

Much like "Fallen Rose," this situation exists both to bring characters deeper into the mystery surrounding Aurora's "death" and to provide them some avenues to begin unraveling it.

CHARACTER GOALS

Characters are likely here to investigate Aurora's death and, now, her disappearance.

ACTIONS

SEARCHING THE ROOM, REDUX

Characters searching the room can use the "Searching the Room" action in "Fallen Rose." The starred clues (*) are the same as those from "Fallen Rose" and should not be given again if a character has already uncovered them in this earlier scene. Others represent differences in the room, and should only be given to those who have been through "Fallen Rose," and so might notice the change: these are noted in the text. Still others can be given regardless of whether the character proceeded through "Fallen Rose" or not. As in "Fallen Rose," the clues are offered in order from least to most likely to impact the plot.

- * The vast majority of the movies and books scattered around the room are romantic in nature. There are comedy romances, historical romances, even Shakespearean romances.
- * A copy of Romeo and Juliet has been bookmarked at Act 5, Scene 3 — at the scene where Juliet commits suicide.
- * The bed is slightly ajar, and the coverlet is tucked up between the mattress and box-springs, as if something had been added or removed from there.
- * In one corner, next to a small trash bin full of empty food containers, crumpled shopping bags and discarded cosmetic packaging, lies a wadded-up half-finished letter. It is only a few lines long, but appears to be very politely requesting that "her liege" reconsider a choice. It is written in a feminine script.
- * A beautiful red-skinned apple with a single bite taken from it lies under the bed. It stinks to the high heavens, and is the source of the death-stench in the room. A successful Intelligence + Occult roll will identify this as a goblin fruit. Additional rolls are required to identify the particular species and effects of the fruit (see p. 7 for details). If the characters have interacted with or heard rumors about Parsimon, this may take them off to investigate the fae farmer. As a member of the Spring Court, Jeremiah knows that Parsimon (a former Spring Courtier

himself) is rumored to have a Hollow which connects to the grounds outside Aeolian's home. He may provide this information out of support for the characters (if they have befriended the motley) or out of his own ire at the idea that Parsimon may have poisoned his motley-mate. (This segues to "The Garden.")

- The clear spot on the table is about the right size for a laptop computer to have rested. (Characters who proceeded through "Fallen Rose" might note the laptop computer and cell phone are both missing.)

- The jewelry here is scattered and all of low quality. Likewise, the clothing thrown around is all mundane. (Characters who proceeded through "Fallen Rose" would note that everything of significant financial resale value that could be stuffed into luggage has been removed from the room.)

CONSEQUENCES

By the time characters reach this scene, Aurora and Micah the Tall have fled the freehold and the area, covering their tracks and putting as much distance between them and their assumed pursuit as possible. They will not answer phone calls, and have enough of a head start on the characters to make it impossible for them to be caught before the equinox (and Warden's deadline) come into play.

From here, characters may attempt to speak with Aeolian ("Eye of the Hurricane"), track down Warden and White ("A Cold Reception") or leave, which will take them to "Going Somewhere?" if they have not already entered it, although Micah will no longer be present in that scene. If they have already proceeded through "Going Somewhere?" and still attempt to leave, they will be called back by King Warden to participate in the final scene of the story, "The Vow."



Disappeared!

THE GARDEN

MENTAL •

PHYSICAL ...

SOCIAL ..

OVERVIEW

Whether escorted by Parsimon or seeking out his lair on their own, the characters may enter his garden Hollow, where they will find the farmer-fae waiting for them. The Woodwalker knows much, but why should he tell them anything?

Finding The Hollow Without Parsimon

If they do not have Parsimon's aid in finding it, efforts to locate and enter the Hollow should be run as an extended action, with each roll representing 10 minutes of search time. Roll the character's Wits + Investigation + appropriate modifiers -4 (for the Hollow's Ward rating). It requires 10 successes to find the entrance to the Hollow. After an hour of searching, the character's efforts draw the attention of something — a Noppera-Bo (pp. 276-177 of **Changeling: The Lost**) if they are in the Hedge, or a pack of three guard dogs (p. 203, **World of Darkness Rulebook**) if they are not. Regardless of whether they choose to fight, interact with or try to ignore these individuals, it distracts them from their search. After 6 rolls, all successes are reset to zero and the effort must be begun again.

DESCRIPTION

Surrounded by a wall of thick vines, this Hollow is almost indiscernible from the outside. Once through, however, it is a bastion of fertility, a testament to its owner's years of dedication to the cultivation of exotic plants of all kinds. Tall trees knit their branches overhead, forming a canopy of verdant shade, and beneath their spreading limbs a maze of raised beds, containers, hanging baskets and earthy plots are teeming with all manner of floral life. A small cabin, little more than a garden shed, is tucked away at one edge of the Hollow, its walls and roof almost impossible to spot due to

a thick layer of winding vine which has claimed the building for a support system. Other outbuildings, smaller even than the cabin, are scattered here and there. Many are open-faced, displaying tools or shelves of well-used but tidy pots and containers.

The buzz of alien insects sets a low bass-note for the grove, while somewhere hidden high above your head birds call back and forth to one another. For now, the air is still, as if the Hollow itself is holding its breath, yet occasionally one of the plants will move, its leaves rustling as it shifts or sways despite the utter lack of breeze.

Closer examination of the flora here reveals this is far from a mundane garden. Some of the plants are rooted in heaps of soil from which bones and bits of flesh still protrude. Others nestle in pools of thick, black-red liquid that gives off a metallic copper tang. Here and there, bushes are festooned with seemingly random trinkets: silver bells tied to boughs with scarlet ribbons, a long blonde braid of human hair nailed with rusty spikes to a tree-trunk, tiny flasks of starry liquid dangle from bushy branches.

The loam here smells of life and growth, too rich to be wholly of Earth. The air is moist, and heavy with the sweet spice of a seemingly impossible array of flowers and fruit. Even the over-ripe stink of compost seems to carry a scent of potential and painstaking care, rather than simple rot.

(clarity) This place is not of Earth. The soil here fairly teems with glamour, and while not every plant here is fae in nature, enough are to set your teeth on edge. Impossible colors, shapes and odors war for dominion over your senses, crossing the boundaries between sight and scent. This is a madman's garden, a True Fae's idea of what being a farmer is like. Who knows what perverse and poisonous inhabitants are hidden beneath the lush, verdant greenery?

STORYTELLER GOALS

Like the prologue, "Night Magic," this scene exists in part to give characters an opportunity to interact with some of the wonder (and horror) of life among the Lost. Parsimon dwells as a near-hermit because of the horrific pledge Aeolian once tricked him into. Although he has escaped from it (through the use of the myrsina), it changed his path forward forever, shifting him from Spring to Autumn and shearing away his once-joyful life from that of the rest of the freehold. Now, he dwells among relative bounty, and yet is alienated from that which he once loved.

On a more tangible note, this scene provides characters with the opportunity to gain information, both about the freehold's history and about the current situation, as well as to potentially get their hands on some interesting or useful goblin fruits or oddments.

Unlike in "Going Somewhere?" Parsimon is more than willing to take hostile action against the characters here in his Hollow. He not only feels more confident here and less under the sway of the freehold's monarchs, but he also has nowhere else to run, except the Hedge. Backed into a corner, even the most peaceful Lost may find his fangs — or in Parsimon's case, his scythe.

CHARACTER GOALS

Characters are likely to come into this scene seeking more information from Parsimon, either directly or in regards to the myrsina (if they have located it in Aurora's room.) If they attempt to interrogate Parsimon, the rules for doing so from "Going Somewhere?" can be used, with the following notable change.

If, at any point in the interrogation, the character interrogating him rolls a dramatic failure or if physical damage is done to Parsimon, the Woodwalker will initiate combat with the goal of driving the intruders out of his Hollow. This is a marked change from his behavior outside of his Hollow.

ACTIONS

RECOGNIZE GOBLIN FRUIT

If Parsimon is befriended, incapacitated, killed, distracted or otherwise unable to protest, a character might have the opportunity to treat his Hollow as her own personal produce stand. The sheer plethora of plants (mundane and magical) here, however, make finding something in particular very difficult.

