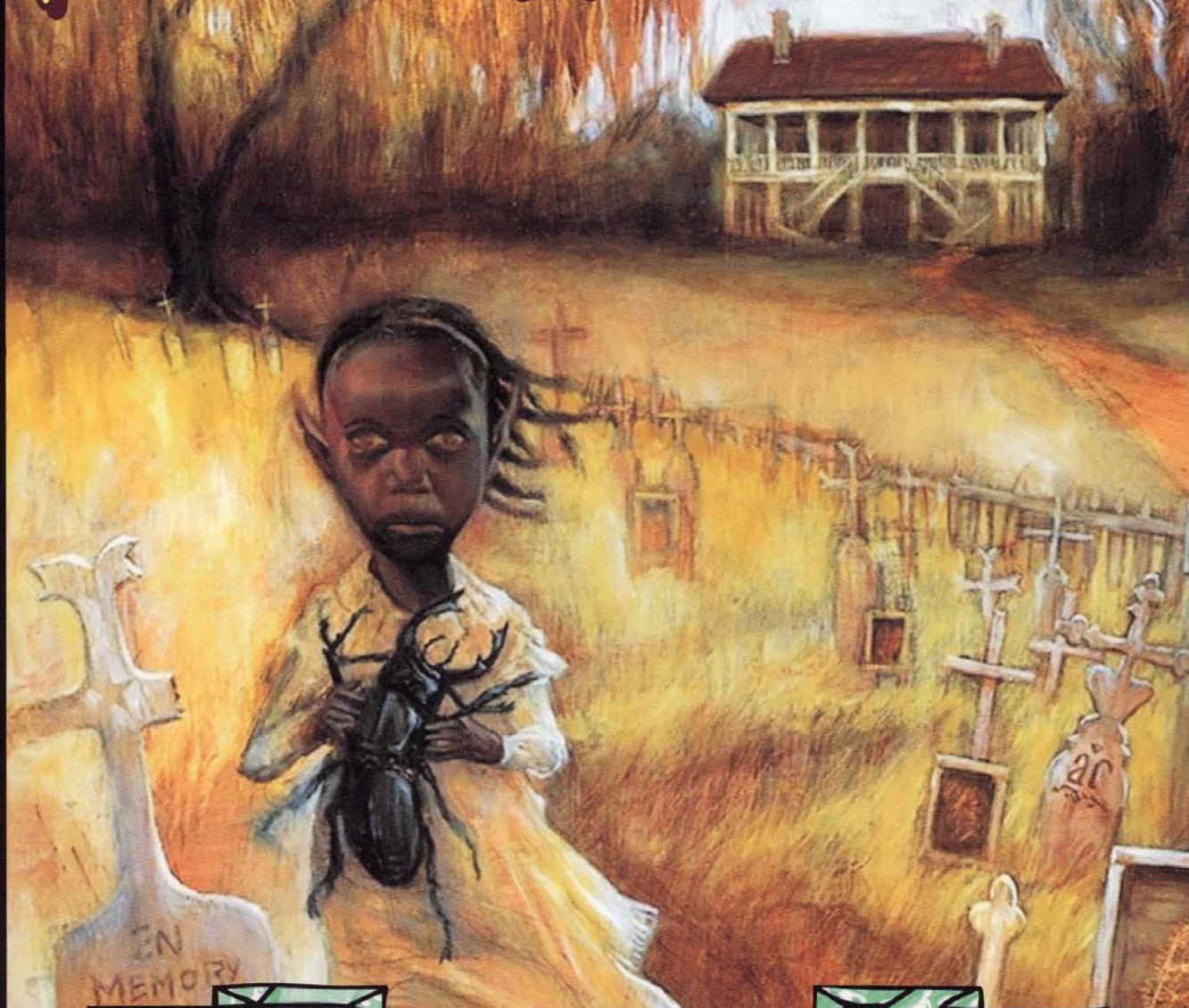


Kingdom of Willow



For Changeling: The Dreaming™

Kingdom of WillowsTM



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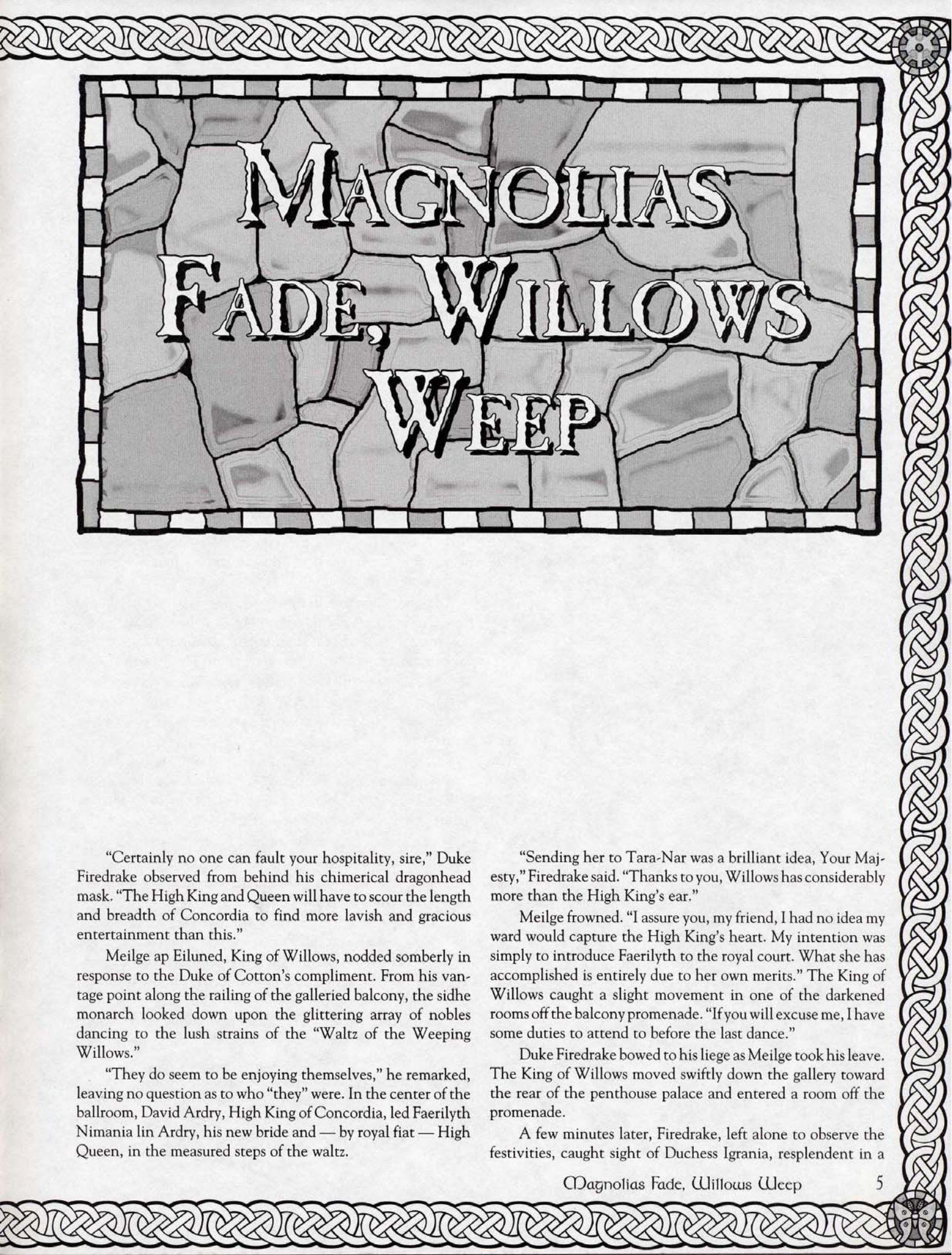
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MAGNOLIAS FADE, WILLOWS WEEP

"Certainly no one can fault your hospitality, sire," Duke Firedrake observed from behind his chimerical dragonhead mask. "The High King and Queen will have to scour the length and breadth of Concordia to find more lavish and gracious entertainment than this."

Meilge ap Eiluned, King of Willows, nodded somberly in response to the Duke of Cotton's compliment. From his vantage point along the railing of the galleried balcony, the sidhe monarch looked down upon the glittering array of nobles dancing to the lush strains of the "Waltz of the Weeping Willows."

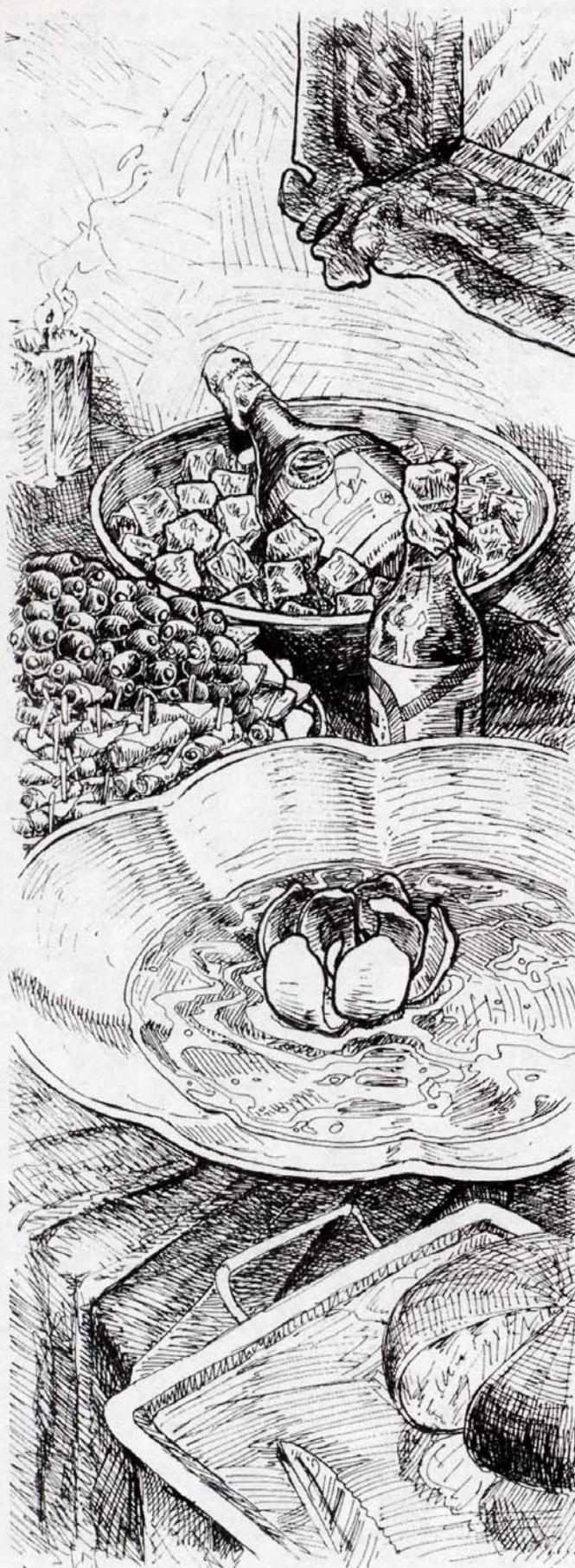
"They do seem to be enjoying themselves," he remarked, leaving no question as to who "they" were. In the center of the ballroom, David Ardry, High King of Concordia, led Faerilyth Nimanian lin Ardry, his new bride and — by royal fiat — High Queen, in the measured steps of the waltz.

"Sending her to Tara-Nar was a brilliant idea, Your Majesty," Firedrake said. "Thanks to you, Willows has considerably more than the High King's ear."

Meilge frowned. "I assure you, my friend, I had no idea my ward would capture the High King's heart. My intention was simply to introduce Faerilyth to the royal court. What she has accomplished is entirely due to her own merits." The King of Willows caught a slight movement in one of the darkened rooms off the balcony promenade. "If you will excuse me, I have some duties to attend to before the last dance."

Duke Firedrake bowed to his liege as Meilge took his leave. The King of Willows moved swiftly down the gallery toward the rear of the penthouse palace and entered a room off the promenade.

A few minutes later, Firedrake, left alone to observe the festivities, caught sight of Duchess Igrania, resplendent in a



pale pink gown and pearl-beaded mask. The Duke of Cotton descended the broad marble staircase to join her on the dance floor.

Meilge did not bother to turn on the light but continued through the dark room until he came to a pair of glass double doors. Opening them, he stepped onto a small balcony that overlooked a terraced garden on the floor below. Even further beneath him, the city of Atlanta sprawled in its nighttime glory, its buildingtops a-twinkle with lights. On the horizon, a moving line of lights lit the darkness like thousands of fireflies traveling toward some unseen destiny.

A warm breeze ruffled the hair above Meilge's mask, carrying with it the overpowering scent of magnolias from the terrace. The Eiluned king inhaled deeply, savoring the honeyed sweetness of the perfumed air.

"Is everything ready?" he said softly into the darkness.

"All is as it should be," a barely audible voice answered. Meilge felt rather than saw a flicker of movement. Then something pressed against his palm. Meilge closed his hand on a small glass vial and smiled to himself. His guests were waiting.

"Are you happy to be back home?" David Ardry asked his wife as they circled the dance floor, blending their movements with those of the other dancers.

High Queen Faerilyth smiled and rested her head for a moment on her husband's shoulder. "My home is with you, my dearest lord," she said contentedly. "But, yes, I am happy to be here again, if only for a few short days."

"I cannot thank King Meilge enough for sending you to my court," David said. "Although, I felt certain it was my cousin who had ensnared your heart even as you captured mine."

The High Queen laughed softly. "Lleu?" she asked. "He is a sweet and faithful knight," she said. "I have heard him called House Gwydion's perfect knight, in fact. But my heart was yours from the moment I saw you."

The dance ended. David and Faerilyth stepped apart and bowed to each other.

"Let me show you something," she said, lowering her voice to a conspiratorial whisper.

Taking David by the hand, Faerilyth led him from the dance floor to a long table, laden with food and drink, along one side of the ballroom. In the table's center, a magnificent cream-colored magnolia blossom floated placidly in a shallow crystal bowl.

"The scent can fill an entire room in seconds," the young High Queen told her husband. "You always know when the magnolias are in bloom."

David Ardry, his face obscured by his golden falcon's mask, looked at his queen, his eyes alight with good humor. Smiling, he extended a fingertip toward one of the blossom's broad, graceful petals.

"No!" Faerilyth caught David's hand and brought it to her lips. Behind her silver crescent half-mask, the warmth in her eyes belied the caution in her voice. "Don't touch it," she said. "The petals are so fragile that even the slightest contact will make the entire bloom turn brown and wither within a matter of minutes."

"I'll have to remember that," he said. "How do you pick them if they're so easily marred?"

Faerilyth laughed. "Very carefully, my lord," she said. "It's all right to touch the stem. Only the blossoms are so very vulnerable. I discovered that when I was very young, after Uncle Meilge brought me here. He warned me not to touch them, and told me what would happen if I did." The High Queen hesitated.

"Let me finish the story," David said. "You had to see for yourself whether or not he was telling the truth or just teasing you. So you touched one, just the tiniest bit."

The High Queen nodded. "My finger left an ugly brown spot on the petal. Then, as I watched, the stain spread until the whole blossom wilted. I was horrified. It was as though I had killed something or destroyed a rare beauty that could never be replaced."

"You are the rare beauty," David said. The softness in his voice gave meaning to the courtly compliment.

"That she is, Your Majesty," King Meilge interjected himself into the conversation, approaching the royal couple from behind to stand between the High King and Queen. "And your gain is, unfortunately, my loss."

"I hope that you will not lose me entirely, sire," Faerilyth said, standing on tiptoe to place a kiss on her mentor's craggy cheek. "This tour is proof that I do not intend to stay locked away in Tara-Nar."

Meilge stepped back from the couple and bowed, first to High King David and then to Faerilyth. He raised a hand and, at his signal, the musicians fell silent. The couples stopped dancing and gathered in a semicircle a discreet distance from the royal couple and their host.

A young boy wearing the black-and-silver livery of House Eiluned along with Meilge's household badge approached the trio. In his hands, the boy bore a silver tray with three goblets of wine. Other pages circulated among the guests, passing out similar goblets, all bearing the Eiluned crest etched into their crystal surfaces.

"As the King of Willows, I welcome Your Royal Majesties to my freehold of Willow's Heart!" Meilge's cultured voice reverberated throughout the ballroom. A round of applause, muted by gloved hands, answered the Eiluned lord's words.

"Thank you, from both of us, for your courtesy and your hospitality," David responded, acknowledging both his host and the gathering with an outstretched arm.

"In your honor," Meilge continued, "I would propose a toast." The King of Willows waited as the page approached and, bowing deeply, raised the before him. David and Faerilyth each took a goblet. Meilge took the remaining goblet and held it aloft toward his royal guests.





"To the High King and Queen," Meilge announced. "May your reign be prosperous and fruitful. May this night, which begins your Grand Tour of Concordia, in this, your most loyal fiefdom, linger long in your memories!"

David and Faerilyth drank, followed by the guests and, finally, by Meilge himself.

The King of Willows felt the smooth, light liquid dissolve the small tablet he held clenched between his teeth. His lips curled upward in satisfaction, knowing that the pill would counteract the effects of the Glamour-tainted wine he had just served to the High King and Queen.

First David and then Faerilyth offered their own toasts in return, as Meilge's page produced a wine bottle and refilled their goblets. Meilge waved his hand once more, and the band struck up a lively gavotte. Once more, the dance floor filled with couples. David led Faerilyth into their midst. Contented, Meilge watched them join the dancers swirling around the ballroom. By his calculations, the wine would begin to affect the royal couple in just under 15 minutes. Dismissing his page, Meilge made his way across the crowded floor, speaking to various guests along his route. At the far end of the ballroom, Meilge passed under a broad archway and made his way through the palace to his study.

Faerilyth laughed softly to herself as she moved in the circle of David's arms. The last dance of the ball had just been called, and she wanted to end the evening as she had begun it, close to her husband. "This has been a perfect evening," she whispered in his ear. David nodded, pressing his cheek close to hers.

"What did you enjoy most about tonight?" he asked, his voice soft and slightly slurred.

"Everything!" Faerilyth replied instantly, then decided that her husband deserved a better answer. She tried to think back to the party's beginning and found it difficult to concentrate. The events of the evening formed an incoherent jumble in her memory, a grand array of masked lords and ladies, of chimerical entertainments and —

"The storyteller," she heard herself say. "I think I liked my uncle's storyteller best."

David nodded, his eyesight blurring as a sudden waft of magnolias filled his nostrils. He blinked and tried to concentrate on his wife's voice.

"I remember him, too," the High King said, or thought he said. "He was an eshu, wasn't he? And he had a strange name."

"Seif Raushan," Faerilyth replied, the name coming to her from some unknown font of information. "It's an Islamic name that means 'Sword of Brightness,' or so he said," she added, finding another fact rising unbidden to the surface of her befuddled mind. "His stories held me fast."

"Not so fast as I, I hope," David replied. This time his ears caught the sound of his voice clearly, but the speaking took a great deal of effort. He started and nearly stumbled as he felt a hand on his shoulder.

"Sire, if I might draw you away for a moment," Meilge spoke softly, but both David and Faerilyth caught the urgency in his voice.

"The dance is almost done, uncle," Faerilyth said. "Can't you wait a moment more before you take my husband from me?" She meant her voice to sound playful and cajoling, rather than plaintive.

Meilge ignored his ward, speaking once more to the High King.

"Sire, I beg you to heed me. If it were not of exceeding importance, I would not dream of interrupting this last dance of the evening."

David nodded solemnly, detaching himself carefully from Faerilyth. "It's all right, dear one," he said. "I'll be back before the music stops." He kissed the High Queen's hand and allowed his host to lead him away.

Meilge escorted David along the edge of the crowd to the side of the ballroom, where he parted a heavy curtain, revealing a narrow door that opened at his touch.

"This passage is one I use when haste is necessary," the King of Willows said. "It leads directly to my study."

Meilge kept his hand on David's shoulder as he guided the High King before him down the dimly lit corridor and through the door at its end. Once inside his study, the Eiluned noble released his hold on his guest. The High King swayed and nearly fell. Meilge helped him to a chair, inwardly jubilant that the wine had disoriented David, rendering him physically weak and mentally suggestible. The High King leaned back in his chair as the room spun. He closed his eyes and tried to regain control over his tumbling senses. Somewhere deep within, David felt himself resisting his lack of control.

This isn't right! What's happening to—? his inner voice shouted. Almost as soon as the thought occurred to him, he felt an unnatural calm wash through him, suppressing the anxiety.

"Your Majesty," Meilge said, kneeling before his slouching lord and speaking directly into his face. "You must listen carefully, for your life and your safety depend on it."

David's eyelids felt as though they were made of lead as he forced his eyes open. "I am listening," he said, his words barely intelligible.

"Word has just come to me that the Parliament of Dreams, meeting in secret session, has voted to remove you from the throne. A contingent of Knights of the Red Branch — not yours — has been dispatched to take you into custody and demand that you surrender your crown and your throne. They are traveling by faerie trod, and will be here in moments, I fear."

David felt a cold sickness rise inside him at Meilge's words. "Why is this happening?" he said, struggling to make himself heard through the fog growing inside his head.

Meilge shook his head, laying a reassuring hand on the High King's knee. "Those politics are beyond me, my lord," he replied. "What is in my power is the ability to take you to

safety. But you must come at once, before the Red Branch arrives."

"Faerilyth?" David asked suddenly, lurching clumsily from the chair in an attempt to stand. Meilge caught him and helped the High King to his feet, steadying him with both his hands.

"Your wife is even now on her way to safety," he said. "Do you understand what I have just told you?"

David nodded, feeling as if he were struggling to lift a heavy weight just to give a coherent answer. "I understand that I am no longer High King," he said. "And that you will take me to a place of safety. For how long?"

Before Meilge could answer, both men started as a blinding light flashed at David's side.

"Caliburn!" David cried, reaching for the enchanted blade that symbolized his office. Since his accession to the position of High King during the Accordance War, he had never been without the Sword of the High King. Now his sword belt was empty — sword and sheath gone as though they had never been. "It has deserted me," he whispered.

"David," Meilge said, using his guest's given name for the first time. "There is no time. We must go."

David Ardry stared at the King of Willows, his eyes mirroring his lost hope. "Do with me as you will," he said, his voice empty and dull.

"This way, then." Meilge's voice was commanding. He took David by the elbow and herded him to an elevator inside the study. "This will take us to the ground. I have a car waiting to take you away."

A battered black van idled outside the building as Meilge ushered David into the Atlanta night. At his appearance, a man in dark clothing stepped from the vehicle and opened the side door. Meilge steered David toward the van.

"Inside, quickly," he said, prodding David in the direction of the open door as arms from within the van reached out and pulled the dazed king inside. Meilge watched as the dark-clad man slammed the door shut then turned to climb into the seat beside the driver.

The King of Willows stepped toward the open window. "You know what to do?" he asked.

The man nodded. "The instructions were explicit," he said.

"Then do it quickly," Meilge replied.

He watched as the van roared off into the night, joining the line of traffic that moved in its ceaseless course through the city.

Meilge turned away, barely able to contain his elation as he composed himself to rejoin the party. "I'm afraid the last dance is done," he muttered to himself.

The guests were lining up to bid farewell to their host and his guests of honor as Meilge made his way across the ballroom to stand beside Faerilyth near the door.



"Where is the High King?" he asked his ward, looking around him as if searching for David Ardry.

"I thought he was with you, uncle," Faerilyth said, surprised at seeing Meilge return alone.

Meilge shook his head. "I brought him to my study where I was told an urgent letter awaited him. I left him there to peruse its contents in private." Lies had always come easily to the King of Willows, and Meilge managed to inject this one with just the right amount of confused concern. "Did he not return here?"

Faerilyth shook her head, her surprise turning to worry.

Meilge caught the eye of Berin O'Donnell, the captain of his personal guard. He had been careful to see that the wine drunk by the Scathach knight had been lightly dosed with the same poison given to David and Faerilyth. Though not directly charged with the protection of the High King, Meilge knew that O'Donnell would assume that duty unless diverted. That would have ruined his plans. A cup laced with the Dreambane potion and a small suggestion to Captain O'Donnell to concentrate on some of the lesser guests had been enough to ensure his ignorance of recent events.

"My lord?" O'Donnell parted the crowd expertly as he approached his liege.

"It seems that the High King has vanished," Meilge said, deliberately pitching his voice so that, although he appeared to be whispering, the first few guests in the reception line could clearly hear his words. "Take your best men and search the palace from top to bottom," the King of Willows ordered. "Report to me when you have found him — or if you fail to do so."

O'Donnell bowed and left the room, calling out names in a clipped, authoritative voice as he went.

Meilge turned to Faerilyth and took her hand in both of his. "We will find your husband, Your Royal Majesty," he said formally. "In the meantime, you are safe with me."

Meilge let go of the High Queen's hand and faced the confused guests. "Lords and ladies, friends," he said, raising his voice to carry to the furthest corners of the room. "I regret to inform you that His Royal Highness is unable to attend the final festivities at this time. I anticipate his return shortly, and ask you all to remain and enjoy yourselves until he is once more with us. The dances are over, but food and good conversation remain. Please, help yourself to both."

As soon as he had finished speaking, the line of guests dispersed into small groups, whispering excitedly among themselves at the unexpected turn of events. Meilge's eyes narrowed for a moment. This was as he had hoped. Rumors based on nothing more than innuendo and a few choice phrases spoken just within the range of hearing would circulate quickly as each person attempted to make sense of what had just occurred.

From the back of the room, a sudden cry went up. "He has the sword!"

Meilge felt a cold surge of panic, but steeled himself to conceal any outward sign of fear.

"Who has what sword?" he called out. "Come forward, whoever you are, and if you do have a sword, see that it is pointed at no one present."

The King of Willows watched as a figure wound through the press of guests.

"It's your storyteller," Faerilyth murmured, as the young eshu stepped forward out of the crowd and knelt before King Meilge and the High Queen, his hands outstretched before him, palms upward. At his waist hung a sheath, and across his flattened palms lay a faintly glowing sword.

"My lord," he said, then paused as he realized that the king had not yet given him leave to speak.

"Go on," Meilge said, his voice impatient as he fixed his eyes upon the blade that had just vanished from David Ardry's side.

"My lord," Seif Raushan began again. "Your Royal Majesty," he continued, this time addressing Faerilyth, "I was waiting my turn in line to bid farewell to the High King and Queen when your announcement sparked a wave of speculation among the guests. Someone said that the High King had disappeared. Another courtier replied that someone had abducted him. Then I heard someone else suggest that the High Queen was behind a plot to overthrow the High King and rule in his stead. I could not stand to hear such a lie spoken in my presence, so I defended Her Royal Majesty. I said that her love for her husband and her loyalty to Concordia speak of a character that would never stoop to so base a deed. I had barely spoken the words when a brilliant light surrounded me and —, this," he gestured with his head toward the sword, "appeared in my hands."

"That is Caliburn you hold!" Faerilyth exclaimed. "It is the High King's sword and the symbol of his office. Caliburn has never been parted from him and never will be until —," her voice broke off. She swallowed hard as the room began to rise up to meet her and a hot brightness surrounded her face. "Until he chooses to abdicate or dies," she finished, just before the light in her eyes exploded into sweet darkness.

The first blow struck David as he felt the van pull away from the curb. He screamed as searing pain lanced through his ribs, and he recognized the deadly impact of cold iron on his faerie self. He raised a hand to ward off a second blow, but a pair of muscled arms pinned him to the floor of the van.

"Don't kill him, Marco," a husky voice snarled. "We got orders just to knock him out with the pipes."

"I know what I'm doin', Frankie," a second, reedy voice answered. "Once ain't enough for someone his size and weight. Even if these things ain't like the usual ones. Why'd we have to use these wrought-iron things?" The second blow struck the king on the back. David gritted his teeth and bit back the urge to scream again.

"Another one should do it, if I'm not mistaken. He's already woozy from the drugs."

Through eyes blurred with tears of agony and rage, David could barely make out what looked like an iron cage set inside the van. A chill ran through his body just before the third blow drove him into unconsciousness.

Faerilyth awoke to find herself seated in a comfortable chair in Meilge's study. Meilge himself was kneeling at her side, along with Seif, the storyteller, and Llew Ardwyd ap Gwydion, her husband's cousin. Also in the room, Duke Firedrake and Duchess Igrania stood glaring at each other on opposite sides of the door, and standing behind King Meilge, Berin O'Donnell looked uneasily at Faerilyth.

Llew's green eyes mirrored his relief as the High Queen looked dazedly around her. "Are you all right, my lady?" he asked, his deep-timbered voice low and soothing. "We feared that some terrible mishap had befallen you—"

"I am fine," Faerilyth replied, realizing as she spoke that the confusion that had clouded her mind earlier had vanished, leaving her in command of her faculties. "Have you found my husband?" she asked.

Meilge shook his head sadly. "My guard captain was most thorough," he replied. "The High King is nowhere to be found."

"There are additional problems, Your Majesty," Llew interjected.

"What more could happen?" Faerilyth snapped. "My husband has vanished. The *High King* has vanished! His sword—," her voice trailed off as she turned her head to look at Seif Raushan. The young eshu now wore Caliburn belted at his waist.

"My lady, Allah knows I would give the sword into your hands if I could," he began. "For with King David gone, the rulership of Concordia rightfully falls to you. But Caliburn will not let me surrender it to another's possession."

"What do you mean, it will not let you give it up?" Faerilyth looked more closely at the young storyteller. His guileless face bore no sign of obstinacy or willfulness, only a soft resignation and a worried frown.

"The sword has spoken to me," Seif whispered. "Not aloud, so that all could hear and believe, but in my mind and in my heart. Caliburn has told me that it is my destiny to go in search of the High King, wherever he may be. Only by finding him will I be able to restore his sword to him, and put to rest any suspicions about your part in his disappearance."

"My part?" Faerilyth looked to Meilge. "What does this mean?" Meilge rose to his feet.

"Your Royal Majesty," he said. "Much has happened in the two hours since you lost consciousness. We have had to conclude that the High King has, in fact, disappeared. I felt compelled to notify his sister, Queen Morwen, of the problem. She has sent word to me that, in her brother's absence, she is assuming the Regency for his designated heir, Princess Lenore."

Faerilyth's eyes narrowed, and she straightened in her chair, about to speak.

Meilge raised a hand in a gesture of supplication.

"Please, Your Majesty, allow me to present you with a complete picture of your — our — present situation," he said.

Faerilyth pressed her lips together tightly and nodded.

"It is our feeling," Meilge continued, "and I am certain



that many others will support us in this, that David declared you his High Queen and equal to him in rulership. His unfortunate disappearance means that the Crown of Concordia passes to you, not to his heir or to his sister. Queen Morwen has demanded that you return to the Tara-Nar to await news of your husband. I feel this is the worst thing you could do, Your Majesty."

Meilge paused for a moment, watching Faerilyth's face for signs of impatience.

The High Queen took a deep breath and inclined her head toward her mentor. "I would be interested in hearing your reasoning as to why returning to my sister-in-law is such a bad idea," she said. Inwardly, Faerilyth marveled at the composure in her voice. Already her heart ached at the thought that David was no longer at her side.

Meilge bowed his head in acknowledgment of Faerilyth's request. "You have been High Queen for too short a time, and you have few friends in Morwen's lands beyond those whose connection to you is through David Ardry. Here in the Kingdom of Willows you have many loyal friends and supporters. I would prefer, for your own safety, that you remain under my protection and in the care of those who love you."

Meilge looked solicitously at Faerilyth.

"I would hear from the rest of you before I make any decisions concerning myself or the Kingdom of Concordia," Faerilyth said, looking around at the six other people in the room with her, then addressing her next words to Meilge. "In one part, at least, you are accurate in your assessment of the situation: I am the High Queen and sole ruler of Concordia until such time as my husband, David Ardry, returns that I may take my place at his side."

As she spoke, Faerilyth's body seemed to grow even more regal. Her delicate features radiated an inner strength and authority that Meilge had never seen before.

Turning to the eshu storyteller, who started from his position next to Lleu at the High Queen's feet, she gestured for him to rise. He obeyed her and stepped backward, expecting to be dismissed as the only commoner among the group of noble sidhe. Faerilyth extended a hand to him, stopping him in his place.

"Seif Raushan, king's storyteller," she said, a smile playing at the corners of her lips, "you bear at your side the Sword of the High King of Concordia, claiming that it has chosen you as its trustee. Why, then, do you not challenge me for the position of High King, as would seem to be your right?"

Seif looked stricken. He dropped to his knees again, his inexperienced hand fumbling at the sword. Slowly easing Caliburn from his belt, he offered it, hilt first to the High Queen. "Your Royal Majesty," he began, raising his head as he spoke to meet the High Queen's gaze with his own direct, piercing look. "Caliburn chose me for your sake. I am not the wielder of the sword, but only its bearer. As the chosen bearer of Caliburn, therefore, it falls upon me to seek the one who still holds title to it — the High King David Ardry."

"That right should have come to me," Lleu spoke out, his voice impassioned and bristling with anger. "What claim do you have on my cousin's wife or on the symbol of his office?" His hand strayed to the sword he wore in a sheath at his hip.

Seif rose to his feet and turned to face his challenger, holding Caliburn carefully, point down, at his side.

"I claim nothing, Sir Lleu, save what Caliburn has decreed for me, but if you offer challenge, I cannot refuse you, though I stand no chance against one of your skill and merit."

Duchess Igrania bolted forward from her post by the door, and positioned herself squarely between the knight of House Gwydion and the eshu storyteller.

"This is neither the time nor the place for posturing or the issuance of duels, particularly one-sided ones," she said sternly, pinning Lleu Ardwyad with a look. "From everything I have heard, it seems that Caliburn has chosen who will search for the High King or for evidence as to his fate," she nodded to Seif, before turning her attention once more to the sidhe knight.

"There is still a role for you, Sir Lleu, which I believe lends itself more to your inclinations. The High Queen's position is by no means secure. As King Meilge has so aptly illustrated, she has few friends of her own outside the Kingdom of Willows. Queen Morwen already disputes her claim to the throne. There will be others who seek to challenge her for the right to rule Concordia, and still others who will place the blame for the High King's disappearance on the shoulders of his Eiluned wife. The High Queen needs a champion." She paused in her speech to let her words sink in before she curtsied to Faerilyth.

"Your Royal Majesty," Igrania said. "These will be difficult times for you, and you will be asked to bear much. It is good that you have grown up here, in the Kingdom of Willows, for you must learn to act like the tree for which this land is named. You must bend with the winds of change or else be broken by them."

Faerilyth looked at Duchess Igrania, in some ways more her mentor than Meilge. Igrania had enlisted Faerilyth in the Cat's Cradle, putting her in touch with Seelie and Unseelie noblewomen throughout Concordia. Igrania was never without a plan; the High Queen now waited to see it unfold. By her reckoning, the duchess had just placed David's cousin Lleu in check.

"There is no one more qualified or more willing to serve as the High Queen's Champion than I," Sir Lleu said.

Duchess Igrania nodded and stepped back, resuming her original place by the door. Duke Firedrake glared at her, then winked and crossed his arms in front of him.

Lleu Ardwyad knelt before Faerilyth. "Your Royal Majesty," he said. "I beg you to accept my sword arm to serve as your defender and protector."

Faerilyth saw the broad smile on Igrania's face. *Checkmate.* She nodded her acceptance of her cousin-in-law's offer. "I will take your oath, Sir Lleu, before this evening is over."

Faerilyth glanced toward Meilge again.

"Your offer of protection and sanctuary gives me comfort, uncle," Faerilyth said to the King of Willows. "But I must refuse it with the most profound regret." Faerilyth stood up, seeming to tower over the others in the room, despite her diminutive size.

"If it is true that I have few friends outside the Kingdom of Willows, then it is incumbent upon me to correct that deficiency. One of the reasons the High King decided upon a Grand Tour of his realm was to introduce all the kingdoms of Concordia to their High Queen. That purpose remains in force."

She paused as she heard Igrania's almost inaudible "Bravo!"

"I shall remain here in Willow's Heart for three days, after which I will continue my Grand Tour of the Kingdom of Willows and the rest of Concordia. I will keep the itinerary originally planned by my husband and me. My cousin, Sir Lleu, shall accompany me as Queen's Champion."

Duchess Igrania stepped forward.

"By your leave, Your Royal Majesty, I would make the journey with you as well. You will need a chaperone for the sake of propriety, and I must confess to a desire to see those parts of Concordia that lie beyond my own experience."

"Then I, too, will accompany your royal majesty on this Grand Tour," Duke Firedrake asserted in a booming voice as he strode forward. Stopping before the High Queen, he executed a perfect courtier's bow, bending from the waist and holding his position for a full five seconds before resuming his rigid, upright posture. The Duke of Cotton faced Duchess Igrania as he spoke.

"I will not let you take this opportunity, madam, to win support for your territorial claims to my lands," he said. "Besides, you may need a strong sword arm to defend you while Sir Lleu is busy fending off the wolves from the High Queen's throat. Your pardon, Majesty," he finished, bowing his head to Faerilyth.

The High Queen bit down hard on her lower lip to keep from laughing aloud at the duke's bluster. Her expression grew serious once more as she turned to Meilge.

"Your Majesty," she said, "I have just received offers of fealty and service from those who have previously sworn such to you. As I hold your oath as High Queen, will you acknowledge my right of precedence and allow them to swear themselves directly to me?"

Meilge stared intently at Faerilyth. He had trained her too well in the ways of court politics. In this, at least, she had unwittingly outmaneuvered him. Hiding his reluctance, the King of Willows nodded his head.

"You are High Queen," he said. "Take what is yours by right."

"Then there is one thing I must do before I take your oaths," she said. "Seif Raushan, come kneel before me. May I borrow a sword from someone?"

Before she had finished speaking, Berin O'Donnell's sword was held out to her. Faerilyth took the blade from Meilge's captain of the guard and touched it to the shoulders of the kneeling eshu.



"Rise, Sir Seif Raushan, Chosen of Caliburn," she said. "I will take your oath now, along with those of these nobles who will assist me in my journey."

Sir Seif remained on his knees as he looked up at the High Queen.

"My lady queen," he said, his voice trembling with the sudden shock of his unexpected knighting. "I will gladly swear my loyalty to you, but I cannot accompany you on the Grand Tour. My quest begins tonight, and where it will lead me only Caliburn can say."

Faerilyth nodded. "Well spoken, Sir Seif," she said gently. "I will hear your oath first, then, so that you may be on your way."

The van hurtled north on I-85, leaving Atlanta far behind.

"How's he doing, Roy?" the driver asked the dark-clad man in the seat beside him.

Roy looked left over his shoulder at the still form now curled upon himself inside the iron cage bolted to the floor of the van. "Sleepin' like a baby," he said. "Are you sure he's not dead?" Roy asked the two men in the back seat of the van.

"Nah, he's just out of it. He's breathin' and whimperin'."

"You didn't break anything, did you, Marco?" the driver called to the largest of the pair behind him.

"I know how to hurt a man without scratching the polish," Marco replied. "He'll be all right in a couple of days."

"So what do we do with him now, Jake?" Marco's backseat companion asked, directing his question to the driver.

"We do what we were told to do, Frankie. We keep him with us and make sure he don't come near anything that might remind him of who he is."

"Great," Roy said. "How do we know what that is? And who is he?"

"He's someone who pissed off the Big Man," Jake said. "How the hell do I know who he is? All I know is that we don't take him to anything fancy: no museums, symphonies, plays — nothin' like that."

"Right, like we do that shit all the time," Frankie snorted. "So we dose him up on cheap liquor, greasy food, take him to our favorite strip joints — I wonder if he's a wrestling fan?"

"I guess he will be," Roy said.

"The boss said that when he comes out of it, he won't know who he is, so we should give him a name and tell him that it's his. You took his ID, right?"

"He didn't have nothin' on him when we searched him," Frankie said. "I guess the Big Man kept it."

Jake nodded. "So long as he don't have anything to tell him who he really is, I don't give a shit who kept what."

"So, what's with the iron cage?" Marco asked.

"It's supposed to make him weak," Jake answered. "It fucks up his immune system or something. It's like an allergic reaction. I don't understand it, but the boss wanted it for the trip, so that's what he got. We'll sell it for scrap as soon as we cross the border."

"Speaking of borders, where are we going?" Roy asked.

"Anywhere we want," Jake said. "The boss just said to get him the hell away from Atlanta and stick with him. He said our 'companionship' would keep him in line. I think he meant it as a compliment."

"How about New York? I ain't been there, yet," Marco said.

"You ain't been anywhere outside Atlanta," Frankie said. "Why not Chicago or Detroit?"

"Let's go all the hell of the way to California," Roy suggested.

"We got plenty of time to decide," Jake said. "Look for a gas station, first. I gotta take a leak."

Meilge stood on the balcony and watched the rising sun greet Atlanta. In his hand, he held the magnolia blossom that had formed the centerpiece of the previous evening's banquet table. Absently, he touched a petal with his fingertip, watching as a small brown stain took shape where his flesh contacted the surface of the creamy blossom. He had been unable to sleep. Recent events had not turned out precisely as he had planned, but on the whole, he was satisfied that he had accomplished most of his goals.

By far, he would have preferred for Faerilyth to remain where he could keep an eye on her, but even that was not

beyond his capacity. He would speak with Riel, his sluagh spymaster, later this morning and order him to arrange for constant surveillance of Faerilyth and the rest of her entourage as they embarked on the Grand Tour.

He had hoped that the poisoned wine would have had a more potent effect on Faerilyth, as it had on her husband. It was too easy to convince the High King that he had been deposed and that the Knights of the Red Branch were on their way to take him into custody. Faerilyth should have accepted his offer of sanctuary as easily. He shook his head in silent recrimination.

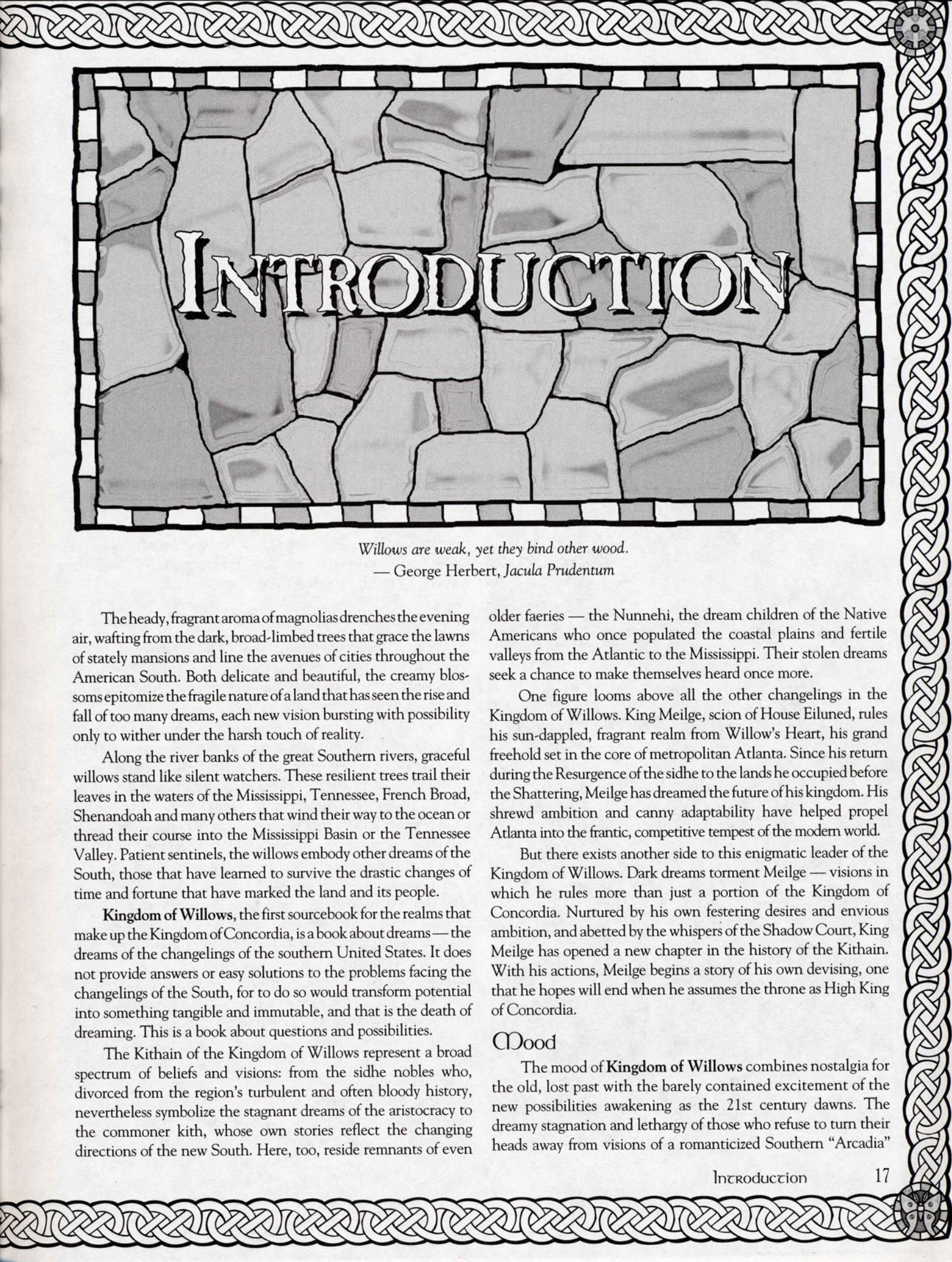
There would still be time, in the future, after she returned from her Grand Tour, to administer another dose — a stronger one — of the Dreambane infusion to render her amenable to his suggestion that she appoint him High King in David's place.

In the meanwhile, let her and her champion traipse around the countryside. While Faerilyth was winning friends, he would be influencing others in more subtle ways. When enough members of the Parliament of Dreams were convinced that Faerilyth had engineered the disappearance of David, she would remember who had first offered her sanctuary.

Meilge turned away from the sunrise and entered his room, leaving the now completely withered magnolia blossom on the balcony floor behind him. He had nurtured Faerilyth carefully. In time, the seed he had planted would bear fruit. The blood of House Eiluned would call out to Faerilyth. She would return home.







INTRODUCTION

Willows are weak, yet they bind other wood.
— George Herbert, *Jacula Prudentum*

The heady, fragrant aroma of magnolias drenches the evening air, wafting from the dark, broad-limbed trees that grace the lawns of stately mansions and line the avenues of cities throughout the American South. Both delicate and beautiful, the creamy blossoms epitomize the fragile nature of a land that has seen the rise and fall of too many dreams, each new vision bursting with possibility only to wither under the harsh touch of reality.

Along the river banks of the great Southern rivers, graceful willows stand like silent watchers. These resilient trees trail their leaves in the waters of the Mississippi, Tennessee, French Broad, Shenandoah and many others that wind their way to the ocean or thread their course into the Mississippi Basin or the Tennessee Valley. Patient sentinels, the willows embody other dreams of the South, those that have learned to survive the drastic changes of time and fortune that have marked the land and its people.

Kingdom of Willows, the first sourcebook for the realms that make up the Kingdom of Concordia, is a book about dreams — the dreams of the changelings of the southern United States. It does not provide answers or easy solutions to the problems facing the changelings of the South, for to do so would transform potential into something tangible and immutable, and that is the death of dreaming. This is a book about questions and possibilities.

The Kithain of the Kingdom of Willows represent a broad spectrum of beliefs and visions: from the sidhe nobles who, divorced from the region's turbulent and often bloody history, nevertheless symbolize the stagnant dreams of the aristocracy to the commoner kith, whose own stories reflect the changing directions of the new South. Here, too, reside remnants of even

older faeries — the Nunnehi, the dream children of the Native Americans who once populated the coastal plains and fertile valleys from the Atlantic to the Mississippi. Their stolen dreams seek a chance to make themselves heard once more.

One figure looms above all the other changelings in the Kingdom of Willows. King Meilge, scion of House Eiluned, rules his sun-dappled, fragrant realm from Willow's Heart, his grand freehold set in the core of metropolitan Atlanta. Since his return during the Resurgence of the sidhe to the lands he occupied before the Shattering, Meilge has dreamed the future of his kingdom. His shrewd ambition and canny adaptability have helped propel Atlanta into the frantic, competitive tempest of the modern world.

But there exists another side to this enigmatic leader of the Kingdom of Willows. Dark dreams torment Meilge — visions in which he rules more than just a portion of the Kingdom of Concordia. Nurtured by his own festering desires and envious ambition, and abetted by the whispers of the Shadow Court, King Meilge has opened a new chapter in the history of the Kithain. With his actions, Meilge begins a story of his own devising, one that he hopes will end when he assumes the throne as High King of Concordia.

Mood

The mood of **Kingdom of Willows** combines nostalgia for the old, lost past with the barely contained excitement of the new possibilities awakening as the 21st century dawns. The dreamy stagnation and lethargy of those who refuse to turn their heads away from visions of a romanticized Southern "Arcadia"



collide with the impetuous imaginings of prosperity held by progressive-minded changelings who seek to bring about a rebirth of their realm.

This clash of old guard against new breed manifests throughout both the mortal and changeling worlds of the South. Penetrating the stifling atmosphere of changelessness, a burst of anticipation stirs the hearts of Southerners. The signs of imminent change abound on all sides: harbingers of hope point to a president from Arkansas, to the growth of major centers of urban culture, to new investments in the South's financial and economic future. Here, they say, lies the future, and the people of the South will form the vanguard of tomorrow. The willow stretches its branches to meet the winds of change.

Beneath it all, however, old anger smolders in the breasts of those who do not forget. Southerners of African descent remember their ancestors' enslavement by the plantations owners before the Civil War and the decades of segregation and Jim Crow laws that sustained and legitimized their continued oppression. Native Americans have not forgotten that these lands belonged to them until the ambitions of the white colonists cut them out of the American Dream. Poor whites continue to eke out a meager existence on subsistence farms in the mountains and in the Deep South, missing out on the privileges and prosperity claimed by their wealthy cousins in the Tidewater and Basin regions. The coal towns of Kentucky and the mill towns of the Carolinas bear witness to the economic deprivation of many Southerners. The magnolia withers at a touch, revealing the decay at its center.

Theme

Several themes run through this book. Perhaps chief among them is that ambition is its own reward, often coming at great cost to personal honor. Sometimes the price of getting what you wish for outweighs the reality of the wish.

In addition to the mortal guises that mask the faerie nature of changelings, Southern changelings often cloak themselves in other masks — either physical, like the half-mask frequently worn by King Meilge, or psychological masks that cloak true feelings beneath a patina of elaborate manners and customs. What you see is not always what you get. The *appearance* of honor often substitutes for true honor, and few recognize the difference until it is too late.

Dreams of modernity and prosperity permeate the South, from the ambitions of metropolitan Atlanta to the smaller dreams of tourist havens scattered throughout the scenic region. New Orleans; Baltimore; Richmond; Washington, D.C.; the Research Triangle of Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill; the growing cities of Nashville, Memphis, Knoxville and Chattanooga — all seek bigger pieces of the "American Dream." The South is awakening from its dreams of the past, and is trying to put behind it the nightmares of civil war, racism and segregation.

Stereotypes abound throughout the South, from the Southern gentleman and Southern belle to the good ol' boys and mountain mamas. These clichéd images represent dreams that have lost their dynamism, yet stereotypes exist because of those who fit them. How do these "ready-to-wear" dreams manifest among the changelings who embody them?

Everywhere, changelings and mortals alike struggle to sort out what is worth keeping from what needs to be discarded. Should the new dreams completely supplant the old, or are some aspects of the past worth keeping? Must the changelings of the Kingdom of Willows abandon themselves in order to redefine their place in the new era? If the South “goes modern,” what happens to the romanticism of the Old South? Was it ever really romantic for those excluded from that dream by skin color or social class?

How To Use This Book

Changeling is about change; the game itself has transmuted from its original conception to a second re-imagining. This first sourcebook for the Kingdom of Concordia introduces a new concept, that of an ongoing story whose seeds take root in the Kingdom of Willows, but whose flowers blossom throughout all the other kingdoms.

Dreams are the font of creativity; creativity cannot happen without change. Even in the Kingdom of Willows, the apparent stagnation is deceptive. **Kingdom of Willows** serves as the catalyst for a dynamic and epic journey through Concordia.

Contents

Kingdom of Willows is divided into two books. *Book One: Dreams of a Lost Past* explores the history, geography and politics of the Kingdom of Willows. *Book Two: Dreams of a Troubled Future* outlines the ongoing story that will emerge in future supplements and introduces the movers and shakers among the Kithain of the South, as well as other relevant denizens of the **World of Darkness**.

“Magnolias Fade, Willows Weep,” the short story that begins **Kingdom of Willows**, focuses on the ambitions of King Meilge, one of Concordia’s most complex and devious rulers, and sets the tone for the rest of the book.

The **Introduction** gives an overview of the Kingdom of Willows, including the mood and theme that together serve to unify a region of divergent interests and varied populations.

Chapter One: History of the Kingdom of Willows chronicles the history of the American South, from the original Native American faeries through the two European invasions and the later Resurgence. In addition, the story of the growth and development of the American South speaks of dreams and promises made and broken, of victims and profiteers, of war and its aftermath, and of a new South emerging from the ruins.

Chapter Two: Geography outlines the varied regions that make up the Kingdom of Willows — its duchies and important lesser domains and their place in the world of both mortals and changelings. Places of historic interest and Glamour-rich sites abound in this landscape of raw emotions and tattered dreams.

Chapter Three: Politics and Culture looks at the underlying schemes and plots at work in the Kingdom of Willows. Featuring the various political impulses of both the Seelie and Unseelie Courts, along with the machinations of the Shadow Court, this section describes the unique phenomenon of “politics — Southern Style.” Secret societies abound in the Kingdom of Willows; changeling organizations that exist throughout Concordia have branches in the South, but other, unique societies flourish here as well.



Chapter Four: The Kithain of the Kingdom offers a wealth of information on Who's Who among Southern changelings, from King Meilge and his counselors to the rulers of the duchies and important (or just plain interesting) commoners.

Chapter Five: Gallain and Others presents more characters. In this section, you can find representatives of the Nunnehi who remain, despite efforts to dislodge them, as well as some of the strange creatures called Inanimae. Here, also, are other supernaturals, including vampires, werewolves, wraiths and mages, who might have cause to interact with the changelings of the Kingdom of Willows.

Chapter Four: Storytelling supplies background information concerning the ongoing story begun in this supplement and gives hints about future developments. In addition, this section presents ideas for telling other stories based in the Kingdom of Willows and offers thoughts on how to incorporate the atmosphere of the South into your stories set in Meilge's domain.

Finally, the **Appendix** describes important treasures of the Kingdom of Willows, as well as detailing a new Nunnehi kith and describing faerie steeds and hounds.

Reference Sources

Storytellers wanting to supplement the information presented here with additional information may find the following books, films and music helpful.

Geography and Travel

Travel books abound on most regions of the South. A few stand out for their better-than-average attention to the atmosphere and history of the areas they cover. The *Smithsonian Guide to Historic America* series includes three volumes on the region that encompasses the Kingdom of Willows: *Virginia and the Capitol Region*, *The Carolinas and the Appalachian States*, and *The Deep South*. These colorful, informative books give information on historic sites, as well as insightful commentaries on the history of each state covered. Other useful travel books include the *Insight Guides* series (*Old South*, *Washington, D.C.* and other titles) and *Fodor's Guides* (*The South and Virginia & Maryland*). *Quick Escapes from Washington D.C.*, by John Fitzpatrick & Holly J. Burkhalter, describes a number of scenic excursions in the five-state region that surrounds the District of Columbia. Its emphasis on "getaways" incorporates both historical and recreational sites, any of which may serve as backdrops for **Changeling** stories. In much the same way, Carolyn Sakowski's series of backroads guides (*Touring the East Tennessee Backroads*, *Touring the Western North Carolina Backroads*, and others) provide similar perspectives on out-of-the-way sites.

History and Culture

John Berendt's *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* sparked a national phenomenon as readers across the country devoured this luscious inquiry into a city, a crime, a culture and a region. Focusing on Savannah, Georgia, this elegant and perceptive work contains the South in microcosm. *Black, White, and Southern*, by David R. Goldfield, looks at the racial tensions and the progress toward Southern desegregation in the latter part of the 20th

century. The Southern aristocracy takes center stage in *A Class by Themselves: The Untold Story of the Great Southern Families*, by William Stadiem, while the peculiarities of the antebellum South comprise the subject of Kenneth S. Greenberg's *Honor and Slavery: Lies, Duels, Noses, Masks, Dressing as a Woman, Gifts, Strangers, Humanitarianism, Death, Slave Rebellions, the Proslavery Argument, Baseball, Hunting, Gambling in the Old South*. *The Carolina Pirates and Colonial Commerce, 1670-1740*, by Shirley Carter Hughson, discusses the history of piracy along the Carolina coast. *The American South: a History*, by William J. Cooper, Jr. and Thomas E. Terrill, provides a comprehensive overview of the region from its colonization to the beginning of the 1990s.

The Time-Life series on *The American Indians* serves as a good general introduction to the history, customs, beliefs and present locations of the native tribes of the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic regions. In addition, *The American Indian in Alabama and the Southeast* by Rev. John Franklin Phillips, chronicles the history of the Southeastern tribes and their doomed battle to retain their lands. The author's advocacy of church support for the resurgence of Native American cultural movements offers many insights into the complex relationships between well-intentioned missionaries and native populations. Numerous books on Native American myths and legends can provide guidelines for stories involving the Nunnehi still residing within the boundaries of the Kingdom of Willows.

Fiction and Literary Criticism

While Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* may remain the most popular novel about the South, Southern writers have figured prominently in American literature since its beginnings. The novels of Thomas Wolfe, William Faulkner, Eudora Welty, Carson McCullers and Flannery O'Connor pioneered the "genre" of Southern fiction; many others continue the tradition of illuminating the peculiarities of the Southern psyche. The list of contemporary Southern writers includes (in no particular order) Reynolds Price, Lee Smith, Maya Angelou, Tennessee Williams, Clyde Edgerton, Bobbie Ann Mason, Louise Shivers, T.R. Pearson, Gail Godwin, Alice Walker, William Styron, Alex Haley, Fred Chappell, Toni Morrison, Pat Conroy, Eugenia Price, Dori Sanders, Ernest Gaines, and Doris Betts. *Parting the Curtains: Interviews with Southern Writers*, by Dannye Romine Powell, offers insights into the habits and philosophies of some of the South's most prolific tellers of stories, while *The New Writers of the South*, edited by Charles East, gives a sampling of works by authors who openly share their dreams of the South.

Films

Gone with the Wind: The film that is most frequently associated with the South. Forget any critical sensibilities; if you haven't seen it, you need to, if only to get an idea where all those dreadful Southern accents came from.

Deliverance: This nightmarish encounter between vacationing city boys from Atlanta and savage mountain men of the backwoods embodies a grain of truth within its blatant stereotyping.

Roots: This made-for-television, epic miniseries brought black history to the consciousness of white America for perhaps the first time.

The Color Purple: Based on Alice Walker's powerful novel, this luminous film focuses on black women in the rural South.

To Kill a Mockingbird: The compelling film version of Harper Lee's tale of a Southern lawyer's defense of a black man accused of raping a white woman ignited controversy when it first hit the screen; it retains its original power due to the virtuoso performances of its actors.

Long Hot Summer: A torrid Southern melodrama accentuates the great discrepancies in class between the gentry and the "poor white trash."

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof: An adaptation of the Tennessee Williams' play opens up the heart of a Southern patriarch and his dysfunctional family in this steamy drama starring Elizabeth Taylor and Paul Newman.

Thunder Road: Directed by its star, Robert Mitchum, this story of moonshiners in Kentucky was filmed in western North Carolina. Panned by the critics, it has gotten better reviews over the years.

Interview with the Vampire: Think of it as "Dracula meets New Orleans."

Steel Magnolias: The true strength that lies beneath the seeming fragility of the Southern woman forms the core of this evocative film.

Last of the Mohicans: Filmed in the mountains of western North Carolina, this film version of James Fennimore Cooper's novel showcases the spectacular scenery of the Appalachian South.

Nell: This is another film utilizing the Appalachian mountain

landscape as a backdrop for a story of primal innocence corrupted by the best of intentions.

Forrest Gump: Besides its much-touted message of simplicity and an Academy Award-winning performance by Tom Hanks, this film contains many typically "Southern" elements.

Prince of Tides: The coastal islands of South Carolina form the backdrop for this Southern family drama based on Pat Conroy's novel.

Days of Thunder: Filmed at the Charlotte Motor Speedway in North Carolina and starring Tom Cruise, this is the quintessential stock-car-racing film in which a brash new driver takes on the pros and beats the odds.

Music

The music of the South draws from diverse traditions. The ballads and tunes of the British Isles form the basis for bluegrass and Appalachian folk music, while Native American and African rhythms and chants lend their power to religious singing, giving rise to the infectious and exhilarating Southern gospel tradition. In New Orleans, the combination of French, African and Indian cultures produced the unique, upbeat sounds of Cajun folk and zydeco. Before "the blues" migrated north to Chicago, it had its beginnings in the Mississippi delta region, Chattanooga and Memphis. Jazz and Dixieland flourished in the Deep South, while the origins of rock'n'roll can be seen in southern rockabilly and rhythm-and-blues. Nashville's Grand Ole Opry made Country-Western music a national pastime. Southern rock draws and audience owing to its bad-boy image, while many new bands emerge to place their own stamp on modern rock.





Book One: Dreams of a Lost Past

CHAPTER ONE:

HISTORY OF THE KINGDOM OF WILLOWS

The Kithain do not make history; they dream history. Or, at least, that's my opinion of things. I could be wrong.

— Slevin Teague (dog pooka), chronicler to King Meilge

Your Majesties.

In anticipation of your upcoming Grand Tour of Concordia, I submit the following historical commentary for the first of your destinations: the Kingdom of Willows.

I have availed myself of the talent and expertise of Sir Slevin Teague, chronicler to King Meilge, reasoning that the most insightful — if not the most accurate — portrait of a region comes from one residing therein. My initial misgivings upon learning that the honorable chronicler is a pooka, a kith not renowned for its veracity, were somewhat eased when I read his observations (taking them with a grain of salt, as it were).

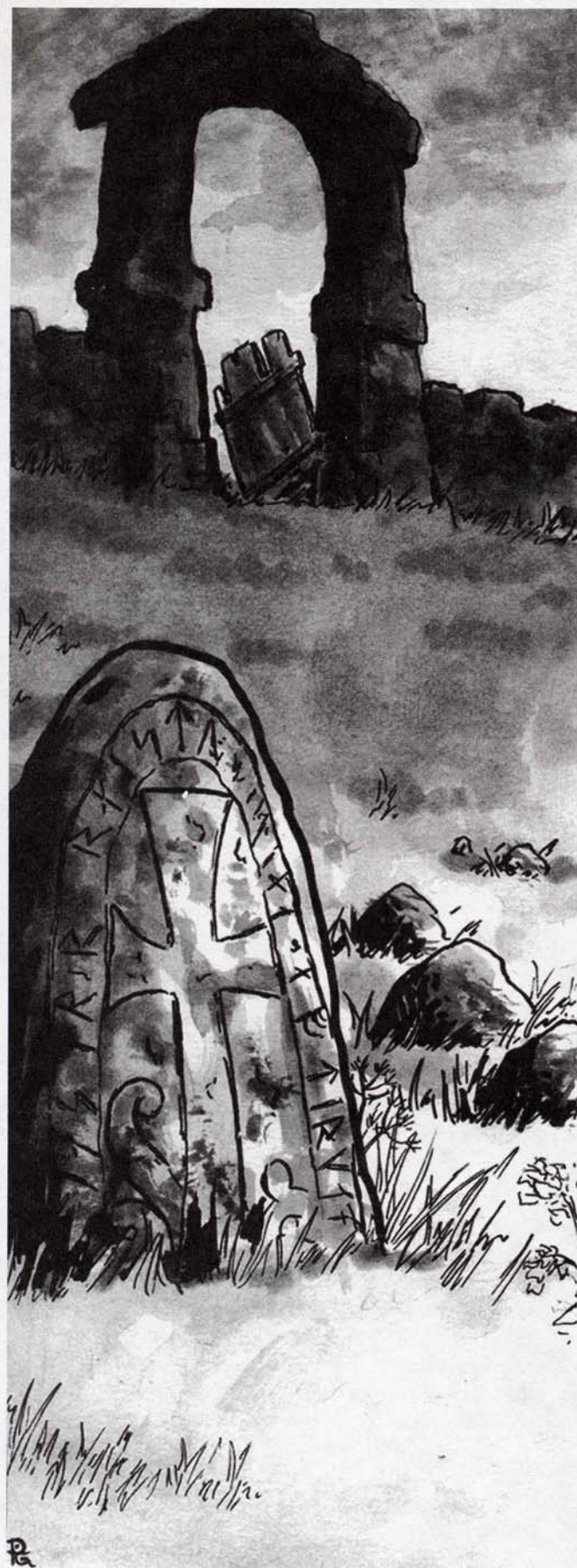
I pass these musings on to you as both caveat and excuse for any discrepancies you may find. In Sir Slevin's own words, "History is nothing more or less than a collection of lies and half-truths masquerading as fact. But they are all we have to go on."

Since High Queen Faerilyth is herself a native of the Kingdom of Willows, much of this information, not to mention the inestimable Sir Slevin, may have for her the ring of familiarity.

To amplify (and in some cases, clarify) Sir Slevin's information, I have added my own commentaries on the region's history. It is my hope that this admittedly inexhaustive summary will apprise Your Majesties of the complex interweavings of mortal and Kithain stories that comprise this kingdom's past.

As always, I remain your faithful servant.

Lady Aramithe ni Fiona, Director of the Grand Tour



The Kingdom of Willows came into existence with the proclamation of the Kingdom of Concordia as the sovereign government of the North American fae. The land encompassed by the Kingdom of Willows has a far older history, however, reaching back in time to the first peoples to inhabit the American continent. The earliest faeries arrived with the Dreamers of the native tribes that settled along the fertile Atlantic coast, the rich farmland of the Mississippi basin and the verdant forests of the Appalachians. The first dreams belonged to them.

The Original People

Some of the original inhabitants of the land emigrated from a place they called "the Dawnlands" to make their homes along the coastal waters of the great eastern sea. They were the Roanoke, the Nanticoke, the Piscataway and the Powhatan — tribes of the southern Algonquins. Children of Father Sun and Mother Earth, they honored both of their parents and lived in harmony with the world around them. They also respected the invisible world and its dream-inhabitants, the canny rock-fishers (may-may-gway-shi) and the ever-inventive thought-crafters (children of the god called Manabus), recognizing in them their own dreams come to life.

Others came from the damp soil of the Earth itself or emerged from a great realm below the Earth's surface, following the command of Someone Powerful to dwell upon the outside of the world. These were the southeastern tribes of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw and Creek, as well as the Natchez, Gaddo, Tunica, Yazoo, Biloxi, Yamasee, Waxhaw and Tuscarora. Like their Algonquin neighbors, they attuned themselves to the lands around them; the Dreamers among them imagined into existence the nanehi ("People Who Live Anywhere"), the yunwi tsundsi (the Little People) and the yunwi amai-yine'hi (the Water People).

Dreamfolk of the Dawnland

*We are the stars which sing,
We sing with our light;
We are the birds of fire,
We fly over the sky.
Our light is a voice;
We make a road for the spirits,
For the spirits to pass over....*
— Algonquin poem

Before the first intimations of the Sundering reached the American continent, the faeries of the Algonquins lived in close proximity to their mortal Dreamers. The may-may-gway-shi often assisted their flesh-brothers and -sisters in harvesting the bounty of the waters, and shared their knowledge of the secrets of Medicine with worthy individuals, while the thought-crafters inspired the creativity of their mortal kin, teaching them better ways of surviving in harmony with the natural world. Native faeries sometimes served as guides for youths undergoing vision quests, assisting them in crossing the border between the visible and invisible worlds and acting as intercessors with the spirits that dwelt in the Higher Hunting Grounds.



The Southern Algonquins

The Algonquins who lived along the coast of what would one day become the states of Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina partook of the rich bounty of fish and shellfish offered by their nearness to the Atlantic Ocean and the great waterways that emptied into it — the Potomac, Rappahannock and James Rivers and the Chesapeake Bay. In addition to the bounty that sea, lake and river provided, the southern Algonquins made good use of the prolonged growing season and fertile river-fed soil to grow corn, beans, squash and tobacco. Nuts and berries from the forests that lined the coast supplemented their diet. In addition to providing alternative meat sources, the myriad game animals that proliferated in the nearby woodlands offered skins, furs and other parts (such as claws) that could be used for clothing, tools and decoration. The tribes of the Roanoke, Nanticoke, Piscataway and Powhatan also hunted the many varieties of wild fowl (especially turkeys) that lived in the marshes and woods.

The waterways also provided the southern Algonquins with reliable routes on which to travel using dugout canoes carved from the trunks of elms, cedars and cypresses. A series of linked trails that paralleled the rivers also connected one village to another, making overland journeys relatively easy. Tribal villages traded goods with one another, exchanging strings of shells, colorful feathers, medicinal herbs and rare pigments for ceremonial dyes, region — specific game or carved fetishes.

The villages of the southern Algonquin tribes consisted of loaf-shaped lodges which were built by covering a frame of wooden poles with large pieces of bark, hides or mats woven from the reeds that grew along the river banks. In addition to these family residences, called *wigwams*, settlements included sweat lodges, sheds for storing food, a council house that served as the chief's lodge and ceremonial temples. Frequently situated on high ground and protected from attack by log palisades, these villages afforded security and engendered a sense of community to their residents.

Men and women of the southern Algonquins divided chores between them. Activities such as warfare, hunting, fishing, tobacco cultivation and the preparation of fields for planting fell most often to men; women bore the responsibilities for tending all the other crops, preparing food, tanning hides, weaving, and rearing children. Among many of the tribes, women held positions of respect; where leadership positions remained within the same family, women sometimes inherited the title of "chieftain."

Celebrations and rituals marked important events in the lives of the southern Algonquins. Puberty rites, marriage ceremonies, births and deaths served as the occasions for tribal gatherings to honor the spirits and reaffirm the connection between the worlds.

The People of the Southeastern Woodlands

Along the rivers of the Southeast, huge earthen mounds rise above the landscape — some etched with deep pictographs or stone mosaics, others topped by the ruins of temples. These monuments constitute the legacy of the first inhabitants of the rich forests and valleys of the Mississippi Basin. The civilization of the Adena-Hopewell culture (also called the “mound builders”) flourished in the American Southeast almost 4,000 years ago, before it declined and vanished from sight.

New settlers replaced the old. The Mississippian culture, a highly developed, agricultural society of sun worshippers, continued the building of mounds for ceremonial purposes. For centuries after the passing of the old mound builders, Mississippian tribes such as the Natchez made their homes near the Mississippi River. That civilization, too, rose and dwindled, giving way to yet a third wave of newcomers — the tribes that one day would bear the collective title of the Five Civilized Tribes.

From across the Mississippi came the Choctaw and the Chickasaw, descendants — according to legend — of the hero-brothers Chacta and Chicsa. Following the directions of a sacred staff and led by a white dog, Chacta brought his people to the rich lands of central Mississippi; his brother, Chicsa, continued onward into Tennessee, western Kentucky and Alabama. The Cherokee, a group of Iroquois-speakers who called themselves *aniyunwiya* (the principal people), arrived from the north, traveling down through the Ohio River valley. They settled first in the Great Smoky Mountains of North Carolina, spreading from there throughout eastern Tennessee, western Virginia and the hills of South Carolina, northern Georgia and Alabama. Southern Georgia and most of Alabama saw the rise of a collection of smaller tribes eventually known as “Creeks.” One group of Creeks traveled as far as Florida, where it developed independently as the Seminoles.

The tribes of the Southeast combined hunting and agriculture to provide food for their people. The forests provided plentiful game, while the rich soil of the mountain valleys supported vegetable crops and tobacco. A variety of fruits, nuts and berries was available in the forests.

The Southeastern tribes lived in towns set along the rivers. Each town had a central square that contained a ceremonial field, a *tcokofa* (winter council house) and a set of buildings that served as a summer council house. Arranged around the town center were residences for tribal members, usually consisting of a summer house, a winter house and several storage sheds for food. Each town had its own chief, who governed with the advice of his council, made up of warriors and elders. Generally, chiefs made decisions after arriving at a consensus; each council member expressed his opinion in meetings. Among the Creek and the Cherokee, the greatest warrior also served as chief in times of war.

Competition and rivalry existed between towns of a single tribe and among the different tribes. The Cherokee, Choctaw and Creek all participated in various forms of stickball, a sport conducted with great ceremony and ritual that conferred a great deal of status upon the winning team and its township. Wars occurred on a seasonal basis, motivated by either revenge or the need to attain greater status within the tribe by bringing home war captives. Most often, different tribes raided each other, but occasionally a town would conduct a raid upon a neighboring rival.

Most of the Southeastern tribes were matrilineal, determining ancestry from the female members, and women occupied positions of importance in society. Although they did not regularly serve as warriors, some women did fight alongside their male kinfolk, while others accompanied war parties to serve as “cheering sections,” using songs, dances and — when necessary — insults to spur the braves to victory. Men and women performed different chores within society, but both sexes were eligible to serve as council elders.

Within each town, family groups divided themselves by clans, each with its own totem spirit. Thus, the Cherokee had seven clans: wolf, deer, bird, paint, blue, wind and sweet potato. Marriages occurred across clan lines; to do otherwise was to commit incest and incur severe punishment.

The natives of the Southeast all worshipped a supreme being and honored the spirits of nature. Religious ceremonies involved ritual bathing, purification ceremonies, puberty rites for young men and women, and the all-important Green Corn Ceremony, which celebrated the ripening of the corn harvest and served as a time of rejoicing and renewal.

The reclusive rock fishers preferred to remain within the seclusion of their homes within large rock formations or behind waterfalls, emerging only occasionally to bestow their special gifts upon the human tribes. The gregarious and inquisitive thought-crafters, on the other hand, mixed freely with mortal folk, participating in their ceremonies and exchanging small Medicine tokens for gifts of prime tobacco, necklaces of tiny shells or adornments made of bright feathers. Now and then, promising young men or women would return with visiting faeries to their enchanted dwellings, sometimes staying there for years. Upon their return, not a day older than when they left, these individuals often occupied positions of great respect within their tribes, for they had been touched directly by the Medicine of the spirits. Many of them became shamans or willworkers (later known as Dreamspeakers), while others served as counselors to their tribal leaders.

From these chosen ones came the first hints (through dreams) of the arrival of strangers who would forever change the Algonquin world.

Children of the Woodland Dreaming

*If you desire to communicate
with the Nuhnehi
go and touch the branches of willows
swaying in whispering winds....
— Marijo Moore, "Invisible Tongues"*

The tribes of the Southeastern woodlands and valley, like their Northeastern neighbors, recognized the close presence of the Nunnehi. Referring to them as the "invisible people," the "little people" or the "people who live anywhere," the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw and Creek all heeded these messengers from the spirit world. The faerie folk of the Southeast resided chiefly in their own townships, well away from mortal eyes. Among themselves, they celebrated their relationship to the cycles of nature. Born of mortal dreams, however, they also understood their need for human interaction and sought ways to connect with their Dreamers.

The yunwi tsundsi acted as either unseen helpers or mischief makers. Not unlike boggans, these diminutive faeries often attached themselves to certain families, watching over children, retrieving lost objects and bestowing on their adopted mortals small gifts. If insulted or ignored, they retaliated by playing pranks on the offender or pelting her with stones thrown from their hiding places.

More decorous but no less attracted to humans than the Little People, the nanehi provided assistance to mortals in need and served as messengers between the living and the dead. The nanehi often took human lovers and sometimes dwelt for a time in native towns.

The yunwi amai'yine'hi lived along the rivers of the southeast. More attuned to the natural world and their beloved waterways than to mortal society, these reclusive faeries occasionally interacted with humans. The people residing near the southern rivers or using these waterways for fishing or transportation quickly learned to respect the water people, whose attentions to river travelers could prove either helpful or disastrous.





Refugees FROM ACROSS the GREAT WATERS

It began with a series of dreams and visions. Elders of the Nunnehi received images of pale-skinned people, similar to yet utterly unlike themselves, stepping onto familiar landscapes. At other times, they dreamed of white birds or colorless deer emerging against the dawn sky, as if they had come from the place where the rising sun bleached them. Feelings of fear and great trouble accompanied these visions. The native faeries spoke of these dreams among themselves and waited. They did not wait long.

Across the sea, in Europe, the fae felt the growing wave of disbelief begin its erosive work on the ties that bound the mundane world to the Dreaming. Many of the sidhe, whose delicate natures withered against Banality's early onslaught, severed their ties with the mortal world and fled to Arcadia for refuge. A few, reluctant to leave entirely a world still rich in promise and inspiration, journeyed westward by land trod or sea path to the Summerlands, the paradise of Tir-na-N'og just this side of the setting sun.

In other words, they joined the ranks of the discoverers of pre-Columbian America. Fleeing a world that began to grow colder with Banality even before the Shattering, many sidhe led their households (of both nobles and commoners) to the fabled lands of the West. Sailing with their Viking Dreamers exploring the cold, northern waters, many trolls landed along the shores of what would later be called Canada; some stayed to set up their own holdings as far south as New York, where their kith would remain strong throughout the later centuries. Celtic fae, among them a few clurichaun and pooka, made the journey to the Land of New Dreams as well. Thus, long before

Your Majesties.

Information about this time admittedly exists only in legend and Remembrance, so we must view with some skepticism what our pooka chronicler says of this time, particularly with regard to the commoner incursions without noble leadership. We must remember, however, that myths once assumed a status equal if not superior to history in the centuries before certified historical experts claimed for themselves the sole ability to endow a shard of imagination with the weight of "fact." It must be admitted that during the Resurgence, the troll army held its strongest positions in the New York area. Therefore, I have not edited Sir Slevin's text in this instance, as he might very well be correct in his suppositions.

My Best Regards.

Lady Aramithe

the Black Plague signaled the onslaught of the Shattering, many European fae had already established themselves in the "Westward Isle."

Unlike the explorers who would navigate the Atlantic in the 15th and 16th centuries, the fae were not limited to coastal penetration of the rich lands of the New World. Ancient dreampaths led many of these refugees deep into the hinterlands, where they encountered humans still untouched by cynicism. Also, at this time, the emigrant European fae first encountered the native faeries of America — elusive and alien (to them) creatures called them Nunnehi by their Dreamers.

Eager to reestablish freeholds and make the best of their self-imposed exile in this strange and beautiful new land, the European fae began to erect palaces in the wilderness. In most cases, they found themselves infringing on land claimed by the native faeries or by their human Dreamers. In some instances, the newcomers placated the local Nunnehi with gifts and offers of friendship. Old and new faeries swore oaths of alliance. Grand castles wreathed in Glamour rose within sight of Nunnehi villages, and both prospered. Other exiles were not so fortunate — or so perceptive — in their dealings with the native fae. Refusing to recognize the presence of culture and civilization in the absence of ostentation, some (well, almost all) of the European fae seized choice lands without seeking permission from the local faeries, dismissing them as mere commoners and therefore beneath their notice. In some cases, outright warfare marked the first contact between European fae and the Nunnehi.

Your Majesties.

I realize that the above comments may seem disrespectful or insulting to the queen's mentor, yet I have left them in the document with the hopes that further discussions with Sir Slevin may shed some light on this era that is almost lost to our knowledge. King Meilge himself claims not to recall his former existence in Summerstree. Although I have attempted to verify or disprove the allegation that King Meilge's prior life in the Willow's region was marked by discord with the native fae, I have been unable to either substantiate or refute the claim. Sir Slevin does call it a series of misunderstandings, and such was often the case among two disparate cultures meeting for the first time. In any case, as King Meilge now acknowledges the existence of the Echota Council Lands practically on his doorstep, we may assume that whatever enmity once existed between the Nunnehi of the region and King Meilge has been settled.

Yours,

Lady Aramithe



A few wisps of Remembrance remain from those elder times. In the mountains of eastern Kentucky, a few Nunnehi tell tales around their campfires of a great friendship between the pale-skinned Lord Tamlin ap Fiona and the Nunnehi wise woman Weeping Sky. Those who can prove kinship with or offer tribute in the name of Tamlin find welcome even today among the few Nunnehi who still inhabit the Cumberland Mountain ranges of Kentucky.

Your Majesties.

Sir Slevin's summarization of this "first wave" lends credence to other tales of similar pre-Shattering arrivals of the fae in the New World. The possibility that some of those who sought refuge in the Summerlands might have brought enchanted members of their household with them does much to explain some of the disputed evidence that Europeans visited the American continent well before the Columbian era. Unfortunately, few mortal historians would find acceptable the premise that humans traveled from Europe across faerie trods.

In addition, the preexistence of relations, whether good or bad, between the fae and the Nunnehi might shed light on the different degrees of acceptance from the native fae we encountered on our Return. In some instances, nobles who laid claim to fiefdoms throughout Concordia reported constant and inexplicable harassment by local Nunnehi, regardless of attempts to placate them. Other lords had no such difficulties, remarking that native faeries seemed to greet their arrival as the return of old friends.

Yours,

Lady Aramithe

Other whispers from the ancient past tell of the arrival of Meilge ap Eiluned (who rules today as King of Willows) and his household in the heartland of Georgia, where he built a grand freehold called Summerstree. A series of unfortunate mishaps and mistaken overtures between this lord of the sidhe and the native faeries led to a state of near constant war. Periodic raids and skirmishes plagued the ancient domain of Summerstree from its founding to its abrupt and catastrophic demise (see below). Of course, the Mists tend to obscure the verification of any reports from that forgotten age.

For the Nunnehi, the arrival of strangers presaged change. The knowledge that others who seemed so different from themselves existed altered their relationship to the world and to the Dreaming. Indeed, the European faeries' mere knowledge of the Sundering hastened its appearance in the New World. The refugees unwittingly brought with them the seeds of their own doom. By Nunnehi lorekeepers' accounts, the repercussions of the Sundering echoed about the Higher Hunting Grounds during this time.

The Shattering

Finally, the weight of Banality proved so oppressive that not even the most untainted bonds of Glamour could hold the Dreaming close to this world. With a great shudder, the trods that still connected the two worlds began to crack and crumble; the gateways to Arcadia shimmered and groaned, dissolving like sand castles before the relentless pounding of ocean waves. Even in the Summerlands of America, the paths to the Dreaming faded and tremors rocked the Dreaming.

The sidhe who had enjoyed a brief respite from the travails of the Old World realized that time had at last caught up with them. Sealing off their freeholds, sometimes stripping those places of Glamour to power their journey, the last of the sidhe departed the world. In the heart of the South, Meilge ap Eiluned bade farewell to his magnificent palace at Summerstree.

Curiously, not all of the sidhe chose to leave. The same Nunnehi who preserve the legend of Tamlin and Weeping Sky also speak of a sacred place in the mountains where a pale lord still dwells beyond mortal senses. Other rumors persist of the hidden glens of these Lost Ones — deep within the bayou country of Louisiana and the Ozark Mountains and in the hinterlands of West Virginia. Many fae of House Liam — indeed, some say half the house — chose to remain rather than flee to the safety of Arcadia. Their tale ends soon thereafter, as their "changeling" line died out. Moreover, as many of us know, the sidhe of House Scathach refused to leave the mortal world, surrendering themselves to the same methods of preservation as did the commoner kith who failed to make the crossing into Arcadia. While most members of that house remained in Europe, emigrating to America with their mortal kin after its official "discovery," a few numbered themselves among the early exiles to the Summerlands and rode out the years between the Shattering and the Resurgence by seeking refuge among friendly native tribes.

Strange New Dreams

Wherever there are dreams, the fae are not far behind. When Columbus reported his discovery of the Indies to his patrons, he ignited the imaginations of Europeans. Merchant houses saw their profits soar contemplating the possibility of trade with the "Orient" (closed to them by land routes since the fall of Constantinople). Religious dissidents began to dream of establishing for themselves refuges from the persecution of their beliefs. Monarchs sought to expand their domains by laying claim to the reputed wealth and resources that lay across the western sea. All of these groups included changelings who fed on the excitement and hope that rose from the tales of new lands ripe for the taking.

While the history of the American South traditionally begins with the settlement at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607, in truth, Europeans had visited the southern portion of the new continent since the middle of the previous century. The Spanish arrived in Florida in the mid 1500s. Led by Hernando de Soto, an expedition traveled extensively throughout the South, making contact with natives in the Carolinas and along

the Mississippi. The Kithain accompanied the Spanish explorers in force, seeing the wonders of the new lands for themselves. They reported their findings to the fae in Europe. The French also explored parts of the Southeast, though they did not establish their settlement in Louisiana until 1718. Almost certainly, however, their expeditions contained changelings. After all, explorers dream some of the boldest dreams in the world. Where Ponce de León sought the Fountain of Youth, the Kithain sought — and found — the Fountain of Dreams.