If a character is simply trying a quick "grab and stash," Storytellers can use a chance die roll (with the results hidden from the player). On a 10, the character has managed to grab something of value, a goblin fruit or oddment of some sort. On a 1, the character has snagged something harmful. This might be a flower with a nauseating scent that makes her vomit, a vine or vegetable with nearly-invisible-yet-incredibly-painful thorns (characters take 1 point of lethal damage for each round it is

picked or carried in a bare hand) or a fruit which acts as a Toxicity 4 poison when consumed or touched. All other rolls result in the character having harvested something mundane — perhaps an exotic flower, a nourishing root or a tasty fruit — which has no more value or power than a similar item bought from a mortal supermarket would.

Longer searching, however, may increase a character's odds of finding something useful and avoiding the garden's more dangerous plantings, and uses the rules below. Because of the sheer density of mundane and fae plants being cultivated in Parsimon's Hollow, each search is represented by an instant (rather than an extended) action. Regardless of successes, characters may not carry or own more goblin fruit or oddments than is indicated by the chart on p. 225 of **Changeling: The Lost**.

Storytellers should use their own discretion in deciding what fae plants are or are not available here. **Hera pears**, for example, grow only in the depths of the Hedge, so regardless of how successful the player's roll is, he will not find one growing here. (It is not impossible that Parsimon may have one preserved in a jar on one of the sheds' shelves, however.)

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Occult

Action: Instant

Hindrances: Looking for a particular goblin fruit (−2 to −4 depending on rarity), Parsimon is present but the character is seeking without his permission (−3), character is low Wyrd (−1 if under 3 Wyrd), character is low Clarity (apply negative as to Perception rolls per p. 93, **Changeling: The Lost**)

Help: Parsimon is distracted (if sneaking) (+2), Parsimon is aiding the character (+4), Skill Specialty in goblin fruit or oddments (+1), character has physically seen or held the particular item being sought before (+1), character is high Wyrd (+1 for every dot above 5), character is high Clarity (per Keen Senses bonus, p. 92, **Changeling: The Lost**)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character not only fails to find a helpful goblin fruit, but also triggers a negative event. This may be harvesting something harmful by mistake (see the "grab and stash" rules above, and treat as if a 1 has been rolled), alerting Parsimon (if the harvesting was supposed to be clandestine) or damaging a plant or structure in the Hollow in a severe and noticeable fashion.

Failure: The sheer bounty of this location is overwhelming. The character either finds nothing of use, or mistakes a mundane fruit, plant or flower for something more interesting.

Success: At the Storyteller's discretion, the character locates and successfully harvests a goblin fruit or oddment from the bountiful garden-Hollow.

Exceptional Success: Either two fruits are located and harvested, or a particularly powerful goblin fruit or oddment is obtained. Examples might include a hera pear (preserved), myrsina or other rare goblin fruits.

CONSEQUENCES

Damage or destruction of any of Parsimon's carefully tended vegetation will quickly earn the characters a request to leave his Hollow, and a refusal to comply may spur the Woodwalker to physical action. On the other extreme, if the characters attempt to harvest more than five or six goblin fruit without Parsimon's knowledge, they will have a difficult time hiding them from his sight as they



make their departure, and he may well request payment for them (either in immediate trade or future favors, an option which may bring Parsimon back into the characters' story in other chapters of an ongoing Lost chronicle).

Before long, it becomes clear that the characters are no longer welcome, and if they stay, his attitude goes from neutral to negative and eventually to hostile. He will not abandon his Hollow while intruders are present, but will actively do everything in his power to "move them along," from social surliness to using Contracts.

From here, they may return to speak with Aeolian ("Eye of the Hurricane"), seek out King Warden ("A Cold Reception") or return to investigate Aurora's chambers ("Disappeared!") If they choose, instead, to leave the scripted scenes and take other actions unrelated to this story arc, they will be contacted on the equinox and invited to attend, segueing to "The Vow."

THE VOW

MENTAL PHYSICAL SOCIAL

OVERVIEW

King Warden calls together all those who were invited to the pre-nuptial party for their decision. The location is a mundane meeting hall, of the type normally rented out for families to decorate for “too big for the family room” celebrations. Tonight, however, the mood is as dour and austere as the king himself.

The gathering is slated to begin at sunset, with the king insisting the wedding will happen no later than the stroke of midnight that evening. Thus the characters will have several hours for final negotiation, manipulation or intimidation within this scene.

Should the characters have made the decision to remove themselves from the story altogether, Storytellers may use a variety of means to bring them back into the plot with this scene. All of the techniques described in “Motivations” on pp. 4-5 can be used, depending on the nature of the characters involved. Likewise, Warden or Aeolian are likely to cast a very suspicious eye upon those who were present at the initial gathering but seem to have removed themselves from the situation after Aurora’s “death” was discovered.

DESCRIPTION

Unlike Aeolian’s opulent home, the location Warden has called the freehold together in is stark and austere. The hall’s white walls are unadorned. Perhaps this makes it an ideal canvas upon which those who normally rent the site might decorate it to suit their own wedding or party. Now, however, the blank expanses and colorless palette seem bleak and severe, especially when contrasted by the brilliant variety of Lost who fill the main chamber. Even the fae, however, seem subdued, and an air of tension lurks just below the surface. Many of those gathered are armed and armored, some seem to be only awaiting the word to turn the meeting to a melee.

Voices, low and heavy with threat and fear, lay down a steady grumble of background noise here. Outside, the suburban traffic flow rushes past, contributing the occasional irate honk or squeal of brakes to the already tense soundtrack of tonight’s meeting.

This hall is far smaller (and less well ventilated) than Aeolian’s mansion, yet as many or more fae are gathered here. In areas where the Lost gather closely together, their Mantles taint the air with warring odors: over-ripe fruit, stifling sweet floral, offal and grave-taint, ozone and musk. Overall, however, there is the stench of nervous sweat, and an unmistakable smell of fear.

(clarity) Did you make the right decision? Are you sure? What you do and do not do in the next few moments will change your path forward forever. The entire freehold will be changed by the decisions you have made. The weight of that responsibility presses down on your shoulders, your chest, burdening your lungs until you can hardly breathe. Did you make the right choice?

STORYTELLER GOALS

This is the climax of the story arc: here, one way or another, the situation will reach some sort of resolution. A myriad of options await the characters, depending on how proactive they’ve become in the previous scenes. There is no right or wrong answer, but each possibility carries its own burdens and benefits for the characters and the freehold.

Several factions balance each other out here. Warden’s supporters insist on an acceptable replacement for Aurora or her return and the giving of her hand in marriage if it has become public knowledge that she is still alive, or else they will refuse to hand over the throne to Spring. Aeolian’s minions refuse to offer another member of their Court up for sacrifice (if they still blame Winter for Aurora’s “death”) or insist Aurora be brought back and follow through with the marriage (if they are aware of her duplicity). Those not aligned with either monarch are splintered in their goals, and only add confusion and chaos to any discussion.

Depending on how much of the truth has become public knowledge, vocal advocates may lobby for a variety of options. Some call for another arranged marriage, or at least a pledge-bound truce between those who would take the thrones of Spring and Winter. Martial-minded fae bellow for war against Winter if Warden dares to try to halt the turning of the seasons, or boast of their ability to hold the throne if “treacherous Spring manipulators attempt to bribe and backstab their way out of their agreement.” Softhearted freehold members might insist on every fae’s right to marry for love, while their opponents call just as

adamantly for those who would rule to put aside their own whims and emotions and to show responsibility to the good of the freehold first. These factions essentially stymie and stalemate each other, leaving the situation ripe for the characters to apply pressure and tilt the scales in whatever direction they see fit.

While the scenarios below run fine without the intrusion of the True Fae, should Storytellers choose to do so, the Viscountess of Broken Vows can be watching (and nudging here and there) as a voyeur to the climax of this situation. She is unlikely to get physically involved in any altercations, but may (out of sight of Warden) nudge characters toward directions which would force the Winter King to break his oath.

CHARACTER GOALS

A choice must be made, even if the choice is to take no action. The freehold is milling in discontent; most are uninformed or have partial information about the situation at best, and are handicapped and hesitant to make a decision because of it. By the end of this scene, however, the story will end and results will occur. The characters have the opportunity here to steer the future of the freehold, either by action or avoidance. Regardless, there will be reactions to their choice.