Once the Jamestown colony proved viable, the rush to settle the New World gained momentum. In Maryland, Catholics under the protection of Cecilius Calvert, Lord Baltimore, founded St. Mary's City in 1634; Protestants established their own colonial enclave in Anne Arundel Town (later called Annapolis) soon after. In both Virginia and Maryland, an aristocratic upper class assumed the rights of rulership over a labor force of indentured servants and Indian and African slaves, whose efforts ensured ready cash crops from the farming of tobacco. All the commoner kith and a few of House Scathach arrived alongside their mortal counterparts. While some were craftsmen, farmers and entrepreneurs, a few Kithain were among the indentured colonists who traded a few years of

service for their passage to the new lands. Many eshu traveled on the slave ships with their kinain families, but some were both free and wealthy. Still other changelings braved the few trods left open, thereby discovering freeholds abandoned by nobles and claiming them as their own.

After the demise of the ill-fated settlement on Roanoke around 1590, the region south of Virginia remained largely ignored by English colonists for over half a century. After the Restoration of the British monarchy in 1660, the Carolinas were again targeted for colonization when King Charles II granted settlement charters to his allies. Charles Towne (later Charleston) arose in 1670, while along the coastal regions south of Virginia (in what would later become North Carolina), colonies sprouted near the original Roanoke settlement.

Further south, in Georgia, a variation on the colonial dream differentiated that portion of the South from its very inception. Established by a board of trustees as a haven for debtors and others who had run afoul of the rigid class system in England, the colony of Georgia, founded in 1733, spread outward from the port city of Savannah. The ideals that sparked this experiment in reformation also attracted many changelings who fed on the dreams of new beginnings in a new world.

Your Majesties.

In my opinion, the disappearance of the colony on Roanoke Island remains an unsolved mystery to human historians largely because they lack the imagination to conceive of possible reasons outside the bounds of logic and evidence. Laying aside those two factors opens the mind to a pair of possibilities.

The "facts" are these: Established in 1587 by Sir Walter Raleigh, Roanoke was ignored for three years. By 1590, all signs of the colony's inhabitants had vanished, leaving behind only the single word Croatoan carved into a tree. No signs of the settlers turned up when search parties explored the nearby Croatoan Island (now called Hatteras). Historians assume that the colonists either died from disease or at the hands of the local native population or else "went native" and removed themselves from the vicinity.

Almost certainly, however, changelings accompanied those early settlers; how could it be otherwise in a situation so richly based on dreams and hopes? Consider the possibility that, upon realizing that the colony's supplies were dwindling and no rescue from England was forthcoming, these changelings somehow found a way to reconnect with the Dreaming. With the help of the local Nunnehi, who still retained ties at that time with the Higher Hunting Grounds, the relocating a small colony of enchanted mortals to an enclosed portion of the Dreaming might have succeeded. The resulting homestead would lie just beyond the realm of mortal vision and forever outside the course of human history.

A second explanation for the disappearance of the Lost Colony tells a grimmer tale and comes from the Prodigal shapeshifters who call themselves the Garou. Their legends speak of a great evil that invaded the New World with the Roanoke settlers. Determined to banish that dark force from their Pure Lands, an entire tribe of Garou and its native allies sacrificed themselves, thus utterly destroying the colony to protect their lands from further corruption. Though the Garou have maintained this story as a tragic, historical epic, I much prefer the happier version, admittedly concocted by my own imagination.

I remain your servant.

Lady Aramithe



Dreams in Conflict

As the new colonies in Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia set down roots, the ambitions of the European colonists brought them into conflict with the natives whose lands they commandeered. The Powhatan Confederacy (named for its leader, Chief Powhatan) initially tested the resolve of the early settlers of Jamestown by sending warriors to attack the settlement. The capture of Captain John Smith and the intervention of Pocahontas, Powhatan's daughter, to save him from execution led trade agreements and alliances between natives and newcomers.

In truth, however, conflicts between the Algonquins of the Virginia coast and the Jamestown colony continued as the English sought to expand their holdings at the Powhatans' expense. By 1618, a little more than a decade after the founding of Jamestown, the Powhatans had declined — their numbers decimated by European diseases and their culture tainted by the introduction of guns, tools and other strange and valuable trade goods. With the defeat in 1640 of Opechancanough, Powhatan's successor, the native Algonquins found themselves relegated to the status of vassals or, in some cases, indentured servants or slaves. They were confined to lands on the fringes of the growing colony. The land now belonged to the usurper and his dreams.

In Maryland, a similar uprooting of native culture took place as newcomer advances swept aside the Piscataway. Alliances with the English settlers at Saint Mary's aggravated the Piscataway's northern neighbors and rivals, the Susquehannock; these Iroquois, armed with guns from the Swedish and Dutch immigrants in Delaware, mounted attacks on their southern rivals. Those Piscataway who survived the battles fell prey to disease. The rush to colonize continued.

In the Carolinas, the Tuscarora and the Creek nations suffered the same depredations from the settlements in Charles Towne, New Bern and other emerging colonies. Disregarding tribal claims to lands provoked conflicts between natives and settlers, while disease took its toll among the longtime inhabitants of the region. In 1711, the embittered Tuscarora mounted a last-ditch attack on the New Bern community; their defeat and forced emigration to upstate New York permanently secured the eastern coast of North Carolina for future generations of settlers. Attacks by the Yamasee and Lower Creeks on the South Carolina settlement at Port Royal sparked a series of wars that soon involved not only the entire coastal region of the Carolinas but extended into the interior, where the Cherokee became involved. The resulting Yamasee War had a devastating effect on the natives, inflaming old hostilities between the Creeks and the Cherokee, who had sided with the British against their ancient rivals. By the end of that bloody conflict, the position of the English settlers had solidified; as the ultimate victors, they controlled the disbursement of lands and goods. The dreams of the Southeastern woodlands began to fade.

The Second Shattering

Despite warnings from their Nunnehi brothers and sisters, the Algonquins and the Southeastern tribes persisted in seeking fair treatment from the Europeans. Hoping to salvage some sort of peace, the native faeries sent their own emissaries to bargain with the faeries from across the waters. Unfortunately, the Nunnehi did not realize that this contact would expose them to the taint of Banality. In the aftermath of the Shattering, the European fae had transformed themselves into changelings, embracing a veneer of Banality to shield their inherent Glamour from utter destruction. The Nunnehi had no such protection; like the diseases that decimated the mortal population of the native tribes, Banality infected the Nunnehi, weakening their ties with the Higher Hunting Grounds.

In addition to the drastic reduction of the native population and the extinction of entire tribes, a disruption in the connections between the mortal world and the American Dreaming resulted from the imposition of European cultural values and religious beliefs — and disbeliefs. The gateways to Arcadia had long since disappeared; now the passages to the Higher Hunting Grounds began to dissolve. Even as their mortal counterparts debated methods of dealing with the newcomers, councils of Nunnehi elders met to determine how to cope with the impending loss of their source of Medicine.

The answers came to them in dreams and vision quests.

Like the Prodigal wolf-spirits, the Nunnehi learned new ways of gathering Medicine — by tapping directly into the power of the natural world. While the loss of the Higher Hunting Grounds made it more difficult to harvest Glamour from acts of creativity and imagination, their new knowledge of drawing forth the magical essences of the rocks, trees and rivers that surrounded them helped them sustain themselves. Instead of traveling back and forth between the mortal world and the Higher Hunting Grounds, the Nunnehi learned how to enter the spirit world that their wolf-cousins called the Umbra, the source of natural Medicine.

As their human tribes dwindled, the Nunnehi withdrew deeper into the wilderness. Although a few native fae persisted in attempting to coexist with their European cousins, most preferred to avoid further contact. Thus, dreams of welcoming and sharing disappeared from history's stage, replaced by darker visions of mistrust and fear.

New Arrivals, New Lands, New Dreams

While the initial settlement of the South was coastal, a second wave of newcomers moved into the Appalachian Mountains. Some of these pioneers resented the stratified society of the tidewater settlements and sought a less restrictive way of life; others migrated from the northern colonies, following the valleys of the Appalachians from Pennsylvania and upstate New York. Among these newcomers were the Scot-Irish and the Pennsylvania Dutch (or Germans). A new influx of European fae — trolls, boggans, nockers, pooka and redcaps —

Glamour on the High Seas: Pirates and Privateers

During England's sporadic campaign of warfare against Spain, privateers received commissions from the monarchy to prey upon Spanish ships. Given the blessings of the British Crown, several of these buccaneers achieved high status; King Charles bestowed a knighthood and the title of Governor of Jamaica on Henry Morgan as a reward for his privateering efforts against Spain. Rumors among the Kithain hold that Valeren ap Scathach served as one of Morgan's most trusted officers, accompanying him on his daring assaults against the Spanish fleet.

Throughout the early period of colonization, pirates frequented the coastal regions of the Carolinas, finding havens in the many coves that pocketed the shoreline. Small settlements along the coast welcomed these free traders and looked forward to their arrival.

The exploits of Whispering Molly, the sluagh pirate "queen," and her crew of Kithain made their way into the legends of the fae of the Carolina coast. Flaunting the Navigation Acts that imposed high tariffs on imported goods and forced the colonists to sell their produce only to England, Molly's ship, the *Midnight Witch*, smuggled contraband at cut-rate prices to colonists eager to sample her exotic wares.

The British response to piracy varied according to the political climate. During the conflicts with Spain, privateers bore letters of marque endowing them with the license to attack Spanish vessels. With the cessation of English-Spanish hostilities, however, these "freelance" traders became an embarrassment to the Crown.

Despite the fickle nature of royal patronage, piracy held great profit for the venturesome entrepreneurs on the high seas. Trading in everything from rum and gold pieces to the human cargo of slaves from Africa and indentured servants captured from "legitimate" merchant ships, privateers continued to defy the forces of the law.

The wild freedom and excitement of life on the high seas served as a rich source of Glamour for Kithain of all classes. Changeling legends speak of a motley of redcaps that served the most famous of the Carolina pirates, Edward Teach — better known as Blackbeard.

Some stories credit the career of the retired Major Stede Bonnet, who late in life turned to piracy, to the pranks of Gannet Sullivan, his Unseelie pooka companion who sought to infuse some excitement into a friend. Other Kithain, such as the eshu Andre Dubonet, captain of the *Broken Chain*, preyed upon slaving ships, rescuing many kidnapped Africans who later established free enclaves in various parts of the South.

Certainly, the lure of riches drew many changelings to the swashbuckler's life, but more of them rejoiced in the wealth of Glamour that came from casting aside the constraint of laws and regulations for the drama and camaraderie of shared danger and excitement.



eagerly accompanied these settlers deeper into the wilderness. More rugged dreams surfaced in a land that refused to succumb to human occupation. The strong desire for independence that arose among these isolated pockets of colonists mirrored the largely Unseelie component of the fae population in this area. Like their human counterparts, the fae who settled the inland mountains in what would eventually become western North Carolina, eastern Tennessee and Kentucky and northern Georgia sought escape from the Seelie commoners who retained too many vestiges of the traditions left behind by their vanished *sidhe* overlords. The dreams of rebellion flourished in the mountains and the hinterlands.

The coastal colonies of the South continued to prosper. The town of Baltimore received a charter in 1729; by 1707, Williamsburg had inherited the leadership of the now-abandoned Jamestown settlement. In 1730, the Carolinas divided into northern and southern provinces. Charleston served as the capital of South Carolina until after the Revolutionary War. Savannah held its place as Georgia's capital until Augusta replaced it in 1785.

During the period leading up to the American Revolution, the southern colonies evolved into a rigidly structured society. The rise of plantations, held by the aristocratic "planter" class, led to the increased need for cheap (read: preferably free) labor. The importation of black slaves from Africa and natives from the Caribbean and the enslavement of the indigenous tribes played a vital role in the region's economy.

Oglethorpe's Tarnished Dream

The colony of Georgia began as one man's vision of an ideal society. When George II granted a charter to James Oglethorpe for the founding of a society, he little knew that he had granted permission for an experiment in utopia. On the surface, Oglethorpe's colony — founded in Savannah in 1733 — promised sizable profits to the British monarch; the region's semitropical climate seemed ideal for cultivating grapes for wine, raising silkworms and growing exotic spices. In addition, the location of the colony served as a buffer zone between the Spaniards in Florida and the prosperous Carolinas.

Oglethorpe proposed to settle his lands with people who had fallen out of society's favor: families of debtors, religious dissidents, petty criminals and poor workers in need of a second chance. The original trustees of the colony outlawed slave labor, forbade the use of alcohol (hard liquor) within the colony and attempted to prevent the growth of large plantations.

Many commoner changelings were among the first arrivals in the new "promised land," spurred on by the hopes of debtors whose bitter hearts still held within them hopes for change and for a new life. Numerous families of redcaps and boggans trace their mortal ancestry to Savannah's earliest days.

Unfortunately, Oglethorpe's dream died in its infancy. While the climate of Georgia's coastal region seemed ideal for growing grapes and other semitropical crops, the soil proved unsuitable. Eventually, the colony had to resort to the staple crops raised by its neighbors in the Carolinas — cotton, rice and indigo. As early as 1749, landowners began using slave labor to remain competitive. In 1753, when Georgia reverted

to the status of a royal colony, it bore little resemblance to the land of opportunity as imagined by its founder. The shattered dreams of its inhabitants took on their own life, and new changelings emerged whose Unseelie natures reflected the loss of hope and loss of faith in honest effort.

From the Bayou to the Deep South

The French established the settlement of New Orleans at the mouth of the Mississippi River in 1718, hoping to control the lucrative fur trade between the Gulf and the Great Lakes. Lack of French interest and economic support, however, prevented New Orleans and the entire territory of Louisiana from reaching its full potential. In the 1760s, France ceded its lands west of the Mississippi to Spain, while England acquired French territory east of the great river.

While the French controlled New Orleans, the city acquired a diverse population that included French, Irish, Spanish, German and West Indian residents. Kithain found both the climate and the atmosphere of New Orleans congenial. Under the French and later Spanish, black inhabitants enjoyed greater freedom than their enslaved counterparts in the British-controlled colonies. The bayous to the west of the Mississippi became the refuge in the 1750s of French Acadians expelled from Canada by the British. These exiles formed the basis of the Cajun population who have forever stamped the culture of the region.

Among the changelings who settled in Louisiana were eshu who made their homes with the free blacks and the exiled Acadians, pooka and boggans who arrived with the Irish, German nockers and trolls and Spanish and West Indian satyrs.

In 1686, Henri de Tonti founded the settlement known as Arkansas Post (Poste d'Arkansas) along the Lower Mississippi. Abandoned in 1700, the outpost was revived by an influx of German settlers determined to establish themselves along the Mississippi's fur trade route. While that attempt proved less successful than anticipated, the outpost nevertheless maintained a tenuous existence, surviving to greet the Americans who claimed it as part of the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. Hardy nockers, trolls and boggans, as well as a few sluagh, traveled to Arkansas with the hope of reviving their fading dreams.

In 1699, the French established an outpost not far from the site of modern Biloxi; Fort Rosalie on the Mississippi River became the second permanent site of French colonists in 1714. Clashes between the French and the native Creeks and Natchez (aided by their Nunnehi kin) limited expansion of the region until well after the American Revolution. The Mississippi Territory, which includes present-day Alabama, passed from the French to the British in the transfer of power that gave Louisiana to Spain.

Although they failed to establish permanent settlements in Alabama, Spanish and English fur traders explored the rich lands along the Alabama River in the latter half of the 16th century. The region remained disputed territory for many decades thereafter. Finally, the French succeeded in founding settlements at Fort Louis in 1702 and in Mobile in 1711. From there, they established a series of forts and indigo and rice plantations. Like the English

and Spanish, they imported black slave labor from Africa. The Treaty of Paris in 1763 gave Alabama to the British, who made a point of courting the Creek nations who lived in the region, supplying them with guns and horses and encouraging their assimilation of European customs and culture.

The beauty of the Mississippi and Alabama River valleys called to European changelings, and a few hardy members of House Scathach and a number of commoner fae arrived with the early fur traders and subsequent planters. Many eshu labored in the fields alongside their enslaved mortal families, helping to keep alive their pride and dreams of attaining freedom.

Dreams of Independence and Revolution

The events that led up to the American Revolution comprised a catalog of mounting frustrations between the colonists of the new world and the English Crown. The monarchy saw its interests in the Americas as primarily economic, expecting the colonies to provide it with cheap sources of raw materials and foodstuffs while at the same time purchasing imported goods at high prices. In addition, the British used the colonies as a convenient dumping ground for political and religious dissidents, reasoning that enough distance would neutralize these enemies while at the same time allowing them to perform valuable (though risky) services for the Crown.

The British did not count on the power of dreams and a vast ocean to inspire rebellion and a desire for independence.

Fighting alongside their kinain families, the Kithain joined wholeheartedly in the War of Independence, although not all of them fought on the side of the rebels. Many pioneers of the Appalachian frontier resented the prosperity of their richer cousins inhabiting the fertile lands along the Chesapeake and in the Tidewater regions of the Carolinas and Virginia. Hotbeds of Tory sympathizers proliferated in parts of the South. Many battles between English and American forces saw Scathach sidhe, trolls, redcaps and pooka battling each other with chimerical weapons alongside mortals armed with muskets and cannons.

Both the British and the Americans sought allies among the native tribes still residing in lands claimed by England. The British won many Creek and some Cherokee to its cause by assurances that it would limit the western expansion of the colonies. Other branches of the Cherokee sided with the Americans, who supplied them with weapons and horses in return for their assistance. For the most part, the Nunnehi counseled their human kin to avoid involving themselves in the wars of the invaders, but their advice went unheeded as more warlike tempers prevailed. Some Nunnehi, spurred on by anger over the treatment that they had received at the hands of European fae, joined the war despite the warnings of their own tribal elders. Chimerical war clubs and tomahawks became as common as swords in some parts of the South.

In the end, the dreamers of independence proved victorious: in 1783, the colonies achieved their freedom from Britain. The American Dream began.

In many ways, the real losers of the Revolutionary War were not the British, but the Native Americans. The tribes who had supported the English suffered seizure of their lands as spoils of war. The Algonquins, Creeks, Cherokees and other tribes retreated further west as the new American nation sought to expand its western borders. The expansion of the fledgling Union proceeded as Kentucky and Tennessee were incorporated as states. Nunnehi villages disappeared, and sacred grounds suffered as pioneers trampled through them. Many native stories were lost, supplanted by those of the Europeans.

In 1803, France sold the vast Louisiana Territory, which included the entire middle portion of the continent from New Orleans to the Canadian border, to the new United States government. Overnight, the young nation acquired the potential to become a formidable world power. Europeans flocked to the newly opened territory. In their wake came European fae hungry for freeholds.

The westward expansion into the Appalachian and Cumberland Mountains and into the Mississippi and Tennessee Valleys brought pioneers into renewed conflict with the Creeks, Choctaw, Chickasaw and Cherokee. The success of the new American nation also disturbed Britain, unwilling as it was to let go entirely of its hold on its former colonies. Continued conscription of Americans into the British army and navy and British attempts to control America's relations with other European powers led to the

Your Majesties.

Although we sídhe were not present when these events transpired, the reports that have come down to us from commoner chronicles (such as that given above) detail the origin of the difficulties we labor under in the present day. From this period of colonization, warfare and displacement created enmities that still plague Concordia. Not only do many Nunnehi still resent the Europeans who, centuries ago, ousted them, but we here in Concordia still often have shaky relations with those Kithain who never left Europe. It often seems as though they still consider the denizens of Concordia to be their inferior descendants, half-barbaric children who need to be shown the proper way of doing things. Perhaps this arrogance on their part reflects to us our own foolishness in dealing with today's Nunnehi — and often our commoner subjects. But perhaps I ascribe too much meaning to what was (after all) really the commoners' own doing. They could hardly have been expected to excel in ruling a strange new land without the centuries of expertise we sídhe have acquired. Perhaps we can take steps now to undo some of the harm that was caused then.

I hope that my musings have served to pique your interest rather than to offend.

I remain,

Lady Aramithe

A District Apart: Washington, D.C.

In 1791, Maryland donated land along the banks of the Potomac River for the construction of a national capital. The District of Columbia, hovering on the border between Maryland and Virginia, thus belonged to the nation rather than to any single part of it. Though Washington reflects the cosmopolitan ideas of its chief architect, a distinctly Southern atmosphere also permeates the city and its environs.

Designed by the French architect Pierre-Charles L'Enfant, the city of Washington, D.C., became the center of the new government in 1800. Captured and burned by the British during the War of 1812, Washington underwent rebuilding and expansion.

The nation's capital contains its own share of Glamour, born from the dreams of independence and the visions of each new president-elect (before the realities of political expediency exercise their corrosive influence on once-pristine ideals). Many Kithain, however, believe that Washington's Glamour bears a dark taint. These critics maintain that spending too much time pursuing inspiration in a city known for its arcane and unsavory political machinations has driven many a changeling into the arms of the Shadow Court.

In fact, many Unseelie Kithain reside in the Washington, D.C. area, which they claim belongs to none of Concordia's established nobility. No one has yet verified the rumors of the city's seat as a Shadow Duchy owing fealty to the "Kingdom of Discordia."

War of 1812. Again, the British sought — and received — support from the native tribes; again, the Indians — and the native fae who embodied their dreams — were the losers, as more of their lands fell in reprisal to the victorious Americans.

Plantations and Evictions

The growth of the plantation system throughout much of the southeast (with the exception of some of the more mountainous regions) marked the most significant difference between the southern United States and the rest of the nation. The South depended on large-scale farming for the production of cash crops. Land, the South's greatest resource, rested in the possession of an aristocratic class of planters. The use of slave labor, ingrained in the plantation economy since its colonial inception, became a subject for debate and fierce discussion in Congress almost from the beginning. Kithain embroiled themselves on both sides of the issue, with changelings from planter households standing in opposition to their more liberal-minded Kithain counterparts.

Once the colonies had won their freedom from England, they were loathe to surrender any portion of it to a greater union. The division between Federalists, who supported a

strong central government, and Republicans, who advocated placing authority in local hands, made it difficult to reach a consensus on the status of slavery. The southern states, largely represented by members from the planter class, saw any attempt to limit the importation of slaves or to abolish slavery as an attack on their sovereign right to self-determination. As so often happens in the political arena, morals bowed before the pressure of expediency and self-interest. Thus, the same men who reveled in their hard-won struggle for independence denied the blessings of liberty to others. Unfortunately, many Kithain shared their mortal cousins' beliefs.

While the plantation mentality separated the South from the rest of the nation, another issue gained popular support from all parts of the new country. Put simply, the Louisiana Purchase doubled the territory of the United States, making available vast lands for expansion. Standing in the way of the nation's new "manifest destiny," however, were thousands of Native Americans. Already pressed westward from their original homelands, the several Indian nations once more represented obstacles to settlers anxious to claim the rich, new areas as their own.

The War of 1812, while ostensibly fought to establish American rights over its newly acquired territories and to force the English to recognize America's sovereignty as an international power, actually served other interests. By the end of the war, the Creek nation had forfeited its lands in Georgia and Alabama to the United States, removing themselves across the Mississippi. Some Nunnehi remained behind, determined to protect their sacred lands from the supplanters, but they were too few and far between. More European changelings quickly moved in to claim abandoned Nunnehi freeholds.

The war also launched the career of Andrew Jackson, whose exploits against the Creeks at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend and against the British at the Battle of New Orleans cleared the way for his entry onto the political stage. Although many Kithain doubt the assertions that "Old Hickory" was, himself, one of the Dauntain, no one can deny that his presidency brought to an end the dreams of many native changelings. With Jackson's presidency, the remaining tribes of Cherokee, Choctaw and Chickasaw saw their dreams of cooperation with the nation of white Americans turn into a nightmare of eviction and forced relocation.

The Trail of Tears

Since the presentation of Pocahontas to the courts of Europe, the Indian nations had relied on the principles of negotiation and personal representation to formulate agreements between themselves and the chieftains of the pale-skinned settlers. Throughout the colonial period, treaties between the British and the native tribes dictated everything from trade agreements to assurances — of revocations — of land titles.

The members of the Five Civilized Tribes (the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek and Seminole) sought to do the same with the "white father" in Washington. Time and again, ambassadors from these tribes visited the nation's capital, seeking to petition the President to recognize their rights to land and their sovereignty as nations.





The Cherokee went further than any of the tribes in their efforts to gain acknowledgment of their equality as a diplomatic power, besides adopting the clothing, customs, lifestyles, religion and habits of their American neighbors, they developed a written language, published a newspaper and drafted a constitution based on the American model. Their hopes of gaining the respect of the chief of the American nation through cultural assimilation evoked varying responses from each president they encountered. Some, like James Monroe, appeared partially sympathetic to the Indians' concerns. Time and again, petitions and letters to Washington met with ambiguous promises of consideration of the tribes' requests for sovereign recognition.

Finally, with Andrew Jackson, the ambiguity came to an end. President Jackson made no secret of his belief that the solution to the problem of coexistence with the native population lay in removing them — by force, if necessary — from territory claimed by the United States. In this, he had the support and encouragement of many settlers in the disputed lands. The discovery of gold in lands held by the Cherokee in northern Georgia served as the impetus for increased pressure for Indian relocation, and Jackson needed little urging to enact the passage of the Indian Removal Act of 1830. From that moment, the tribes of the Southeast lived on borrowed time.

Despite a decision by the U. S. Supreme Court backing Cherokee claims to nationhood, President Jackson initiated the forced removal in 1838 of more than 14,000 Cherokee from their homelands in Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee.

Known as the Trail of Tears, the Cherokees' enforced march from their homelands to "Indian Territory" (present-day Oklahoma) across the Mississippi resulted in the deaths of one-fifth of the men, women and children compelled to travel through the harsh winter months from October 1838 to March 1839.

Your Majesties.

In my opinion, this passage seems to point to the major cause of Nunnehi/Kithain enmity in this region. Rather than some unproven gossip concerning Meilge ap Eiluned's former time in the land, it seems far more likely to me that most of the damage was done long after we had left for Arcadia. Given that the actions taken by the commoners and their Dreamers caused such disruptions among the native fae, it is little wonder that current relations between the Kithain of the Kingdom of Willows and the few Nunnehi who reside within its boundaries often begin in an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust and, from there, degenerate into open hostility. Can we expect anything else from the inheritors of broken dreams?

Yours,

Lady Aramithe

Accompanying their mortal families, the Nunnehi tried to imbue their kin with courage and hope, but the native faeries suffered keenly from the abrupt disruption of their connection to the land, their source of Medicine. Many Nunnehi perished en route, sickening and dying from a dearth of dreams.

Jackson's net did not catch all the natives, however. Many Cherokee fled to the mountains of Appalachia, hiding from the soldiers until it was safe to emerge. Some Nunnehi came to the assistance of their human kin, using their powers of Enchantment to draw them into the spirit world. With the formation of a reservation in the Smokies, along the border between North Carolina and Tennessee, these refugees from exile once again reentered the world and took up residence on lands granted to them. The surviving Nunnehi likewise attempted to re-create their dreams from the fragments left over from the ambitions of American greed.

Civil War

The first half of the 19th century saw repeated confrontations between the southern states and the rest of the nation. Most northern states had little vested interest in slavery; many had, in fact, abolished the institution. The South, on the other hand, had locked itself into a slave-based economy. Its agricultural foundations rested on the backs of black slaves; moreover, slaves toiled in almost every southern industry, from mining coal in Kentucky to building roads and railroads to laboring in the factories and mills arising in many southern cities. The Missouri Compromise of 1820, which controlled the admission of new states to the Union as slave states or free states in the hopes of preserving a balance between the two groups, underlined the overwhelming importance that the issue of slave-holding assumed in the minds of northerners and southerners alike.

Your Majesties.

My colleague skirts the issue of Kithain involvement in the events leading to the Civil War. Certainly, the high levels of 'Banality' surrounding the debates over the economic 'necessity' of slavery and the political integrity of the rights of states over the demands of a federated government kept many Kithain far away from the center of activity surrounding the dissolution of the Union. On the other hand, signs of Kithain presence are evident in many places during this problematic epoch.

The Kithain of the antebellum South sustained themselves on a variety of dreams. While no overall "government" existed among them since the Shattering, individual commoners and Seathach sidhe managed to carve out freeholds within the Southern Dreaming that mirrored the society around them. Undoubtedly some changelings existed among the slave-owning upper class, feeding on the cloying dreams of pastoral paternalism. The grand balls and galas of the pre-war South served as rallying points for pleasure-loving satyrs, while not a few pooka surfaced among the horse-raising gentry of Kentucky and Virginia.

Among the black population of the South, the eshu played a vital role, one that established strong bonds of mutual inspiration between mortals and changelings. Eshu reminded uprooted slave families of their African traditions and shared in the preservations of folk stories and ancestral histories that would otherwise have disappeared. In addition, many eshu lived among the free blacks of New Orleans, Charleston, Mobile and certain parts of Virginia and Maryland. The sea islands off the coast of South Carolina and Georgia developed a vibrant culture characterized by its own dialect (called Gullah) and by its wealth of songs — many of them spirituals — and folk tales.

The growth of the Underground Railroad, which spirited runaway slaves from the South into free territory across the Ohio River, attracted the involvement of many eshu. Their special affinity for the Art of Wayfare proved especially useful in engineering miraculous "disappearances" and added to the number of successful escapes. A few pooka (who enjoyed the prankish aspects of pulling the wool over the eyes of the staid Southern planters) also joined in the clandestine movements.

Other Kithain prospered in the Southern backwoods, mountains and bayou country. Boggans in the Appalachians, Cumberlands and Ozarks sustained their faerie natures by inspiring local crafters and artisans in the small towns that nestled in coves and hollows throughout the mountains. Redcap motleys roamed the backroads of the South, wreaking havoc and stirring up the fires of dissension wherever they settled. Nockers flourished in coal-mine country and along the railroads, fascinated with the inner workings of the "iron horse," despite their aversion to the poisonous metal rails.

During this troubled era, the differences between Seelie and Unseelie blurred. Was it Seelie to support a system that advocated outright ownership of fellow humans? Did opposing slavery and, therefore, the established authority make a changeling Unseelie? Suffice it to say that a Southern changeling's "Court" often fluctuated drastically and had more to do with their adherence to either the Seelie or Unseelie Code than to their support of any external authority.

Yours, as ever,

Lady Aramithe

Other factors, besides slavery, worked to widen the gulf between the states on either side of the Mason-Dixon line. Southern representatives to Congress repeatedly opposed attempts to federalize the U. S. government, arguing that the original colonies had not rebelled against the British Crown only to surrender their liberty to an American one. The issue of "states' rights" came to stand for Southern reluctance to accede to any authority save its own. Second, the vast differences in economies between North and South further underscored the regional differences. The agricultural South feared economic collapse with the abolition of slavery and saw attempts at national legislation that outlawed trafficking in and possessing slaves as an attack on their balance sheets, as well as an affront to their social structure.

To complicate the situation further, not all Southerners supported the continuation of slavery. In many parts of the South, away from the plantations of the valley and tidewater regions, small farmers lived precariously, working their own fields without slave labor. The fine words and high-falutin' phrases spouted in Washington by Southern senators and representatives to Congress did not reflect their views or interests. The same resentment against the aristocratic planters and rich bureaucrats that led their ancestors to embrace the Loyalist cause during the War for Independence also set these embittered souls against the mainstream of Southern thought.

Secession and the Confederate Dream

The election of Abraham Lincoln to the presidency in 1860 lit the fuse on the powder keg that was the discrepancy between Northern and Southern loyalties. The Republican Party had come out staunchly in favor of abolition and supported the industrialization of the national economy. The Southern planters and wealthy landowners saw Lincoln's presidency as a direct assault on their cherished "independence" from federal controls.

A political faction known as the "fire-eaters" roused their constituencies against the federal government and especially the Republican party of Abraham Lincoln. Beginning with South Carolina in December 1860, the states of the lower South — the ones with the greatest interest in maintaining Southern sovereignty and perpetuating the slave economy — declared their independence from the United States. The border states of the South had a more difficult decision to make. Maryland, though part of the South in both geography and temperament, still had many ties to the Northeast as well as strong abolitionist sentiments; thus, it elected to remain part of the United States.

In Virginia, the planters of the eastern and northern regions of the state professed their allegiance with the new Confederacy. The inhabitants of the state's mountainous western region protested; when Virginia finally acceded to the pressures for secession, Virginia staged its own defection, forming the state of West Virginia and part of the Union. Similar difficulties faced North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky and Arkansas.

On April 9, 1861, Confederate forces opened fire on Fort Sumter near Charleston. A state of civil war existed between

the Confederate and the United States of America. The remaining ambivalent Southern states had run out of time. Kentucky quickly disengaged itself from overt hostilities, declaring itself neutral for the war's duration. Tennessee and Arkansas held out for nearly a month before finally casting their lot in with the Confederacy. On May 20, 1861, North Carolina became the last state to sever its connection to the Union. The battle lines were drawn.

Changelings at War

The Kithain of the South, in most cases, fought alongside their human kinain. Trolls followed whomever held their oath, and many of them distinguished themselves with chivalric honor and bravery in the field of battle. Some, like the redcaps, paid little attention to sides, reveling in the joy of battle and the shedding of blood as a rare opportunity to give full vent to their bloodthirsty proclivities. Ironically, the Scathach sidhe also responded from the heart to the call to war, motivated not by bloodlust (like the redcaps) but by their warrior spirit. Several members of this quasi-house served as aides to Stonewall Jackson and, rumors say, to the South's greatest general, Robert E. Lee.

In the mountains and along the border between the North and South, some changelings, like their mortal relations, joined the Union Army, to express their belief in the dreams of national unity and universal freedom. Just as mortal families in the border states found themselves torn in two as some members joined the Confederacy while others fought to preserve the Union, changeling motleys and oath circles broke apart (often violently) over divided loyalties. The 999th West Virginia Union Volunteers, a small unit made up exclusively of nockers, trolls and boggans, clashed frequently in chimerical battle with their former oathmates and motley companions in the 13th Virginia Confederates, also composed entirely of changelings. On larger battlefields, such as Gettysburg, Vicksburg and Antietam, individual changelings met each other in single combat, surrounded on all sides by the screams and bullets of their mortal comrades.

Many changeling history buffs claim that a motley of redcaps that had managed to maneuver itself into key positions in the army led by William Tecumseh Sherman influenced the general's scorched-earth tactics during his infamous march to the sea. It seems more likely, however, that Sherman's March revealed the Union leader's calculated desire to break the back of the Southern economy, rather than giving evidence to the "advice" of a group of blood-crazed Kithain.

The End of the Confederate Dream

Mortal history offers many reasons for the South's defeat: Northern superiority in the technology of war, the fragility of the South's economy, poor planning on the part of Southern politicians and generals and strategic outmaneuvering by Northern tacticians. Those who seek moral lessons in history point to the "rightness" of the Union cause as opposed to the dubious foundations of the Confederacy. In the end, however, it all boiled down to the fact that, when two opposing dreams struggle to occupy the same place in the "real" world, only one

dream can prevail. On April 9, 1865, General Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox Courthouse to the Union forces led by General Ulysses S. Grant. After four long and bloody years, the dream of a united American nation had prevailed. Like their mortal counterparts, the Kithain on both sides of the conflict began the arduous struggle to heal the wounds brought about by the lengthy and bitter war.

The Age of Reconstruction

What an end to our great hopes. Is it possible that we were wrong?

— Diary of General Josiah Gorgas, Confederate Army

The aftermath of the Civil War brought about sweeping changes in both changeling and mortal society in the South. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation had granted freedom in word to all the slaves living in the rebel states; now that word became deed. The old, outdated dreams of agrarian slavery and decentralized, state-dominated nationhood died at Appomattox. In its stead arose the new dreams that would shape the course of the future — dreams of racial and social equality, visions of an industrialized economy able to hold its own in the international marketplace and the political ideal of a strong, centralized government.

Unfortunately, the dreams of reconstructing the South and rebuilding its shattered economy turned into nightmares of disappointment, dissatisfaction, vengeance and disillusionment. The assassination of President Lincoln in 1865 placed Andrew Johnson in the presidential office. Unfortunately, he lacked the ability to assume the complex role needed by the nation — a healer of wounds and the mender of a broken economy.

Southern states formed new governments and petitioned to rejoin the Union; in many cases, their initial attempts proved unacceptable due, in part, to differences of opinion between President Andrew Johnson and his Congress as to the definition of suitability. The disqualification for public office and, in some cases, disenfranchisement of former Confederate soldiers seemed a logical means of preventing a return to the old practices that had led to secession, but it left much of the South feeling deprived of leaders.

Many Southern Kithain had lost their freeholds to the ravages of invading Union troops; in addition, numerous changelings died on the battlefield, leaving their holdings vacant. Groups of vagabond commoners took to wandering the countryside, searching for empty or poorly protected freeholds to claim as their own.

Although the issuance of presidential pardons soon restored many Southern white males to full citizenship, the damage to their personal honor had already been done. The seeds of hostility toward the North and toward the newly freed black population took root; its ugly blossoms and bitter fruit emerged as legislated racism and unofficial vigilantism. This attitude found its reflection in conflicts between Southern changelings and their northern Kithain counterparts.

Among the newly freed blacks, a strange, unfamiliar sense of power emerged. Many former slaves had long prepared for

freedom; despite threats of beatings and worse, they had taught themselves to read and write in the hope that one day they would earn a place among the ranks of free men and women. Now they achieved status in the eyes of the federal government as citizens and potential landowners. The long struggle of the eshu to nurture the dreams of their mortal relations finally began to blossom.

This state of affairs proved unacceptable to many Southern whites. Persecution of free blacks began early on both political and social levels. State legislations granted blacks certain rights but forbade them others. In some states, blacks could marry, own property, engage in contracts and participate in legal affairs (that concerned other blacks) but could not vote, marry outside their race or hold public office. Vigilante groups concerned with keeping free blacks "in their place" formed lynch mobs and posses, waging a campaign of terror designed to intimidate the black population and prevent it from taking part in the new South. The Ku Klux Klan raised its hooded head, and the sight of burning crosses heralded the politics of fear. To the shame of all Kithain, many changelings — especially redcaps and many Unseelie Kithain — succumbed to their baser natures, reveling in the dark Glamour that arose from inspiring terror in the hearts of the helpless.

Enter the Carpetbaggers

According to popular belief, northern opportunists seized upon the South's economic woes and flocked to the region, hoping to make their fortunes by taking advantage of the depressed economic conditions. Known as "carpetbaggers," after their penchant for carrying all their worldly goods in one bag, these self-styled entrepreneurs weaseled their way into positions as landlords and businessmen. From these lofty posts, they proceeded to bilk the poor without regard to skin color. Yankee politicians who sought to insert themselves into the political vacuum that opened up at the war's end acquired the name "scalawags."

While many genuinely concerned Northern philanthropists and educators also traveled south to offer assistance to the region, their efforts diminished under the weight of stereotype. Few can recall their efforts; everyone remembers the carpetbaggers and scalawags.

During this period, Kithain politics changed drastically. The course of the war had invaded many holdings, and a number of freeholds lay in ruins. Motleys and oath circles that had divided during the war found it difficult to repair their damaged relationships. Many changelings succumbed to Banality; Glamour was scarce.

On the other hand, the South offered new dramas for northern changelings. Boggans and nockers traveled south in the company of educators and industrial experts, eager to lend their inspiration to the emerging middle and working classes. The sluagh, formerly present in small numbers in the coal mining country of West Virginia and Kentucky, seeped into the backwoods and the bayous, searching for caches of lost

Glamour and wallowing in the tragic overtones of faded dreams and lost causes.

Satyrs arrived by the tragos, hoping to inject some liveliness into the cultural life of the defeated South. Redcaps from the North gleefully immersed themselves in the atmosphere of violence that characterized many areas of the region, while trolls attempted to use their steadiness to help stabilize the connections to the Southern Dreaming. And of course the pooka came in force, attracted by the aura of uncertainty and fascinated by the bizarre complexities of southern politics after the war.

Northern eshu also ventured south at the request of their Southern kithmates, serving as protectors and inspirers of the thousands of free blacks. A time for new dreams, many Kithain felt, lay just around the corner.

Industrialization and Exploitation

The last half of the 19th century saw the end of the old South and the rise of the new — rather, of several new — South.

Under the plantation system, one crop had emerged as the mainstay of the Southern agrarian economy — cotton. Not only the planter class, but entire states depended on the yearly cotton crop to put money in the bank. Now, with the need to repay debts incurred during the war and to fund rebuilding efforts, King Cotton, if anything, loomed even larger. To replace the labor once performed by slaves, a system of sharecropping and tenant farming continued to supply workers to ensure a steady supply of cotton. While this widespread method of amassing a labor force provided jobs for former slaves and poor whites, it also encouraged an extreme stratification of society — one little different than that which had existed before.

To some extent, Kithain society reflected that of their Dreamers. Commoner nobles were loathe to surrender any of their claims, clinging to their freeholds and jealously guarding whatever privileges and treasures they still retained. Other changelings, some of whom served on one side or another of the War Between the States, tried to pick up the pieces. Blacks were still not recognized as equals; though eshu were sometimes accorded respect when among Kithain, even there, prejudice reared its head on occasion.

New businesses were springing up all over the South. A merchant class arose almost overnight to provide necessary goods to the new working class. Many merchants operated country stores not unlike the company stores that supplied manufactured commodities to coal miners and railroad workers. Others were simply small businesses begun by entrepreneurs who saw an opportunity to advance themselves in addition to creating a new market in the South. Industrialists began to target the South as an important locus for building factories; labor was plentiful and cheap, and Southern legislators were desperate to increase income and investments in their states.

Southern boggans and nockers found the new state of affairs particularly promising, as dreams of individual achievement spread rapidly among the common people and birthed a new spirit of inventiveness.

Your Majesties.

I beg your indulgence in commenting on one aspect of our pooka chronicler's treatise. While I find it amusing that Sir Slevin's (himself accorded noble status) accounts invariably paint commoners in rosy lights while subtly sneering at nobles of any sort — even commoner nobles — I hesitated to change his narrative in the above section. Despite his obvious admiration for and bias in favor of commoners, some of his general conclusions do seem correct. Of course, we must remember that many of the so-called nobles he refers to were actually opportunists who grabbed what they could after the war rather than the Kithain who had originally claimed the richer freeholds. Many of the latter had served — and died — in the war. As the opportunists merely aped their betters when assuming noble status, it can hardly be said that they were 'fainting hostesses.' Unlike their mortal Dreamers, many of the nouveau nobles were themselves recently elevated from the working class. That they then needed to lower their expectations is certainly ironic, but hardly reflective of those of genuine nobility.