ACTIONS

It would be impossible to prepare for every potential permutation of character choice that this story arc has lead up to with this scene. However, there are several most-likely general scenarios, most which will apply to a wide variety of character choices in this final scene. While each is eventually mutually exclusive, several options may end in results that are not permanent. These are noted as being choices where another option may be played out.

Other options, however, may bring the characters to a climactic end of this story. These are also noted as such.

SHOTGUN WEDDING

Assuming they are made aware of the fact that Aurora was not really murdered, the current monarchs' preferred solution to the current situation would be for the wedding between Todd White and Aurora to proceed as planned. This situation fulfills Warden's need to ensure peace between the courts, and reaffirms Aeolian's sense of control over her ward.

In order for this scenario to come into play, the characters will have had to achieve three goals: determine that Aurora is still alive, catch up with her and Micah before the pair elopes, and convince Aurora to go through with the marriage to Todd White while preventing Micah from interfering. These goals are addressed in "Love Unveiled," but even if the characters are successful in accomplishing all three, the situation is far from over. Upon entering this final scene the characters will find Aurora in tears, filled with second thoughts at the idea of marrying anyone but her true love, Micah. Even if Micah has been removed as a possibility (by death or some other long-term solution), the Spring Heir still faces a lifetime bound to someone she not only doesn't love, but barely knows and doesn't particularly like. She will use every emotional trick (crying, telling sob stories about her love for Micah, shyly flirting, trying to enlist their sense of justice, attempting to convince them that Todd White is a heartless playboy and so on) to convince them to find another option.

Unless the characters move to reinforce their earlier efforts to convince Aurora, she will balk and refuse to marry Todd White during this scenario, leaving the characters to either re-convince her or find another plan.

Characters who wish to continue to pressure Aurora into following through with the wedding to Todd White can do so by using the same mechanic as listed in "Love Unveiled." Those who wish to cement the situation by forcing her into a pledge to do so may use the mechanic for [Unwitting Pledges on pp. 5-7](#). Doing so is a level 3 Clarity sin, as they are essentially tricking her into a life-long, extremely restrictive vow which they know is blatantly against her will and desire.

The Results

If Aurora is convinced or tricked into pledging that she will marry Todd White, she goes through with the ceremony, shedding tears of sorrow and regret the entire time. Just before midnight, Warden performs the ceremony, leading the couple through their vows and the Heart's Oath pledge. At the end of the ceremony, White kneels before the elderly king, and Warden introduces him formally to the freehold as the new Winter King. The Onyx crown disappears from Warden's head, appearing briefly on Todd's. Then, just after midnight, it fades away, and the Emerald Crown graces Aurora's still-tear-stained visage.

Relieved, the freehold celebrates, with food and drink flowing freely. Less than an hour after the post-nuptial party begins, however, there is a scream from the back rooms of the hall. One of Aeolian's servants has found Aurora, hanging from a rope made of knotted strips of her wedding gown and strands of still-blooming rose vine. The now-dead princess has left a suicide note, professing her love for Micah and stating that she could not go on without him.

Warden has slipped away, having exploited the Heart's Oath to essentially escape his pledge. The freehold must now choose a new Spring Monarch, hopefully in time to prevent the former hostilities between Winter and Spring from re-emerging.

If **The Rose-Bride's Plight** is being used as a stand-alone adventure kit, the story can end here. Otherwise, the chaos left in the wake of Aurora's true suicide and the attempt to choose a new monarch is a plot that can be used to segue into a new story.

WEDDING STAND-IN

One of the simplest (yet most sacrificial) outcomes which the characters may put their backing behind is to simply find a substitute bride for Todd White (or barring that, a stand-in couple for both White and the missing bride). Warden, especially, has vowed to unite the Courts before he steps down upon his Keeper's name, so he is very motivated to accept a substitute bride for his ward, as this will satisfy his oath.

Whether one of the players' characters offer themselves for this duty or whether they manage to convince one of the Storyteller characters to do so, certain basic traits are required to fulfill the tenets of Warden's oath, and he will insist on these. It is understood that these individuals will inherit the seasonal crowns of their respective Courts, so a bride for White must be Spring Court or a substitute couple must be Winter and Spring (although in that case the bride might be from either Court, so long as the groom was of the other). As well, the proposed individuals must be of at least Mantle 2 in their respective Court (White is Mantle 2 Winter Court). Neither can be Heart-Oathed to someone else.

Aeolian, however, is less motivated. Due to Warden's insistence on the wedding, she suspects he will be harmed in some way by the wedding not going through, although she is not aware of the depth of his investment into it. She can be convinced of this plan's merit, but only if it serves her best interests as well. Factors which may help convince



Aeolian would include: the prospective Winter courtier having Spring Court Goodwill (White has 2 dots, so equal or more would be preferable), either or both parties of the wedding couple making at least a temporary oath of fealty to her, Warden pledging never to take the throne again and bribes (she's especially fond of secrets she can use to manipulate others).

If either of the current monarchs are unwilling to agree, characters may attempt to find a more suitable "volunteer" or may throw their backing behind another of the possible scenarios.

If both parties are convinced, the couple may make a Heart's Oath to each other during this scene. If this happens, the crown disappears off of Warden's head at the end of this oath, appearing momentarily on the brow of the new Winter monarch before transferring to that of his or her newly wed spouse, the Spring King or Queen.

The Results

Warden has completed his vow, the seasons have turned, and for the moment, all (save for the Viscountess) are relatively happy. The consequences of a Heart's Oath between those who, in all likelihood, were not prepared for a restrictive and lifelong vow may provide fodder for future stories. What happens, for example, when those who have married for duty find themselves falling in love with someone else? Or when the political climate of the freehold shifts, and popular opinion dictates someone other than the Heart-sworn heirs as the next king or queen?

THERE HAS TO BE ANOTHER WAY!

If they have learned of the current monarch's manipulations, the characters may believe that it is wrong to influence others into making a commitment as deep and long-lasting as that of the Heart's Oath, regardless of the potential benefits. They may seek other ways to unite the Courts, either through mundane means (negotiation, peace-talks and so on) or through an alternative pledge (such as a vowed truce between proposed heirs to each Court's throne).

Warden will not accept anything less than a pledge-sworn truce between the two Courts, represented by Todd White and a new heir to the Spring Crown. If there is a member of the characters' group who qualifies (Spring Court, Mantle 2 or higher, and willing to take on the burden of the crown), Aeolian may well nominate him or her as the

Spring heir, especially if she has or believes she can manipulate the character into an oath of fealty.

In order to satisfy Warden, a truce must be sworn between someone he designates as his heir (preferably White) and someone Aeolian agrees to support as the successor to her throne. Any non-pledge-bound truces are simply unacceptable to him (as he is wagering his life on the peace being maintained), and he will refuse to cooperate with such plans. If no acceptable decision is made by 11pm, Warden will make the announcement that will trigger the scenario "Not My Problem — But It Is..." into action.

If, however, the characters are able to negotiate a pledge-bound truce and can manipulate, bribe or blackmail both Warden and Aeolian into agreeing to it, they may well avert both civil war and utter chaos within the freehold, bringing about as close to a win-win situation as is possible.

The Results

Assuming the situation is settled here, rather than transitioning to one of the other scenarios, peace will have been established between Winter and Spring Courts for the first time in decades. Just before midnight, Warden will call his heir (most likely Todd White, unless something has happened to depose him as successor) forward, moving the Winter Crown from his own head to that of the heir. As the clock begins to strike twelve, the Onyx Crown will slowly fade from the new Winter Monarch's brow and the Emerald Crown will appear on whoever Aeolian has appointed as her successor.

NOT MY PROBLEM — BUT IT IS...