With that caveat, I remain.

Lady Aramithe

Still a third "new South" arose with the increased prominence of Southern women, once relegated to the status of refined breeders and hostesses. The Civil War created widows and left many families without fathers. Women stepped in as breadwinners and, with their contributions to the work force, began to demand a political voice. While female commoner nobles had always been accorded more respect for their abilities than their human counterparts, many found common cause with their newly liberated mortal sisters. This state of affairs greatly amused less refined (or poorer) Kithain whose Dreamers had always worked alongside their menfolk. Eshu, in particular, whose women Dreamers had often toiled long hours in the fields or served as household laborers, found grim humor in the image of former fainting hostesses now tending store. While the gentility discovered work for the first time and responded with dreams of shock and dismay or wonder and determination, the dreams of working and middle-class females took on a new richness as they seized opportunities formerly denied them.

Economic diversity began to breathe new life into the Southern economy, creating a new South determined to break away from its "single-crop" dependency. Railroads had played an important role in moving troops during the war; now, more railroad companies laid tracks across the South, enabling inland cities such as Atlanta, Nashville, Richmond, Chattanooga and Louisville to enjoy the benefits of trade once monopolized by the coastal cities of Savannah and Charleston.

Industrial development and investment in the South also grew exponentially, with the emergence of large-scale logging, textile production, tobacco processing and iron manufacturing (to the horror of many Kithain living near the iron works in cities like Richmond, Virginia and Selma, Alabama).

Yet another, grimmer South emerged as white males, many of them former Confederate soldiers or their sons, began to look for ways to salvage their wounded pride. The Redeemer movement sought to redefine the South and come to terms with their defeat without apologies. Laying the blame for the "War of Northern Aggression" on every cause except slavery, these politicians and influential aristocrats strove to embrace modernization without accepting the equality of blacks. They promulgated a rhetoric of change and progress while simultaneously maintaining an attitude of white supremacy. Thus, the dark romanticism of the "Lost Cause" was born and, with it, the proliferation of statutes and social pressures dedicated to the proposition that all men were not created equal. A few Kithain — those who had lost their freeholds and standing within changeling society due to the bad fortunes of war and reconstruction — adopted the Lost Cause as their banner and derived Glamour from its melancholy anger.

During this period, Southern whites also repudiated the Republican party in favor of the rival Democrats, seeing in them their only hope for curtailing increased federalization and for preserving even a vestige of states' rights. Southern Democrats emerged as a distinct force on the political horizon, merging a strong anti-federalist stance with an even stronger white supremacy stance. Blacks, on the other hand, tended to support the Republican party — Lincoln's party — as their best hope for attaining in fact the equality granted to them by law. While few Kithain entered politics directly, many of them found sources of Glamour in the fiery debates and fierce antipathies that arose between southern politicians.

The Twentieth Century

During the first quarter of the 1900s, money and resources poured steadily into the southeast from the North, as wealthy industrialists invested their financial assets in the emerging industries and bought rights to many of the region's natural resources. These mercantile and industrial barons also found something else in the South — the perfect playground. Resorts of various types arose, attracting the rich and famous to luxury hotels, hot mineral springs and the prospect of wintering in the balmy South. This recreational interest served to attract a new wave of changelings, eager to indulge in the Glamour evoked by the "glamorous" visitors to the South.

The First World War catalyzed much of the South, as blacks and whites left the farms and moved to the cities, where they joined the revitalized work force in providing goods for the war effort. Although it did not improve race relations, the long-term effects of the war on the Southern economy lay in the introduction of more new industries, such as chemical and petroleum production.

Your Majesties.

Although Sir Slevin fails to mention it (an odd omission, to my mind), my own researches have revealed that it was sometime during this long, turbulent period that the Shadow Court came into its own in the South. Preying upon the miseries and uncertainties that war and economic depression can cause, this unscrupulous group made inroads in the changeling population — either through promising them a chance to avenge themselves for imagined or real slights and injuries or by appealing to their hopes of changing things for the better. As always, the Shadow Court found its greatest adherents among the "have-nots" — those changelings who lacked freeholds or whose hearts were darkened by the many upheavals of a new nation struggling to assert itself.

It is my belief that many of the atrocities committed in the name of Northern/Southern antipathy and racial bigotry were spurred on by fae implementing the Shadow Court's agenda. Many Unseelie founded societies that continue to exist even today. I fear that many organizations that (on the surface) appear as social clubs or beneficent organizations or cliques actually hide within their hearts a core of Shadow Court activists. While I hesitate to sound an alarm regarding their activities (as we have no real evidence that their maneuverings are more than posturing at this point), I feel it is wise to scrutinize many of the Kithain groupings that arose in the past, particularly those formed around that time period. It cannot be lost on you that we (Concordia) are something of a new nation ourselves. The disturbances and upheavals that once rocked mortal society find echoes in our recent struggles to again assert our rights in the world. I hope there is no commensurate echo in the formation of stronger Shadow Court groups, or we may find ourselves in severe difficulties once again. For us, the past, as ever, becomes our future, just as stories once told may find new life as their cycle comes around again.

Yours.

Lady Aramithe

In the 1920s, a literary renaissance emerged, as writers began to explore the Southern psyche in probing works of fiction and drama. William Faulkner's critical dissection of family relations in the Deep South, Thomas Wolfe's insights into the Appalachian heartland, Eudora Welty's portrayals of real Southerners, and Jean Toomer's powerful expressions of black identity heralded the arrival of a distinctly Southern voice in the world of serious literature. While it is difficult to ascertain the extent of Kithain involvement with Southern writers, changelings certainly basked in the atmosphere of creativity that surrounded them.



Meanwhile, the local changelings struggled to keep ahead of the game, most of their dreams outsated. The patriotic fervor of the First World War and the dark nightmares of the Depression left their collective stamp on the Southeastern changeling population. Many Southern Kithain joined the American forces who fought in the trenches of France and Belgium, glorying in the chance to engage in dreams of battle that held a purity missing from civil strife and internal dissension. Only a few survived with their lives and faerie natures intact.

The Nightmare of Jim Crow

The politics of Jim Crow legislation effectively undermined the efforts toward racial equality. Laws in most southern states precluded blacks from mixing with whites in any public or social capacity other than a position of subservience. With the tacit (and sometimes overt) blessing of the Supreme Court, laws restricting the black vote by requiring literacy tests, residency qualifications and other limits denied blacks access to the ballot. At best, the law declared blacks "separate but equal"; at worst, blacks lost their lives to the lynch mobs of the Klan. Southern whites grew up learning to fear blacks and to believe in their own innate superiority.

In response, blacks migrated by the thousands, leaving the South for other parts of the country where they hoped to find acceptance and true equality. Although some Southern eshu tried to persuade their kinain not to abandon their homes for the risky prosperity and dubious equality of the Northeast and Midwest, others felt the pull of the road and accompanied their mortal friends and families.

Depression and World War

The collapse of the American economy during the 1930s brought financial woes to the South as well as to the rest of the country. Many small farmers lost their homes and lands; businesses declared bankruptcy and closed their doors. Many Southerners, both black and white, left the South, seeing no future for themselves. The Kithain, too, succumbed to the temptation to pull up roots and move elsewhere, searching for new dreams to feed their flagging souls; many of them joined the migration.

The election of Franklin D. Roosevelt to the Presidency in 1932 brought another wave of change to the South. FDR's New Deal policies revamped southern agriculture, instituted forestry programs and launched the vast dam-building project of the Tennessee Valley Authority. Industry received a jolt as well; the paper and chemical industries provided jobs and brought money into the South.

On the political front, the Constitution granted the vote to women in 1920, over the strenuous objections of many Southern males. Blacks, however, still suffered under the oppressive weight of racist-backed political disenfranchisement.

The Second World War sent another generation into battle. In the South, poor blacks and whites made up the majority of enlistees. On the homefront, the war effort bol-

Your Majesties.

Although Sir Slevin's report of this milestone of southern history encompasses the facts with a fair degree of accuracy. I feel he fails to emphasize one remarkable aspect of the civil rights movement and its leaders. The life and commitment of Martin Luther King, Jr. and other dedicated visionaries reawakened in southern changelings a faith in mortals' ability to dream. Throughout the long, dreary centuries since the Shattering, many Kithain despaired in the belief that they fought a losing battle to retain what little pieces of the Dreaming remained after the gateways to Arcadia slammed shut. The Glamour engendered by Dr. King and other speakers, by the wave of folk singers who wove social commentary into their music and by the creative spirit of nonviolent protesters reaffirmed the hope in the hearts of many changelings that they were not trapped on a collision course with Endless Winter.

Despite racist attitudes on the part of some Southern changelings, the Kithain as a group have characteristically paid little attention to skin color as a designation of social status: after all, trolls are blue, pooka often manifest decidedly animal characteristics and satyrs sport both horns and hooves. With the departure of most of the nobles, commoner fae moved in theoretically egalitarian circles (although fact often put the lie to theory).

The eshu, most of them dark-skinned like their African Kinain, suffered from prejudice in their mortal guises, but enjoyed a great deal of respect among the Kithain. Changelings valued these African faeries for their prodigious wealth of stories and for their willingness to fearlessly face the unknown.

Throughout history, changelings have sided with those who dared to dream. Thus, in the South, most Kithain found in the struggle for civil rights a constant source of inspiration and tried their best to repay their mortal Dreamers in kind.

*As always, your servant,
Lady Aramithe*

excelled in espionage and reconnaissance missions, as did (surprisingly) pooka, whose capacity for misdirection and verbal obfuscation made them excellent double agents. Boggans found their best form of service in the war as medics and quartermasters, while nockers went straight for the big guns and heavy weaponry. Rumors persist that some nockers participated in the top-secret atomic research in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, as part of the Manhattan Project.

During this time, Southern eshu redoubled their efforts to inspire their Kinain with even stronger dreams of true equality. The seeds of the civil rights movement took root, emerging in force in the 1960s.

Civil Rights and the Power of One Man's Dream

The end of the war signaled a new phase in race relations in the South. Black soldiers, seasoned by their wartime experiences, refused to resume their status as second-class citizens. Moreover, the persecution of Europe's Jews had made many Americans realize the extent of their own racism toward blacks.

The Supreme Court ruling in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in 1954 declared war on the "separate but equal" status of black Americans. The Civil Rights Act of 1957 sought to put an end to denial of black voting rights and to institute true legal equality in all facets of American life. The arrest of Rosa Parks in Montgomery, Alabama, for refusing to give up her seat in the back of a crowded bus to a white man prompted a 13-month boycott of buses in the city. Leading that nonviolent protest effort was a Southern black minister named Martin Luther King, Jr.

Laws enforcing desegregation in the school system came under attack in Little Rock, Arkansas; New Orleans, Louisiana; Greensboro, North Carolina and other Southern cities throughout the 1950s. Then in 1960, John F. Kennedy assumed the office of the Presidency. Responding to pressure from the growing civil rights movement, Kennedy finally saw the necessity of vigorous government support for desegregation of American society.

It wasn't enough. On August 28, 1963, more than 200,000 blacks and sympathetic whites marched on Washington in peaceful protest to demand equal rights for all Americans. Southern Kithain of all kith followed the trail of Glamour that reverberated through the throngs of marchers. Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke for 15 minutes, but the power and eloquence of his words reverberated throughout the nation and echoed through time. The dream of equality he espoused took on a new life that even King's murder five years later could not silence.

The Resurgence of Nobles' Dreams

The return of the sidhe in 1969 had a profound impact on changeling life and politics throughout America. Some of the sidhe remembered lands they had once held in the Southern U.S. and returned there to reassert their rights of rulership.

stered the South's — and the nation's — economy. Subtle changes began taking place in race relations, as blacks and whites came together to support the war; Southern women, too, shattered many stereotypes as they worked in factories, ran businesses and did double-duty in the absence of husbands, brothers and sons.

Again, Southern Kithain joined in the war. Trolls found causes or leaders to support; redcaps placed themselves in the front lines for the pleasure of the kill. Scathach sidhe sought personal honor on the battlefield and in the skies, while eshu fought alongside their kinain in Europe and Japan. The slugh

Their attempts to revive their claims brought them into direct conflict with commoners who had occupied the choice freeholds in the nobles' absence. Moreover, the long history of struggle for equality left its mark on southern changelings. Just as blacks refused to accept positions of subservience to whites, commoner fae balked at bending the knee to a group of upstart nobles.

As usual, however, nothing in the South is as simple as it appears. The Accordance War came late to the region, but it arrived with a vengeance, sparking some bizarre twists and turns that could only take place in the South.

Some traditional-minded commoners, who still romanticized the quasi-feudal structure of the old plantation society, actually sided with the sidhe, hoping for a return to the stability of the past. Many trolls found themselves responding to old oaths sworn in previous incarnations to some of the returning sidhe.

In other cases, commoner fae opposed the sidhe, seeing them as newcomers or a fancier class of "carpetbaggers." Resentment at the effrontery of nobles — who had sought their own safety in the Dreaming and then, when it was convenient, returned expecting to re-assume their leadership — placed the majority of commoners at odds with the sidhe.

House Scathach occupied a singularly uncomfortable position during the Accordance War. Although it considered itself fully sidhe, the returning nobles dubbed them "half-breeds" and refused to recognize any common kinship. On the other hand, some commoners lumped members of House Scathach in with the returning noble houses, figuring that "kith will tell." Some Scathach sidhe, therefore, found themselves forced to battle both angry commoners and disdainful Arcadian sidhe. Many members of House Scathach simply withdrew from the fray, once again placing themselves outside the reach of both commoners and nobility.

Many progressive-minded changelings found their loyalties divided as the Accordance War ripped apart the fabric of Southern Kithain society. While many commoners instinctively opposed the sidhe, fearing a return to an outdated feudal concept, other, commoners supported the sidhe in hopes of just such an outcome. A few visionaries saw the return of the nobility as a chance to replace the old guard

with a new, potentially more malleable leadership, unburdened by the ghosts of history and the nightmares of the past.

Visions of Today and Tomorrow

The treaty that established the Kingdom of Concordia and designated the American South as the Kingdom of Willows originally placed the region in the hands of King Barabas ap Eiluned. Barabas had seized the area forcibly through a series of brilliant, Shermanesque campaigns; the High King merely ratified a rule already in place.

While few could fault the High King for his choice, given the necessity to impose a swift and equitable peace on changeling society, Barabas soon proved a more ruthless sovereign than he had been a general. Under his erratic and unpredictable despotism, many of the hard-won freeholds held for more than two centuries by commoners passed into the hands of Barabas' noble lackeys.

Finally, in 1990, commoners (along with a few sympathetic nobles and most of House Scathach) revolted, assaulting the royal freehold and forcing the King of Willows to the peace table. Before the peace talks were concluded, however, Barabas fell to the hands of an assassin. A royal lottery selected Duke Meilge ap Eiluned, a veteran of the Accordance War and a popular figure among both nobles and commoners, to succeed the late sovereign as the new lord of the Kingdom of Willows.

Granted these lands by the power of the Dreaming, King Meilge moved his freehold from his original, pre-Shattering holding of Summerstree to a magnificent penthouse palace in downtown Atlanta. Since he assumed leadership of the southern fae, Meilge has become a driving force in the modernization of the South. Quick to perceive the benefits of progress for an area desperately in need of prosperity, Meilge openly solicits investments by industry, banks and land developers. While some Kithain express private dismay at the possible corruption of the Dreaming caused by the encroachment of such Banality-ridden institutions, others support the king's belief that the creativity inspired by his realm's emergence into the mainstream of the 21st century will more than offset any corrosion of the dreams of the past.

Your Majesties.

Sir Slevin Teague's report on the history of the Kingdom of Willow's ends here. I must, therefore, insert my own meager commentary on his account. While Teague has demonstrated a perception and astuteness far outside the normal abilities of his kith, he nevertheless skirts what is perhaps the most salient issue of the Kingdom of Willow's — namely, the enigmatic and sometimes disturbing personality of Meilge himself.

The king mirrors the land and the land mirrors the king. Meilge, in many ways, perfectly reflects the kingdom he rules. Desirous to enlarge his own power base and increase his influence in the Parliament of Dreams, he echoes the South's growing assertion of its economic/political clout. Subject as he is to wild mood swings and mercurial displays of both largesse and cruelty, he nevertheless commands the respect of commoners and nobles alike for his insights into how to ensure prosperity for his subjects and their mortal dreamers. Under Meilge, the fortunes of the South have never seemed brighter.

Since the 1960s, the South has grown by leaps and bounds. Though blacks still struggle to achieve a truly equal place in society, race relations have, for the most part, improved considerably from the era of Jim Crow. Southerners are discovering ways to preserve their history while embracing change and accepting responsibility for past misdeeds. Even remote areas such as the Appalachians and the Ozarks are gaining recognition as oases of local culture and havens for small entrepreneurs and individuals concerned with inventing ecologically harmonious lifestyles. Many families whose ancestors left the South in the 1930s are now seeking to return home. More Southern youth now elect to remain in the South rather than seek their fortunes in the illusory paradises of the North and West.

On the other hand, many vices commonly associated with the industrial slums of the Northeast have arrived in the South. Rumors persist that Meilge has encouraged criminal investments in the region, although the king's supporters cite a number of other causes (both mortal and supernatural) as being responsible for the growth of crime and violence in Southern cities. Some critics claim that Meilge has gone over to the Unseelie Court, citing his alleged involvement in illicit activities as proof. It is only fair to point out that the South still lags behind other parts of the country in organized criminal enterprises.

Despite his many detractors, Meilge remains a stabilizing force for Southern Kithain society. His patronage of the arts and his championship of worthy individuals regardless of their status as commoner or noble has gathered about him a glittering entourage of remarkable changelings, all of them eager to assist their liege in realizing his vision of a dynamic kingdom. If a king can be judged by his councilors, then Meilge has demonstrated his insight and good judgment many times over. That the High Queen considers King Meilge as both her mentor and former sponsor speaks volumes for his loyalty and devotion to the dream of Concordia.

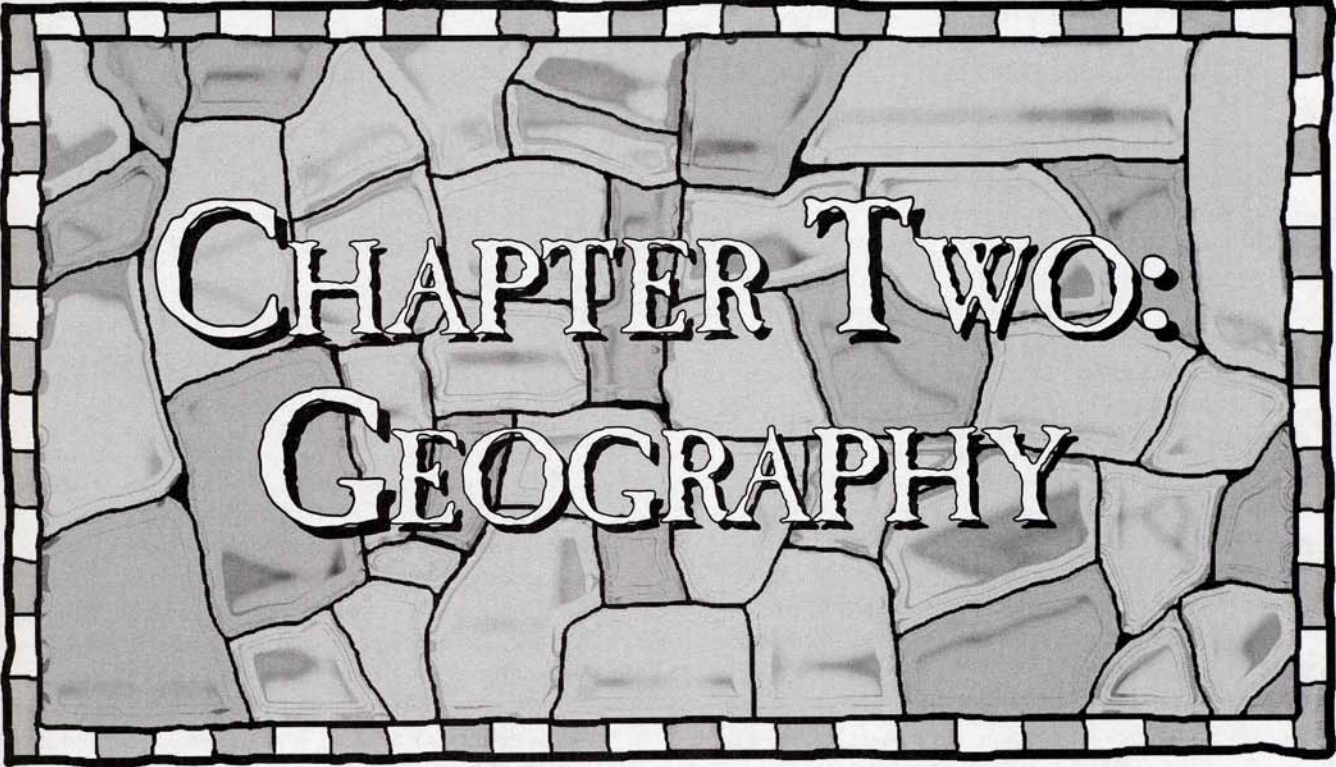
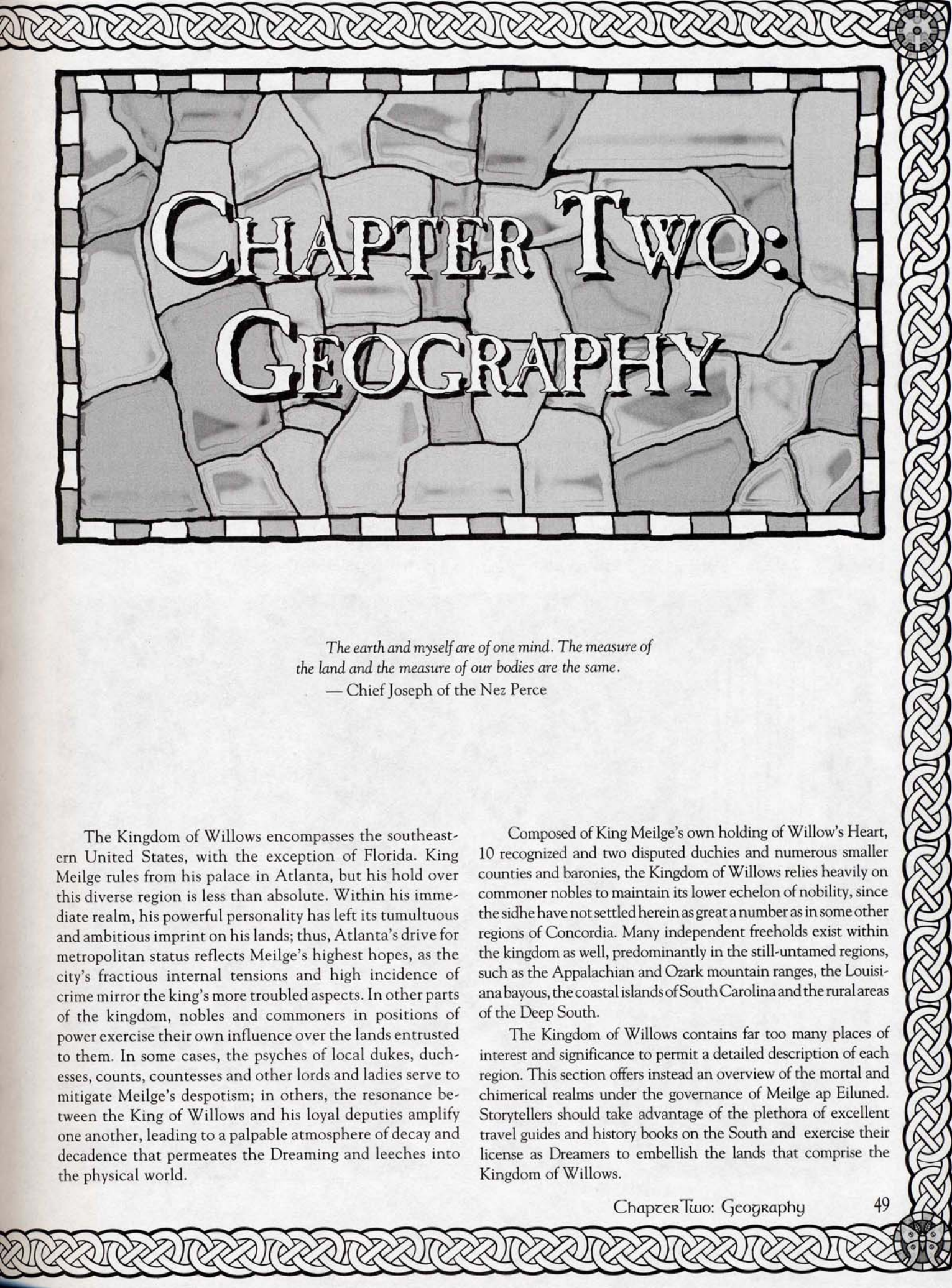
The Kingdom of Willow's comprises a vast territory of wildly different lands and an equally disparate population. The above history has only tapped the surface of its mysteries. To delve more deeply would require more than this brief overview. The real process of discovery will unfold as Your Majesties traverse the lands and speak to your subjects.

It is my fondest wish that Your Majesties will find useful information and a bit of wisdom in this report and that the hospitality for which King Meilge is noted will prove a suitable introduction to the land he holds in your sovereign names.

Respectfully submitted for your edification.

Lady Aramithe ni Fiona





CHAPTER TWO: GEOGRAPHY

*The earth and myself are of one mind. The measure of
the land and the measure of our bodies are the same.*

— Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce

The Kingdom of Willows encompasses the southeastern United States, with the exception of Florida. King Meilge rules from his palace in Atlanta, but his hold over this diverse region is less than absolute. Within his immediate realm, his powerful personality has left its tumultuous and ambitious imprint on his lands; thus, Atlanta's drive for metropolitan status reflects Meilge's highest hopes, as the city's fractious internal tensions and high incidence of crime mirror the king's more troubled aspects. In other parts of the kingdom, nobles and commoners in positions of power exercise their own influence over the lands entrusted to them. In some cases, the psyches of local dukes, duchesses, counts, countesses and other lords and ladies serve to mitigate Meilge's despotism; in others, the resonance between the King of Willows and his loyal deputies amplify one another, leading to a palpable atmosphere of decay and decadence that permeates the Dreaming and leeches into the physical world.

Composed of King Meilge's own holding of Willow's Heart, 10 recognized and two disputed duchies and numerous smaller counties and baronies, the Kingdom of Willows relies heavily on commoner nobles to maintain its lower echelon of nobility, since the sidhe have not settled herein as great a number as in some other regions of Concordia. Many independent freeholds exist within the kingdom as well, predominantly in the still-untamed regions, such as the Appalachian and Ozark mountain ranges, the Louisiana bayous, the coastal islands of South Carolina and the rural areas of the Deep South.

The Kingdom of Willows contains far too many places of interest and significance to permit a detailed description of each region. This section offers instead an overview of the mortal and chimerical realms under the governance of Meilge ap Eiluned. Storytellers should take advantage of the plethora of excellent travel guides and history books on the South and exercise their license as Dreamers to embellish the lands that comprise the Kingdom of Willows.

Willow's Heart

Throw away your Northern Towels™ and save your Dixie Cups™, for the South shall rise again!

— Kids' saying in the South

Encompassing the metropolitan area of Atlanta and all of Georgia, King Meilge's domain reflects both his Seelie and Unseelie natures. It includes some of the most progressive and industrialized parts of the Kingdom, while harboring large areas of rural poverty and provincial-minded people. Though it serves as the center of the Kingdom of Willows, many changelings see instead a rotten core at the kingdom's heart.

Physical Geography

Willow's Heart stretches eastward from the Chattahoochee River, which forms its western boundary with the Duchy of Cotton (Alabama), to the Atlantic Ocean and the Savannah River on its eastern border with the Duchy of Palmetto (South Carolina). On the north, it borders the Duchy of Appalachia (western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee), while it extends southward as far as the Kingdom of White Sands (Florida).

The region's landscape features the Appalachian foothills in the northern part of the region, broad central plains in the region's heartland and a 100-mile-long coastal stretch of sandy beaches and exclusive island resorts. Near the White Sands

border, the Okefenokee Swamp (now the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge) is a priceless ecological preserve featuring rare and vanishing species of plants and wildlife — an earthly paradise for pooka.

Major Cities and Landmarks

*Bring the good old bugle, boys! We'll sing another song —
Sing it with a spirit that will start the world along —
Sing it as we used to sing it, fifty thousand strong,
While we were marching through Georgia.*

— Henry Clay Work, "Marching Through Georgia"

Atlanta and the North-Central Area

The South's largest metropolis, located in the heart of central Georgia, expresses the diverse interests of the new South. Atlanta simultaneously steepes itself in history and competes with the rest of the country in urban growth and economic prosperity. The spiritual center of the Old South, Atlanta has also served as one of the major bases of the civil rights movement. Its eclectic population includes many northern transplants, as well as a varied racial mix of Caucasians, African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans and Asian-Americans. Changelings of all kith make their homes amid the skyscrapers and suburbs, drawing on the many sources of Glamour available in Atlanta.



• **Downtown Atlanta** — The city's hub boasts a skyline of towering, architecturally distinctive skyscrapers, asserting its claim to metropolitan status. At night, the colorful lights glimmering from most of these steel-and-glass sentinels transform the city into a breathtaking landscape of multicolored hues, masking the urban sprawl and squalor too evident during the glaring light of day. King Meilge's own freehold claims pride of place as one of the most eccentric skyscrapers in the area, while Baroness Sabrina and her mortal husband occupy the penthouse floor of an exclusive residential building in the downtown area. Notable sites include the Renaissance-style Georgia State Capitol, the CNN Center, and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center. The Georgia Dome (home of the Atlanta Falcons) plays host to sports-minded Kithain who feed on the Glamour generated by hopeful fans, while Underground Atlanta (a six-block subterranean complex of shops, restaurants and clubs) provides the backdrop for a daily feast on the wonder of tourists and the occasional Kithain party. Satyrs frequent the Underground, hoping for the chance to arrange interesting trysts.

• **Midtown** — Once a haven for the counterculture of the '60s and '70s, the region just north of downtown Atlanta now serves as a center for gays, young professionals and rising artists and musicians. Midtown shows its connection to Atlanta's changelings through the Science and Technology Museum of Atlanta (a favorite hangout of the city's nockers), the High Museum of Art (frequented by fewer Kithain, but notable for its attraction to the sidhe), and the Atlanta Botanical Garden, which holds enduring interest for pooka, satyr and boggan alike. The classic, Egyptian-style Fox Theater is a landmark and a treasure to all Atlanta's Kithain.

• **Outlying Districts** — While the Buckhead, Virginia Highlands, Druid Hills and Emory University regions that surround central Atlanta contain other cultural and historic sites, their main attractions for changelings are their numerous art galleries, eateries and night spots. Even the sluagh find darker, quieter pursuits to entertain them in this region, which caters to young, creative Atlantians.

Savannah and the Coast

Once Georgia's most important city due to its prestige as a port city, Savannah now basks in the faded glories of history, yet begins to look toward its future as a center for both a newly revived shipping trade and a rising center of manufacturing. And, of course, there are the tourists who flock to one of the few major Georgia cities that Sherman did not burn.

Savannah's Historic Center draws Kithain drawn to its romantic view of the past, while the River Street Train Museum serves as the site for the Annual Nockers Rail Fest. The city's sluagh population frequents the Colonial Park Cemetery, the site of many colonial graves. The bustling Port of Savannah functions as the largest port between New Orleans and Baltimore; its revitalized wharf area provides shopping and dining for tourists, and is the *defacto* center for Kithain activity in the city.

Since the 1994 publication of John Berendt's nonfiction novel, *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, residents of Savannah have wholeheartedly embraced the seamy, steamy underside depicted in this socio-cultural true-crime story. Many of the sites mentioned in the book, such as the Mercer House, the Chatham County Courthouse and the Bonaventure Cemetery, have become major tourist attractions, as well as unofficial gathering places for the city's Shadow Court.

The Natural Kingdom's Heart

Willow's Heart's coastal islands form a decorative fringe that wanders lazily down the Atlantic coast between Savannah and the Kingdom of White Sands. Including Cumberland, Jekyll, St. Simon's and Sea Island, among others, these subtropical environments serve as exclusive resorts, private retreats, public beaches and wildlife preserves. Drawing artists with their wild splendor, the Sea Islands also attract Kithain eager to nurture that inspiration.

Straddling the border between Willows and White Sands, the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge represents the largest undisturbed wetlands environment in Concordia and harbors an enormous peat bog, as well as stands of virgin cypress, pine islands and a network of waterways and natural canals. Rumors of a mixed satyr-pooka pirate base occasionally surface — usually in time for a "swamp-crawling party" sometime around Samhain when those who plan to attend are expected to don their best buccaneering gear and follow strategically placed Jolly Roger markers to the site of the gathering.

Enchanted Places

*You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedge-hogs, be not seen;
Newts, and blind-worms, do no wrong;
Come not near our fairy queen.*

— William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Willow's Heart

King Meilge's freehold occupies the upper penthouse levels of an elegant high-rise in the heart of Atlanta's business district. Its opulent interior includes a grand ballroom complete with a galleried balcony, a number of small parlors, music rooms and numerous guest suites in addition to Meilge's own private chambers. Terraced balconies on the lower two levels of the three stories claimed and enchanted by the King of Willows hold gardens of ever-blooming azaleas, camellias, gardenias and other fragrant blossoms as well as a small "forest" of waxen-leaved magnolia trees of both hothouse and naturally occurring varieties. The skyscraper itself, one of the most unique architectural offerings in the city, appears to have been carved of palest blue glass and dipped in spun sugar.

Wisteria Hall

Comprising the area around Savannah, this county serves as the center for Georgia's Seelie aristocracy and for many changelings who epitomize the best values of Kithain tradition.

The Dreaming within the county has a tranquil, leisurely feel to it, and little of the tainted decadence found nearer to Meilge's stronghold.

Centered on the gazebo in the enclosed garden on his family's estate, Count Morrig's freehold, Wisteria Hall, appears in the Dreaming as an elegantly simple mansion. Reflecting the understated good taste of its Seelie overlord, the freehold holds many beautiful treasures and antiques carefully collected over the years. Its spacious grounds contain several lily ponds which serve as homes for various species of tropical fish and numerous private walks and nature paths.

Recently, within Savannah itself, small pockets of disturbing Glamour have begun to surface near places associated with Berendt's book. Dubbed the Midnight Dreaming, many of Savannah's Unseelie changelings frequent these sites, and at least one wilder of House Ailil has attempted to open a freehold on the grounds of the Mercer House.

Florist Primaeval

A small freehold held in fealty to Count Morrig by Lady Una Morrowind, this faerie glen serves as a testimonial to a tragic love affair between a sidhe noble and a mortal. More detailed information on this picturesque portion of the Dreaming can be found in **Freeholds and Hidden Glens**.

Barony of Vellumton

This small but vibrant barony lies north and east of Willow's Heart and serves as a cultural and social center for the Kithain who live in and around Athens, Madison and Watkinsville, Georgia. Steeped in history and Glamour, the Barony of Vellumton offers a haven to artists and musicians, many of whom are initially attracted to the region by the University of Georgia's intellectual and cultural climate as well as its superb Greek-Revival mansions and buildings.

Whitehall Keep, the freehold granted by Meilge to the Baron and Baroness of Vellumton, operates on its grounds a Victorian-style bed and breakfast that serves as an elegant headquarters for mortals visiting the area. In the Dreaming, the mansion doubles as the baronial palace of Baron Arawn and his consort, Baroness Ellawyn, who act as the gracious (but a bit eccentric) hosts for their fortunate guests.

The magnificent lawn outside Whitehall Keep is the site of an annual tournament complete with medieval jousting, swordplay, performances by troubadours, jongleurs and dancers. Mortals and Kithain mix freely in this Glamour-rich atmosphere to re-enact the customs of the age of chivalry.

The Echota Council Lands

Approximately 50 miles northwest of Atlanta, near the Appalachian foothills of northern Georgia, the New Echota State Historical Site marks the former capital of the Cherokee nation. On the reconstructed grounds of the Cherokee Supreme Court building, a group of Nunnehi led by Chief Gray Eagle have established an entire village within the Near Umbra (or spirit world). Hidden from both the Dreaming and mortal eyes, these nannehi and yunwi tsundsi of Cherokee mortal blood

conduct periodic raids on the Kithain of Willow's Heart, paying particular attention to those most loyal to Meilge, whom they call the Half-faced Serpent. Curiously, they never attack the Barony of Vellumton.

Duchy of Cotton

The Duchy of Cotton ostensibly includes the states of Mississippi and Alabama. In actuality, this is a duchy under siege by a feisty duchess determined to wrest the western half away from its duke and claim it as her rightful holding. In this land of hot, humid days and drowsy evenings, the dreams of the old South atrophy while angry dreams of unfulfilled equal rights battles make themselves heard. The struggle against stereotyping both within and outside the Dreaming, forms one of the major issues in the Duchy of Cotton.

Physical Geography

The Duchy of Cotton's undisputed half (Alabama) forms the eastern boundary of the contested Duchy of Magnolia's Home (Mississippi). To the west, the Mississippi River flows southward to rendezvous with the Gulf of Mexico (through New Orleans and the Mississippi Delta). East of the Duchy of Cotton, across the Chattahoochee River, lies Willow's Heart. The Gulf of Mexico forms the southernmost border of both duchies, while the Duchy of Graceland's (western Tennessee) Memphis-Chattanooga line runs from west to east like a straight-edge across the northern edge of both the Duchy of Cotton and its rebellious western half.

The eastern landscape of the Duchy of Cotton varies considerably, from the mountainous northern region of the lower Appalachians to its southern pine forests and the white-sand beaches along Mobile Bay. The Duchy of Magnolia's Home contains fertile farmlands in its interior, a white-sand coastal strip lined with stands of oaks and — of course — the flood-plains of the Mississippi Delta. Many changelings bask in the warmth and sensuous lethargy of the Deep South, and African-American Kinain whose ancestors left in the wake of the Civil War are now returning, bringing with them eshu who have been raised in the North but who feel the pull of their Southern heritage.

Major Cities and Landmarks

Andamus jura nostra defendra (we dare defend our right)

— State motto of Alabama

The Duchy of Cotton

A land of cotton fields, bayous and iron ore, the Duchy of Cotton has gradually evolved from a dependency on cotton to become a growing industrial center. Once the focus of many battles of the civil rights movement, today it attempts to put aside the stereotyping of the past and take its place in the modern South. The region's Kithain exemplify the dreams of both the Old and New South.

• **Birmingham** — The Sloss Furnaces National Historic Landmark stands as a reminder of the city's role as the center of Alabama's iron and steel industries until the Depression; now it attracts nockers, sluagh and a few Dougal sidhe.

A 55' tall cast-iron statue of Vulcan, the largest of its kind in the world, pays tribute to the city's early dependence on the fires of the forge for its livelihood. Local trolls claim that one of their kith served as the statue's model. Pooka enjoy the environs of the Birmingham Zoo (famous for its Siberian Tiger breeding program), while the city's eshu population holds regular storytelling festivals on the grounds of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

• **Montgomery** — In the heart of plantation country, the state capital also served as the first capital of the Confederacy. The first stirrings of the civil rights movement began in the city's Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church, where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. served as pastor and organized the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955. This site has become a shrine for Kithain inspired by the dreams that changed a nation. Satyrs and Fiona sidhe visit the Hank Williams Memorial, which marks the grave of the legendary country music icon, while literary-minded Kithain soak up the melancholy Glamour of pilgrims to the F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald Museum.

• **Mobile** — Noted for its lush growth of azaleas, and as the true birthplace of the Mardi Gras celebration, the Gulf Coast city of Mobile contains some of the oldest African-American Methodist churches in the country. An annual songfest sponsored by the local eshu community attracts changelings from all over Concordia to its three-day celebration of Southern gospel music, black spirituals and regional folk songs. At permanent anchor in the harbor, the *USS Alabama* forms the nucleus of a 100-acre park commemorating the sea and air battles of World War II. Duke Firedrake himself conducts chimerical wargames within the park.

• **Other Duchy of Cotton Sites** — Throughout the duchy, antebellum history coexists with signposts pointing to the modern world. Huntsville houses the NASA-Marshall Space Flight Center, a haven for Kithain unafraid of the dreams of scientific and technological wonders. The Tuskegee Institute celebrates its commitment to black education; its campus contains the George Washington Carver Museum. Despite eshu claims to the area, House Dougal sidhe (and a few of House Balor) find its environment of invention difficult to resist. Civil rights history runs deep in Selma, Alabama, site of the Bloody Sunday confrontation of March 21, 1965. Although many Kithain attend rallies still held there, several redcap white supremacists occasionally make their presence felt. Wise eshu (and other Kithain) do not walk alone in Selma.

Magnolia's Home

The essence of the old South lives on in the disputed Duchy of Magnolia's Home. Watered by the Mississippi River, the land contains farmlands, bayous and pine forests. Antebellum plantations now serve as historic sites and tourist hostels.



• **Biloxi** — The duchy's third-largest city also holds the distinction of being the Gulf Coast's oldest unbroken settlement. Proud Kithain who recall Mardi Gras' beginnings in this area (rather than New Orleans where it has gained enormous popularity) helped build and now maintain the Mardi Gras Museum. While the Unseelie revel during New Orleans' Carnival, Biloxi's Mardi Gras serves as the destination for most members of the Seelie Court. A few changelings claim various antebellum mansions; some of them give guided tours to mortals and Kithain fascinated by the South's past. One motley of pooka have claimed a particularly well-kept mansion, and give mock tours and "formal" dinner parties for commoners who don the chimerical garb of the sidhe nobility (usually taken to grotesque exaggeration) and spoof the manners of the genteel Southern belles and gentlemen of times past.

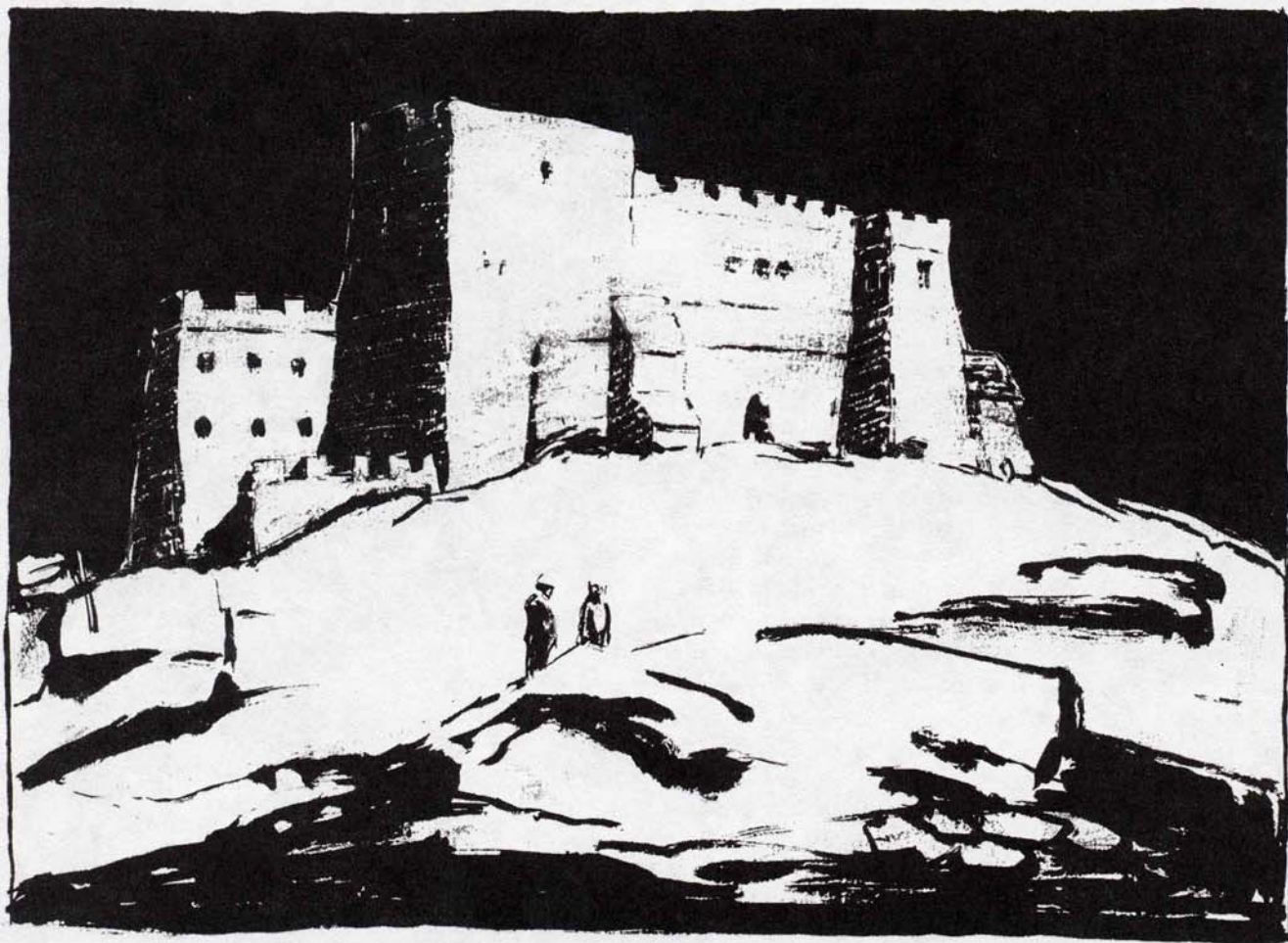
• **Jackson** — Mississippi's capital since 1821, Jackson's Kithain patronize the Governor's Museum and the Mississippi Arts Center. The Eudora Welty Library attracts the changeling literati, while the Davis Planetarium (the Southeast's largest) holds endless wonder for Magnolia's childlings, who regularly swarm the place.

• **Natchez** — At one extreme of the Natchez Trace Parkway, Natchez is the home of the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians (a museum and park), as well as numerous old Southern mansions, some of which now serve as hotels and

nightspots. Though not spoken of, Natchez is usually considered to be Nunnehi territory. Unlike their more aggressive cousins, however, the nanehi who frequent Natchez apparently hold no enmity against European changelings, and even acknowledge "Duchess" Igrania's claim to a freehold there. Rumors that Igrania has recruited an important nanehi medicine woman into the Cat's Cradle are whispered in several circles, but as yet that story is unconfirmed.

• **Oxford** — The home of "Ole Miss," the University of Mississippi, this quintessential Southern town achieved literary fame in its guise as Jefferson, Mississippi in the works of William Faulkner, her native son. The city also houses the Center for the Study of Southern Culture. While a few Kithain reside in Oxford and serve as muses to mortals caught up in literary pursuits, several younger fae find the town far too staid for their liking.

• **Tupelo** — Now a center for the arts and noted for its medical practice, this town is the birthplace of "the King." Fans come here to see the two-room house where Elvis was born and to visit the Elvis Presley Park, Elvis Presley Museum and the Elvis Presley Memorial Chapel. Despite the Duke of Graceland's claim as the most refined Elvis impersonator among the Kithain, dozens of wannabes flock to Tupelo searching for the inspiration that will place them beyond the imitative and into the echelons of true originality.



Natural Places

The Duchy of Cotton contains many prehistoric sites, including the Mound State Monument, with over 20 earth mounds constructed by the predecessors of the Cherokees and Creeks. In addition, the De Soto Caverns in northern Alabama served as a sacred site for the Creek tribes, who believed that these natural caves figured in the origins of their people. The caverns now serve as a freehold for a group of Nunnehi. Russell Cave, an enormous limestone cavern near Bridgeport, holds evidence of some of the region's earliest civilizations. A satyr archaeologist and her team of enchanted mortals are currently examining Russell Cave for evidence of changeling habitation before the Shattering.

In Magnolia's Home, the Bynum and Emerald mounds attest to an early tribe's engineering skills. The 400+ mile Natchez Trace Parkway from Nashville to Natchez traces the oldest routes of the region's native peoples through some of the most beautiful natural scenery of the South. While open to the public, some of the areas just off the trail itself are rumored to hold Nunnehi enclaves that have never been discovered by Europeans. Another rumor tells of a dark dell somewhere along the trail where a Lost One dwells, spinning off nightmare dreams that afflict any Kithain who travel through the region.

Enchanted Places

I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls,

With vassals and serfs at my side.

— Alfred Bunn, "Bohemian Girl: Song"

Ferris Castle

This chimerical castle located in the Dreaming near Montgomery, Alabama, serves as the freehold for Duke Firedrake of the Duchy of Cotton. Once a pre-Shattering holding of House Fiona, the duke reopened the enchanted site upon being granted his title. Styled in the manner of the ancient castles of medieval Ireland, Ferris Castle steeples its portion of the Dreaming in the history of two worlds — the old world of the Celtic sidhe and the "new" world of the aristocratic South.

Its most conspicuous resident, apart from its duke, is the chimerical dragon Verminian. The castle serves as the rallying point for many of the region's Unseelie changelings. Despite its old-fashioned trappings, the duke's modernist tendencies and love of chimerical creations have endowed the freehold with several unusual architectural and decorative details.

Magnolia's Home

The entry to the private freehold of "Duchess" Igrania stands within an enormous magnolia tree in Biloxi's Dreaming. More like a faerie glen than anything else, the freehold consists of a small clearing surrounded by a grove of magnolias (one of which corresponds to the tree that serves as the site's real-world anchor). In the center of the clearing stands a small cottage surrounded by azaleas, camellias and honeysuckle vines. Here the rival to Duke Firedrake's claim to Mississippi spends as

much time as she dares. Its connection to the Dreaming is particularly strong, increasing the chance that a Kithain remaining here overnight will discover something about her ancient past; so potent is the faerie magic of this small freehold, however, that to stay longer than a day at a time involves risking a descent into the early stages of Bedlam.

River Landing

Igrania's original freehold, this lovely antebellum mansion doubles as a palatial structure in the Dreaming near Natchez. To the mortal world, the 200+ year-old house appears worn and dilapidated, a prime candidate for either historic restoration or the wrecker's ball — that is, if anyone could remember its existence for long enough to do anything about it. The house's protective magic dissuades non-Kithain from paying attention to it for more than a few minutes at a time.

Igrania has graced its chimerical reality with her expert and loving touch. It has blossomed under her care in the Dreaming, and serves as a showcase for visiting Kithain and local changelings — including several nannehi. The rooms are light and airy, and all of them are filled with the delicate scent of fresh flowers. Tall cypress trees draped in moss surround the mansion, which fronts on a flowing chimerical river nearly the width of the real-world's Father of Waters.

Boats crafted from the stuff of the Dreaming lie moored at the pier that forms a private dock for the mansion; Igrania occasionally takes her guests on short boat rides along this river of dreams, though she does not dare stray out of sight of the freehold.

Pelican's Roost

This tiny freehold situated along Biloxi's beachfront looks like a particularly run-down boathouse. While hardly larger than its real world shell, it provides a place of refuge for Perseverance Matthews, the evangelist pelican pooka. Persey tries not to use his freehold too often as he doesn't want to call attention to it.

Spirit Rock

Sacred to the Creek tribe and sometimes cited as the place from which spirits came to create the copper-hued people, this vast cavern system holds within it the Spirit Rock. A potent source of wisdom and healing Medicine to generations of Creeks and to their Nunnehi allies, the monolith has never been viewed by outsiders.

"Discovered" in 1540, the caves are known to "the European invaders" as De Soto Caverns. Used as an Indian burial site, as an equipment and gunpowder storage facility for Confederate soldiers and as a speakeasy called the Bloody Bucket during Prohibition, the easily reached portions of the caverns are well known even to non-natives of Alabama. The outer caves now serve as a tourist attraction (including a display of the burial site and a sound, light and water show featuring lasers in the largest cavern, which rises over 12 stories high); outside, campgrounds and picnic areas, a water-fight maze and gemstone mining provide entertainment for visitors to De Soto Caverns Park.



While the descendants of the despoilers frolic — within sight of their sacred places — the inner reaches remain the inviolate hidden home of a mixed tribe of yunwi tsundsi and nanehi. Centered around the enormous onyx known as the Spirit Rock, which forms a gemstone table within one of the largest caverns, the community makes use of natural materials in constructing their homes. Led by a council of elders, including Izusa Whitestone, a noted onyx-worker, the faerie people of Spirit Rock help lead the fight to close the burial ground to public view. So far, they have failed in their efforts. Many visitors to the area have noted missing wallets, shoestrings tied together and hair snarled in knots after touring the site, however. The nanehi work even now to spread stories of the curse upon those who come without reverence to a place of sacred worship.

The Nunnehi fashion amulets and jewelry from onyx found within the caverns and incorporate the oddly shaped stalagmites and stalactites into their equally breathtaking dwellings. Curving and spiraling, these dwellings may rise from the cavern floor, graced with a carved staircase that ascends alongside and around a stalagmite, ducking under an aerie attached to a huge stalactite like Juliet's balcony to emerge inside an upper room hollowed out of the same massive rock formation. Most are lovingly crafted by the yunwi tsundsi to nanehi specifications.

Sweet Magnolia's Grove

Just outside Natchez, a stand of pink magnolias rises by the banks of the Mississippi River. Changelings who venture near the outer edge of the grove sense a profound alteration in the corresponding Dreaming, similar to a freehold but impossible to penetrate. The air that surrounds the magnolias has a heavy, cloying sweetness, unlike the heady delicacy of the blossoms' natural scent. Instead, the odor that permeates the grove bears within it the sick redolence of rot and decay.

This stand of trees, ironically labeled "Sweet Magnolia's Grove" by the locals, contains the hidden freehold of Ceridwyllia, a Lost One of House Eiluned. Driven mad by her centuries-long isolation, Ceridwyllia has affected the land surrounding her freehold with part of her insanity.

While the grove's palpable Glamour attracts changelings to investigate, few dare remain in its vicinity for long. Kithain who stay for more than a few minutes experience a mild but disturbing sense of disorientation. Prolonged exposure leads to frightening hallucinations and the sense of impending danger. Anyone foolish enough to spend the night in the shelter of the trees enters the first stage of Bedlam upon awakening. Even mortals with no faerie blood feel disinclined to stray too close to this spot of dark enchantments.

Duchy of the Delta Crescent

The Duchy of the Delta Crescent includes the entire state of Louisiana, including her most colorful city, New Orleans. This trans-Mississippi southern duchy sits just across the river from Magnolia's Home on the east; to the west, the Sabine River and Toledo Bend Reservoir form a border with the Kingdom of the Burning Sun. The Duchy of the Ozarks (Ar-

kansas) lies along “the Crescent’s” northern edge, while its southern coast fronts on the Gulf of Mexico and provides the setting for the Mississippi River’s grand plunge into the sea. Boasting a rich French heritage in addition to later Spanish and English influences, the Crescent’s changelings form some of the most culturally diverse members of the Kingdom of Willows.

Physical Geography

While most Kithain think of “bayou country” in connection with the Duchy of the Delta Crescent, the landscape of this southern duchy contains considerable diversity. To the north, near Nachitoches, lie great stands of pines and loblolly. Small groups of Nunnehi remain within this forested region. The duchy’s center consists of fertile farmlands watered by the Cane River, ideal for the plantation society that evolved there before the Civil War. Many sidhe and a few trolls claim freeholds in this part of the Crescent. In the South, however, the bayou reigns supreme — great marshlands drenched in a multitude of lakes and trans-sected by the Inter-coastal Waterway. The many hidden places of bayou country hold secret sluagh freeholds along with Nunnehi enclaves.

Major Cities and Landmarks

New Orleans

The sultry presence of the bayou vies with the wild decadence of New Orleans to cause a chaotic jumble of potentially conflicting dreams. Supernaturals of all kinds have flocked here, some drawn by the allure of voodoo, others by the mystique of life in the Big Easy. For many changelings, the omnipresence of “all that damn wrought iron!!!” makes living in certain parts of the city difficult, and gives rise to the conviction that New Orleans serves as a headquarters for a particularly active group of Dauntain. Rumors also abound that New Orleans is in the control of the Shadow Court.

The most heavily visited section of the city is the French Quarter, steeped in the atmosphere of its Creole culture. Notable places in this romantic, historic district include Lafitte’s Blacksmith Shop (now a local bar and a favorite hangout for redcaps, trolls and nockers), the Voodoo Museum (patronized by many of the city’s eshu and sluagh), and the Musée Conti Wax Museum (a center for the city’s Unseelie sidhe). Pooka flock to the Audubon Park and Zoo, while many sidhe and satyrs enjoy the beauty of the grand mansions of the Garden District. A clique of changeling culinary artists hold dinner meetings in the city’s famous restaurants — among them, K-Paul’s (Chef Paul Prudhomme) Louisiana Kitchen. Music enthusiasts among the Kithain frequent Pete Fountain’s Club (in the Hilton Hotel) and Preservation Hall (a haven for traditional jazz).

Acadiana

Settled by French refugees expelled from British Canada in the 17th century, the land that encompasses the vast stretches of bayou country supports one of the most unusual cultural enclaves in the United States. The Cajuns have a distinctive cuisine (blackened meat and eye-watering spices),

music (heavy on the accordions and washboards) and philosophy (“Live for the moment, and enjoy it while you can.”). The Kithain of Acadiana mirror this “good-times” attitude in their easy-come easy-go approach to gathering Glamour. This region includes the towns of New Ibera (on the edge of the Bayou Teche), St. Martinville (immortalized in Longfellow’s *Evangeline*) and Breaux Bridge, famous for its annual Crawfish Festival.

Baton Rouge

Northwest of New Orleans, the state capital sits in the middle of plantation country and is the site for several grand freeholds based around antebellum mansions. The Louisiana Arts and Science Center Riverside Museum serves as a cultural gathering place for Baton Rouge’s Kithain.

Natural Places

Jean Lafitte National Historical Park covers 8,000 acres of what was once known as Barataria, the bayou home base for the infamous French pirate and smuggler for whom the park is named. Avery Island, near New Iberia, contains the tropical Jungle Garden and Bird City, which protects a large population of white egrets and a number of pooka and satyrs who take advantage of the area’s protected status to construct freeholds and occupy enchanted glens away from prying eyes. Other wilderness refuges and sites of natural, largely unspoiled beauty include the Creole Nature Trail, the Sabine Wildlife Refuge and the Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge. Because the Crescent’s duchess makes her home in Barataria, endorsing wildlife refuge areas — and the fundraising parties and arts-and-craft shows held for those charities — has become something of a *cause célèbre* among the region’s changeling population. Interestingly, most who support the efforts are of the Unseelie Court. If rumors that the duchess guarantees large contributors the chance to meet Black Spiral Dancer Garou are true, then the Unseelie’s interest is understandable.

Enchanted Places

*Nor has the world a better thing,
Though one should search it round,
Than thus to live one’s own sole king,
Upon one’s own sole ground.*
— Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, “The Old Squire”

Spirit Hall

Deep in the swamps of Barataria to the south of New Orleans, Lisette Levay discovered and claimed an abandoned freehold. Bounded to the north by the stump of an old twisted cypress tree where Lisette tells fortunes, the unsettling lodge spreads to a cattail-strewn lake in the south. Solid mounds of earth intermix with morass as the freehold’s lawn, a natural defense from those who are unfamiliar with the area. The lodge itself is a treehouse that rests within the branches of a huge banyan tree, transported from a more

exotic clime and seeded in the fertile swampland. Dripping with Spanish moss and vines and covered with black swamp mud, the house is hardly visible among the branches.

Spooky and unsettling, the freehold reeks of tainted Glamour as though it recalls old murders and horrid tortures performed within. Many changelings feel distinctly uncomfortable near the freehold; few understand how Lisette can bear to sleep there. The Voodoo Queen of New Orleans, recognizing this, instead throws lavish parties atop a grassy area within the bounds of her freehold, but not inside the actual structure. Wild music, liquor and drugs all dispel the gloom while the party goes on.

Constructed by Unseelie who committed terrible crimes before the Shattering, the site originally served as a hideout. Captive Seelie were sometimes brought to the lodge and tortured before being given to swamp creatures to devour. The freehold still remembers, and Lisette drinks in the psychic residue left as tainted Glamour.

The Mississippi Pearl, New Orleans

This refurbished showboat holds within it one of the few movable freeholds in the world. A central cabin located at the heart of the ship, flanked by two others, holds within it a small balefire. The three cabins and the walkway between them form the extent of the freehold. Neither Quillan

nor Pearl understand the workings of their chimerical cabins; they just accept their good fortune and bless whoever created the ship.

The central cabin is a large living area similar to a lobby and game room. Comfortable seating is interspersed with card tables, a billiards table and a reading area. A small stage occupies one corner. The other two cabins are sumptuously decorated bedrooms with large four-posters draped in velvet. The whole area looks very much like the master cabin area of a well-to-do riverboat gambler or captain from the age of the paddle wheelers. All the rooms have small port-holes that offer views of the mighty Mississippi.

Only Kithain see the hallway leading to the freehold; others passing through see only an ornate full-length mirror within a scrolled gold frame hung at the end of the passageway. Pearl believes that the freehold remains in existence due to the romantic Glamour inspired by the age of the old paddle wheelers.

Duchy of Palmetto

Centered in the port city of Charleston, the Duchy of Palmetto encompasses all of South Carolina, a state torn between the desire to keep up with the New South and the compulsion to preserve the nostalgia of the past. While many people continue to lump South Carolina together with its



sister state in the catchall phrase “the Carolinas,” the Palmetto State strives to assert its own identity. Its increasing attractiveness to industry and its thriving tourist industry (particularly along its excellent beaches) have attracted interest from ambitious changelings throughout the Kingdom of Willows. Many nobles in Meilge’s court consider the duchy’s ruler a black sheep of the changeling fold. Several would like to supplant him and gain the rich duchy for themselves.

Physical Geography

The Duchy of Palmetto is bordered on the north by the Duchy of the Triangle and the easternmost portion of the Duchy of Appalachia. On its western and southern faces it abuts Willow’s Heart, the Duchy of Vellumton and the eastern edge of the Echota Council Lands. To the east lies the Atlantic Ocean, and at its southeastern edge is the eshu-identified holding of the Gullah Free State. Its northern and western regions (referred to as the Upstate) lie within the Piedmont (literally “foothills”) and Appalachian regions, and can lay claim to breathtaking mountain vistas as well as rolling hills and fertile fields. The central and southern part of the state, called the Low Country, extends from Charleston to the interior and consists of farmlands and horse country. The Grand Strand of beaches that comprise Palmetto’s coast provide recreational environments for locals and tourists alike.

Major Cities and Landmarks

I’m a history nut and in South Carolina you can stir it with a stick. The Civil War started here, and the American Revolution nearly ended here.

— William Schemmel

Charleston

Palmetto’s oldest city and one of the South’s most important ports, Charleston attracts many Kithain of the old guard, who support the sidhe aristocracy. These elitists gather around centers of culture such as the Charleston Museum, which dates from 1773; the College of Charleston; the Gibbes Museum of Art and the Dock Street Theatre. A number of trolls and House Gwydion sidhe patronize the American Military Museum and the Old Exchange Building and Provost Dungeon, used by the British to incarcerate prisoners during the Revolutionary War. The Fort Sumter National Monument, which commemorates the firing of the first shots of the Civil War, serves as a rallying place for Kithain in favor of secession from Concordia.

Columbia

The capital of South Carolina since 1786, Columbia lies in the central part of the duchy and is surrounded by forests of hardwoods and palmetto firs, marshlands and fertile farmlands. The city’s pooka and other changeling nature enthusiasts congregate in the Riverbanks Zoological Park and Botanical Gardens. A thriving community of nockers makes its home in Columbia’s commercial and industrial center.

Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson

This tri-city region of the Palmetto Upstate enjoys a reputation as a gracious vacation and resort area for tourists who come to stay in the Blue Ridge Mountains of the Appalachian region. Resident Kithain appreciate its natural beauty and work hard to ensure that metropolitan development doesn’t curtail its scenic attractions. A larger number of boggans and trolls reside in the Appalachian foothills of the area, many of them practitioners of various “mountain” crafts.

Myrtle Beach and the Islands

Myrtle Beach contains a wealth of family-oriented recreational spots, including the Myrtle Beach Pavilion Amusement Park and the National Wax Museum, as well as a number of water-based theme parks and miniature golf courses. Changeling wilders flock to the beaches during the tourist season to take advantage of the rampant Glamour that surrounds the vacationing mortals. Older changelings sometimes sense the taint beneath this Glamour, as the Banality associated with all tourist traps sometimes reaches epidemic proportions in parts of the city. Off South Carolina’s southern tip lies a string of islands that includes Hilton Head, St. Helena, Edisto and Parris Island (home of the Marine Corps training grounds). Some of these islands contain luxurious freeholds for the duchy’s most prominent changelings. Many of these are tolerated (with barely concealed amusement) by the eshu separatists who claim the islands as the Gullah Free State.

Natural Places

The Duchy of Palmetto contains a wealth of national forests and wilderness preserves, including Devil’s Fork State Park, the Chattooga National Wild, the Hitchcock Woods (near Aiken), and Hunting Island State Park. These wild places are home to some Nunnehi freeholds and a noted satyr enclave dedicated to restoring the old Grecian rites — especially the drama competition and dances.

Enchanted Places

*What strong, mysterious links enchain the heart
To regions where the morn of life was spent.*

—James Grahame, *The Sabbath*

Palmetto Court, Charleston, South Carolina

A stately manse of pink-veined marble imported from overseas provides the shell for the more whimsical freehold that overlays it. Constructed to resemble the onion-shaped domes and carved arches of a sultan’s palace, the crystalline walls of the structure reflect the colors of the flowers in the surrounding gardens. Inside, cool tile floors and colorful walls surround a central fountain. Tiny bronze bells affixed to slender rods rise from various places within the fountain’s bowl. Drop-lets of the cascading water strike the bells at random, creating a chiming, relaxing ever-changing melody. Golden sconces hold colored globes of light.



Beyond arched double doors lies an elegant throne room with a long oriental carpet leading to a dais on which is set a pair of carved wooden chairs set with gems. Duke Antoan holds court here, occasionally accompanied by the former duchess. Around the room colorful and comfortable pillows are strewn about waiting for guests to loll on them. A few couches reminiscent of day beds are scattered around the room for those who feel uncomfortable lazing on the floor. Beaded curtains part to reveal carpeted halls leading to beautifully appointed bedrooms. When in residence, the duke and former duchess share an apartment-sized bedroom that features a small goldfish pond and a living tree that grows through the roof.

The Home Place, Beaufort, South Carolina

Set back from a stretch of highway where many Gullah sell traditional craft items rests a series of small wood-and-stone buildings. Remnants of slave quarters, most serve as part of the display of an old plantation. One is open for viewing. The cabin farthest from the model is actually a freehold, serving as a meeting area for the Kithain of the region. Consisting of a wood-floored central room with an open loft above, it is furnished with little more than a fireplace, a bucket for water, a few cooking utensils and plates, an old plank table and a few rocking chairs. A ladder provides access to the loft, which holds an herb-stuffed mattress and blankets. The Home Place, as the Gullah call it, is the "Dreaming home" of Cientilla, the elderly eshu acknowledged as leader of the Gullah changelings. Whenever Cientilla visits, all Kithain for miles around gather at the Home Place to hear her tales and to touch the dreams of the oldest changeling they know.

Angel Oak

At 1,500 years old with a 25 1/2-foot circumference and a 151-foot span of branches, Angel Oak is among the oldest and largest oak trees in Concordia. Beautiful and strong, the tree's green branches stretch upward toward the sky and spread outward over emerald grasses and its own knobby roots. Located on Johns Island near Charleston, South Carolina, the tree often serves as a shady refuge for picnickers. No one carves initials into its bark or leaves trash within its spread; somehow those who approach the tree feel the respect due it and act accordingly.

Kithain who come close to the tree realize it holds within it a great repository of Glamour — almost as if the oak itself were a freehold. It is a faerie residence, though not a freehold. The oak is the anchor point for a nymph. Known as the Lady of the Island, she sometimes acts as an advisor to those changelings who request her aid. Services she asks in return vary from caring for other groves of trees to keeping intruders away from particularly sensitive wetlands to telling her stories she has never heard. Rumors abound that the Lady was once the beloved of a faerie king.

Duchy of the Triangle

The Duchy of the Triangle includes all of the eastern and central parts of North Carolina (i.e., all but the mountains). Held by one of King Meilge's most trusted supporters, this "nockers' paradise" includes the fast-growing Research Triangle, a center for business, industry, medicine, computers and research, as well as the Piedmont region and the coastal plain with its scenic Outer Banks.

Physical Geography

Three duchies and an ocean surround the Triangle. To the north lies the Duchy of Dogwood (Virginia); the Duchy of Appalachia forms the Triangle's western border, while the Duchy of Palmetto lines its southern boundary. To the east stretches the Atlantic coastline. The Duchy of the Triangle begins just east of the Blue Ridge Mountains, in the hilly Piedmont region of the Appalachian foothills. It extends eastward across broad central plains, composed of farmlands, red-clay soil and pine forests. The beaches along the Cape Fear Coast retain a less-commercial atmosphere than the tamer beaches of Palmetto, while the Outer Banks provide some of the most beautiful oceanfront land in eastern Concordia.

Major Cities and Landmarks

The art of invention grows young with the things invented.

— Francis Bacon

Charlotte

The largest city in the Triangle, Charlotte combines a history that dates back to the pre-Revolutionary War era with a modernistic outlook that embraces new industries and increasing urbanization. This dichotomy accounts for the frequent culture clashes that occur among the region's Kithain. Changeling traditionalists and romantics claim the Fourth Ward, the city's historic district, as their own. Techno-changelings exert territorial rights over Discovery Place's science museum and planetarium and Energy Explorium (owned by Duke Power). Redcaps, nockers and a few troll racing enthusiasts monopolize the N.C. Transportation Museum, backing up Classics Memory Lane Motor Car Museum. Sports and auto racing occupy a major place among the city's Kithain; the Charlotte Motor Speedway hosts regular NASCAR events and includes off-season chimerical stock-car racing. In addition, the four professional teams that make their home in Charlotte have a fanatical following among changeling jocks and sports fans.

Research Triangle (Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill)

This trio of cities hosts a number of major public corporations and privately funded research facilities and attracts many Kithain with scientific or commercial inter-

ests. The state capital in Raleigh, home of North Carolina State University, is a locus for academically oriented Kithain who take advantage of the city's museums of natural science, history and art. The intense rivalry between the changeling population of Durham (which includes Duke University) and Chapel Hill (home to UNC) occasionally erupts in spontaneous Glamour wars in which Kithain from one city invade and Ravage the Dreamers of the other city. Research Triangle Park conducts award-winning scientific and technological research in subjects ranging from medicine to computers. The atmosphere of scientific discovery and innovation attracts hordes of nockers to the service of the Triangle's techno-friendly Prince Murdoch.

Winston-Salem

Home of the tobacco industry (and the headquarters for the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company), Winston-Salem also contains textile mills and furniture factories. The city thus contains a large community of Kithain entrepreneurs and working-class changeling commoners. In addition, some of the Triangle's most artistically creative Kithain reside here, basking in the presence of noted authors such as Maya Angelou and the yearly crop of young Dreamers who attend the North Carolina School of the Arts. Dark rumors of an Unseelie group of Ravagers who prey upon the city's talented student population have led to the establishment of a private troll army dedicated to protecting gifted mortals.

Cape Fear Coast and the Outer Banks

The port city of Wilmington on the Triangle's southern tip offers the Wilmington Railroad Museum (another center for nocker rallies), the Temple of Israel (the state's first Jewish temple), the Cape Fear Museum and the USS *North Carolina* Battleship Memorial. Further north along the coast, the barrier of islands known as the Outer Banks attracts tourists and year-round residents, including many pooka, boggans and wandering eshu. These islands include Cape Hattaras, Kitty Hawk (home of the Wright Brothers' early experiments in aviation), Nag's Head and Roanoke Island (site of the doomed Lost Colony). A recent challenge for Kithain not afraid of a dare is the midnight chimerical flight (using everything from flying carpets to Glamour-enriched hang gliders) near Kitty Hawk, held once a year by invitation only.

Natural Places

The National Seashores of the Outer Banks consist of 120 miles of beach preserves designated as wilderness areas with limited access to tourists — but not to changelings who gleefully utilize trods to reach the area's two enchanted glens for special storytelling sessions. The interior regions of the state include natural wilderness areas such as the Uwharrie Mountains (near Charlotte), the William B. Umstead State Park in the Raleigh area and Durham's Eno River State Park (available for whitewater rafting — a favorite among trolls).

Enchanted Places

*Let me but do my work from day to day,
in field or forest, at the desk or loom,
in roaring market-place or tranquil room;*
— Henry van Dyke, "Work"

Trinity Manor

Home to Prince Murdoch of House Dougal, Trinity Manor rests within a well-kept stone-fenced lawn on a quiet back street in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The house itself is unremarkable to mortal sight; to Kithain, the freehold looks much like the painted outer shell of an amusement park ride — perhaps for bumper cars — with depictions of stock car racing and a cheering crowd. On the lawn are numerous metal sculptures of various inventions, the wheel (with lights on each spoke), a bobbing miniature oil derrick (painted a luminescent orange) and several dozen smaller pieces that turn with the winds or move when water flows across them.

Inside, there is a stone hall with several comfortable pieces of furniture set around a central glass table. Murdoch often has plans for one machine or invention or another laid out on the table. The area serves as the duke's audience hall, though it is more frequently used for all-night planning sessions working on the motor of Murdoch's and Langolier's stock car. Both Langolier and Murdoch have bedrooms in the manor, and a few larger chambers are kept ready for guests. Recently, the largest (and now most feminine) one has been occupied by a lovely satyr lass named Cissy. Beyond the stone hall is a ballroom that the duke never had use for — until now. Since meeting Cissy, he has refurbished the room in a bright green tartan and gold leaf (her favorites), and plans to hold a ball there soon.

Duchy of Appalachia

Created by King Meilge as a means of controlling the stubborn and intransigent commoners who proliferate throughout the region, the Duchy of Appalachia consists of western North Carolina, eastern Tennessee and southeastern Kentucky. This is mountain country, with only a few sidhe and many commoners. In general, the Kithain of the region are a rebellious crowd, although a few loyalists (aristocrats) do reside therein.

Physical Geography

The Blue Ridge, Cumberland and Great Smoky Mountains make this three-state region a spectacle unto itself. The mountains both separate the lands within their purviews from the flatlands of the adjoining duchies and unite the inhabitants of the region with one another. The area's climate is that of a temperate rain forest, housing many species of plant and animal life not typically found so far south. The panoramic vistas of endless ranges of mountains

colored bluish gray against the sky gives this region a timeless, enchanted feel — even apart from its appearance in the Dreaming.

Major Cities and Landmarks

One of the first questions a stranger is asked in the mountains is, "Where you from?" We are oriented around places. We never forget our native places, and we go back as often as possible.

— Loyal Jones, "Appalachian Values"

The Eastern Region (Western North Carolina)

Asheville, in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains, is the major city in the western part of the state and serves as the home for a sizable community of Kithain crafters and artisans. While many changelings from all over Concordia come to pay homage to "native sons" Thomas Wolfe and O. Henry, others — particularly the sidhe — visit the city to see the magnificent Biltmore House, a castlelike structure modeled after a French Renaissance chateau and rumored to contain numerous faerie treasures among its priceless furnishings and adornments. Near Hendersonville, the Flat Rock Playhouse offers professional summer theater, attracting tragos of satyrs and other changeling actors. On the border between North Carolina and Tennessee, the Cherokee Indian Reservation serves as the home for the remaining Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation, many of whom are kinain of the local Nunnehi population.

The Western Region (Eastern Tennessee)

Just west of the Smoky Mountains, Knoxville hosts the headquarters of the Tennessee Valley Authority. The city's development into a rapidly growing center for culture has made it a haven for changelings seeking the stimulation of urban life. Nearby, Oak Ridge contains the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Graphite Reactor and the American Museum of Science and Energy. While local nockers appreciate the technological achievement of the region, more sinister changelings absorb the dark Glamour associated with the development of the atomic bomb. Rumors of a twisted freehold near Oak Ridge have filtered to the Duchess of Appalachia. Chattanooga, in the southeastern corner of Tennessee, attracts changelings preoccupied with the military history of the Civil War. The Battles for Chattanooga Museum is a favorite gathering places for these contingents of trolls, redcaps and Scathach sidhe.

Southeastern Kentucky

Berea, Kentucky, is the home of Berea College and the Appalachian Museum. Many changelings refer to it as "boggan country," although all kith make their homes in this center of folk arts and culture. Renfro Valley houses one of the oldest country music centers in the state, attracting many changeling bards and minstrels to its numerous music festivals. This is also the site of some of the South's poorest people; the ravages of strip mining and the coal industry



have left whole portions of this region economically depressed and physically ravaged. Many changelings exhaust themselves trying to keep alive the hopes and dreams of the mortal population of much of this area.

Natural Places

The Appalachian Mountains contain numerous national parks and forests, including the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Grandfather Mountain International Biosphere, the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, the Pisgah and Cherokee National Forests and the Daniel Boone National Forest. Containing some of the largest preserves of virgin forest in Concordia, these wilderness areas contain several Nunnehi freeholds. A research team consisting of a historian from House Liam, several eshu and a pooka guide have begun the systematic exploration of these wild lands, seeking the truth behind the persistent rumors of glens where Lost Ones still survive and groves that host whole families of nymphs.

Enchanted Places

*A castle girt about and bound
With sorrow, like a spell.*

— Swinburne, *The Tale of Balen*

Orchard Castle

What mortals see as an old shack built beneath a silver birch tree in a small glade near Jonesborough, Tennessee, is far different to Kithain eyes. Orchard Castle serves as home to the ruler of Appalachia, Duchess Dianan and her faithful troll guardian, Count Bjorno. The glade is a small green paradise dotted with apple and cherry trees. The shack is a tiny gray marble palace (looking more like a life-size dollhouse than a castle) with miniature red-slate turrets. Banners with representations of the Fiona silver lion on a crimson background fly from the peaked central tower. Two reclining silver lions — animate chimera — guard the red-oak door.

Inside, there is just enough space for a comfortable sitting room — complete with a fireplace holding the freehold's balefire — and three smaller rooms. Two serve as Dianan's and Bjorno's respective bedrooms, while the third is a tiny treasury housing Dianan's ducal treasures. Whenever the duchess holds court, tables, pillows and blankets are set out in the glade. Dances take place beneath the trees, which are lit with chimerical globes of light for the occasion.

Coal Town: A Commoner Enclave

Nestled in a hidden hollow in the mountains near Harlan, Kentucky, Coal Town is a thorpe or faerie town originally built

by nockers. The glade that houses Coal Town is anchored by a sacred stone, a large chunk of coal that lies unnoticed among a great many similar pieces in a coal bin alongside Hollis Burnette's house. Nockers, boggans and eshu comprise the greatest number of residents, though the faerie thorpe has its share of redcaps, pooka, sluagh and satyrs as well. Two trolls serve as the town militia.

The Coal Town Handicraft Cooperative allows the residents of the town to support themselves without the need for outside jobs. Faerie crafters create statuettes made of coal, finely made quilts, decorated brooms, baskets and furniture, which they sell at craft shows and in local stores. Most of the cottages in the glade are constructed from local rock and wood then enchanted as their residents see fit. While mortals see only a small (and relatively poor) mountain enclave, the Kithain are treated to everything from snug European style chalets to palaces carved from ice to jeweled castles to cottages seemingly made of cookies and candy.

Twisted Oak

Originally a graceful, colonnaded manse on a green hill near Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Twisted Oak gained its current name when it was claimed by Gadiel of House Balor. Appreciating the symbolism of the gnarled oak tree that guards the entrance to the freehold, the Unseelie lord determined to twist the entire freehold to his dark visions. While Twisted Oak still looks much like a ruined mansion overgrown by weeds and creepers to mortal eyes, to the fae it has a much darker aspect.

To changeling senses, Twisted Oak is hardly distinguishable from the tree itself. While it is indeed covered in kudzu, the black-red color of the foliage suggests both rot and blood. Beneath a low hanging branch sits the door. Inside, the freehold has changed as well. Once it appeared light and airy and was furnished with antiques. The rooms that are open to most Kithain seem normal, albeit dimly lit. In areas only open to Gadiel's inner circle, however, dark, twisted furniture rests atop strangely patterned carpets depicting odd landscapes along silver pathways. One such carpet, kept in a hidden room is actually the beginning of a trod. The walls play host to swirling tapestries capable of inducing terrible nightmares in those who contemplate them too long. The basement has a dirt floor and holds the graves of childlings who displeased Gadiel. In all, the heart of the freehold reflects the madness of its Unseelie master.

Court of Balsam

Sometimes called the House of the Black Dome and other times known as the Court of Balsam, the freehold that lies within an abandoned campsite near the top of Mount Mitchell in North Carolina serves as the ducal court of Countess Toireasa. The mountain court, hidden on the edges of the camp, resembles a rustic hunting lodge. Constructed of interlocking pieces of varied wood, both the inside and outside evince patterns like fine parquet woodwork. Finely stitched rag rugs perpetuate the theme, as do the rattan and hand-carved

wood furniture. Many of the countess' own paintings of the beautiful mountain scenery adorn the walls.

The rest of the decor displays many Native American arts and crafts — gifts from Toireasa's allies, the Nunnehi. A freehold noted for its hospitality, the House of the Black Dome, though it appears rustic, holds within it what may be one of the most complete libraries of Nunnehi knowledge available to changelings.

The High Castle

Atop High Castle Mountain, an aerie near London, Kentucky, lies a gray boulder, the entryway to an ancient fortress of House Fiona. Cloaked by enchantment, the freehold lies under the mountain; with walls seemingly made of coal that glitters like black diamonds and lit by faerie lanterns — swirling globes of color — High Castle is formed around four grand halls. From these, lesser hallways lead off to bedrooms, workrooms, a still room, potter's shed and even an underground chimerical garden. Treasures ranging from furnishings to jewelry are scattered throughout the freehold, surviving from before the Shattering.

Only Kithain are able to see the outer manifestations of the ruined faerie fort that rest atop High Castle Mountain. Only remnants now remain of once-majestic crystalline towers and arches that reflect the light of sun and moon. Constructed by the Fiona lord Tamlin, the freehold that closed with the Shattering reopened when needed by another Fiona noble as she and her lover fled for their lives. It now serves as home to a mixed motley of commoners and outcast nobles. For more information on High Castle, see **Freeholds and Hidden Glens**.

Chimney Tops

The sharp, craggy knobs known as the Chimney Tops, twin peaks that thrust upward within the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, once served as a meeting place between

The Dancing Ground

Near the freehold of High Castle lies an enchanted glen. Once used as a Nunnehi dancing ground and meeting place between the native fae and a Fiona lord's household, it is now a pocket of Glamour where the Lost One known as Lord Tamlin resides. Formed by a ring of oaks and yellow birches, the grassy, treeless area (called a mountain bald) is cloaked in a curtain of Glamour. Those who have faerie sight can see the profusion of flame-azaleas and red trilliums within the circle and the blackened oak doorway that once led to Arcadia. On nights of the full moon, even more is visible: a hazy figure rises in the center of the dancing ground and, fiddle in hand, plays melodies that waft ethereally on the mountain winds.

Cherokee shamans and their Nunnehi spirit-cousins. Both sides would come together to share stories and medicine lore among the weathered rocks that have existed for 500 million years or more.

Still used by the Nunnehi, the site is now a popular hiking destination, forcing the Native American fae to restrict their appearances on the site. Access to their homes is through a crevice that at first appears impossible to traverse — even for expert climbers. Within the crevice, which is hidden by Glamour from prying eyes, Chief Crying Tears and his tribe of nanehi and yunwi tsundsi have constructed homes. Appearing to casual inspection as mere holes (like shallow caves), each home within the Chimney Tops is actually a comfortable burrow carved from rust-colored Thunderhead Sandstone and veined with golden pyrite (fool's gold). The walls are usually polished, giving them a marblelike appearance. The Nunnehi make bedding and cushions from savory smelling plants and mosses that are stuffed inside woven cloth. Tunnels just high enough to accommodate the fae have been carved within the peaks, leading from one home to the next and all leading to a central cavern where the fae meet, sing, dance, tell stories and hold council.

The Nunnehi of Chimney Tops, known to many as the Walkers on the Mountain, have alliances with certain local Garou. Crying Tears advocates peaceful co-existence with

non-native fae as well, hoping this will preserve his people and their ancient home.

White Foam

Hidden alongside a riverbank deep within the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area lies the yunwi amai'yine'hi village of White Foam. Brought into existence soon after the Shattering, the village has only rarely been visited by non-native mortals or changelings — mostly due to its remoteness. The Big South Fork area covers 10,000 acres of wild, rugged wilderness area in the Cumberland Mountains.