If nothing is done, the Winter King will enter the assembly and announce in a solemn and formal fashion that he cannot, in good conscience, allow the seasons to continue to transition in the face of such obvious treachery on the part of the Spring Court. When Aeolian rises from her seat to protest, Tai will appear behind her where he was hiding using Light-shy (Smoke 5), and will plunge a poisoned (Toxicity 7) dagger into her back. Characters can attempt to intercede and apprehend the Venombite, but she has both surprise and a base initiative of 18. Immediately after the attack, Tai will again activate Light-shy (die pool 6)

and attempt to flee the hall (Speed 12). If she makes it outside, she will disappear into the hedge, surviving to support Winter another day.

Assuming the assassin's strike is successful, unless something is done immediately, the Spring Queen will soon lie dead, even with her Elemental ability to pump her Health dots by her Wyrð score (5) for a scene. The poison, a refined and Wyrð-strengthened version of Tai's own venom, delivers 7 points of lethal damage per turn for a total of 3 turns (along with however much damage the initial stab wound did). Regardless of her fate, this action will scatter the crowd, and in the midst of the chaos, King Warden will pronounce a public statement, vowing never to relinquish the throne. At this point, the characters may choose to attempt one of the other scenario options and negotiate for peace in some manner. If they do not do so, the Winter Court will withdraw, leaving the freehold in the midst of full civil war.

Results

This is the least conclusive scenario. However, it provides a perfect jumping off place for another story — that of a freehold fully embroiled in a civil war between the seasonal Courts. Storytellers may continue on with this adventure, spinning out the opportunity for characters to directly become involved in the battle (whether their goal is victory or peace). Or, if they would like, they can pick up the story thread several years later, when the freehold has been devastated not only by Lost battling Lost, but also by True Fae as its lack of changing seasonal rule has left the entire freehold exceedingly vulnerable to predation by the Others. Conversely, the characters may choose to flee the freehold entirely, leaving the wreckage behind them and taking with them little more than some scars, bad memories and perhaps a morality lesson in the danger of pledges gone wrong.

This scenario leaves amazing continued potential for the Viscountess to enjoy broken pledges. While she may remain behind the scenes, chances are she'll become a recurring character if this story goes forward, constantly nudging those who take vows lightly.

THE KING IS DEAD

Multiple options exist which may bring the characters to the conclusion that deposing King Warden is their best bet for the peace and

safety of the freehold. The most likely of these spawns from "Not My Problem — But It Is..."; if it becomes clear that Winter has assassinated (or attempted to kill) the Spring Monarch, it may well tip the scales towards physical retaliation against the Winter ruler.

Other possibilities might include the characters being egged into destroying Warden on Aeolian's behalf, resorting to combat if they become frustrated with his insistence on the wedding or truce between the Courts being pledge-sealed or even possibly offering him the myrsina to allow him to "die" and sever his pledge.

Warden himself is not a combat-oriented character, and will pose little challenge should the situation actually enter combat. Storytellers are encouraged to narrate the scene with Warden full of bluster and bravado, refusing to surrender or compromise even up to the death blow. If the characters kill Warden, Todd White will claim the throne, promising compromise and peace between all of the freehold's seasonal Courts. If they kill Warden as a result of "Not My Problem — But It Is..." they are left with another difficulty: The rest of Winter will flee at their monarch's death, leaving no one to bar Spring from taking the throne at midnight. However, with Aurora's disappearance (and Aeolian injured or dead) the freehold's Spring courtiers are in chaos. It lies to the characters to help organize and appoint a new Spring monarch, or to take the crown themselves.

Results

If White takes the Winter Crown, he will graciously support and aid Aeolian (if she lives) and the characters in choosing a Spring monarch to ascend the throne at midnight. It is possible, if any of the characters qualify, that he will support them as heir, either to the Spring throne or to his own. He will make suave but meaninglessly vague promises of a future without conflict, a time of peace, but without a vow in place, there is nothing to stop the freehold from returning to the conflicted state it has maintained for decades. Before the year has turned, the situation will be just as it has always been, with White rising to take Warden's place in an even more self-centered and cold hearted manner than the former monarch ever possessed.

AFTERMATH

Each of the separate scenarios in “The Vow” has direct results included in its description. However, other effects are possible, especially if a Storyteller is using **The Rose-Bride’s Plight** as part of an on-going chronicle.

Aurora’s Motley: Whether Aurora flees or commits suicide, her motley will be shaken to the core by her loss. This may provide opportunities for one or more of the characters to join the motley (especially if they’ve established positive rapport with the group during this adventure.)

Tai: Assuming Tai either was not used by Warden or escaped, she may well reappear in later stories. She is an incredibly effective and often underestimated assassin for Winter Court and might appear later to take revenge, especially if the characters are responsible for Warden’s death or misfortune.

The Emerald Crown: If Aurora marries Todd White and then commits suicide, her death will leave the Spring Court without a monarch. Whether one of the characters steps up to try to claim the throne or the characters get pulled into the freehold’s attempts to determine who should rule in her stead, this situation may well provide a jumping off point for additional political manipulation-based storylines.

The Happy Couple: If the characters befriended Micah and Aurora and allowed or aided them in escaping, they may serve as friends or allies in the future. Alternately, if Aurora was convinced to return and later committed suicide, Micah may well be a long-term and dedicated adversary.

The Viscountess: The Viscountess may well make an appearance at the close of this story, noting publicly to those assembled that while Warden may have kept true to his pledge, he has truly done her a favor in virtually assuring that the others (the newly wedded couple, freehold members thrown into a civil war or those otherwise put into conflict by his actions and choices) will eventually break theirs.

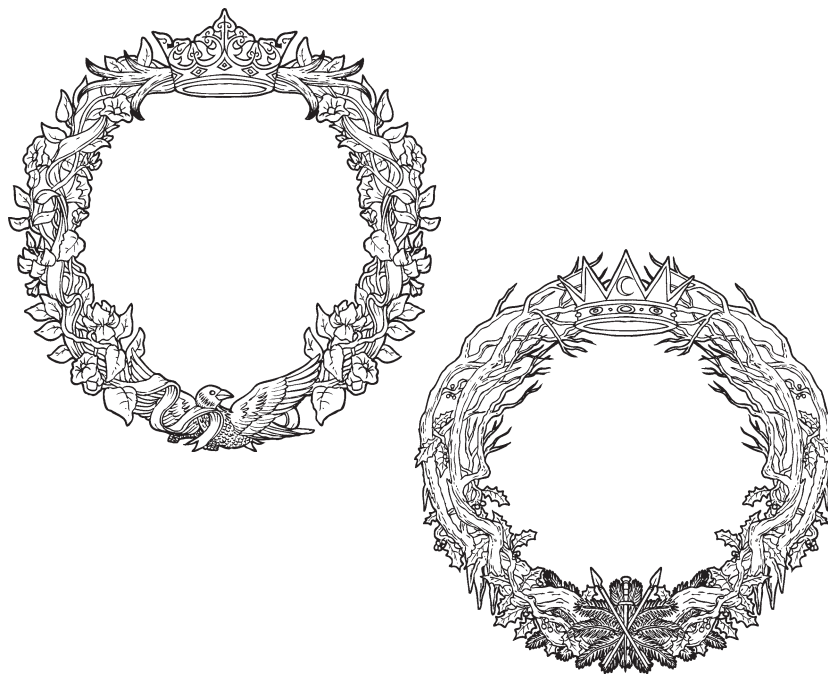
EXPERIENCE

Depending on how deeply characters investigate the available information and how many of the scenarios they encounter, **The Rose-Bride’s Plight** should take between one and three sessions to complete. In addition to the experience given out after each session, achieving certain goals or checkpoints specific to this adventure kit may earn players additional experience points for their characters.

+1 Uncover Aurora’s “death.” Discovering that Aurora’s death was actually a hoax is worth an extra experience point at the end of the story.

+1 Obtain or Learn about myrsina. Uncovering knowledge about a rare goblin fruit is worthy of an additional experience point.

+1 Avoid civil war. If characters are able to help guide the freehold into a solution which does not ultimately involve Warden refusing to turn over the crown to Spring, they could be granted an additional experience point.



SCENE: NIGHT MAGIC (PROLOGUE)

29

MENTAL •

PHYSICAL —

SOCIAL • •

HINDRANCES

Ill-dressed for the event (dirty, cheap or torn clothing -1)
Strangers to the freehold (-1)

HELP

Striking Looks (+1 for 2 dots in the Merit, +2 for 4),
Hold rank or position within the freehold (+1)

OTHER

STs Introduce Setting and Atmosphere.