The land itself is untamed, with dense woodlands, rocky gorges, and deep ravines providing the framework for swift mountain streams, rushing rivers, leaf-strewn rock-lined ponds and cascading waterfalls. While kayaking and white water rafting are possible within the area, the rivers lie far removed from paved roads. Trails into Big South Fork are accessible only on foot or by horseback. Four-wheel-drive vehicles can reach part of the area, but any approaching White Foam inexplicably suffer dire fates (all four tires shredded, bucketfuls of dirt somehow added to the coolant or even disappearing altogether while their owners explore the woods).

Spread through northern Tennessee and southern Kentucky, Big South Fork nominally falls within the governance of the Duchy of Appalachia. No changelings of European stock



have ever asserted their rights here and survived the experience. While the *yunwi amai'yine'hi* enjoy seeing those people who have respect for their rivers, those who are too noisy or leave garbage or unnecessarily destroy foliage or build fires that are too large are targets for the faeries' wrath. Led by master pranksters such as Leaping Waters, the native fae may tip over visitors' boats or string together all the interlopers' food and drag it through the water. Tents and clothes get "wettings." As a last resort, the *yunwi amai'yine'hi* may grab particularly obnoxious campers from below while they are trying to swim or bathe and half-drown them.

White Foam itself looks more like a series of dome-shaped beaver dams along the riverbank than a native village. Constructed of intertwined sticks covered with reeds and mud, the dwellings are surprisingly roomy inside so long as no one wishes to stand fully erect. The fae keep any valuables they have — a few pieces of pottery, clothing and a trinket or two made from river stones — within their abodes. The communal treasure, such as it is, is kept within a waterproof sack tied to stones at the bottom of the river. Such treasures may include jewelry and other pretty-shinies lost by campers near the faerie village or while white water rafting.

Duchy of Blue Grasses

The Duchy of Blue Grasses comprises all of Kentucky except for the mountainous southeastern region incorporated into the Duchy of Appalachia. The nobles and many of the commoners hobnob with the "horsy" set; some raise their own faerie horses and hounds, holding their hunts and races in freeholds. The majority of commoners, however, eke out a hardscrabble existence on the dreams of the rural and working-class poor.

Physical Geography

Two major and one minor river frame the Duchy of Blue Grasses on three sides. The Ohio River forms the duchy's north and northeastern borders, while the Mississippi sweeps past its westernmost edge. To the east, the Big Sandy River marks the boundary between Blue Grasses and the disputed Duchy of Winterthorn (West Virginia), while in the southeast, the Cumberland and Allegheny Mountains form the border of the Duchy of Appalachia. South of Blue Grasses lies the Duchy of Graceland (western Tennessee).

While the eastern part of the state is famous as coal country, the central and western regions of Blue Grasses contain fertile farmland and pasturage, making it ideal for raising horses and other livestock, as well as cash crops like tobacco.

Major Cities and Landmarks

Nature was here a series of wonders and a fund of delight.

— Daniel Boone

Louisville

The home of the Kentucky Derby, Louisville lies along the Ohio River, just across from the Kingdom of Grass. Louisville serves as the commercial and industrial center of the Duchy of Blue Grasses. Founded by George Rogers Clark (the brother of William Clark of the Lewis and Clark expedition), the city contains numerous historic sites, including Old Louisville and the Butchertown Historic District (home to a long-standing German community and many nockers and trolls). Changeling society's "horsy" set hosts an annual gathering at Churchill Downs, while the Old Town Sluggers (a group of Kithain baseball enthusiasts) hold regular meetings at the Louisville Slugger Company, the most famous manufacturer of baseball bats headquartered in downtown Louisville.

Lexington and Surroundings

The largest city in the central region of Blue Grasses, Lexington lies just beyond the foothills of the Cumberlands in the midst of rich, grassy pastureland and farmland. The city contains many splendid examples of 19th century houses, including the homes of Mary Todd Lincoln and Henry Clay. A number of these houses serve as freeholds for the city's changeling nobility. Thoroughbred Park, a favorite center of pooka activity, commemorates the elegant horses for which the state is famous.

Much of the land surrounding Lexington is devoted to the business of horse breeding. Numerous stud farms, several of them owned by the region's Kithain, produce new crops of colts and fillies — including faerie steeds — each year to bolster the sport of horse racing. Near Lexington, the Kentucky Horse Park, which includes the Hall of Champions, the International Museum of the Horse and the grave of Man O' War (the world's most famous Thoroughbred), provides a memorial to the "sport of kings." The steam-driven Kentucky Central Railway — a favorite with the region's nockers and trolls and frequented by a few of the sidhe — operates in the summer between Paris and Maysville, Kentucky.

Between Lexington and Louisville, the state capital of Frankfort contains the Kentucky Military History Museum and the Frankfort Cemetery, which contains the graves of Daniel and Rebecca Boone. Troll and redcap childlings sometimes stage mock warfare using the museum's displays as inspiration for creating chimerical battles.

Western Blue Grasses

The western part of the duchy contains a number of small cities and towns, including Fort Knox (home of the U.S. gold depository). Periodically, plans surface among less honest nockers and their redcap allies to rob Fort Knox using faerie magic. Such plots usually die aborting as the would-be thieves run up against the overwhelming bureaucratic Banality surrounding their tempting target. Bowling Green, the home of Western Kentucky University, contains the world's only GM Corvette Plant. Two sidhe of House Dougal compete to receive the first car off the assembly line each year and stage Corvette races throughout the summer. Hopkinsville, Kentucky, is the

birthplace of both Confederate President Jefferson Davis and psychic Edgar Cayce. Native-born Charisma Jones, a particularly convincing and inventive pooka, plays on the Cayce connection to offer her psychic services to a worldwide clientele. South of Hopkinsville, the Cherokee Trail of Tears Commemorative Park hosts the annual Trail of Tears Inter-Tribal Powwow — an event attended by many Nunnehi of Cherokee descent.

Natural Places

Blue Grasses contains many picturesque natural sites, including the Falls of the Ohio, a series of rapid descents that begin not far from Louisville (a favorite among daredevil wilders who white water raft along the falls using chimerical conveyances), and Big Bone Lick State Park, which contains prehistoric salt licks and the calcified bones of ancient Ice Age creatures. Herds of bison now roam the park (brought here in an attempt to increase the species' numbers). Several lodges of secretive Nunnehi are rumored to exist in the park area. Near Hodgenville, Mammoth Cave National Park provides some of the world's most spectacular underground rock formations and natural cave phenomena and serves as a freehold for a motley of sluagh.

Enchanted Places

They say Princes learn no art truly, but the art of horsemanship.

— Ben Jonson, *Explorata: Illiteratus Princeps*

Duchy of Blue Grasses

Just outside Lexington, Kentucky, lies the Thoroughbred breeding farm of Rose Garland Stables. Off the near pasture, a picturesque wood frames a trickling, rocky stream. To one side, where the stream forms a small, sandy pool, a rock grotto rises. Though the opening looks only large enough to set a small candle within it, it is actually a full-size doorway — one only discernible by fae.

Inside, the rock hallway leads down into a series of hillside caverns. Most were carved and shaped before the Shattering. Smoothed into arched halls and rounded chambers, the native rock has been highly polished so that it gleams in lamplight. Tiny veins of crystal and minerals glint and sparkle throughout the freehold. Within the central cavern, a grand hall adorned with multicolored tapestries and carpets boasts mirrored lanterns and gold-touched furnishings.

Moving along a lesser hallway leads upward to a hidden pasture and opulent stable area located in the center of the wood. There, near an entryway into the Near Dreaming, Duke Araby breeds faerie steeds. Luxurious beyond the dreams of most mortal kings, the freehold of the duke seems to reflect its ruler's love of riches and creature comfort.

Less well-traveled, a secret passage leads to a hidden room where the duke assumes his guise of Lord Justice. A further passage leads up to a paddock and small stable where his black faerie steed lives.

Freehold of the Mammoth

Mammoth Caves, Kentucky, is one of the state's most visited tourist attractions. A band of sluagh, led by a matriarch called Jiruna, found that some of the lesser-developed, hidden caves contained Glamour. Sealing off the entry to their lair from the more traveled portions of the system, the sluagh created a freehold for themselves using balefire stolen from the Duchy of Blue Grasses. Left in their natural state, the caverns and passages are easily traveled by sluagh, but the small, twisting openings prove impassable to other kith. Lit intermittently with low-powered lights, most of the freehold remains dark and mysterious, just as the sluagh prefer it. Each member of Jiruna's motley has his or her own cavern — many with ledges or secondary caves attached. As a whole, the community has adopted the practice of carving out dwellings in the ledges similar to those used by the Native American cliff dwellers. While other Kithain would find life in the caves distasteful, the sluagh enjoy the darkness and quiet their freehold provides. The darkling caves also produce a quantity of dross in the form of small crystalline drops of condensation that solidify into tear-shaped pebbles.

When necessary, Jiruna meets with visitors in the outermost cavern of the freehold, a dimly lit cave with enough room for a table and several chairs. The sluagh live on money made from selling hand-thrown red and black pottery. Jiruna sells a more valuable commodity to select clients — information. From the outside, the doorway looks like a normal part of the grassy hillside. Visitors cannot go beyond the meeting hall unless they too are sluagh and capable of squirming through the tiny halls leading inward.

Duchy of Graceland

Made up of central and western Tennessee, the Duchy of Graceland vies with Meilge's realm for supremacy of the Kingdom of Willows. The Duke of Graceland seeks to build his own power base in the heart of the Tennessee Valley. He has attracted many changeling musicians (not just country-western, but all genres) to the soul of "Music Country."

Physical Geography

The Appalachian mountain chain forms the eastern border of Graceland, separating the duchy from the Duchy of Appalachia. To the north lies the Duchy of Blue Grasses. The Mississippi River marks the western boundary, while the Duchy of Cotton (including the disputed duchy of Magnolia's Home) marks Graceland's southern border. Unlike the mountainous areas to its east, the Duchy of Graceland has a greater geographic connection with the Southern heartland.

Major Cities and Landmarks

It's not an accident that so many great Americans have their roots in Tennessee. A blend of hard work, religious conviction and rugged individualism seems to result in greatness here.

— Suzi Forbes, *Tennessee: A Photographic Journey*

Memphis

Situated on the Mississippi River at the southwestern tip of the Duchy of Graceland, Memphis stands as a monument to two musical traditions: blues and rock and roll. The blues of the Mississippi Delta came to life in the songs of legendary bluesman W.C. Handy, whose home on Beale Street is now the site of the W.C. Handy Home and Museum and, thus, the rallying place for the city's blues-oriented Kithain. B.B. King's Blues Club, also on Beale Street, stands alongside a number of other jazz, blues and rock clubs; the city's wilders haunt this section of Memphis, gathering Glamour from the music that drifts out into the street. Graceland, the mansion and gravesite of Elvis Presley, is the city's primary tourist attraction, attracting millions of fans and devotees who year-round pay homage to "The King"; as the freehold of Duke Florian, Graceland absorbs tremendous amounts of Glamour from the adoration of visiting fans. Sun Studio, famous as the recording studio for Elvis, Roy Orbison, and B.B. King (among others), functions as both an active studio and a tour site; several local changeling musicians work here as session guitarists and drummers.

The National Civil Rights Museum, located in the building where Martin Luther King, Jr. fell to an assassin's bullet on April 4, 1968, provides a fitting memorial for the champion of and martyr for civil rights. Many eshu visit this site to commemorate the Dreamer who so embodied their ideals of freedom and mutual respect. The Center for Southern Folklore preserves stories and crafts of the Mississippi Delta and provides a resource center of information for Kithain historians. The Mud Island theme park, located on an island in the Mississippi River, houses the Mississippi River Museum as well as the B-17 bomber, the *Mississippi Belle*.

Home to the University of Memphis Tigers and the site for concerts and other entertainments, the 32-story Pyramid serves as one of the more unusual arenas in the country. An annual rally of the Memphis Mystical Pooka Pyramid Admirers (MMPPA) celebrates the city's architectural oddity.

The city's National Ornamental Metal Museum, which includes a large display of wrought iron, holds a special attraction for Graceland's Unseelie changelings; secret initiation ceremonies for induction into the Shadow Court take place here. The Chucalissa Archaeological Museum contains artifacts from the prehistoric Mississippian Indian culture that dwelled along the Mississippi Delta until A.D. 1500. Recently, the museum has been the target of Nunnehi raids aimed at recovering items they consider sacred.

Nashville

Known as Music City, U.S.A., Nashville lives and breathes the heartbreaking, mournful music made popular by Hank Williams, Patsy Cline and Loretta Lynn. Opryland, U.S.A., contains the Grand Ole Opry, the Roy Acuff and Minnie Pearl Museums and numerous rides and live shows. An annual Country Music Glamour Jamboree brings Kithain from all over the Kingdom of Willows to Opryland for a four-night orgy of country music. The city also contains the national headquarters for the Gideon Society, famous for its practice of leaving

Bibles in hotels and motels throughout the world; recently, a number of pooka infiltrators managed to slip pieces of dross (in the form of bookplates) into some of these Bibles, hoping to improve the lives of hundreds of tourists and traveling salesmen.

Other Cities

East of Memphis, the city of Jackson memorializes the greatest legend of railroad history in Casey Jones Village. Not far from Jackson, Shiloh National Military Park occupies the site of the Battle of Shiloh, one of the turning points of the Civil War. Franklin, Tennessee, south of Nashville, contains many fine ante-bellum homes, some of which house extremely conservative factions of sidhe nobles and a very few die-hard commoner nobles who refused to give up their holdings when the "usurpers" returned from Arcadia. Franklin also serves as the entrance to the Natchez Trace Parkway (see the Duchy of Cotton). The Alex Haley House Museum in Henning honors the author of *Roots* and boasts an African-American boggan (who is noted for remarking to visiting eshu, "See? Not all blacks belong to *your* kind!" and who keeps the museum spotless during off hours). Lynchburg is the home to the Jack Daniel Distillery — a frequent target for wilders in search of thrills, who compete in changing the mix to create the most potent "faerie mead." The Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration holds its annual 10-day meet in Shelbyville, Tennessee — a yearly attraction for many of the Kithain horsey set found throughout the rest of Willows.

Natural Places

The natural scenery of the Duchy of Graceland is preserved in areas such as Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park, which borders on the Mississippi River. Reelfoot Lake, formed by an earthquake in 1811, serves as a sanctuary for the bald eagle. These natural areas serve as refuge, for small Nunnehi communities. Most of these native fae are never seen by other changelings.

Enchanted Places

Old lame Bridget doesn't hear

Fairy music in the grass

When the gloaming's on the mere

And the shadow people pass.

— Francis Ledwidge, "The Shadow People"

Duchy of Graceland

Utilizing the portions of Elvis' famous mansion not open to the public, the Duchy of Graceland mirrors the decor prevalent in the rest of the house — with a slight twist. The furnishings in Graceland feature long, custom-made couches and coffee tables, thick carpets and elaborate window treatments. Comfortable armchairs, brass fittings, chandeliers, mirrors and high ceilings give it a feeling of grandeur while still seeming homey enough that someone might have actually lived there.

The original furnishings were removed from the rooms that are unused by the estate (and part of the freehold),

necessitating the construction of chimerical reproductions. Additionally, the duke commissioned several stained-glass walls and door frames, lending both color and light to the freehold. They range in subject from strutting peacocks to dimly remembered scenes from Arcadia. His favorite room sports a wall covered in reproductions of Presley's gold and platinum record awards — just like the one found elsewhere in the mansion. Though much of the freehold echoes Graceland's creamy white color scheme, several rooms are decorated in dark jewel tones that appeal to the duke's Ailil soul. In one such chamber — the duke's private quarters — the balefire burns, warming furniture decorated with the flag of Dixie.

Duchy of the Ozarks

Sparsely populated by both mortals and changelings, the Duchy of the Ozarks has recently come into prominence through the realm of human politics. For the most part, however, it includes a large population of commoner mountain folk, self-sufficient and "out of the loop" of changeling politics. The territory claimed by the realm's duchess includes the entire state of Arkansas.

Physical Geography

Bordered on the east by the Mississippi River, on the north by the Kingdom of Grass, on the west by the Kingdom of the Burning Sun and on the south by the Duchy of the Delta Crescent, Arkansas sided with the Confederacy in the Civil War, unlike its sister border state, Missouri. The rich river country to the east gives way to the mountains of the Ozarks in the north and west and in delta lands to the south.

Major Cities and Landmarks

If Arkansans expected, and usually practiced, probity in the conduct of their ordinary affairs, they have, from the founding of the first government at Arkansas Post, displayed a pronounced tolerance for boodling by public officials.

— Harry S. Ashmore, *Arkansas: A History*

Little Rock

The capital and largest city lies in the central part of the duchy on the Arkansas River. It contains the Arkansas History Commission, the Museum of Science and History (a favorite gathering place for nockers, eshu and boggans), the State Capitol and the Little Rock Central High School (site of one of the major desegregation battles of the civil rights struggle). The eshu in Little Rock maintain an active presence among Kithain, spearheading the movement toward a changeling commonwealth and opposing the feudal society.

Other Sites

Mammoth Spring, Arkansas, houses the Mammoth Spring State Park, a repository for railroad memorabilia; the Arkansas Ramblers, a motley of semi-itinerant eshu and pooka, have established a winter freehold inside one of the trains on display in the park. The Ozark Folk Center, in Mountain View,

contains crafts and artifacts of the local folk culture — many of them crafted by the Ozark Boggan and Sluagh Cooperative. The Orr School, in Texarkana, commemorates the boyhood home of ragtime legend Scott Joplin; Leland Joplin-Jones, a pooka jazz pianist who claims Joplin as one of his mortal ancestors, makes his home in the school's basement.

Natural Places

The Duchy of the Ozarks contains many scenic preserves, including Crater of Diamonds State Park, Hot Springs National Park and the Toltec Mounds State Park; besides being centers of activity for the region's Nunnehi, these areas provide local wilders with opportunities for white-water rafting and hiking, often in the company of kinain Dreamers. The Hampton Museum State Park contains an archaeology museum that houses artifacts dating from the period of the Ozark Bluff Dwellers.

Enchanted Places

Independence, like honor, is a rocky island without a beach.

— Napoleon Bonaparte, *Sayings of Napoleon*

Duchy of the Ozarks

Often called the Radiant Well, the freehold of deposed duke Brendan MacLiam and his sluagh successor Kerry Dunwood, is one of the most unique in Concordia. Reached by traveling down a spiraling stairway inside an old covered well, the freehold is a surprising blend of light and darkness. A doorway in the side of the well opens inward. Beyond the door, a tunnel gently lit by fluorescent-paint patterns leads into a large hall within which is set a replica of King Arthur's Round Table. Here the Commonwealth Council meets to decide how the duchy is to be ruled, resolve grievances between changelings and discuss projects.

Brendan's apartments within the freehold are filled with light and decorated in blue and silver. He keeps a suit of chimerical armor and his sword in his bedroom. Muffled by several intervening walls and doors, Brendan plays his Irish harp. His collection of art glass is displayed throughout his quarters.

Kerry's rooms are quite different. While she talks and socializes far more than most sluagh when in the public rooms of the freehold, when allowed to retreat to her own space, Kerry prefers that it be dark, quiet and restful. She thinks of her apartments as a haven more than a bedchamber.

Duchy of Dogwood

The Duchy of Dogwood, comprising the states of Virginia and West Virginia (ignoring the arbitrary boundaries between the two regions), contains some of the most conservative and the most radical elements of Southern changeling society. The fae of the eastern region of the duchy look down on their poorer cousins of the west. Here the dreams of the languid lost South find themselves juxtaposed against

dreams of political power emanating from the bedroom communities of Washington, D.C.

Physical Geography

The Duchy of Chesapeake (Maryland) forms the north-eastern border of the Duchy of Dogwood, while the Atlantic Ocean lies to the east. Bordered on the south by the Duchies of Triangle and Appalachia, Dogwood's western edge consists of the Appalachian chain, which separates it from its western half, the disputed Duchy of Winterthorn. The terrain ranges from the Tidewater region near the coast, with its numerous coves and rivers, to the mountains of the Blue Ridge and Alleghenies.

Major Cities and Landmarks

In building their estates, the Virginia Cavaliers were ever mindful of the English model, hence the importance of the dynastic line. Because there was only a relative handful of socially acceptable immigrants, most marriages took place within this self-consciously circumscribed group. Some matches were even made within the same family — better to hazard the genetic risks of consanguinity than the social ones of a union beneath one's station.

—William Stadiem, *A Class By Themselves*

Richmond

The duchy's capital lies at the mouth of the James River. Once the capital of the Confederacy, Richmond now serves as a center for industry, tobacco production, shipping, banking and high-tech enterprises, as well as a cultural magnet for the South. Many of Richmond's commoners trace their mortal heritage back to the region's earliest settlers. The Museum and White House of the Confederacy draws many trolls and boggans to its atmosphere of nostalgia; several of the city's sidhe, attracted by the myth of the Lost Cause, have begun holding regular meetings on the museums grounds. After hours, the darkened rooms of the Edgar Allan Poe Museum offer sanctuary to Richmond's sluagh. Agecroft Hall, a 15th century manor house transported in 1925 from Lancashire, England, to its present location, is the freehold of a reclusive noble of House Liam.

Charlottesville

At the center of Dogwood's fertile Piedmont region, Charlottesville claims Thomas Jefferson as its native son. Monticello, conceived and designed by Jefferson himself, pays tribute to his visionary ideals in architecture and invention. Each year, the Monticello Society, made up of an assortment of trolls, boggans, nockers and several sidhe from Houses Gwydion and Dougal, meet on the mansion's grounds. The Oakencroft Vineyard and Winery acts as a magnet for the local satyr community.

Shenandoah Valley

Between the Blue Ridge and Allegheny Mountains, the Shenandoah Valley holds many cities steeped in history. Harrisonburg, home to a large Mennonite community and several nockers and boggans, features Eastern Mennonite College, James Madison University and the Virginia Quilt Mu-

seum. Nearby Dayton holds the Shenandoah Valley Folk Art & Heritage Center; Kithain crafters in the region have many of their finest works on display to inspire mortal visitors. Lexington is the home of Washington and Lee University and the Virginia Military Institute (VMI). Troll war games and chimerical Civil War reenactments take place on the grounds of both institutions.

Roanoke

The largest city of western Virginia (as opposed to West Virginia) contains the Science Museum of Western Virginia, the Hopkins Planetarium, the Virginia Museum of Transportation — places that attract large numbers of the region's nockers and House Dougal sidhe. Just outside the city lies Booker T. Washington's Birthplace, now a national historic site and a center for eshu activity. The Mill Mountain Zoo, known for its Siberian tiger and red pandas, is a favorite place for many childling pooka.

Fredericksburg

Famous for its Revolutionary War associations, Fredericksburg contains the Mary Washington House and the James Monroe Museum and Memorial Library. In the basement of the Hugh Mercer Apothecary Shop, which introduces visitors to colonial medicinal treatments, Jervis Halls, a sluagh healer, still treats his Kithain patients using 200-year-old remedies and herbal cures. Some of the region's more radical wilders — as well as a group of Unseelie commoners who espouse confrontational politics — have set up their headquarters in the Rising Sun Tavern, once frequented by Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington and other leaders of the revolution.

Williamsburg

This colonial restoration is the largest historical site in the duchy. Recreating the settlement of Williamsburg, capital of the Virginia Colony from 1699 until after the Revolutionary War, the streets are barred to vehicular traffic, and visitors tour the historically accurate sites accompanied by costumed interpreters and guides, many of whom are Kithain. A few miles from Williamsburg, Jamestown Island commemorates the first permanent English colony in America, while the nearby Jamestown Settlement serves as a living-history museum where visitors can interact with "characters" representing sailors, craftsmen, pioneers and Indians. Yorktown, site of the final battle of the American Revolution and Cornwallis' surrender to Washington's Army, contains the Yorktown Battlefield and the Yorktown Victory Center, including a Continental Army encampment where tourists may watch and speak with costumed interpreters — several of them respected troll warriors.

Washington, D.C.

The nation's capital lies between the duchies of Dogwood and Chesapeake, occupying a district all to itself. A planned city whose vision changed with each successive planner, Washington contains not only some of the nation's most impressive

architecture but also some of its most squalid slums. Capitol Hill and its environs includes the Capitol Building, the Supreme Court, the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Library of Congress, RFK Stadium (home of the Redskins) and the Catholic University of America. Surrounding the area known as the Mall are the Washington and Lincoln monuments, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the White House and the Treasury Building. The State Department, Federal Reserve and the National Academy of Sciences occupy the area known as Foggy Bottom. Downtown Washington periodically undergoes attempts at revitalization but remains an overcrowded area filled with substandard housing and decaying buildings. So many dreams are bound up with the various art centers, museums and historical monuments of the city that Kithain who travel to the region regularly find themselves infused with overwhelming amounts of Glamour. There is a downside to this though. Many who come seeking such abundance instead find themselves falling victim to the rampant Banality that exists side-by-side with the abundant Glamour. Further, many become actual victims of the twin Unseelie who claim Washington's Shadow Duchy.

Natural Places

Dogwood is bursting with natural areas. The Shenandoah National Park includes much of Virginia's Blue Ridge Moun-

tains and features forests of pines and hardwoods. The Shenandoah and Endless Caverns provide prime examples of limestone and calcite formations, while the Grand Caverns in Augusta County contain spectacular underground "rooms." Some portions of these "endless" caves provide shelter for slugh, while others serve as "spooky play places" for childlings of all kith. Near Chesapeake, Virginia, lies the Great Dismal Swamp, a national wildlife preserve for many species of birds, black bears and bobcats. Commoner Kithain flock to the area on nights of the full moon for the monthly all-commoner Full Moon Jamboree and Troll Stomp. Off the coast of Virginia's Eastern Shore peninsula, Chincoteague Island hosts the annual swim and auction of ponies from nearby Assateague Island — overseen by a pony pooka who claims the area as a freehold (see Duchy of Chesapeake).

Enchanted Places

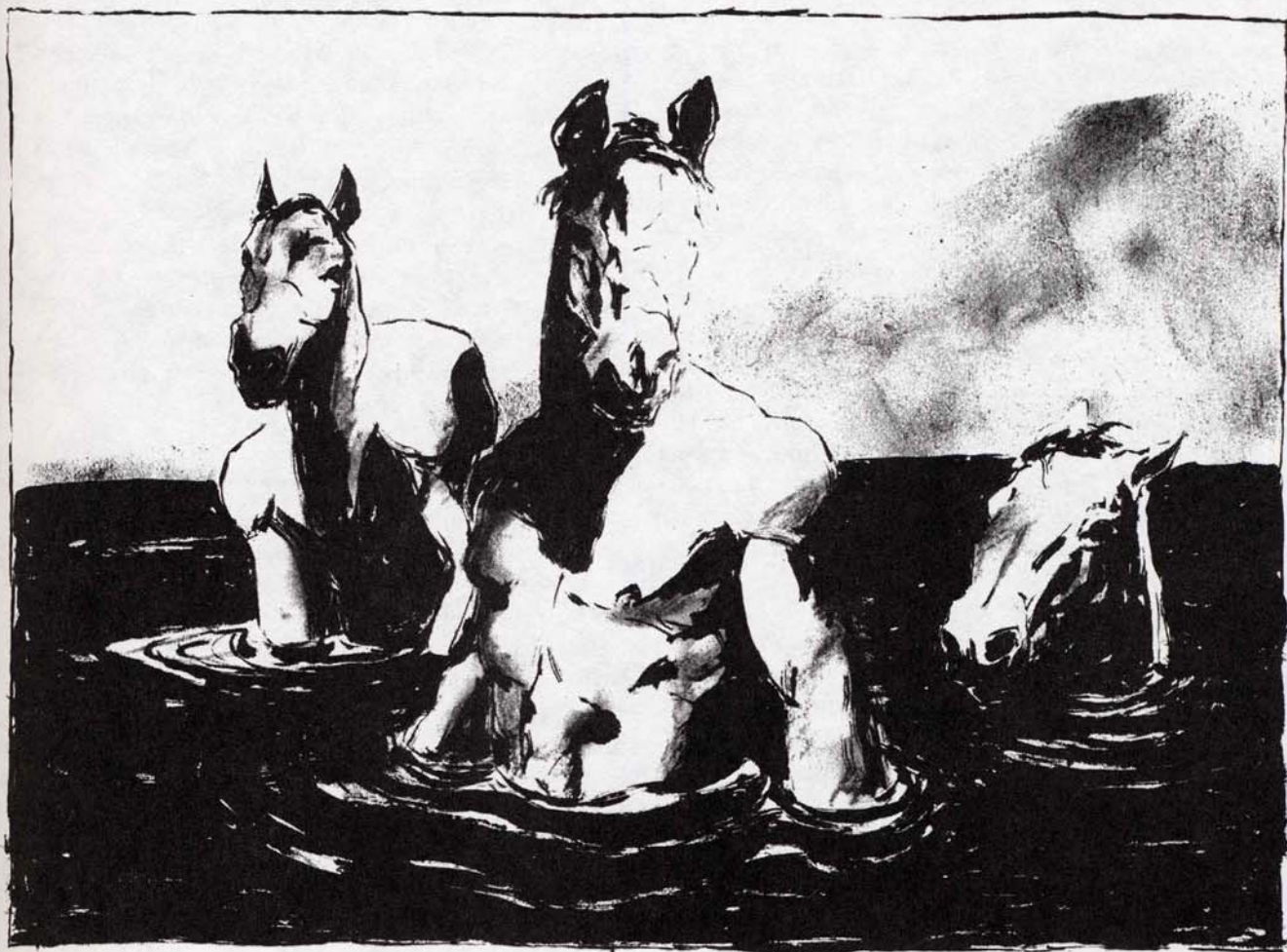
The universal points

Are shrunk into a flower;

Between its delicate joints

Chaos keeps no power.

— Elinor Wylie, "The Eagle and the Mole"



Duchy of Dogwood

Located on a quiet back street north of the river in Richmond, Virginia, the seat of the Duchy of Dogwood exists within a stately mansion that blends in with the other houses on the street. Built of brick in the federal style, with its columned porch and window sills and sashes of pristine white, it could serve as a museum of life in old Virginia. Formal gardens and a manicured lawn surrounded by trimmed hedges occupy the front of the freehold and serve as an area where the court holds its outdoor revels. The whole estate is hidden from the public eye by a wall of trees that line a stone wall around the grounds.

Inside, the rooms that open into the court continue the themes of old money and tradition. Colonial-style furniture rests upon polished hardwood floors and is surrounded by hand-printed wallpaper. The scent of fresh flowers fills every room. These are the rooms that the duke allows visitors to see.

In the more private quarters within the freehold, Cormac and Ashe have created a modern haven for themselves, ranging from a room filled with computers and techno toys to a pseudo-Turkish bathing area complete with Olympic-size pool, sauna and jacuzzi. The duke's private room is filled with video games and puzzles, while Baron Ashe's room holds avant-garde artwork and several musical instruments. One hall serves as a training room where Cormac and Ashe practice swordplay and argue tactics — aided by an enormous terrain table that shows whatever features the two can recall of Arcadia and the Dreaming, peopled by thousands of miniatures lovingly crafted to look like the various kith. Not all of Countess Meregrinne's style has been eradicated yet, and rooms that feature more staid decor are occasionally (and grudgingly) allocated to the duchy's more conservative elements.

The Hunt Club

Unlike the false front of restrained good taste in the duke's freehold, the Count of Jamesriver's holding at the Hunt Club is exactly what it appears to be. Surrounded by leagues of white fencing and acres of rolling grass and bisected by a tree-lined white drive, the Hunt Club is an exclusive steeplechase and fox hunting establishment located just outside Richmond. It is so exclusive, in fact, that only changelings — most of whom are sidhe — are allowed on part of its grounds. A few commoners, servants of Count Rual, work at the club, some even serving as waiters and bartenders within the section open to mortals.

Inside, the Hunt Club features fine leather furnishings, Oriental carpets, green-shaded lamps and a teak-wood bar. Oil paintings featuring the hunt, horses and dogs line the walls, and collections of English snuffboxes and china bric-a-brac are on display throughout the club.

Within the freehold, Count Rual holds numerous card parties, hosts balls and organizes hunts. The freehold hardly differs from the public parts, except for Rual's pets — dozens

of faerie hounds that inhabit the attached kennels and often wander through the open portions of the holding. A secret gate located behind the kennel leads to a minor trod that the count uses to train the hounds for hunts in the Dreaming.

The Cleansing Place

Near Jamestown Island is a living-history museum known as Jamestown Settlement. Costumed guides re-enact the daily lives of the colonials, demonstrating cooking, armor-smithing, and the hard life endured by the settlers in their wattle and daub, thatched-roofed houses. Within Jamestown Settlement can be found its "Indian Village," where visitors can enter and explore a wigwam while Native American

The Court of Mirrors

High King David's secret court lies in the heart of Washington, D.C., set into a faerie glen filled with weeping willows, a brook and wild rose bushes. The center of the freehold is an octagonal teahouse, its sides brushed with colors (rather than painted). Clean lines and surrounding gardens evoke harmony in all who visit.

Inside, comfortable but simple furnishings provide seating areas and small tables for tea ceremonies. Places for entertainers are available, and sleeping quarters are also provided. A central room is reached via a winding spiral staircase and holds nothing in it but eight large mirrors.

This room, which gives the freehold its name, is the meeting point for the trods that lead out from the site. Stepping into a mirror sets one on the corresponding trod. Of the eight trods, one remains unexplored.

By employing Dream-Craft, Kithain have determined that the unexplored trod opens into the Deep Dreaming, though they are uncertain of its exact position or whether those who venture into it can return to the freehold. Despite this small mystery, the entire building is an oasis of serenity and simple beauty.

interpreters clad in buckskin show how their ancestors cultivated gardens, constructed tools, wove baskets and made pottery. Children are allowed to touch; hands-on learning is encouraged, in fact. At the far end of the Indian village, usually overlooked by the tourists but labeled as "off limits" in any case, sits a sweat lodge.

The Nunnehi known as thought crafters claim the "cleansing place" for themselves. Occasionally, a talented mortal (i.e., Dreamer) is enchanted and allowed within, then gifted with insight before she leaves, but many of the Native American fae — such as Aiyana Flower-That-Blooms — prefer to inspire through their work as interpreters in the Indian village. Within the lodge lies a gateway to the spirit world. Only those who have been properly cleansed in the

sweat lodge may see the straight pathway and cross to the other world.

The Shadow Duchy, Washington, D.C.

Cloaked by dark Glamour from casual notice, the Shadow Duchy is housed in the basement of an old book bindery that is now a rock club called the War Zone. Upstairs, the club features a dance floor, seating area, three bars, a mosh pit, a stage and dressing rooms. Loud music inundates the building from 8 p.m. until 1 a.m. on weekends.

Downstairs, reached by a set of stairs, is a cellar where beer and other potables are kept. A concealed door leads into the freehold (which also has a separate sewer entrance). The tunnel that leads from the cellar to the actual holding pulses with sounds from above, but once through the far door, baffling and sound proofing provide peace and quiet within.

The holding itself opens out from both entryways into a chaotic jumble of darkness and strange swirls of color accompanied by flashes of strobeflike light, odd noises and weird angles that are wildly disorienting. Enhanced through tainted Glamour, the room can cause changelings to enter Bedlam if they are left within it long enough. Duchess Kali and Duke Siva, the twin Unseelie who claim the freehold,

bypass this room through a hidden tunnel that leads directly to the heart of the freehold. Those not led blindfolded through the tunnel must brave the chaotic entry hall. Should they find the exit (through the ceiling and reachable only by piling up some of the room's furnishings), they can enter the actual freehold. Otherwise, whoever enters must wait until the duke and duchess allow them to leave.

The freehold proper consists of little more than a series of open rooms swathed in dark cloth, lined with pillows and draped with spiderweb-gauzy curtains. One chamber is reserved for meetings of the inner circle of the true Shadow Court. It houses a huge black-glass oval table and several twisted-wood armchairs covered with black velvet.

Disputed Duchy of Winterthorn

Although claimed by the Duchy of Dogwood, the region that encompasses West Virginia has declared its independence and now seeks recognition as a duchy. Populated primarily by commoners with a few sidhe in residence, this region disavows its connection to the more aristocratic, sophisticated changelings east of the mountains.



Physical Geography

The disputed Duchy of Winterthorn sits in the northwest corner of the Duchy of Dogwood, surrounded on its western edge by the Duchies of Appalachia and Blue Grasses and the Kingdom of Grass. Primarily consisting of the Appalachian mountains and western foothills, large parts of the duchy have suffered from the depredations of the coal industry.

Major Cities and Landmarks

Mountaineers are always free.

— Motto of the State of West Virginia

Harper's Ferry

Located at the junction of the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers, the city of Harper's Ferry once served as a railroad center and was the site of John Brown's rebellion in 1859. The Kithain of the city wholeheartedly support the idea of an independent duchy, and have organized the sending of petitions to the Parliament of Dreams expressing their feelings. The John Brown Society (made up of redcap and nocker radicals) proposes more violent and direct forms of action to ensure their freedom from the Duchy of Dogwood. Nearby Charles Town contains the Jefferson County Courthouse and the John Brown Gallows.

Shepherdstown

Settled by German immigrants in 1790, Shepherdstown contains the Shepherd Grist Mill and the Sheetz Rifle Works. The town is also the site of the first successful demonstration of a working steamboat. A vibrant community of nockers, boggans and trolls — many of them of German origin — form the center of a growing craft movement in the city.

Charleston

The state capital contains the West Virginia State Museum, the Sunrise Museum and the Criel Mound, a relic of the Hopewell-Adena prehistoric culture (and the site of a Nunnehi freehold). Near Charleston, the Hatfield Family Cemetery bears witness to the legendary Hatfield-McCoy feud that ranged along the Kentucky-West Virginia border from 1881-1896. Kithain descendants of these warring families occasionally conduct transborder Ravaging raids against each other's freeholds.

Natural Places

Some of the duchy's natural sites include Cathedral State Park, near Aurora, which contains virgin forests of hemlocks and pines, the New River Gorge National River, and Hawk's Nest State Park.

Enchanted Places

*Over the dark mountain, over the dark pine wood,
Down the long dark valley along the shrunken river,
Returns the splendor without rays, the shining of shadow....*

— Robinson Jeffers, "Night"

Winterthorn

A 19th century grist mill enlarged by additions originally intended to transform it into a restaurant and inn, serves as the freehold of Gwyhyr ap Gwydion, the self-styled Duke of Winterthorn. Located in the wilds of West Virginia, the holding sits atop a reservoir of Glamour. Constructed of river stones and wooden timbers, Winterthorn straddles a small river that turns the millwheel as it flows down a short waterfall.

Named for the white roses that grow nearby, the freehold is home only to Gwyhyr and his chimerical daughter Irenia. What was once a pleasing rural holding has assumed many nightmare characteristics due to Gwyhyr's entry into Bedlam. Time seems distorted while Winterthorn. Those who spend an hour within its confines may emerge an hour, a minute or a month later. Further, it is not unusual for vines covered with white roses to spring up throughout the freehold.

Outside the building, though within the area of the freehold proper, is an elaborate hedge maze filled with colorful flower beds. Chimerical butterflies and animals — rabbits, a tiny gray fox, and a few field mice — make their homes within the maze. During winter months, the evergreen hedge never dies and is always twined with pallid, though redolent, rosebuds.

Duchy of Chesapeake

Aristocratic to the nth degree, the Duchy of Chesapeake clings to traditions even as it fights against the encroaching Banality of the urban centers that impinge upon it. As its physical counterpart, the state of Maryland, teeters precariously between identifying with the genteel, sophisticated mores of its southern sister Virginia and the frenetic, pragmatic ambitions of its northeastern neighbors, the Duchy of Chesapeake shares in the conflict. Caught between its allegiance to the Kingdom of Willows and its sympathetic resonance with the adjoining Kingdom of Apples, Duchess Elena-Anastasia's realm maintains a facade of tolerance and style while simultaneously striving to achieve standing as a model of the modern dream.

Physical Geography

The Duchy of Chesapeake lies along the Mason-Dixon line, placing it at the northernmost edge of the South (or the southernmost portion of the North). The Kingdom of Apples forms its northern border, while the Duchies of Winterthorn and Dogwood comprise the western border. To the east, Chesapeake shares the Delmarva peninsula with both the Kingdom of Apples (Delaware) and part of Dogwood. Chesapeake Bay slices deep into the duchy, almost bisecting it. Washington, D.C. straddles the border between Chesapeake and Dogwood near the mouth of the Potomac River. The region's topography ranges from mountains and forests along the western edge of the duchy to farm country in the south and river country, complete with marshlands and beaches, along the Eastern Shore.

Major Cities and Landmarks

Marylanders at their best have stood for moderation, skepticism, ironic humor, love of peace, and a sense of proportion that reminds one of the sailor's heed to both sail and ballast.

— Robert J. Brugger, *Maryland: A Middle Temperament*, 1634-1980

Baltimore

The largest city in the duchy, Baltimore served the American colonies as a center for shipping and the ship-building trade. During the War of 1812, nearby Fort McHenry came under British bombardment, an occasion immortalized by Francis Scott Key's "Star Spangled Banner." A pooka descendant of the anthem's author has purportedly written additional (irreverent) verses to the song and performs them at the irregular meetings of the Chesapeake Pooka Patriots' Club. Although Maryland remained loyal to the Union in the Civil War (due to the presence of Union troops in the city), a strong faction of Confederate sympathizers remained in Baltimore. Reconstruction in Baltimore spurred the city's industrial growth, which lasted until the mid 1950s, when other cities edged it out of the competitive marketplace. The Kithain of Baltimore are exhausted by the struggle to find Glamour in a city overwhelmed by social unease and economic woes. Recent attempts at revitalization, backed

by efforts from the city's changelings, are beginning to overcome the city's reputation as a depressed metropolis.

• **Historic Baltimore** — Many historic sites and buildings that reflect the city's status as one of the oldest American settlements are nestled together north of the harbor. Centered on Charles Street and Mount Vernon Square, this section of the city includes Johns Hopkins University, the Enoch Pratt Free Library and the Basilica of the Assumption (the country's oldest Catholic cathedral). This area is a favorite gathering place for the city's artistic and serious-minded Kithain. Sherwood Gardens, famous for its thousands of tulips and azaleas, is a trysting place for many satyrs, while the Baltimore Zoo provides a constant source of amusement for many childlings of all kith.

• **Inner Harbor** — The Patapsco River basin serves as Baltimore's harbor and as a working seaport. Fells Point, a revitalized historic district complete with cobblestone streets, has become a source of inspiration for local artists and crafters (and, hence, for their Kithain patrons). Nearby, Fort McHenry attracts troll, redcap and sidhe military-history enthusiasts.