PCs Learn about Freehold and Area History.

SCENE: A GRAVE ANNOUNCEMENT

32

MENTAL •

PHYSICAL —

SOCIAL •

HINDRANCES

None — This is a hub point for other scenes.

HELP

None — This is a hub point for other scenes.

OTHER

STs Provide first conflict/mystery.

PCs Decide whether to investigate Aurora's death and how to go about it.

SCENE: FALLEN ROSE

34

MENTAL • • •

PHYSICAL —

SOCIAL • •

HINDRANCES

Searching the Room: The motley is hostile to the character and intentionally hinders his investigation (-3)

Hack the Tech: The motley is intentionally working against the character (-2), character is inexperienced with modern technology (-3)

HELP

Search the Room: The motley aids the character in his search (+3), the character (or a helper) is a young woman with a private bedroom (+1), additional characters aid in the search (+1 per helper)

Hack the Tech: The motley is willing to cooperate with helping come up with potential passwords (+4)

OTHER

STs Provide additional clues to the mystery of Aurora's "death."

PCs Investigate Aurora's room and find new information.

SCENE: EYE OF THE HURRICANE

38

MENTAL • • •

PHYSICAL —

SOCIAL • •

HINDRANCES

Character uses emotional, rather than logical verbal acuity in his attempts (-2)
Character attempts to bully/intimidate Aeolian (-2)

HELP

Character has already gleaned lower level of similar information thread (+1 for tier one, +2 for tier two)
Character has a pledge with Aeolian (+2)
Character has professed loyalty/similar goals/done favor for Aeolian (+1 to +4)
Specialization in Debate or Fast-Talking (+1)
Character has already gleaned all information in the Tiers below (+3)

OTHER

STs Provide opportunity for players to see how dangerous pledges can be when used against the unwilling.

PCs Negotiate with Aeolian for information.

SCENE: A COLD RECEPTION

41

MENTAL • PHYSICAL — SOCIAL • • •

HINDRANCES

None — Warden is implacable unless his criteria are met.

HELP

None — Warden is implacable unless his criteria are met.

OTHER

STs Demonstrating the difficulty in dealing with (or being) a Lost who is trapped between pledge bans.

PCs Learn more about Warden's position in the situation and attempt to negotiate with him.

SCENE: GOING SOMEWHERE?

43

MENTAL • • PHYSICAL • • • SOCIAL •

HINDRANCES

Interrogate
Parsimon: Parsimon has exited the building (−1); (friendly attempts) Parsimon has exited the building (−1), the characters have had negative interaction with Parsimon in the past (−1 to −3)
Catching Parsimon: Parsimon has exited the building (−1), character is heavily armored (−1 to −2)

HELP

Interrogate Parsimon: The character claims to work for one of the monarchs (+1); (hostile attempts) the character is obviously armed (+1), the character is wielding an unsheathed weapon (+2), the character is greater than Size 5 (+1); (friendly attempts) the character is female (+1), the character is plant-like in nature (Flowering, Woodwalker, Woodblood, etc.) (+1)
Catching Parsimon: Specialization in running (+1), character has gone out of his way to get between Parsimon and bottom of stairs/escape route (+2)

OTHER

STs Provide additional information about Aurora's "death."

PCs Glean information from Parsimon.

SCENE: GOOD KNIGHT

46

MENTAL • PHYSICAL • • • SOCIAL • •

HINDRANCES

Character attempts to bully Micah (−1)
Character insults Micah's honor (−4)
Character insults Aurora (−4)
Complementing Todd White (−1)
Mentioning Aurora's upcoming wedding in a positive light (−2)

HELP

Character appeals to Micah's sense of honor (+1 to +4)
Character enlists aid on Aurora's behalf (+2)
Character appears to know or suspect that Aurora is alive (+1)
Insulting Todd White or Maxwell Warden (+1 to +2)

OTHER

Characters may also choose to fight Micah.

STs Opportunity for combat. Representing noble potential among the Lost.

PCs Learn more about what happened to Aurora through interacting with Micah.

SCENE: LOVE UNVEILED

48

MENTAL • • PHYSICAL • • • SOCIAL • • •

HINDRANCES

Suggestion involves Aurora marrying Todd White (−4)
Character shows hostility towards or threatens Aurora (−4),
Both are currently unconvinced (−2)

HELP

Characters pledge to protect Aurora (+2)
Characters pledge not to make Aurora marry Todd White (+2),
Suggestions involve Aurora and Micah marrying (+4)
Character has defeated Micah in honorable combat (+2)
Plan includes revenge on Aeolian (+1)
One half of the couple has been convinced (+2)
Micah or Aurora has been tricked into a pledge to return (+4)

OTHER

STs Players are faced with the direct issue of whether to sacrifice the couple's love for the sake of duty or peace in the freehold.

PCs Convince Aurora and Micah to return, or come up with another plan to keep the freehold safe.

SCENE: **DISAPPEARED!**

50

MENTAL . . .

PHYSICAL —

SOCIAL —

HINDRANCES

The character did not see the room earlier (-2)

HELP

The character is a young woman (+1)
Additional characters aid in the search (+1 per helper, +2 if the helper is a young female)

OTHER

STs Provide additional clues about the situation surrounding Aurora's disappearance.

PCs Learn more about Aurora's disappearance.

SCENE: **THE GARDEN**

52

MENTAL •

PHYSICAL . . .

SOCIAL . .

HINDRANCES

Looking for a particular goblin fruit (-2 to -4 depending on rarity)

Parsimon is present but the character is seeking without his permission (-3)

Character is low Wyrd (-1 if under 3 Wyrd)

Character is low Clarity (apply negative as to Perception rolls per p. 93, **Changeling: The Lost**)

HELP

Parsimon is distracted (if sneaking) (+2)

Parsimon is aiding the character (+4)

Skill Specialty in goblin fruit/oddments (+1)

Has physically seen or held the particular item being sought before (+1)

Character is high Wyrd (+1 for every dot above 5)

Character is high Clarity (per Keen Senses bonus, p. 92, **Changeling: The Lost**)

OTHER

STs Provide confirmation about nature of myrsina.

PCs Learn more information from Parsimon. Potential exists for gaining goblin fruit or oddments.

SCENE: **THE VOW**

55

MENTAL

PHYSICAL

SOCIAL

HINDRANCES

None — Each of the potential end scenarios is focused on roleplay rather than mechanics.

HELP

None — Each of the potential end scenarios is focused on roleplay rather than mechanics.

OTHER

STs Complete adventure kit, leaving players with strong sense of consequences based on their choices.

PCs Find solution to Warden's issues in most positive way possible.

SCENE:

MENTAL

PHYSICAL

SOCIAL

HINDRANCES

HELP

OTHER

STs

PCs

SEEMING: Wizenod

KITH: Woodblood

COURT: Autumn

NAME: Parsimon

CONCEPT: Hermit Father

VIRTUE: Charity

VICE: Wrath

Intelligence:	●●●●○	Strength:	●●●●○	Presence:	●○○○○
Wits:	●●○○○	Dexterity:	●●●○○	Manipulation:	●●○○○
Resolve:	●●○○○	Stamina:	●●●○○	Composure:	●●●○○

SKILLS

Academics	●●●○○
Crafts (Farmin ^g)	●●●○○
Investigation	●●●○○
Medicine	●●●○○
Occult (Goblin Fruits)	●●●○○
Politics	●○○○○
Science	●○○○○
Athletics	●○○○○
Brawl	●●○○○
Larceny	●●○○○
Stealth (Forest Walkin ^g)	●●●○○
Survival (Hed ^g e)	●●○○○
Weaponry (Sickle)	●●●○○
Empathy	●●●○○
Intimidation	●●○○○
Persuasion	●○○○○
Subterfuge	●●●○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

MERITS

Brownie's Boon*	●○○○○
Court Goodwill (Spring)	●●●●●
Eidetic Memory	●●○○○
Harvest (Hed ^g e Bounty)	●●○○○
Hollow: Size	●●●○○
Amenities	●●○○○
Wards	●●●○○
Mantle (Autumn)	●●●○○