• **West Baltimore** — Despite its high crime and depressed economy, this section of Baltimore attracts a fair number of Kithain who frequent the B&O Railroad Museum, the Babe Ruth Birthplace and Baseball Center, and





the Poe House. The city's Unseelie changelings and most of its slough population reside in small freeholds in some of this area's abandoned buildings. Rival motleys conduct gang wars here with disconcerting regularity.

Southern Region

Chesapeake's southern region, with its farmlands and tobacco fields, most closely resembles the rest of the South. Home to the state's capital, Annapolis, this area lies along the western shore of Chesapeake Bay. Annapolis is not only a historical mecca, with numerous buildings dating from the Colonial period; it also serves as a thriving port for yachters and oystermen. Seasonal yacht races are popular among the sidhe of the region, while commoners hold weekly oyster festivals during the peak gathering season. The area also encompasses Chesapeake Beach, the Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant and Lexington Park, home of the Naval Air Test and Evaluation Museum. Rumors abound that an enclave of Unseelie changelings led by a noble of House Balor has established a freehold near the nuclear plant and plan to use the freehold as a base to overthrow the current duke.

Western Maryland

The largest city in western Chesapeake, Frederick sits amid mountains and farmlands, giving it a distinctly different atmosphere from the rest of the duchy. Once the vacation land for railroad barons and other industrialists, the city now draws tourists with its recreational opportunities and proximity to many historical sites. The Kithain of the region find they have more in common with their counterparts in Winterthorn and Dogwood than with their kithmates in the Duchy of Chesapeake. Sharpsburg, 20 miles west of Frederick, is the site of the Antietam National Battlefield, which commemorates one of the Civil War's bloodiest battles and served as the occasion for Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation; an annual gathering of eshu celebrates this milestone in the history of their kinain.

Eastern Shore

Sharing the Delmarva Peninsula with Delaware and Virginia, the residents of Chesapeake's Eastern Shore and nearby islands are a breed apart. Queen Anne's County, across the bay from Annapolis, contains Wye Mills, home of Maryland's State Tree, the 450-year-old Wye Oak. Rumors that the tree houses a dryad have not been proven. If one exists within the tree, her cloaking of her faerie nature is far too effective for modern changelings to penetrate. Salisbury, near the southern border of Delaware, contains the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art; ironically, chicken packing is the city's largest industry. Ocean City, which borders on the Atlantic, contains beaches, boardwalks and theme parks and is favored by gangs of childlings (some of them members of the Children's Crusade). Smith Island, home to a community of fishers, is noteworthy for its excellent array of seasonal seafoods — soft shell crabs, oysters and clams — as well as for the archaic, 17th-century English spoken by its

inhabitants. Pooka legend has it that a local crab pooka named Sebastian served as the model for Disney's character of the same name in *The Little Mermaid*.

Natural Places

Despite its image as an urbanized region, due to its proximity to Washington, D.C., Chesapeake contains a number of unspoiled wilderness sites. Catoctin Mountain Park, near Frederick, contains forests and rock formations; secluded within its boundaries lies Camp David, a presidential getaway since Franklin D. Roosevelt. Despite its attraction to satyrs, pooka and the occasional boggan, the tight security in the area discourages much Kithain activity near Camp David. The Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, on the Eastern Shore near Cambridge, features marshlands, forests and waterways, all of which serve as homes for songbirds, waterfowl and many endangered species, including fox squirrels and sika deer. Blackwater is claimed by the Nunnehi; the duchess does not dispute their claims.

Enchanted Places

Hail Guest! We ask not what thou art;

If Friend, we greet thee, hand and heart;

If Stranger, such no longer be;

If Foe, our love shall conquer thee.

— Arthur Guiterman, *Old Welsh Door Verse*

Chesapeake House

An attractive white wooden house with neat dark-green shutters, a wide front porch with white railings and gingerbread trim, Chesapeake House is a three-story many-roomed mansion. The yard, enclosed by graceful gates and walls, was initially quite formal, with matching flower beds, a bird bath and a sundial. In its current incarnation, the grounds are strewn with toys and a swing and slide set and equipped with a basketball hoop. While the flower beds still hold a few flowers amid weeds and overgrown grass, the sundial and birdbath have been riotously painted with many layers and colors of spray paint. Among the designs are several backward capital J's and stylized depictions of crowns. Out back, the yard overlooks the bay from atop a cliff. Steps cut into the rock lead down to the duchess' boathouse.

Further evidence of Jasper's artistic endeavors adorns the inner walls of the freehold, especially in the rooms he claims as his play space. Duchess Elena-Anastasia hasn't had the heart to either punish him or have the drawings washed off. Aside from the rooms that benefit from Jasper's special touch, Chesapeake House is noted for its gracious decor.

Drawing rooms and ballrooms where the duchess holds many parties throughout the year abound, while small sitting rooms attached to bedchambers provide dozens of guest quarters. The duchess' own chambers feature a canopied bed and mirrored dresser, while Jasper sleeps in a replica of a red Corvette under tenting painted to look like the night sky. Jasper also has a junglegym and "toy" shooting range attached to his quarters.

Assateague Dunes

Although much of Assateague Island is given over to outdoor recreations, the area around the dunes where the wild ponies run plays host to a small freehold. The tiny source of Glamour lies between two dunes that look just like all the others in the area. Only a changeling or someone attuned to Glamour could distinguish the place. Nonetheless, a small depression in the sand serves as a freehold for Zrori, a pony pooka who lives on the island and runs with the wild pony herds. Her favorite time of year is the annual roundup where the ponies are herded into swimming to nearby Chincoteague Island where they are sold at auction. She revels in the frustration caused by playing pranks. Her favorite involves making herself so appealing that someone buys her, only to discover that she has unbelievably escaped from her pen.

Blackwater Hunting Grounds

Part of the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge on Maryland's Eastern Shore, the Blackwater Hunting Grounds connect the spirit world to this vast tract of marshlands, waterways, open bodies of water and forests. Deep within the woodlands, a few rock formations serve as the entrance to an encampment of may-may-gway-shi, or rock fishers, whose mortal Algonquin descendants once hunted in this region.

Although they keep mostly to themselves and rarely interact with the visitors who drive, cycle or walk along the approved trails and paths that traverse the wildlife preserve, daring individuals occasionally show themselves to outsiders. Smiling River, one of the most curious of the rock fisher braves, sometimes guides lost persons back to safety.

Making their homes within the rocks themselves, the may-may-gway-shi of the Blackwater Hunting Grounds have decorated their dwelling places with paintings on the inner walls of the rocks.

Within the spirit world (or Umbra), the Blackwater Hunting Grounds teem with animal, bird and fish spirits, who allow the rock fishers to pursue them in a celebration of the bond of necessity between predator and prey. Each fish spirit who gives its life to feed one of the rock fishers returns the next day, its spirit reformed and ready for the next chase.



CHAPTER THREE: POLITICS AND CULTURE

The life they began after moving into the mountains was a new life — their own, shut off from the rest of the world. These pioneers were our true early Americans, of pure strain, strong with customs and idioms. . . . Their odd speech they explained to outlanders in this fashion: "The words o' you' uns don't fit our mouths, so we don't use 'em."

— Virgil Carrington Jones, *The Hatfields and the McCoys*

This chapter takes a look at the complex and convoluted politics that make the Kingdom of Willows a hotbed of intrigue and a morass of conflicting personal ambitions. As one of the seven kingdoms that comprise Concordia, the Kingdom of Willows jockeyes for its share of political power within the highest echelons of Kithain society. Just as the American South, which constitutes its physical boundaries, hosts a variety of conflicting political ambitions, so too do the nobles who control the many fiefs of the Kingdom of Willows. Their internal maneuverings reflect the nobles own special needs and ambitious perceptions. And all this transpires according to the convoluted plan of Meilge ap Eiluned, King of Willows.

Culture among the Kithain of the Kingdom of Willows also bears its own unique stamp. While the first generation of sidhe who arrived from Arcadia in 1969 observe many of the quasi-feudal and medieval customs prevalent throughout Concordia, later sidhe arrivals (as well as some of the older ones) have borrowed social conventions peculiar to the

South. These variations on a cultural theme are also discussed in this section.

Politics

While the kingdom has always had its share of both Seelie and Unseelie conservatives and liberals, they are not always as easy to pin down as Kithain from other areas. Some otherwise conservative fae become downright modernist and liberal when it comes to certain issues that are near and dear to their hearts. Many straddle the fence, and dangling their feet on both sides, reacting to changing political winds much like the politician who both condemned and advocated liquor depending on who was asking his opinion. Still, the new twist in politics has created unexpected enemies and allies. Rather than falling in whatever side they usually follow, Kithain throughout the Kingdom of Willows (and Concordia) are finding themselves among strange bedfellows regarding the disappearance of the High King and the factions contending for the throne.



Discord in Concordia: The Riving of the Parliament of Dreams

In the wake of High King David's disappearance, High Queen Faerilyth of House Eiluned claims the throne. Although she has been named High Queen by David and, therefore, believes she has the right to assume the throne of Concordia in her own name, Faerilyth instead opts to claim it in David's name, holding it in trust until his return. It is as if she has decided to rule Concordia as Regent, while retaining the title of High Queen bestowed upon her at her marriage.

Morwen fails to grasp that essential point. She instead believes that Faerilyth seduced and killed or kidnapped the king, thereby surrendering any right or claims she might otherwise have. By insisting that Faerilyth is not the rightful claimant to the throne, Morwen hopes to keep a potential murderer (or at least a conspirator) from claiming the throne of Concordia. Further, Morwen hopes that if David still lives, and if Faerilyth had anything to do with his disappearance, refusing to surrender her claim to the throne to anyone except David himself may force Faerilyth give up on her plan and return David. That's the only way Morwen will ever see any power from all this. Of course, Morwen believes that when David returns, he will be able to prove Faerilyth's guilt in the matter and have her banished or executed for treason.

Faerilyth's and Morwen's mutually exclusive decisions cause a split among the representatives to the Parliament of Dreams. The Royalists support Faerilyth and her reign, arguing that the Dreaming seems to have accepted her authority to rule. Opposing her are the Morwenists, a faction loyal to (and some say, led by) David's sister. These latter Kithain believe that Faerilyth tricked the High King into marrying her, and hold her responsible for his disappearance. Some even whisper that Faerilyth has arranged for David's secret assassination. The Morwenists want to depose Faerilyth and set Morwen up as High Queen.

An offshoot of the Morwenists, called the Regent's Faction, believe that Morwen should rule Concordia but should eschew the title of High Queen and govern the Kingdom as Regent for David's appointed heir, Princess Lenore, who is still a childling.

Yet a fourth faction, calling itself the Lottery Faction, maintains that a Royal Lottery should be held to determine a new High King.

This situation has thrown the changeling population of Concordia into chaos, leading some to threaten civil war as various kingdoms see this as an opportunity to declare independence from Concordia. Not the least of these kingdoms is Meilge's domain, which has long harbored a resentment for the "Northern" based rule from Tara-Nar.

In the Kingdom of Willows

Although Meilge holds sovereignty over the Kithain of the Kingdom of Willows, in reality he relies heavily on his appointed dukes, duchesses and lesser nobles to exercise authority in his name. Most of the nobles support Meilge, recognizing his keen insights into the workings of the modern world.

A few, however, harbor doubts about their liege's true motivations. Many Seelie nobles in the Kingdom of Willows believe that their king possesses more than just a strong Unseelie "streak"; they claim that not only has he gone completely over to the Unseelie Court, but that he has strong ties with the Shadow Court.

Particularly among the counties, where ambition and intrigue run hot, many counts and countesses either secretly plot against Meilge or else ignore him altogether, seeing his rulership as irrelevant to their own unique problems. The baronies, on the other hand, tend to support Meilge because of his *laissez-faire* attitude toward them.

Indeed, despite his often autocratic bearing, Meilge allows his vassal lords a great deal of leeway. Some believe the King of Willows trusts those to whom he has delegated authority to act without the need for constant attention from above. More cynical nobles ascribe darker intentions to their sovereign's actions, suspecting that Meilge does not care what transpires within his domain as long as his own schemes bear fruit.

The truth of the matter lies somewhere in between and has its source in the complex psyche of the king of Willow's Heart.

Political Impulses

The same political impulses that exist within the Parliament of Dreams also have their proponents in the Kingdom of Willows. In fact, most of the Seelie and Unseelie impulses claim some portion of the Kithain population, as nobles and commoners alike seek ways to express their desires for representation within the government of Concordia. The following section offers an overview of the various political groupings in the Kingdom of Willows.

Seelie Impulses

The majority of Southern Kithain ally themselves with the Seelie Court and fall into one of the three major political impulses associated with the Seelie fae. While it is simplistic to say that any one region is dominated solely by a single political impulse, some generalizations do describe certain regions better than others. Most Southern fiefdoms contain at least a few Kithain from each impulse. Even in the most Traditionalist regions, hotbeds of Modernists and Reformists can be found.

Traditionalists

Those Kithain who believe in the inherent right of sidhe rulership fall within the Traditionalist impulse. In the Kingdom of Willows, which has a long history of rule by the aristocracy of Southern planters, Traditionalists have a strong power base. They are strongest in the fiefdoms of the Deep South (Georgia, Mississippi and Alabama) and in the coastal fiefs of Virginia and North and South Carolina. Many nobles in Kentucky and Maryland also belong to the Traditionalists. The majority of Southern sidhe belong to this group, along with some trolls, boggans and a few nockers — the commoner kith most likely to accept a highly stratified class system without raising a stir.

Many Traditionalists consider themselves members of the Morwenist or Regent's factions, feeling that the High King's appointment of his wife as co-ruler has violated the natural order of a singular monarchy.

Reformers

The Reformers, who have adopted the principle of a constitutional monarchy, believe that the best form of government for the fae is one that relies on the cooperation between a monarch and his subjects. Not surprisingly, Reformers have their strongest contingencies in the fiefs nearest to Washington, D.C.; Baltimore, Maryland; and Richmond, Virginia. Another Reformer base exists in the Duchy of the Ozarks, where the paucity of nobles necessitates reliance on a good relationship with the commoner kith.

In general, members of House's Liam and Scathach and a few members of House Gwydion, as well as many commoners of all kith support the Reformers. These changelings are also the ones most likely to agree with the politics of High King David. Since his disappearance, many Reformers now support the High Queen's claim to the throne.

Modernists

The Modernists have their political strongholds in the thriving new metropolitan regions of the South, such as Atlanta, the Triangle region of North Carolina and the swiftly developing cities of Knoxville, Chattanooga and Nashville, Tennessee. Many of the fiefdoms near major Southern cities contains their share of changelings who insist that the anachronisms of the sidhe-dominated superstructure need updating to incorporate the realities of a modern, technological society.

This impulse has the support of many commoners. Nockers, slugh, pooka, redcaps (the Seelie ones) and satyrs, in particular, embrace the tenets of Modernism. Few sidhe outside House Scathach hold Modernist views; the most notable exception to the sidhe's inherent dislike of this faction is King Meilge himself. The King of Willows realizes that the world will not revert to a pre-technological age anytime soon, and that the fae must adapt to the modern world or die.

Strangely enough, many Modernists support the Royalists (Faerilyth's faction). Others, however, advocate the idea of a Royal Lottery, feeling that the Dreaming knows best who Concordia's ruler should be. Some secretly hope that sooner or later a commoner's name will find its way into the lottery and bring Concordia crashing into the present day.

Unseelie Impulses

While Unseelie Kithain remain a minority in the Kingdom of Willows (as they do throughout most of Concordia), they do form a sometimes vocal "second party" among Southern Kithain. By definition, Unseelie fae do not support the tenets of Seelie government. They hold different beliefs concerning the importance of honor and the relationships of the fae to the Dreaming and to the mortal world. Criticism of the Parliament of Dreams and the government of Concordia runs high in the Kingdom of Willows, and its Unseelie Kithain raise the loudest voices raised in opposition.



As with the Seelie fae, political divisions demarcate subtle shades of opinion among the Unseelie Kithain. On the whole, Unseelie changelings see High King David's disappearance as an opportunity, rather than the disaster it has been labeled by their Seelie counterparts. After all, the belief that change is good forms one of the major tenets of the Unseelie Code.

Purists (Traditionalists)

Before the Shattering, Seelie and Unseelie nobles took turns ruling faerie society. Purists among the Unseelie desire a return to this ancient form of dual government. Many Southern Purists support King Meilge, believing that the King of Willows only claims membership in the Seelie Court. Some members of this impulse feel that Meilge would make an ideal "winter" king of Concordia. A few actually claim that High King David's disappearance was a voluntary withdrawal from the political arena. According to them, High Queen Faerilyth is secretly a member of the Unseelie Court and is now taking her turn as leader of the fae.

Purists, like Seelie Traditionalists, tend to congregate in areas of the Kingdom of Willows where belief in aristocratic rulership is strongest. Unseelie sidhe tend to fall into this political impulse, since it advocates the inherent supremacy of the nobility. A few commoners support this impulse as well, finding the idea of constant cycles of changing rulers appealing.

Repudiators (Reformists)

The Unseelie who call themselves Repudiators believe that fae society has languished under Seelie rule for too long. Their goal is the complete overthrow of Seelie leadership. They see this as the only way to realign a balance that has for too long fallen on the side of the Seelie.

This is a popular position for Southern Unseelie changelings who believe that they can field a number of potential candidates to rule as the Unseelie High King of Concordia. For them, the disappearance of the High King is a signal from the Dreaming that the time has come for an Unseelie takeover.

Southern Repudiators claim Meilge as one of their own (whether or not he claims membership in their faction). Although they, like the Purists, would throw their support behind Meilge as High King, they do not delude themselves into thinking that the King of Willows would ever give up absolute power once it fell into his hands. And that's the way they want it.

Although Repudiators welcome commoners into their faction, they relegate non-nobles to secondary positions, believing like the Purists that only the sidhe are fit to rule.

Anarchists

This impulse includes Unseelie changelings who simply want a change in government regardless of what form it takes and who advocate chaos and destruction for its own sake. In the Kingdom of Willows, Anarchists exist in the backwoods, where any kind of government equates to meddlesome interference, and in major Southern cities, where resentment against any

kind of authority is common. Anarchists greeted the news of High King David's disappearance with a three-day celebration that included riots and block parties and widespread Ravaging.

More commoners than sidhe belong to the Anarchist impulse.

Ritualists

The most spiritually oriented of any of the fae, Seelie or Unseelie, the Ritualists believe in observing the ancient faerie practices — including all the festivals. Their firm espousal of the principle that the king is the land and that, periodically, the king must sacrifice himself for the good of the land makes them some of the most dangerous (and deadly) members of the Unseelie Court.

The New Orleans area serves as the center of Ritualist practices in the Kingdom of Willows, though smaller Ritualist groups exist near Charleston, South Carolina and Savannah, Georgia. Members of this impulse have approached King Meilge privately, encouraging him to depose David and assume his position. They firmly (and correctly) believe that Meilge arranged for David's disappearance. They are eager to learn where Meilge has hidden the "king of the old year" (as they now refer to David) so that they can ritually sacrifice him for the continued prosperity of the land he once ruled.

Modernists

Unseelie Modernists hold many beliefs in common with their Seelie counterparts. They, too, maintain that changelings must stop hiding behind fake medievalism and come to terms with the modern world. They just go a little further than their Seelie cousins. Unseelie members of the Modernist impulse go out of their way to court Banality, reasoning that continued exposure will inure them to its worst effects and make them better able to survive the inevitable approach of Endless Winter.

Unseelie Modernists co-exist with their Seelie kin in areas of the Kingdom of Willows where technology and industry have gained a firm foothold. The Research Triangle and the iron-rich lands near Birmingham, Alabama, are prime territory for Unseelie Modernists. A few members of this impulse have even opened up a freehold near Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

By far, commoners make up the majority of Modernists, although a few members of House Balor and some Unseelie Scathach sidhe also belong to this impulse.

The Shadow Court

While the true Shadow Court carefully conceals its presence in the Kingdom of Willows, most Unseelie changelings believe that this ultra-secret organization has at least one of its headquarters within King Meilge's realm. Many Unseelie fae feel certain that King Meilge belongs to the Shadow Court's inner circle; others suspect that the Shadow Court controls Meilge's actions though he, himself, remains outside it.

A Southern Twist

Growing dissatisfaction with centralized government — which, among mortals, once found expression in the movements for states' rights — has led many Southern changelings to espouse the concept of minimalist rule. Some intrepid fae have begun to whisper of declaring their independence from Concordia, feeling that the need to concentrate on their own local needs is worth the risk of a second Accordance War.

While they have yet to comprise a formal political impulse, the Separatists (as they are beginning to call themselves) have slowly been gathering support among changelings who feel left out of Concordia's government. These rebel changelings argue that each kingdom within Concordia has its own special needs and that no one central monarch can possibly satisfy all those needs.

Many of them go even farther, claiming that the Kingdom of Willows covers too much territory to be under the rule of a single individual, no matter how astute. They advocate regional rule, perhaps by individual duchy or maybe through a council of dukes whose lands all face common problems.

While rebellion tends to attract the Unseelie Court, a few Seelie changelings also find themselves drawn to the Separatist faction. They see no conflict in advocating small, independent Kithain realms and following the tenets of the Seelie Code.

Secret and Not-So-Secret Societies

A number of prominent southern Kithain belong to one or more of the secret (and not terribly secret) societies that make up the underbelly of changeling politics. Like "old-boy" clubs and other forms of networking, membership in any of these clandestine — or overt — organizations offers Kithain a built-in group of supporters and allies, as well as certain social advantages from gaining the right to establish a freehold to earning a position in a local noble's court. While many secret societies restrict their membership to the nobility, others admit both commoners and nobles; a few secret societies made up entirely of commoners also exist. See **Nobles: the Shining Host** and **The Shadow Court** for more detailed information on the societies described below.

Red Branch Knights

Personal honor ranks as one of the highest virtues for Southern Kithain, and the Red Branch Knights epitomize honor. Although most members of this group of oathbound knights are nobles, a very few commoner knights have gained admittance to this exclusive fellowship. Most Knights of the Red Branch belong to the Traditionalist impulse, and almost all of them are Seelie.



Berin O'Donnell, despite his Scathach lineage and ostensibly Unseelie mien, has earned a well-deserved position within this society of stalwart upholders of the chivalric code.

Beltaine Blade

One of the most secretive of secret societies, the Beltaine Blade consists of sidhe nobles who wholeheartedly support monarchic rule as the preferred form of fae government. Most members of the Beltaine Blade consider High King David's populist sympathies a sign of weakness. This society refuses to recognize Faerilyth's claim to the High King's throne, seeing her as merely a weaker extension of a weak king.

Members of the Beltaine Blade support the idea of a strong, autocratic ruler. Southern sidhe who belong to this society may soon begin a push to proffer Meilge as a suitable candidate for High King, despite his Modernist views. In the Kingdom of Willows, the society looks to Count Rual ap Gwydion, a staunch fae Traditionalist and political conservative, for leadership.

Ranters

This society of radical commoners consists primarily of Unseelie fae united by their hatred of the nobility. Even the High King's noted sympathy for commoners does not extend to these destructive fae; he has outlawed the organization since his discovery of its existence.

In the Kingdom of Willows, the Ranters enjoy freedom as long as they confine themselves to the backwoods, mountains and bayous, where few can witness their rampant destruction.

Django Hillrunner, an eshu drummer with an Unseelie changeling group of fusion-bluegrass musicians who reside in the Duchy of Appalachia, belongs to one of the less violent arms of this clandestine and illegal society. (See *Rage Across Appalachia*, a Regional Sourcebook for *Werewolf: the Apocalypse*, and *Changeling: The Dreaming* for additional information on the Cloudburst Black and Bluegrass Band and its goals.)

Catacomb Club

Those commoner nobles who resent the forfeiture of authority to the sidhe make up the majority of members of the Catacomb Club. Southern members, in particular, resent the perceived "intrusion" of the sidhe into a society that had functioned well enough without them. Chiefly a "back-room" political lobby, the Catacomb Club contains many titled commoners who seek to increase their own political power and further their ambitions. Members excel in appealing to their commoner constituency, and are among the most vocal of the commoner nobles in the Parliament of Dreams.

Most Southern changelings who belong to this society reside in areas where the sidhe still struggle to secure a solid hold on the Kithain population, such as the Duchy of Appalachia, the Duchy of the Ozarks and numerous smaller fiefdoms. Most of these commoner nobles exhibit Reformist politics, although a few Modernists hold positions in this elite. Appalachia's Count Bjorno, a troll, sees his membership in the Catacomb Club as a means of achieving justice for commoners rather than for exercising personal gain. Unfortunately, he is the exception to the rule.

Crystal Circle

Less a political organization than a special-interest group, the Crystal Circle brings together the most talented of fae sorcerers whose interests lie in exploring the furthest reaches of the Dreaming. Although regionalism has less bearing on this cabal than on many other clandestine groups, a few Southern members of the Crystal Circle maintain that the Dreaming in the South retains a closer attachment to Arcadia than in most other parts of Concordia.

Members belong to all political impulses and both Courts, although Seelie sorcerers predominate. In the Kingdom of Willows, the Crystal Circle seeks to investigate the high incidence of "haints" (haunts) and other areas that are highly magical. Recent interest among newagers in the many ley-lines that criss-cross the Southern mountains has caused widespread concern among members of the Circle who fear that too much mortal intrusion will wreck these possible remnants of lost faerie places of power.

Elena, Duchess of the Southern Coast, once participated heavily in the group's experiments and expeditions; rumors abound that her current reclusive existence within her freehold masks her latest attempt to explore the Far Dreaming.

Cat's Cradle

The noblewomen who make up the membership of the Cat's Cradle have taken the art of subtle political manipulation to new heights. The Cat's Cradle crosses all political spectrums of both Seelie and Unseelie Courts. Its members believe that by working carefully behind the scenes, they can ensure the long-term survival of the fae.

Within the Kingdom of Willows, the Cat's Cradle reflects the insight long held by most Southern women: true power resides in the ability to influence its overt wielders. While the extent of its membership is a closely guarded secret, members of the Cat's Cradle reside in nearly every fiefdom of Meilge's Kingdom. Among its most prestigious members are Igrania, the self-appointed Duchess of Magnolia's Home, Duchess Elena-Anastasia Nicolenskya and High Queen Faerilyth.

Monkey's Paw

This ultra-secret society of fae assassins and spies-for-hire has a strong membership in the Kingdom of Willows. Primarily composed of commoners, the Monkey's Paw also includes a few renegade Scathach sidhe and several members of the three Unseelie houses. Many changeling nobles, both sidhe and titled commoners, avail themselves of the Monkey's Paw's expertise in wetwork and covert activities without realizing that their employees also pursue their own agendas.

King Meilge's spymaster, the sluagh Riel, holds a position of power within this organization — a fact which has serious implications for the security of the Kingdom of Willows.

Golden Sickle

Many Modernists (both Seelie and Unseelie) belong to this progressive organization, that advocates the acquisition of influence and wealth in the mortal sphere. Members of the

Sickle seek to master technology and overcome the inherent Banality of the modern world. In the Kingdom of Willows, membership is strongest in the South's urban areas and in the Duchy of the Triangle.

Acknowledged by the Golden Sickle as their leader, King Meilge embodies the calculating shrewdness and canny business sense so admired by the group's membership. Both commoners and nobles belong to the Golden Sickle, since it emphasizes material success rather than birth or lineage.

Knights of the Cold Watch

This cadre of Unseelie nobles preserve their memories of the dark "things" that came through the Mists from Arcadia during the Resurgence. Though most nobles have forgotten these horrors, the Knights of the Cold Watch spend their time scouring the mortal world and the Near Dreaming for traces of these creatures.

Some Southern members of the Cold Watch believe that the bayous of Louisiana and the deep woodlands of Appalachia and the Ozarks harbor enclaves of these frightening beings.

Appalachia's Duchess Dianan remembers her own encounters with monsters during her passage from Arcadia into the mortal world. Despite her Seelie nature, she supports the work of the Knights of the Cold Watch and extends her hospitality to them whenever they pass through her lands.

Pilgrims of the Bright Road

Primarily made up of Unseelie Ritualists, this secret organization seeks communion with the realms of the dead and dedicates itself to the exploration of the Dark Dreaming. The Pilgrims of the Bright Road enjoy a strong following in the area around New Orleans and in other parts of the Kingdom of Willows where old "superstitions" and the belief in spiritualism still hold the imagination of the locals.

Lisette Levay, Unseelie duchess and the self-styled Voodoo Queen of New Orleans, holds a high position among the Pilgrims, and many flock to her holding during Mardi Gras for an annual ritual of reaffirmation of their tenets.

Children's Crusade

Composed of Unseelie childlings and wilders drawn primarily from the ranks of redcaps, satyrs and sluagh, this organization of assassins reportedly serves the goals of the Shadow Court. While the Children's Crusade has a relatively small membership and a rapid turnover rate (due to the swiftness with which Banality claims its most active members), it has members throughout all of Concordia. Several "Crusaders" reside within the Kingdom of Willows, including "King" Jasper the Wicked, the satyr ward of Baltimore's Duchess Elena-Anastasia Nicolenskya.

Southern Cross

Originating in the Kingdom of Willows just after the Accordance War, this secret society consists entirely of Southern fae who resent being ruled by "Yankee" sidhe from the North (i.e., Concordia). Adopting many of the terrorist tactics



of the Ku Klux Klan, including the burning of chimerical crosses on the lawns of freeholds known to house staunch supporters of the High King, these changeling vigilantes seek to precipitate nothing short of a civil war within Concordia. A few moderate members of this group prefer to gain their objectives through the politics of persuasion rather than terror, but they are the minority.

Attracting the extremist members of the Separatist impulse, the Southern Cross advocates the immediate and violent overthrow of the Parliament of Dreams and an end to Northern "occupation." They reportedly maintain a list of "undesirables" among the Kithain, discriminating against any fae born outside of the Kingdom of Willows. Though theoretically open to all sympathizers, regardless of kith or status, in reality the majority of their members come from the Unseelie Court. Rumors persist that the Shadow Court pulls the strings of this organization, using it to disrupt the internal affairs of Concordia by fostering the idea of the decentralization of Kithain society.

Duke Florian of House Ailil, the ruler of Graceland, is the unconfirmed leader of the Southern Cross. Other strongholds for this group exist within the Duchy of Appalachia, the Duchy of Cotton and the Duchy of the Ozarks. In general, they have a following wherever there is a history of rebellion against authority.

Children of Annihilation

This secret and extremely radical organization presents one of the most dangerous threats to changeling society since the advent of the Sundering. Composed exclusively of Unseelie extremists — many of them from the Modernist and Anarchist impulses — the Children of Annihilation work toward the total eradication of the Seelie Court.

Their reasoning is simple, albeit warped. Believing that only Unseelie ruthlessness can survive the onset of Endless Winter, they seek to cull the weaklings (i.e., the Seelie fae) from the fold. They also perceive that, since Glamour is dwindling from the mortal world at an alarming rate, Banality will eventually supplant it as the sustenance of the fae. To this end, members of the Children of Annihilation deliberately court Banality, trying to render themselves immune (or at least resistant) to its effects.

Tactics practiced by the Children of Annihilation include the deliberate murder of Seelie fae; the use of cold iron weapons in these assassinations effectively removes these changelings forever from the Dreaming. More subtle tactics involve seeding Seelie freeholds with objects made of cold iron and kidnapping Seelie childlings in order to convert them.

One of the most fanatic of its members, Gadiel of House Balor, resides within the Kingdom of Willows, in a recently constructed freehold near Oak Ridge, Tennessee, the site of early research on the atomic bomb. Whether or not they are completely mad, members of this group cause terror and havoc wherever they implement one of their raids.

Politics – Southern Style

The phrase “Southern politician” conjures up the image of a paternalistic, cigar-smoking, smooth-tongued master of the political filibuster and back-room bureaucracy. Although the South’s political machine still holds its share of Jesse Helms and Strom Thurmond clones, these members of the “old guard” comprise a relatively small segment of the region’s public servants. The South is changing, developing a new awareness of itself as part of a larger whole. In the latter half of the 20th century, the South has begun to improve its race relations, to open itself to alternative lifestyles and to appreciate the political power of women.

Its political representation now reflects its growing diversity. The presidencies of Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, both of them born below the Mason-Dixon Line, have dramatically demonstrated the new Southern awareness. Blacks and women have claimed their rightful share of political power in all levels of government in the South, from local positions on city councils to mayorships and positions in Congress.

Although the South remains a hotbed of political conservatism and a staunch enclave for Republicans and conservative Democrats, it also contains its share of liberals. Party-switching is common in the South, as individual politicians owe less loyalty to partisan politics than to their own particular beliefs.

Southern political practices maintain many traditions; the concepts of trading a favor for a favor and greasing the wheels in one area to gain great returns in another are standard practice in the South. Corruption and payoffs are still much in evidence. Mastery of the political lobby is also the province of many Southern politicians; the efforts of the tobacco lobby and the supporters of clear-cutting and the deregulation of businesses bear witness to the effectiveness of special interest blocs in the South.

Modern political thinkers still struggle to overcome the fear (unfortunately justified) that many Southerners have that the South will lose its seniority in certain national committees if veteran incumbents are defeated. Which, incidentally, goes a long way toward explaining the continued re-election of Jesse Helms and Strom Thurmond. Despite growing opposition to these veterans’ ultra-right-wing stances, many otherwise moderate voters fear the loss of their political clout. Southerners desire to retain as much power in the halls of Congress as they can — even if it means forestalling their entry into the 20th century to do so.

The cult of personality remains a powerful influence in Southern voting patterns. Many voters in the South choose the person rather than the party, believing that political platforms mean less than personal honor or charisma. Although the myth of the “Southern politician” persists, other political archetypes are beginning to displace it.

The politics of Southern changelings likewise reflects an increased diversification. Younger sidhe have begun to rise to power in the Kingdom of Willows, and their attitudes are a far cry from the authoritarian and autocratic practices of the Resurgent generation of nobles. Commoners who are politically active tend to mirror the changes taking place in the mortal arena. Many whisper that the Cat’s Cradle has been instrumental in encouraging the rise of progressive changelings to positions of power within the Kingdom of Willows. On the other hand, the Modernist views of King Meilge have also contributed to a changing of the faerie guard.

Culture

The social life of the Kingdom of Willows combines aspects of post-Resurgence Kithain customs with traditions that present a distinctly southern perspective. In many parts of the South, Kithain society during the Interregnum reflected the quasi-feudal, land-based structure of planter society. Although the Civil War and the post-war Reconstruction led to the industrialization and modernization of the South in the mortal world, many Southern Kithain retained vestiges of the old structure within their chimerical society. Commoner nobles held major freeholds and served as points of stability and order; other commoners served as vassals to these *de facto* nobles, or else made do with small holdings in the hinterlands and backwoods.

The Resurgence brought about a change in leadership among Southern Kithain but did not cause as much social disruption in the South as in some other regions. The foundations for the re-imposition of the medieval trappings of pre-

Shattering Kithain society already lay in place. Sidhe nobles co-opted many of the larger freeholds after the Accordance War, and the Kingdom of Willows was able to take advantage of a population of changelings already conditioned to accept the presence of a landed aristocracy.

Honor

In the antebellum South, as in medieval Europe, honor served to distinguish gentlemen of high regard from men of low degree. The white male aristocracy of the South did not attribute honor to women, slaves or lower-class white males. Women possessed virtue, while slaves and white men who did not belong to the landed gentry were either good or bad; honor did not apply to these three subclasses of Southern society.

Southern Kithain society still places a high value on the concept of honor, though it now governs the behavior of both sexes and all kith. The code of chivalry and the Seelie Code delineate the boundaries of honorable behavior for Kithain

society in general, but in the Kingdom of Willows, certain activities define "honor" in a peculiarly Southern fashion.

Duels

Among Southern Kithain, dueling serves as a means of settling disputes that affect a changeling's personal honor or status. While some parts of Concordia frown on duels except under formal conditions such as during tournaments or as a part of the justice system, in Meilge's realm the duel enjoys not only official sanction but also immense popularity as a regional pastime.

Duels come in many forms and serve many purposes in the Kingdom of Willows. They need not even take place to have their intended effect. Any duel can be averted by a formal apology, in which the Kithain tendering the apology effectively concedes the victory to her opponent.

At the heart of every duel, however, is the premise that one member needs to assert his or her superiority over the other. Societies without hierarchies or status have no need for duels.

• **Formal Duels** — Sanctioned by a freehold lord, these combats settle disputes between noble changelings, usually of equal status. Occasionally, a lesser noble may issue a formal challenge to a superior (usually not his liege). The higher-ranking noble always has the option of refusing the duel without loss of honor; in most cases, however, a noble rarely stands down from a test of his personal honor.

Formal duels take place when the court that houses the participants formally convenes; if the duelists come from different freeholds, a neutral holding usually serves as the venue for the duel so as not to offer either party the "home court" advantage. Common causes for formal duels include grievous insult to a noble's personal honor, publicly casting aspersion upon a noble's status within Kithain society, or accusing a noble of violating some portion of the Escheat.

Chimerical swords or pistols are the weapons of choice for formal duels; using weapons that cause physical harm is usually considered bad taste unless the pre-duel agreement stipulates such weapons and their use receives the approval of the noble in charge of overseeing the duel.

• **Personal Challenges** — These duels make up the majority of contests between noble Kithain. Issued any time one noble feels insulted or injured by another, personal challenges usually occur at a time and place agreed upon by the participants (*"Meet me by the stand of poplars at dawn tomorrow."*). Most duels of this nature involve only the principals and their seconds, and often take place without the knowledge of the local fief-holder. While problems arising from romantic entanglements usually result in a personal challenge, affairs of the heart occasionally achieve enough notoriety to warrant settlement through a formal duel.

As in formal duels, personal challenges usually involve chimerical swords or pistols. Since personal challenges do



not receive the same scrutiny as formal duels, serious combatants sometimes resort to real weapons; in those cases, duels are usually fought to "first blood."

• **Commoner Duels** — Duels fought between commoners serve the same purposes as nobles' duels; they restore lost status, reassert lost honor or settle disputes. While fewer formal trappings surround such altercations, commoner duels enjoy a higher status than barroom brawls or common fist fights. Usually, one of the participants issues a formal challenge ("Step outside and let's settle this right here and now!"). If the one challenged accepts, the "formalities" usually give way immediately to the duel itself. On occasion, a duel between commoner changelings becomes as involved and complicated as either a formal duel or a personal challenge.

Commoner duels arise over anything from a minor insult to a serious defamation of character. These duels sometimes involve chimerical swords or pistols; more often, duelists wield knives or else battle hand-to-hand. Wrestling bouts are common.

• **Verbal Duels** — Not all duels involve weapons or the physical exchange of blows. While the art of dueling with words and gestures sometimes serves as the prelude to a physical contest, caustic verbal exchanges more often become duels in and of themselves. Usually conducted in public, these confrontations use innuendo, veiled insults, provocative language and outright dares to either force an opponent to overstep the bounds of propriety in front of an audience or to reduce one member of the dueling pair to impotent silence. The preferred form of dueling for changelings unaccustomed to using weapons, verbal duels also take place between combat-savvy nobles or commoners who find themselves in situations where physical duels are either inconvenient or inappropriate.

Most verbal duels take place during parties, at court or at other social gatherings of Kithain. Winners are decided either by the consensus of spectators or else by the withdrawal of one of the parties from the conversation, thus "surrendering" the field of battle to her opponent.

Occasionally, verbal duels consist of less subtle word battles. Name-calling displays between nockers, lying contests among pooka or storytelling duels involving eshu serve the same purpose and often provide more entertainment for spectators than the subtleties of noble discourse.

• **Social Duels** — Perhaps the most arcane and subtle form of duel is the social duel. Rather than taking up weapons against one another, two changelings may schedule social events such as parties or appointments opposite one another, inviting the same guests. The victory goes to the changeling with the greatest attendance at her event. Social one-upsmanship can take other forms as well: rivals attending the same social function may try to outdo one another in dress or in the value of a hostess gift ("Oh, yes, I understand those handmade soaps were on sale the other day."). Horse races, business deals, poker games and any number of other potentially competitive activities may mask social

duels. In some cases, one participant may not even be aware of the duel until she realizes that she has just "lost" face or honor.

Gifts

The custom of gift-giving, while not exclusively the prerogative of Southern Kithain, reaches epic proportions in the Kingdom of Willows, comprising a language of bestowal and acknowledgment of status all to itself. Similar to the potlatch ceremonies of some Native American tribes, the object of giving gifts lies in forcing the recipient of the gift to acknowledge the giver's superiority or to establish oneself as the equal of the person being gifted.

When one changeling goes "calling" on another, she customarily brings a gift to her hostess. This present not only expresses the guest's gratitude for the invitation, it also asserts the visitor's status as the equal of her host despite her "inferior" status as invitee.

For a changeling to accept a gift without offering something in return equates to the tacit assumption of the giver's superior status. Many status-hungry Kithain refuse to allow reciprocation of gifts, preferring to force the admission of their higher status as unchallenged givers. (This is yet another form of social duel.)

While many changelings are simply displaying their generous natures, others use largesse as a weapon to place others in their debt or to approve their social standing. Nobles are expected to maintain their good name and reputation by giving gifts to their vassals, thus reinforcing their superior standing in society.

Southern Manners

Southern Kithain have also perfected the art of politeness, turning the forms of civil behavior into a carefully orchestrated panorama of power politics. From the first tip of the hat and "Good day, ma'am" to the final "Y'all take care, y'hear?" and its accompanying farewell bow, Kithain manners in the Kingdom of Willows reflect a constant jockeying for social prestige — the demonstration of superiority over one's inferiors.

When feminists in the 1970s insisted on opening doors and carrying packages for themselves, they weren't just "whistling Dixie" by aping male manners; instead, they were co-opting the language of the dominant class (in this case, males) and, by doing so, placing themselves on an equal footing with members of that class.

The Kithain of the Kingdom of Willows still speak that language of dominance and submission, a subtlety often lost on changelings visiting from outside the kingdom. Like the bestowing of gifts, exchanges of polite behavior provide changelings with a forum for a symbolic discussion of status.

The vocabulary of manners is a complex and often confusing one. A changeling who holds a door for another changeling may, by that simple action, concede the other's right of precedence or, conversely, demonstrate her own power to control the other's access to the doorway. Politeness in speech may be a sign of deference or an exaggerated form of condescension.

Southern Hospitality, Changeling Style

The American South has a reputation for “Southern hospitality” that goes above and beyond the normal realms of politeness and friendliness. The same holds true for the Kithain of the Kingdom of Willows. The warmth and welcome extended to visitors from outside Meilge’s domain is legendary.