CONTRACTS

Dream—Pathfinder	●○○○○
Artifice—Brief Glamour	●○○○○
of Repair	
Darkness—Creeping Dread	●○○○○
Night's Subtle Distractions	●●○○○
Eternal Spring—Gift of	●○○○○
Warm Breath	
New Lover's Kiss	●●○○○
Warmth of the Blood	●●●○○
Yesterday's Birth	●●●○○
Fleeting Autumn—	●○○○○
Witches' Intuition	
Eternal Autumn—Last	●○○○○
Breath Isaac	
Fleeting Winter—The	●○○○○
Dragon Knows	

HEALTH

●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□
○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

WILLPOWER

●●●●●●○○
□□□□□□□□

GLAMOUR

□□□□□□□□
□□□□□□□□
Glamour per turn <u>4</u>

WYRD

●●●●○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Brawl	0(B)	5
Sickle	2(L)	9

Clarity 5

Size 5

Speed 11

Defense 2

Initiative Mod 7

Armor _____

PLEDGES/NOTES

* Brownie's Boon Merit allows Parsimon to complete any mundane task in half the normal time so long as he is alone. Additionally, he may halve the time necessary again by spending a point of Glamour, up to three points, which cuts the time required down to 1/16th the normal time.

Seeming Blessing: Can spend one point of Glamour to gain the 9-again rule on all dice pools involving Dexterity for the rest of the scene. When dodging, can spend one point of Glamour to add Wyrd dots to Dodge total, for the rest of the scene.

Seeming Curse: Doesn't benefit from the 10-again on dice pools involving Presence. Suffers a -2 dice untrained penalty for Social Skills, rather than -1.

Kith Blessing: 8-again on Survival rolls. Can survive by eating any plant, even poisonous ones.

Note: Parsimon carries up to 10 goblin fruit with him at any given time. These include items carried on his person and those stored in his Hollow available for barter. Recommended goblin fruits include the *myrsina* on p. 7, as well as Promise Leaves (*Changeling: The Lost* p. 224) and *hera pears* (only the preserved fruit, Parsimon does not possess a hera pear tree in his Hollow – *Rites of Spring*, p. 131).



PARSIMON
HERMIT FATHER

Character Relationships

AEOLIAN, OATH-WIELDING QUEEN

I loved her once, or thought I did. Thought she loved me too. I've never been more wrong, on either account.

EVERYONE ELSE

Damned nuisances. Why won't they just leave me to my work?

SEEMING: None (True Fae)

KITH: None

COURT: None

NAME: Viscountess of Broken Vows

CONCEPT: Karmic Servant of the Wyrd

VIRTUE: Prudence

VICE: Sloth

Intelligence:	●●●●○	Strength:	●●○○○	Presence:	●●●●●●
Wits:	●●●●●	Dexterity:	●●●●●	Manipulation:	●●●●●
Resolve:	●●●●○	Stamina:	●●●●○	Composure:	●●●●●

SKILLS

Crafts (Pandora's Gift) ●●●○○

Investigation ●●○○○

Occult (Pledges) ●●●●●

Athletics ●●○○○

Stealth ●●●○○

Survival (Hedge) ●●●○○

Empathy (Body Language) ●●●○○

Expression ●●●●●●

Intimidation ●●●●●

Persuasion ●●●●●

Subterfuge (Half-Truths) ●●●●●

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MERITS

Fast Reflexes ●●●○○

Fleet of Foot ●●●○○

Striking Looks ●●●○○

CONTRACTS

Hearth—Fickle Fate ●○○○○

Darkness—Creeping Dread ●○○○○

Night's Subtle Distractions ●○○○○

Vain Glory—Mask of ●○○○○

Superiority

Songs of Distant Arcadia ●○○○○

Splendor of the Envoy's ●●●○○

Protection

Mantle of Terrible Beauty ●●●○○

Words of Memories ●●●●●

Never Lived

Fleeting Spring— ●○○○○

Cupid's Eye

Growth of Ivy ●●○○○

Wyrd-faced Stranger ●●●○○

Pandora's Gift ●●●○○

Waking the Inner Faerie ●●●●●

Eternal Spring—Gift of ●○○○○

Warm Breath

Fleeting Summer— ●○○○○

Baleful Sense

Goblin's Malignance ●●○○○

Friendless Tongue ●●●○○

HEALTH

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GLAMOUR

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Glamour per turn 8

WYRD

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PLEDGES/NOTES



VISCOUNTESS OF BROKEN VOWS KARMIC SERVANT OF THE WYRD

Special Abilities

Sense Sundered Oaths: Broken promises of all sorts speak to the Viscountess. Not only can she sense automatically if others have broken any pledges during their lifetimes, but she can tell if they have violated any promises of any sort within the last month, who the promise was made to, as well as how and when it was broken. With a successful Wits + Wyrd roll, she can also sense any existing pledges her target bears. This roll is a contested action versus the target's Resolve + Composure.

Two Birds with One Stone: Laziness inspires efficiency. The Viscountess can wield two Instant action Contracts in the same turn. This ability only works with Contracts, not other Instant actions. It can be used to activate two different Instant action Contracts such as Baleful Sense and Friendless Tongue in a single turn. It can also be used to activate the same Instant action Contract twice against the same or different targets. It cannot be used to lessen the amount of time required by Extended action Contracts.

Slip Away: The Viscountess has the ability to make herself intangible. She cannot use any other offensive or defensive abilities or powers while intangible, but neither can she be affected by offensive or defensive actions of others. This can be used for spying (she remains wholly visible while intangible, but she can hide within walls or solid objects large enough to mask her presence) or as a means of escape. For Storytellers with access to **Winter Masques**, it would be very appropriate for the Viscountess to also have access to all five clauses of the **Contracts of Separation** (pp. 40-42), with Slip Away being a simplified version of Phantom Glory.

Vice Over Virtue: Like all Keepers, the Viscountess of Broken Vows regains Willpower contrary to the ways of mortals and changelings. She regains one Willpower point from indulging her Virtue, but refreshes her whole pool when satiating her Vice.

I'd rather cut off my sword-hand than allow him to touch Aurora, let alone marry her.



AEOLIAN OATH-WIELDING QUEEN

Character Relationships

AURORA, BLUSHING BRIDE

A tractable girl who knows her place.

FLIT, NOSEY INFORMATION BROKER

Useful at times, but too unpredictable to be truly counted upon.

PARSIMON, HERMIT FATHER

Too valuable a resource to allow to slip away.

JEREMIAH SOMN, MADAME NIGHT AND SQUICK

As long as they remain devoted to Aurora, they are known quantities and assets to the freehold.

MAXWELL WARDEN, A MOST PROPER KING

He lets his pride get in the way of what is best for the freehold.



SEEMING: Elemental

KITH: Airtouched

COURT: Spring

🌿 Pledge Trap (no 10-again, with situational modifiers per Unwitting Pledges pp. 5-7)



— *Aeolian levels a hard blue stare upon her target, speaking with the speed and dexterity of a spring breeze. The conversation winds around the two of them almost visibly, and the person she's speaking with slowly begins to nod his head in agreement with her words. No one in the freehold is as renowned for weaving airtight pledges as Queen Aeolian. Perhaps her own vaporous nature allows her to see even the smallest crack or potential loophole in a promise's wording, or perhaps she simply lacks the human emotions that would grant her vows a modicum of flexibility. Regardless, should this cunning Pledgesmith attempt to manipulate an unwitting individual into a pledge, her target will be hard pressed to escape unfettered.*

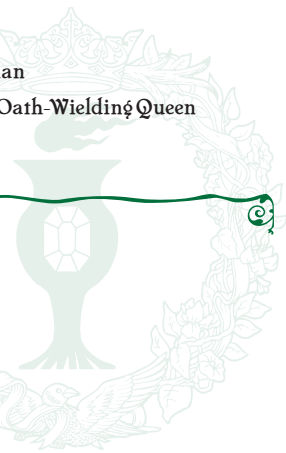
NAME: Aeolian

CONCEPT: Oath-Wielding Queen

VIRTUE:

VICE:

NOTES:



SEEMING: Fairest

KITH: Flowering

COURT: Spring

 Sweet Talking ●●●●●●○○○



9—again, augmentable with Glamour up to 3 per round, max pool of 12) — *She lowers her gaze to the floor at her target's feet as if too shy to meet his eyes. A few soft words pass across her crimson lips, and then she looks up at him through her thick fringe of lashes. She holds his gaze for just a moment too long before tilting her head to the side and smiling sweetly. Those nearby can hear a single honeyed word...* "Please?" *He almost hurts himself rushing to meet her request. Aurora's sweet demeanor, beauty and charm make it difficult for others to tell her no. She will, in any situation, attempt to use guile and sheer force of personality to convince others to do as she sees fit, including lying for her, protecting her from harm and supporting her plans, no matter how morally ambiguous they may seem to be. On the other hand, she really does come across as a nice person (albeit in a difficult situation), which only bolsters the effectiveness of her verbal manipulations.*

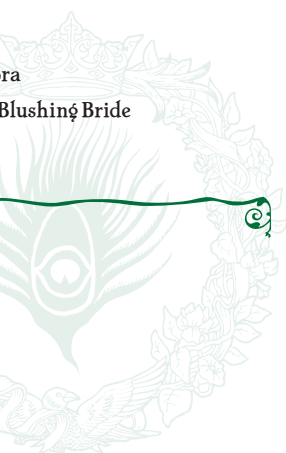
NAME: Aurora

CONCEPT: Blushing Bride

VIRTUE:

VICE:

NOTES:





AURORA
BLUSHING BRIDE



Character Relationships

AEOLIAN, OATH-WIELDING QUEEN

She's not as smart as she thinks she is.

BALOR, JEALOUS BULLY

It's not my fault he's got a thing for me. It's not like I ever led him on.

JEREMIAH SOMN, VOYEURISTIC DREAM-DOCTOR

He's such a dear, sweet boy. He really needs a girlfriend, though.

MADAME NICHT, DISDAINFUL SEER

She scares me sometimes, but I'd never let her know that.

MICAH THE TALL, NOBLE KNIGHT

What girl could resist a man who believes the sun and moon rise and set in your eyes?

SQUICK, BOCEYMAN

There's nothing frightening about Squick — as long as he's on your side.

TODD WHITE, ICE-HEARTED GROOM-TO-BE

I think this is all a game to him. He courts me like I'm a chess piece to be captured, or a bird he's stalking but doesn't really want to eat.



JEREMIAH SOMN
VOYEURISTIC DREAM-DOCTOR



Character Relationships

AEOLIAN, OATH-WIELDING QUEEN

I believe she genuinely cares for the freehold and the Court. It must be hard to be alone up there on the throne.

AURORA, BLUSHING BRIDE

She's a sweet girl, and deserves far better than most of the lowlifes that have been courting her.

MADAME NICHT, DISDAINFUL SEER

I've never let her read my future. I trust that she'd see and tell the truth — I'm just not sure I'm ready to hear it.

PARSIMON, HERMIT FATHER

I don't envy the man. I think he still pines for the queen he can never truly be with.

SEEMING: Fairest

KITH: Bright One

COURT: Spring

Dream Riding (vs. dreamer's Wits + Resolve) — *With a self-contented smile, the starry-skinned doctor settles down beside the sleeping form, reaching out to stroke her cheek with one hand as his eyes close. Within moments, his body relaxes visibly and his breathing matches that of his sleeping patient as their dreams merge.* After entering another individual's dream, either through the Plunge or a dreaming-tasked pledge, Jeremy can attempt to analyze the dream, learning interesting details about the dreamer's nature, condition or the current issues plaguing her subconscious. He can also rifle through her subconscious, given time, and pick out particularly interesting tidbits of current or former dreams to view.

NAME: Jeremiah Somn

CONCEPT: Voyeuristic Dream-Doctor

VIRTUE:

VICE:

NOTES:

The Plunge — As a member of the Oneirophys-ics, Jeremiah may slip into a deep dream state at will, just by spending a point of Glamour. This Plunge allows him, while sleeping, to enter into the dreams of any individual he is making skin-to-skin contact with, as long as his target is also sleeping.



BALOR
JEALOUS BULLY

Character Relationships

AEOLIAN, OATH-WIELDING QUEEN

No one who's watched her for five minutes could miss how she uses people.

AURORA, BLUSHING BRIDE

She's nothing but a manipulative little tease.

JEREMIAH SOMN, VOYEURISTIC DREAM-DOCTOR

He healed me once through my dreams. Smirked at me for weeks afterwards. Someone needs to teach him to respect other people's privacy.

MICAH THE TALL, NOBLE KNIGHT

Self-righteous ass.

TAI, STEALTHY KILLER

Damn effective, when the frost-biters let her off her leash long enough to be.

SEEMING: Ogrë

KITH: Cyclopean

COURT: Summer

Ferret Out Info (8-again) — *He leans in close, speaking in a surly whisper to the man in front of him. His face wrinkles in a grimace as he breathes deeply of the now-cringing man's scent. "Y'er lyin', ya slimy bastard. Ya reek of it. Now where's it at?"* Although far from socially graceful, Balor's got a knack for gathering information. He's exceedingly good at "sniffing" out information, regardless of whether others intend to share it or not. Among other things, he can quite often tell when others are lying, just from the scent of fear and deception surrounding them.

NAME: Balor

CONCEPT: Jealous Bully

VIRTUE:

VICE:

NOTES:



MADAME NIGHT
DISDAINFUL SEER

Character Relationships

AEOLIAN, OATH-WIELDING QUEEN

I've seen dark things in her future, but she listens to no one but herself.

AURORA, BLUSHING BRIDE

Like the rest of us, she does the best she can with the cards she was dealt.

SQUICK, BOCEYMAN

He walked through Hell and out the other side with me. I'd do anything but go back there for him.

MAXWELL WARDEN, A MOST PROPER KING

The Devil comes up whenever I read his future. I do not envy him the choices he must face.



SEEMING: Wizenod

KITH: Oracle

COURT: Autumn

NAME: Madame Night

CONCEPT: Disdainful Seer

VIRTUE:

VICE:

Reading The Portents ●●●●●●●●●●

— A thoughtful look crosses her face and her long, spidery fingers scramble for the silk pouch at her waist. The cards are in her hands and shuffling before he can take a backwards step, and as he lifts his hands to protest, she plucks one from the deck and holds it out towards him. "What's wrong, sugah?" she purrs in a slow, southern drawl. "You afraid of seeing what will come of your choices?" Some people shy from the mysteries of the future. Madame Night has no respect for those who are not willing to face what lies ahead with open eyes and squared shoulders. By consulting her tarot deck, Madame Night can gain insight into the most significant upcoming event which will affect her target in the near future. She regularly uses this ability to keep an eye out for dangers to newly returned Lost or the children in her neighborhood, but can also be convinced, with the proper payment, to focus her ability on the future of others.

NOTES:

SEEMING: Darkling

KITH: Mirrorskin

COURT: Autumn

NAME: Squick

CONCEPT: Boogeyman

VIRTUE:

VICE:

Instill Fear ●●●●●●●●●●

(vs. target's Comp) — He grinned at her with the unceasing, gape-lipped smile of a scarecrow. The expression never reached his eyes, however, which glittered like oily pools. He doesn't say a word, just looks at her, and even across the room, you could see the goosebumps start to raise on her forearms. Squick's role in life is to play the boogie-man for adults who need a reminder that there are things out there bigger and badder than they are. Child molesters, abusive parents, pedophiles and others who take advantage of the young and vulnerable may well find themselves visited by a grinning demonic scarecrow intent on scaring them to within an inch of their life. While he rarely uses this ability on anyone except those who mistreat children, it's always a possibility.

NOTES:



SQUICK
BOCEYMAN



Character Relationships

AURORA, BLUSHING BRIDE

She plays games, but she's a good person at heart.

BALOR, JEALOUS BULLY

Yeah, he's a jerk. But when you need to get to the root of an issue, there's no one better.

TAI, STEALTHY KILLER

The only thing faster than the speed of light is the speed of darkness. Don't blink or you'll miss her, then it will be too late.

TODD WHITE, ICE-HEARTED GROOM-TO-BE

If he hurts Aurora, he'll regret it for as long as he lives.



TAI
STEALTHY KILLER



Character Relationships

AEOLIAN, OATH-WIELDING QUEEN

Who knew so much ice could thrive in Spring?

PARSIMON, HERMIT FATHER

He's forgotten more about poisons than most Lost will ever know. Makes ya wonder why Aeolian keeps him so close, doesn't it?

MAXWELL WARDEN, A MOST PROPER KING

He knows a tool used to often loses its edge.

SEEMINC: Beast

KITH: Venombite

COURT: Winter

Back Stab

●●●●●●●●●●

(initiative 18) — *Your eyes slip across her, like there's nothing there to hold your attention. She's standing against the back wall, well out of the flow of traffic. Then, someone makes the wrong move and she's not there any more. You look, and she's 10 feet away, putting away a slick-looking dagger like she's already shanked someone.* Tai is a one-trick pony, but what this Beast does, she does exceedingly well. Seeming to appear from nowhere (Light-shy — Smoke 5), she strikes with inhuman speed (Oddbody — Mirror 4, Buglewort, Fast Reflexes 2) and then disappears again just as quickly until her Court has need of her once more.

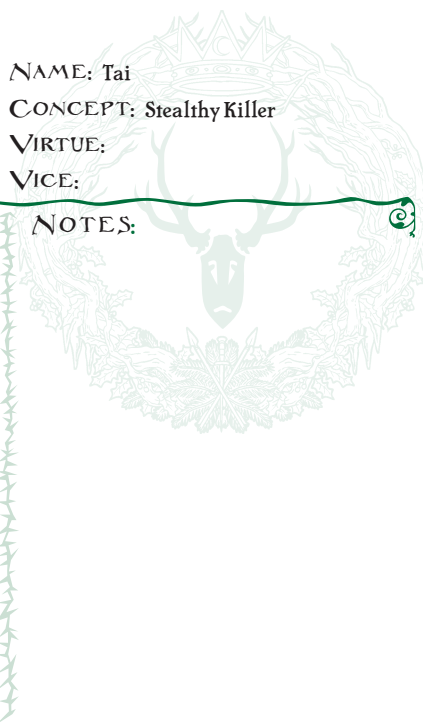
NAME: Tai

CONCEPT: Stealthy Killer

VIRTUE:

VICE:

NOTES:



SEEMINC: Wizenod

KITH: Chatelaine

COURT: Winter

Well-Chosen Words

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(11 dice when spending a point of Glamour, 9-again) — *Sliding his spectacles slightly lower on his nose, the monarch looked over the top of them at the offending party. "I can see your point. But the end simply does not justify the means. I will look into this matter, and I assure you justice will be done. But as for your actions, I'm certain you see that amends must be made." The onlookers were amazed as the criminal willing agreed to support the family of the man he'd murdered for the next year as a penance for his actions.* If there is one thing Maxwell Warden does well, it is dealing with controversial topics while avoiding offending others. He may not necessarily convince those around him to believe as he does, but he rarely fails to communicate the logic of his arguments in a way that leaves at least the possibility of swaying others to his way of thinking.

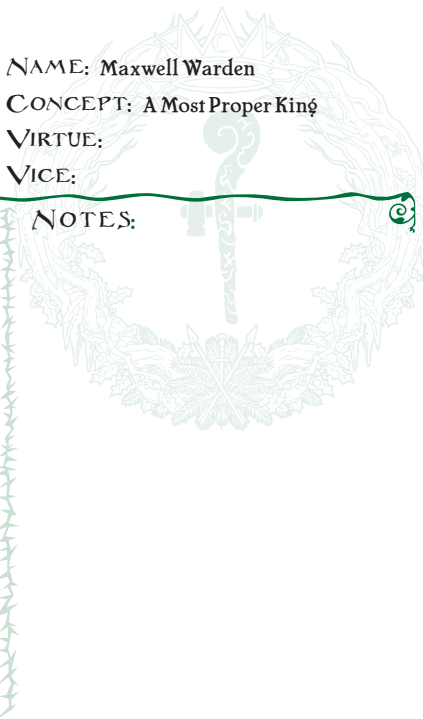
NAME: Maxwell Warden

CONCEPT: A Most Proper King

VIRTUE:

VICE:

NOTES:



MAXWELL WARDEN
A MOST PROPER KING

Character Relationships

AEOLIAN, OATH-WIELDING QUEEN

She does not tell me how to run Winter, nor I her Court. But I cannot, will not trust her with our freehold's future. Spring has proven far too fickle in the past.

MICAH THE TALL, NOBLE KNIGHT

A supreme example of Summer's inability to understand the word "subtle."

TAI, STEALTHY KILLER

You have nothing to fear from the girl. She's harmless, I assure you.

TODD WHITE, ICE-HEARTED GROOM-TO-BE

The hope of the freehold rests on his shoulders. I cannot allow myself to doubt he can stand the weight.





TODD WINTER
ICE-HEARTED GROOM-TO-BE

Character Relationships

AURORA, BLUSHING BRIDE

The Princess *and* a sure path to the throne? Yeah, I'd hit that.

BALOR, JEALOUS BULLY

He's just jealous. All talk, no action, you know what I mean?

MADAME NIGHT, DISDAINFUL SEER

Kinda freaky, but, you know... in that zombie-princess kind of way.

MICAH THE TALL, NOBLE KNIGHT

Why is that Ogre always hanging around Aurora?



SEEMING: Beast

KITH: Hunterheart

COURT: Winter

Cool and Collected ●●●●●●●●●●

— He looks over the head of the angry Wizedon who is poking a finger in Todd's chest to make her point. "You aren't even listening to me! I told you, I know you did it, and I'm going to find a way to prove it!" The silver-haired fox-man just smiles, looking down at her with a nonchalant shrug. "Go ahead and try. You're wasting your time and mine. Now if you'll excuse me?" Some folks just don't care. Todd is one of them. He's so casual about virtually everything that it's hard for people to imagine that he would lie, and it's almost impossible to intimidate or bully him, or to appeal to his better nature (assuming he has one).

NAME: Todd White

CONCEPT: Ice-Hearted Groom-to-Be

VIRTUE:

VICE:

NOTES:

SEEMING: Beast

KITH: Windwalker

COURT: None

Information Broker ●●●●●●●●●●

— Her wings practically vibrate as she fidgets from one foot to the next. "Yeah, I know a little something about them. What's it worth to you?" Her eyes sparkle as her customer reaches for his wallet. If there's dirt on someone, Flit probably knows it, and is willing to trade it for something "valuable." Her definition of valuable varies, though, and some consider her a walking goblin market when it comes to information and the prices she asks in return. This petite airhead may have the attention span of a gnat, but she never forgets a juicy tidbit of information, and she rarely gets the short end of a bargain.

NAME: Flit

CONCEPT: Nosey Information Broker

VIRTUE:

VICE:

NOTES:



FLIT
NOSEY INFORMATION BROKER

Character Relationships

AEOLIAN, OATH-WIELDING QUEEN

She pays me a lot to keep her secrets. You going to pay me more to talk?

JEREMIAH SOMN, VOYEURISTIC DREAM-DOCTOR

He knows things about just about everyone in the freehold. And he's not that hard to trick into spilling his guts.

MICAH THE TALL, NOBLE KNIGHT

Like any other knight, he's got a weak spot in his armor. You wanna know where? Sure, but it'll cost you.

TAI, STEALTHY KILLER

She hates being watched, and hates being talked about even more. I can tell you some really interesting things about her. But, oh boy, is it going to be expensive.

NAME:

CONCEPT:

SEEMING:

KITH:

COURT:

VIRTUE:

VICE:

Intelligence: ●0000 Strength: ●0000 Presence: ●0000

Wits: ●0000 Dexterity: ●0000 Manipulation: ●0000

Resolve: ●0000 Stamina: ●0000 Composure: ●0000

SKILLS

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HEALTH

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WILLPOWER

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GLAMOUR

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Glamour per turn _____

WYRD

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FLAWS

Clarity _____

Size _____

Speed _____

Defense _____

Initiative Mod _____

Armor _____

PLEDGES/NOTES