What many Kithain outsiders don’t understand is that the locals are actually wielding the double-edged sword of hospitality in order to assert their territorial rights over “foreign intrusion.”

Southern nobles who open their freeholds to visiting changelings emphasize by their actions that they are the ones who can provide shelter and accommodations. Commoners who go out of their way to act as guides for outsiders prove their knowledge of the land and the resources it has to offer.

While many fae in the South are simply anxious to please and gracious to a fault, some knowingly exercise their skills at manipulation and politesse to finesse visiting Kithain.

Many Southern Kithain use the language of manners to put others in their place — usually an inferior one.

Festivals

The Kithain of the Kingdom of Willows observe all the major and most of the minor changeling holidays and festivals. In addition, Southern changelings have their own celebrations that serve as occasions for celebrating the Dreaming and providing opportunities for gathering Glamour.

Cotillions (Saining Ceremonies)

Like the coming-of-age parties that introduce debutantes into the social whirl, Kithain cotillions celebrate the Saining or acknowledgment of new changelings as full-fledged members of fae society. Throughout much of the Kingdom of Willows, grand balls take place once a year in each fief; at these parties, newly discovered Kithain who have undergone their period of acclimation are presented to changeling society.

Usually held in May and June, concurrent with the debutante balls of mortal society, these coming-out parties range from extremely formal affairs that introduce new sidhe to less fancy parties in smaller or commoner-held freeholds.

Deróy Day and the Preakness Ball

On the first Saturday in May, the Duchy of Blue Grasses holds its own special affair. Kithain from all over the Kingdom



of Willows, particularly those who follow the horses, gather at Churchill Downs to celebrate the running of the Kentucky Derby. Afterwards, Duke Araby holds an "open freehold" at his estate, where the chimerical Bluegrass Derby takes place in the Near Dreaming and showcases the latest crop of faerie steeds.

Two weeks later, in the Duchy of Chesapeake, the same "horsy" crowd of Kithain travel to Baltimore's Pimlico Race-track for the running of the Preakness. They adjourn to the freehold of Duchess Elena-Anastasia for her annual Preakness Ball and Derby. Once again, faerie mounts challenge one another in a course specially maintained in the Near Dreaming,

Funerals

Southern changelings, unlike many other Kithain, take great delight in funerals. Elaborate memorial services and wakes provide occasions for changelings to congregate socially and remember their lost comrade's connections to the Dreaming. These ceremonies often serve as rich sources of Glamour from the impassioned speeches and eloquent eulogies delivered. In addition, many Kithain who attend changeling funerals and wakes find themselves reacquiring lost memories of past lives, either in the mortal world or in Arcadia. (At the Storyteller's discretion, a changeling character may receive a beginning dot in Remembrance or increase her current rating through participation in the final rites of a changeling's passage into the Dreaming.)

The Duchy of New Orleans holds the unchallenged title of the Funeral Capital of Concordia. Duchess Lisette provides all her subjects upon their "passing" with a spectacular send-off in the form of a New Orleans-style funeral, complete with Dixieland band and professional mourners. Some changelings petition the self-styled Voodoo Queen of New Orleans for permission to hold their funerals in her fief.

Despite the usual tendency of the sidhe to sidestep funerals and ignore the outward acknowledgments of their own eventual demise, many Southern sidhe not only attend changeling funerals on a regular basis but also arrange for their own wakes, believing that they will be reborn again in the Kingdom of Willows. (*"Better to be born a commoner in the Southern Dreaming than a noble in the cold Yankee lands."*)

Other Festivals

Throughout the Kingdom of Willows, regional festivals and celebrations provide occasions for changelings to get together and express their creative talents or to just revel in their fae natures. Parties built around sporting events, such as collegiate football and professional stock car racing, draw many commoner fae to tailgate parties, chimerical auto races and monster-truck rallies in the Near Dreaming. The recent Olympic celebration in Atlanta provided King Meilge with a stellar opportunity to host a round of parties in and around Willow's Heart, thus adding to his status as a magnanimous host and a lavish bestower of gifts.

Local celebrations observed by Kithain in the Kingdom of Willows provide Southern changelings with a steady round of festivities. The annual Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, Tennessee; the Spoleto Festival in Charleston; and the Gullah Festival in Beaufort, South Carolina, honor the traditional arts, crafts and culture of their regions. Commissioning Week in Annapolis, Maryland, serves as an occasion for conferring knighthood on eligible sidhe in nearby fiefdoms. Many Southern states hold Highland or Celtic festivals that also draw large numbers of noble and commoner changelings. Renaissance Festivals have sprung up all over the South as well, usually held for several weeks in a row during the summer. Many changelings find employment at such festivals, while others simply enjoy them. Some even hire themselves out as jousters to settle disputes, combining the joy of dueling with the pleasure of the environment.

That Old-Time Religion

Sociologists often refer to the South as the Bible Belt, and religion has historically played a key role in the development of Southern culture and mores. From its early beginnings as a refuge for religious dissenters, both Catholic and Protestant, to its current status as the center of evangelical fundamentalism, the South has held religion close to its heart.

Besides its sizable Protestant base, parts of the South also host other branches of Christianity. Black churches, particularly in the Deep South, have served as the spiritual underpinning of the civil rights movement. In Tennessee and North Carolina, charismatic sects of snake handlers and faith healers proliferate. The experience of religion as performance art lives in tent revivals, fundamentalist crusades and black and white gospel music concerts.

Non-Christian religions also have strongholds in various parts of the South. In New Orleans and the lower South, voodoo and obeah minister to many Southerners of African or Caribbean descent. Sizable Jewish and Muslim communities exist in Southern urban centers, while small enclaves of Sufis and Ba'h'ai prosper in such unlikely places as the Appalachian mountains.

Many Kithain in the Kingdom of Willows adhere to some form of religious practice, particularly in their mortal lives. In some social classes, to do otherwise would be to court suspicion or, at the very least, gain a reputation for having a dubious moral character. Then again, some Kithain just enjoy the pageantry.



Book Two: Dreams of a Troubled Future

CHAPTER FOUR: KITHAIN OF THE KINGDOM

American by birth; Southern by the Grace of God
— popular bumper sticker in the South

The many Kithain of the Kingdom of Willows — King Meilge and the members of his court, the dukes and duchesses who serve him and other notable nobles and commoners in the Kingdom — are detailed here. The presence of the Unseelie and the workings of the Shadow Court within the domain are also revealed. Rather than listing hundreds of stats, these biographies focus on who the changelings are, and their dreams, where they can be found, what their connections to one another are and (in some cases) how each fits into a Kingdom of Willows chronicle or the ongoing storyline that begins with this book.

Why so many Kithain? Because in many ways, the stories of their lives tells more about the kingdom than can geographical details or discussions of culture. Too often, the people and places of the South are stereotyped in the minds of others; towns look like the movie set for *To Kill a*

Mockingbird, rural life resembles *Mayberry RFD*, the people are all natives of the region, Southerners are just ignorant inbred hillbillies and rednecks or else Uncle Tom blacks. Surprise— they aren't. The South, not the North, is the cradle of the civil rights movement, and major cities like Atlanta face problems (drugs, poverty, traffic snarls and crime) that are akin to that in cities like New York and Chicago. Rural communities, at least the really poor ones, showcase a few acres of land covered with rundown, kudzu-covered trailers, not dilapidated farm houses. The changing face of the New South is, therefore, best understood by a look at the faces of the changing region.

Because the Kingdom of Willows encompasses 10 states, this is by no means an exhaustive list. Storytellers should create as many barons, countesses, commoners and such as they want to fill out the kingdom.



Willow's Heart

Meilge of House Eiluned

King of Willows, Ruler of Willow's Heart

Exiled along with his house from the Dreaming, Meilge of House Eiluned entered the body of a young teenager when he crossed into the mundane world. His host body was strong, well-formed and handsome, with golden-blond hair and sky-blue eyes. After all, as a royal prince among the Eiluned (one of the few details of his life in Arcadia he remembers), he deserved the best. A staunch traditionalist, he served as a captain in the Accordance War, harrying commoners with both blade and cantrip. Part of the sidhe army, he fought across the breadth of the continent, until reaching New York. Near the end of the war, a band of commoners captured Meilge, wounding him across the forehead and blinding his left eye with a blade of cold iron. They wasted no healing on him. The band hoped to trade him for several of their own compatriots captured by the sidhe. During the captivity that followed, as he sought to escape, an overzealous guard threw acid in Meilge's face, thus scarring him both in his faerie mien and his mortal seeming. This time, one of his captors had enough compassion to save his eyesight. At the end of the war, a few weeks later, they released him.

Worse than the scarring of his visage, Meilge's psyche and soul were marked by his experiences of the war. While he still thought the sidhe superior and believed in their right to rule, he now had great respect for the modern weapons and methods of commoners. Their ruthless treatment of him forever cured him of any romantic notions of chivalry or honor he might have held, and their sheer numbers taught him that he would need to win the commoners' support if he was ever to rule

without the constant fear of assassination. More than that, he now knew they respected strength and ability, not bloodline. Though he loathed commoners even more for what they had done to him, Meilge coldly reasoned that he would need their willing support if he were ever to achieve a position from which he could exact his revenge.

While Meilge had always evinced the Eiluned tendency toward intrigue, he now fully embraced his Unseelie side. Hating High King David and Queen Mab for not ransoming him, he refused to take the small freehold offered him in New York. Instead he returned to the Atlanta area where he had claimed a freehold before the Shattering. Meilge remembered he had once held lands there, but recalled nothing else about that time. The wily Eiluned hid his Unseelie nature beneath a show of Seelie traditionalism and asserted his right to his old holding to Barabas (the Eiluned king of the area and Meilge's distant cousin). Granted his freehold, which lay south of Atlanta, Meilge became once again the Duke of Summerstree. In return, since Meilge had served in the Accordance War, King Barabas asked Meilge to become general of the royal troops. Meilge agreed.

Meilge soon discovered that he was barely tolerated by the other sidhe (or the more important commoners) in the area — ironically because he lacked the right pedigree. As a supposed "Northerner," he was seen in the South as little better than a carpetbagger. Further, gentlemen in the South were expected to conform to certain social conventions. Among these was having the good taste to adhere to a polite and acceptable mask, an outward show of good manners, bravery, bonhomie and the appearance of conformity and success. Whether or not people were actually like that, they were expected to act and look as if they were. Meilge, with his morose, withdrawn manner and the terrible scars on his face, lacked the correct "mask."

Determined to force others to accept him, Meilge crossed the final line. Utilizing his freehold as a base, Meilge soon gathered around himself a criminal empire designed to make him wealthy beyond imagining, reasoning that his social "betters" couldn't argue with what money could buy. He commissioned Murdoch of House Dougal, a noted inventor and crafter of chimera, to create a mask for him — a mask that would hide his scars. Murdoch crafted something far better than he intended; he created one of the great treasures of the modern age: an alabaster and gold half-mask that hides Meilge's true intentions along with his facial scars.

Soon after donning the mask, Meilge found acceptance, even admiration, among the fae of the area. The king took him into his privy court and relied on Meilge's astute political insight and diplomacy. Meilge was particularly adept at smoothing relations between nobles and disgruntled commoners and in gaining prestige (and building up a stock of favors owed to him) as he settled disputes. Meilge found that his mask allowed him to project the appearance of sympathy, fairness, respect for others, and friendliness — all without in fact feeling those emotions or actually having those qualities. The commoners came to trust, then love this noble who embodied enough

traditional values to be colorful, yet enthusiastically supported change and modern ideas as well. Meilge was at the center of a burgeoning personality cult.

Hidden from the Seelie fae, however, Meilge continued to weave his web of criminal activities and build a base of power for himself. Using his criminal wealth, he bought a fanatically loyal personal guard. Finally, he discreetly contacted some local Unseelie and joined the true Shadow Court. For their part, they were delighted that someone as important as Meilge now swore allegiance to them; Meilge merely saw them as one more group to use to his own advantage.

King Barabas was an unjust and unpopular ruler. From the time he took the Kingdom of Willows by force during the Accordance War until his death in 1990 during a commoner revolt, Barabas' whimsical cruelty wrecked the kingdom. The revolt led to a direct assault on the king's freehold, an attack that ended in a stalemate. Under a flag of truce, a parley was called to discuss the commoners' grievances. As always, Meilge was called in to mediate. Tensions were high, and the parley was more disorganized than usual. In the confusion, a fight started that ended in the death of King Barabas.

Popular as he was with both the sidhe and commoners, Meilge was proclaimed king by Royal Lottery. Many outside the kingdom (and a few within it) suspected Meilge had somehow used his connection to the commoners to instigate Barabas' death.

Just as many Kithain were glad that such a stalwart monarch was ready to step in and take over and didn't care if Meilge had arranged things; at least they were rid of Barabas. Meilge proclaimed his innocence, even going so far with propriety as to shut himself away for a week to mourn his cousin. Kithain empowered to use cantrips to see if Meilge spoke the truth found that he was not lying. The killer was never apprehended. With the evidence of Meilge's innocence in hand, High King David confirmed the Eiluned noble's right to rule the Kingdom of Willows as the heir chosen by lottery.

Within a year of Barabas' death, Meilge had his predecessor's graceful home torn down and established his court in a gleaming, opulent glass high-rise.

Operating from the heart of Atlanta's business district, Meilge acts as the godfather of a vast crime ring, conducts Shadow Court business and rules his kingdom. Many of his subjects wonder at the continued spiritual decline of the Kingdom but cannot argue with Atlanta's financial success.

Meilge is constantly attended by his personal guard, a cadre comprising trolls, Scathach knights, a few redcaps, a sluagh spymaster and younger Eiluned knights-in-training. Fanatically loyal, the guard combines muscle and ferocity with guile and sorcery. Coupled with the Scathach's legendary ability to withstand Banality, these abilities make them a potent force. The only time the ruler of Willows is without his guard is while he sleeps; then, they guard all approaches to his chambers.

Though he is constantly wary of assassins (a paranoia left over from the Accordance War), Meilge hardly needs his guard when within his holding of Willow's Heart. Most of his subjects view him with admiration, if not outright love. Only those

outside his sphere of influence have any sort of clear vision of what Meilge is really up to. Some suspect him of wrongdoing because Eiluned are rarely trusted; others see the rampant crime in Atlanta and the fractiousness of Meilge's duchies as signs that something is wrong. Many rumors circulate, but no proof has ever emerged concerning his criminal activities, his supposed ties to the Shadow Court or the murders he is said to have committed or paid others to perform. Many other kingdoms associate corruption with Meilge's kingdom, but nothing has been proved.

Meilge excels at intrigue and deception, but rarely reveals his perfidy to anyone else. He has cultivated the facade of a Southern gentleman, always well-spoken and polite (even when he is undergoing his periodic depressions), forever extending favors to others and always ready to bravely defend his honor (though almost no one has the temerity to challenge his good name anymore). While his sword work is not legendary, he is accounted an excellent strategist. His abilities in acting are almost good enough to fool everyone, even without his mask. Though rarely betraying such skill in Glamour, Meilge is a master of Chicanery, Soothsay and Sovereign.

King Meilge is known to his people as a champion of modernity, but he has a curious traditionalist streak when it comes to rulership. He is the acknowledged leader of the Golden Sickle, a Modernist political faction. Due to many trips outside Willow's Heart, Meilge has aged. Though still a wilder when he became king, he is now a greybeard. With the assumption of that state, he took on the guardianship of another Eiluned noble, a young girl named Faerilyth, whom he has named as his heir.

Treasures: King Meilge holds the kingly treasures of Willows (crown, scepter and seal). Though he has numerous smaller treasures, his greatest and most potent one is the Alabaster Mask. Meilge's mask does more than conceal his scars; it also conceals his intentions and true feelings and prevents others from telling whether Meilge is lying. The mask projects a literal false-face of fellowship, empathy and honesty, which Meilge uses to great advantage. Those in Meilge's vicinity always see his actions in the best possible light. Even when questioned while the Dreaming is invoked, Meilge simply needs to state the exact truth; the mask changes what he says (or changes what the listeners hear) into something else. When Meilge engineered the murder of his predecessor, for example, he was forced to confess his guilt when magically interrogated. As he did so, however, the mask changed his words into a denial of the crime. What came through was the sound of a denial and the knowledge that Meilge spoke truly.

Image: Meilge is tall (just under six feet) and of average weight. His hair, which was once golden blond, has bleached out into a pale straw color. His eyes are faded blue, but darken when he is angry. Meilge wears well-cut and tailored suits when not in his freehold, but prefers courtly velvets and silks in dark colors when in residence. The upper half of Meilge's face is concealed by an ornate half mask made of alabaster and gold. When he is not in his faerie mien, the mask fades from view,

though it still obscures the worst of the scarring. He smiles often, though such smiles rarely reach his eyes.

Roleplaying Hints: You are a man obsessed by revenge — against the commoners who tortured you and the nobles who left you in the commoners' hands. Those experiences forever warped you, turning your heart to stone and darkening your beliefs. Nevertheless, you have seen the strength the commoners possess and have no wish to engage them directly. Instead, you mask your intentions, acting as a friend to commoner and noble alike. Despite your ability to rule, you suffer wild mood swings, debilitating depressions and nightmares and occasional killing rages. You're quite mad, though few among your acquaintances know that; you seem so focused and such a gentleman. Fully committed to the Shadow Court (though you masquerade as a member of the Seelie Court), you work to bring on Endless Winter. You are one of the Shadow Court's most likely candidates to become high king when the Unseelie come to power.

Story Connection: Not content to wait for a high kingship that may never come, Meilge has launched his own scheme to win the crown. He sent his ward, Faerilyth to David's court at Tara-Nar, hoping she would prove a useful spy. Then his Dán took a hand in things. Unbelievably, David fell in love with Faerilyth, sought Meilge's permission and (against much opposition from his courtiers and many of the other monarchs) married her. In a show of his love, David declared Faerilyth to be fully his equal, naming her High Queen of Concordia. To demonstrate his newfound accord with King Meilge, David and Faerilyth are beginning their Grand Tour of the kingdoms in the Kingdom of Willows.

Meilge has great plans for them. After removing David from the picture and confining him with guardians who will ensure he never emerges again from Banality, Meilge can now step back into Faerilyth's life as her "guardian," devoted to her welfare now that the king has mysteriously disappeared. From there, he hopes to enforce her claim to the throne. After a few years as the power

behind the throne, he'll be able to dispose of Faerilyth as well. Meilge will become High King upon her untimely death and unleash a bloodbath against the commoners that will make the Accordance War look like child's play. At least, that's the plan....

Faerilyth Nimanian Lin Ardry

High Queen of Concordia, Heir to Willows

Faerilyth dimly recalls her life before coming to King Meilge's court. Born to a wealthy Jewish family in Augusta, Georgia, "Debbie" attended the correct schools, learned to play piano, took ballet lessons, sang in the school youth choir and still managed to fit in cheerleading, service club and junior prom activities. She preferred shopping with friends, attending parties and choosing new boyfriends over studying or going on family outings. If not for her exceptional beauty and her interest in the occult (which greatly troubled her parents), she would have been just another rich debutante. Despite her full social calendar, Debbie lacked something in her life; when she turned 15, she realized what it was: *excitement*. Pampered and sheltered, granted every wish her heart desired, she was bored to tears. Taking the advice of a close girlfriend, Debbie decided that if she didn't make a break for freedom, her doting parents would arrange the rest of her life as "perfectly" as they had arranged the first 15 years of it.

Pooling her birthday money and her allowance, she bought a bus ticket to Atlanta, intending to leave from there by plane. Meanwhile, she decided to explore the city a little. Emerging into the midst of the Midtown Music Festival, she was enthralled with the crowds, the noise, the excitement, and the music. Stopping to listen to one band after another, she felt her heart responding to it all. She moved joyfully from stage to stage, drinking in the creativity. Moving beyond the last stage set up for the festival, she chanced upon a young man softly singing ballads to a tiny audience. Something in his performance called to her, wrenching at her innermost being. As she felt a great uplifting, she was suddenly assaulted by impossible sounds, sights and tastes. The very air seemed charged with brightness. She grew sick and dizzy. Retching and disoriented, she stumbled into an alleyway where she fell next to a dumpster, moaning and thrashing. Convulsions took her as her Chrysalis entered its full Dream Dance state.

Alerted by the violent upsurge of Glamour, King Meilge and several members of his personal guard who had been enjoying the music nearby, raced to the alleyway where they discovered her. As they moved her to a more private location, Debbie's human self disappeared, swept away by the glory of her fae mien. Clad in rich robes of the deepest violet, she looked up into the kind face and warm eyes of the crowned sidhe male who offered her his hand. "Shall we dance, my lady wife?" he asked teasingly. *David. His name is David. And I am Faerilyth*, she thought. The rest of the dream swirled away in dancing colors. When she opened her eyes, she was in Willow's Heart.

In the days that followed, the court acknowledged her as a noble of House Eiluned, and King Meilge himself became her



mentor. Apartments were set aside for her, and Faerilyth learned cantrips as if she had invented them, probably due to her inherent interest in the occult. King Meilge treated her respectfully and assured her she'd never have to return home. She reveled in her new life, drinking in Glamour from concerts and learning how to act as a Muse. Soon, she was making new friends. Meilge gave her free rein for the most part, allowing her to test her wings without interference. Thus, he had no idea when Faerilyth was recruited by the Cat's Cradle.

Igrania, the Duchess of Magnolia's Home, met Faerilyth at a party thrown by Meilge to introduce his ward. Liking what she saw in the young Eiluned, Igrania tutored her in politics and sounded her out about her thoughts regarding commoners and nobility. Satisfied by Faerilyth's answers, Igrania introduced her to other members of the Cat's Cradle, who made their own assessments of the young sidhe. After a year, they asked her to join, and she readily assented, thrilled to be part of something important. Because she was asked to keep her affiliation with the group a secret, she never even told Meilge she had joined.

Five years later Meilge decided Faerilyth was sufficiently devoted to him that he could afford to use her beauty in his service. He arranged for his ward to go to Tara-Nar, High King David's court, for an extended visit — ostensibly so that the High King could meet Meilge's heir, in reality so that Meilge could use her as a spy in the high court. David's name echoed in her thoughts, though she could not recall why. When she arrived, however, David was away visiting Queen Mab. The court was under the rule of David's sister Morwen.

Many at Tara-Nar suspected Faerilyth's motives both because she was Eiluned and Meilge's ward. For the first time, Faerilyth discovered what most fae thought of the King of Willows. Also for the first time, she was unpopular. Hiding her hurt, she withdrew into herself, hoping an air of mystery would keep her disappointment secret. Rumors circulated that she had Unseelie friends at home (a garbled version of her association with some of the members of the Cat's Cradle). Though Morwen was not unkind to Faerilyth (nor were all the courtiers unsympathetic to her), the young Eiluned was reluctant to confide in them, not knowing if any of them knew of the Cat's Cradle.

When David returned, everything changed for her. Upon meeting the High King, she saw only his kind face and warm eyes. She remembered her Chrysalis. For his part, David seemed enchanted by her. Though David was much older, his time within freeholds had retarded his aging, leaving him barely beyond his wilder years. Despite Morwen's opposition and the disapproval of many nobles of the court, Faerilyth and David fell in love. The more the court tried to undermine the romance, the more determined Faerilyth grew that she would make David a good wife. Ultimately, he proposed and she accepted.

Rather than opening herself to more criticism, Faerilyth asked David for a small wedding, to be attended only by a few friends and family. Out of love for her, he agreed, but he had a price. He insisted that Faerilyth must agree to rule by his side as his High Queen. Though initially reluctant, after speaking

with Meilge about the matter, Faerilyth saw that David needed someone who could be his equal, someone to ease his burdens. She agreed. David proclaimed Faerilyth High Queen and had her crowned as such the day after their marriage. No one is sure yet what Faerilyth's ascension will mean to David's heir, the Princess Lenore. That's for the loremasters and law makers to decide later.

David and Faerilyth have been married for two weeks now. They have embarked on a Grand Tour of Concordia, so that all the monarchs and nobles can meet their new queen. Because Meilge was Faerilyth's guardian, the honor of the first visit goes to the Kingdom of Willows.

Though she is still relatively new to the Dreaming, Faerilyth has a natural affinity for magic. She is well-versed in Sovereign, and has begun studies in both Primal and Wayfare. She hopes to learn more so she can be a true asset to David and the kingdom. Meanwhile, she hopes that David's trust in her will allow her to utilize some of the training in court etiquette and diplomacy she received as Meilge's ward.

Treasures: Though entitled to the treasures of a High Queen, the only one Faerilyth has received thus far is the crown. The other treasures of her rank are being constructed for her. Morwen currently holds David's scepter and seal as symbols of her regency over the throne while David is absent from court.

Image: Faerilyth is just over 5' 6" tall and slender as a willow sapling. Her black hair cascades past her waist and her eyes flash a dark violet, reminiscent of a young Elizabeth Taylor. She prefers dark blues and violets that compliment her eyes and wears simple but elegant garb. Even among the sidhe, Faerilyth is remarkable for her beauty.

Roleplaying Hints: You've led a charmed life. From a rich home to a king's palace to the discovery of your faerie nature to your coronation as High Queen, you've never faced a serious setback — except the reception given you by some members of David's court. Usually gracious and well-spoken, you have lately found yourself tongue-tied by the distrust and disapproval you encountered among the courtiers. But you thrive on David's love and are blossoming into a confident, competent queen whenever you are with him. You are certain that that you will overcome everyone's disapproval in time, and you strive to learn more each day so you will become the queen David needs. In the wake of David's disappearance, that is more important than ever.

Story Connection: When David disappears, the blame falls on Faerilyth. Defended by true-hearted advocates, she overcomes the initial assault, but realizes she must truly become the High Queen if she is to survive and keep David's kingdom intact. Though devastated by the loss of David, Faerilyth must find the strength to contend with Morwen, who insists that David left his throne in her hands and that she will return the throne to him — and only him — upon his return. Faerilyth will not give up her right to the throne, nor will Morwen surrender her claim — a deadly butting of heads that splits the fae into at least two camps: the Queen's Defenders (Faerilyth's faction) and the Deposers (also known as the

Morwenists). Once again, the changelings of Concordia stand on the brink of civil war. Though Meilge supports Faerilyth, he eventually plans to use her as his stepping stone to the high throne. Faerilyth may surprise him with the steel that lies below her fragile surface.

Seif Raushan

The Chosen of Caliburn

Philip "Flip" Larson seemed much like the other kids in his southeast Atlanta neighborhood — poor, black and unlikely to climb out of poverty unless by way of drugs or crime. But he was different. Blessed with parents who trained their only child to be honest and self-reliant and to take personal responsibility for his actions, Philip avoided the fate of most of his neighbors. He differed in other ways as well. For one, from the time of his first memories, he always loved stories — tales of overcoming incredible odds, stories of those who succeeded through personal integrity and hard work, and more intricate legends of daring and glory. He read voraciously, devouring every fairy tale, adventure book, horror story and work of mythology he could find at the public library.

The other difference was his religion, which changed when he was 12. In the heartland of Protestant Christianity, his parents embraced Islam as a faith that provided blacks with pride in their heritage and offered their family a set of guidelines by which to live their lives. Philip took the Islamic name Seif Raushan (Sword of Brightness) to show his commitment to that faith. Unlike many who mistake the teachings of the Prophet, Seif recognized that Islam does not call for the subjugation of women or for a jihad against all those not of the faith. Instead, it advocates tolerance and living a good and righteous life.



Seif watched as other boys his age gave in to drugs and joined gangs, committed robberies and car jackings and beat or killed those who opposed them. He never fit in among them, though he understood their frustration and alienation. Rather than spending his time dealing drugs, he stayed at home or at the library. Then his mother lost her job and his father was laid off, temporarily they said. What little savings they had managed to put aside, hoping to send Seif to college, were spent on rent and food. Every day his parents looked for work. Each evening they returned exhausted and dejected. Seif decided maybe he should look for work too.

Inquiring at the school library, he was directed to the school guidance counselor (he hadn't known there was one). She suggested he apply for work at the public library or at a museum, since his interests were academic. Six days later, he was hired by the High Museum of Art's janitorial company. He reasoned that Islamic art did not portray the human figure, but surely would not prohibit him from viewing such work. Walking into the skylit atrium for his first evening on the job, Seif was amazed and infused with Glamour. Assaulted by the onset of his Chrysalis, he found sanctuary in the strong arms of a fellow janitor, a chubby little woman named Myrtle, who suddenly looked very different to Seif — more like one of the creatures out of the fairy tales he read as a child. Myrtle saw him through the worst of things, then explained to him what had happened and that he was a changeling, just as she was. By his fae appearance, she identified him as an eshu; she herself was a boggan.

Myrtle managed to cover for him so he wouldn't lose his job, and began teaching him more about changelings as they worked together in the following days. Then she told him he must present himself to the king. She asked if he wanted to leave home, but he explained that he was the only one bringing in money and he needed to stay. Myrtle arranged for Seif's (whose fae name was coincidentally Seifrizarien) presentation at court.

Coached by Myrtle (though she rarely attended court herself), Seif made obeisance to King Meilge and offered his allegiance and loyalty to the king. He explained that he was best at remembering stories and offered to share them whenever the king liked, but said he could not remain at court due to his home situation. Meilge accepted his service, then asked Seif to explain the problem. On hearing that Seif's parents were out of work (a tale told with the magnificence of an epic by Seif), Meilge promised to do what he could for them.

Within two days, Seif's father got a call from a rival of his previous employer and accepted a new job with them at a higher salary. His mother received a call asking her to attend a two-week, paid training course for prospective managers with a local firm, and eased into a new job as well. Meilge never came out and said he arranged things, but it was clear to Seif that the king had pulled some strings, and the eshu owed him a big one.

In the subsequent two years, Seif finished high school and began work as a junior curator at the museum while taking

night classes at college. He hopes to major in anthropology with an emphasis on folk art and folk tales. Seif's semiregular appearances at court are eagerly anticipated occasions during which the city's changelings gather to hear a master storyteller. He has made friends at court, and has found the courage to at least speak to Meilge's beautiful ward, Faerilyth.

Seif has been invited to appear at court for the ceremonies that welcome High King David and High Queen Faerilyth to Willow's Heart. He is to perform for them, and gladdened to know that Faerilyth has attained the station he always thought she deserved. For the occasion, he has crafted a new story — a tale of love, loss and renewal — that he hopes will please the royal couple.

Though a master of the art of storytelling and knowledgeable concerning Legerdemain and Wayfare, Seif has not completely neglected his physical nature. Since coming to court, he has learned the basics of sword fighting and has become a passable archer. Though now "hobnobbing" with the elite, he hasn't forgotten his first fae friend and regularly visits with Myrtle.

Treasures: Though the treasures do not belong to him, as the bearer of Caliburn and its sheath, Seif has access to the sword's powers (should he choose to use them).

Image: Seif is a little under average height and weight at 5' 7" and 125 lbs. He has thick, curly black hair; deep brown skin and dark brown eyes. His rounded face makes him look younger than he is. In his eshu mien he is taller and more commanding, though a boyishness underlies his wise-looking gray eyes. Seif's manner is reminiscent of Azim, the Moorish companion played by Morgan Freeman in *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*.

Roleplaying Hints: You were always a good kid, respecting your parents for trying to raise you right on too little money. Your fascination with stories can be traced to a curiosity about and love for people. Though you are by no means a pushover, you are not mean or ruthless for the sake of appearing tough. While you don't seek conflict, if it finds you, your opponent will find well-tempered steel within you. Living a righteous life and helping others to do so is important to you. If you could, you'd like to take every poor child you can find and inspire them all to escape the fate that the ghetto has in store for them. You are willing to help those who need a helping hand to stand up, but it must be their decision to try. You take your debts seriously, and are never hasty when swearing an oath to someone.

Story Connection: Faerilyth is blamed for David's disappearance. Angry people accuse her of murdering him. Unable to tolerate this insult to someone he believes to be an innocent and good person, Seif jumps forward and is the first to speak in her defense. As he finishes his eloquent plea for a calm and rational discussion and states his belief in the queen's innocence, Caliburn suddenly appears in his hand. The sword lets him know it has chosen him to lead the quest to find David. Though Seif does not believe himself worthy of such an honor, and though he wants to stay and protect the queen from those who would harm her, he accepts the sword's geas and takes up the quest for the missing king.



Riel

Meilge's Spymaster

Riel was born in a small village in Colombia. Even as a small child, he could barely tolerate loud noises and bright lights. Although he seemed to comprehend what people said to him, he never spoke. His parents wondered if he lacked vocal cords, but had no money for tests or doctors. Still, he seemed strong enough and worked alongside his parents in the fields, growing the plants that the "big bosses" required. His nimble fingers and the ease with which he could wriggle into the smallest niches made him very valuable for setting plants into hidden places.

One day the boss sent some men to oversee the harvesting. They took notice of the silent youngster and "purchased" him from his parents. They took Riel to a special teacher, who taught him to utilize his silence and agility, to pick pockets, scale buildings and use knives and silenced guns. Over the next three years, Riel learned photography, code-breaking and law, as he became a journeyman spy-assassin. He also learned that people expected him to talk back when they spoke to him. Often, however, they became annoyed, for he could not speak above a whisper.

Sent on his first solo "job", Riel was instructed to eliminate a nosy actress whose film on the druglords would hit too close to home. Sneaking onto the set was no problem, nor was spotting his target. Killing her became problematical when her impassioned performance triggered his Chrysalis. Overwhelmed and alone, Riel staggered away and lost his sanity. Some time later, he pulled himself together and crept back to a hideaway he'd fixed up in case he someday needed a bolt-hole.

Knowing the boss would never forgive him for failing to take out the actress, he decided Colombia was too hot for him. Besides, he wanted to find others like himself, for he now knew

he was some sort of alien masquerading as a human. The young sluagh's skills allowed him to sneak aboard a plane bound for the U.S.A. inside a box that no one would believe even a child could fit inside. Several hours later, the plane touched down in Atlanta, he got off with the luggage and slipped out before anyone discovered him.

It didn't take too long for the local changelings to locate him. Discovered by Sabrina Lennin-Corvald, an Unseelie sidhe socialite, Riel wound up being introduced to the Shadow Court. Through interpreters, he learned what they had to teach about changelings (the first indication he had that he wasn't an alien) and confessed his past in return. Realizing his potential, the Shadow Court arranged English lessons for him and instructed him in various Arts. Then Sabrina took him to King Meilge's court and introduced him.

Riel offered his services as spymaster-assassin to the king. There followed several tests of his loyalty, but once Meilge was convinced the sluagh could be trusted, he hired him. Riel now has his own quarters in a soundproofed area of Willow's Heart and works as the king's eyes and ears wherever the king can't go. He reports to Meilge on the people of his court, oversees the majority of the king's less-than-legal dealings and handles anyone who becomes a problem for his monarch. Unknown to Meilge, Riel also reports on the king's activities to the Shadow Court.

Aside from his mastery of assassin and spy skills, the talented wilder excels in Legerdemain and Chicanery. The Shadow Court has also taught him the Art of Contempt (see **The Shadow Court**). Recently, Riel has focused most of his energy into learning about various kinds of extortion rackets and the world of high finance.

Treasures: Though Meilge doesn't know it, Riel kept one dose of Dreambane and one of Dreamshield (the drug's antidote). The sluagh has also acquired a slim stiletto that can create Phantom Shadows (as per Legerdemain •••••) after being bathed in changeling blood (5 Health Levels worth). Usable blood may be from changelings, Gallain, Nunnehi or even Dauntain. Once the power is used, the stiletto becomes inert again (unless bathed in more Kithain blood). The blood need not all be gathered into the blade at once, but can be drawn in a little at a time (thus, Riel could use his own blood so the stiletto is primed, or he could garner one or two blood levels in a fight and save them until he gains the requisite amount).

Image: Riel is a small, young man with dark olive-skin, curly black hair and large brown eyes. He prefers soft, loose-fitting dark clothing. In his sluagh mien, he appears much taller and emaciated and his skin is bleached bone white. His court attire is many layered, elaborate and all black. More so than most sluagh, Riel's penchant for sitting with his arms wrapped around his bony knees gives him an insectile appearance.

Roleplaying Hints: You've always known that your existence depends on pleasing those more powerful than yourself. Because of your fae advantages, you've found the perfect career. It makes you very valuable. In fact, you are probably the most highly paid of Meilge's "guard."

You aren't interested in bullying others; those who come in contact with you find you creepy enough. You have no need to be threatening; they're already scared. You have no illusions concerning such foolish concepts as honor. Wealth and superior skills determine who's on top. It's nice to live in a palace, but you have come to realize (due to your contact with the Shadow Court) that you'd rather own the palace than work in it. You'll have to do something about that soon. After all, grumpdom is just around the corner, and you wouldn't want to waste any time on — or shed any tears for — Meilge.

Story Connection: Riel acts as King Meilge's spymaster, one of his most trusted aides. He is the one who acquires the Dreambane, the Glamour-rich drug Meilge uses to poison David. Though Riel doesn't know what Meilge does with the king once he has David helpless, he is privy to the knowledge that Meilge used the drug on the High King. He could (either on his own or if activated by the Shadow Court) try to use that knowledge to blackmail Meilge. Of course, Meilge is no fool and is all too aware that his spymaster now has the upper hand. Things could get very interesting at court.

Sabrina Lennin-Corvald Baroness of Peachtree

Ever the sybarite, when Sabrina of House Leanhaun arrived back on Earth in Ireland in 1969, she was too impatient for pleasure to take the body of a child. Instead, she chose a voluptuous young woman (Sabrina Lennin) of 18 years. Rather than fight a dreary war (the IRA was in full swing at the time) or claim a freehold, she found a satyr lover and set about lining up artists whom she could Rhapsodize for the Glamour she desperately needed to stay young. Several dozen dead or burnt-out artists later, she decided Ireland was much too small a place to support her appetites for long.

America seemed a much more likely place for her forbidden Ravaging to go unnoticed. Noting that Atlanta, Georgia, seemed to be a growing city with a burgeoning art scene, she chose it as her new home. Making a few contacts in the Irish scene, Sabrina met Berin O'Donnell, a fellow Unseelie sidhe of House Scathach. Though Berin had no intentional contact with the Shadow Court, a few Unseelie of Berin's acquaintance did. Sabrina quickly arranged to meet with them and joined, reasoning that they would protect her if anyone questioned her methods of gaining Glamour.

A further advantage of her friendship with Berin (who thought she was "simply charming") was that he introduced her to Duke Meilge. Noting her excellent taste, ability to locate wonderful new artists and exquisite loveliness, Meilge immediately requested that she become his official hostess for all parties and receptions held at Summerstree. Realizing the protection that the friendship of Duke Meilge offered her, she accepted. When he became king, she moved up in the world — becoming the king's official hostess at Willow's Heart. Meilge elevated her to the status of baroness and gave her the barony of Peachtree as a reward for services rendered.

Her presence at concerts, the ballet, the opera, symphonies, art shows and museum openings did not go unnoticed for

long. Martin Corvald, a rich financier and fancier of the arts, met Sabrina, wooed her, married her and built a mansion to her specifications at the site of her freehold. Since then, Sabrina has enchanted Martin, who revels in the idea of his otherworldly wife. Martin knows nothing about how Sabrina retains her youthful appearance; he attributes it to her faerie blood and thinks it is natural among the "immortal" Fair Folk. The two attend galas and parties together and sponsor gallery shows and seasonal frolics. Martin never attends the king's social functions.

Meanwhile, she has continued her usual practices out of sight of the court. Sabrina used her friendship with Meilge to introduce a Shadow Court operative (Riel, the spymaster) into Willow's Heart. She has no doubt that such a coup puts the Shadow Court in her debt and believes Meilge feels he owes her one too. While the King of Willows knows Riel is from the Shadow Court, Sabrina believes he has no idea of her own involvement.

Celebrated by high society, adored by her husband and cherished by Meilge as the authority on chic revelry, Sabrina has indulged herself for several years. She never seems to age, despite time spent outside her freehold. Some mortals have noticed that her lack of aging goes beyond what might possibly be accomplished through vigorous maintenance and plastic surgery. Jealous whispers follow her wherever she goes these days. Even Meilge and her oldest friend in Atlanta, Berin, have begun to question whether she's not spending too much time within a freehold (their only explanation for her continued youthfulness). They also worry that her lack of aging will attract the wrong kind of interest if she's not more careful.

Then there is the matter of Faerilyth, Meilge's fosterling. Once a gawky, socially inept girl, the young Eiluned blossomed into a lovely woman, almost overnight so it seems. Meilge even had Faerilyth act as hostess several times, displacing Sabrina from her accustomed role. Though the threat Faerilyth posed has been negated by her departure and subsequent marriage to High King David, Sabrina still feels somewhat miffed with Meilge's treatment of her.

Asked to act as hostess for the masquerade ball, Sabrina could not refuse, despite her pique. Unfortunately for Meilge, Sabrina keeps a close eye on all the activities that occur during one of "her" parties. That's what makes her such a good hostess. She always knows what's going on and can step in to liven up dull moments or break up tense situations before they escalate into ugliness. What she saw at the party is far more serious than a tiff over a hairdo, however, and may eventually prove Meilge's undoing.

Sabrina is gracious and charming, with that natural veneer of class many Southern socialites seem to have. Her greatest talent lies in convincing others that she is what she appears to be — and that appearance changes from person to person. Sabrina would have made a consummate actress or con artist. She excels in Chicanery (an absolute must when controlling a party) and Sovereign and has a bit of talent with Wayfare. She is a master of tact; has excellent taste in clothing, music and decor and dances like a dream. Though married, she never lets that stop her from enjoying herself. She lives for those times she



can seduce beautiful young things — especially if they have no inkling of her true age.

Treasures: Sabrina has a small pin shaped like a rose that constantly refreshes her perfume (a dusky rose scent).

Image: Vivacious and stylish, Sabrina has the flame red hair, porcelain skin and emerald green eyes associated with the Irish. She stands a little over 5' 3" and barely weighs 100 lb. Those pounds are neatly packed onto a frame that screams "seductress." She prefers to wear deep green, which complements her green eyes and enhances the color of her hair. The slightest hint of an Irish accent infects her soft Georgia drawl. No one would ever suspect that she's 47 years old.

Roleplaying Hints: You are the yardstick by which others are measured (and usually found wanting). Your taste is legendary, your parties are the social occasions of the month in Atlanta society, and you are loved by the social elite. Blessed with a very rich, very doting husband, you can do whatever you like. Though you are subject to the curse of your household, you need never suffer from it again. There are plenty of artists out there who long for your attentions. You love being at the center of things, and you love taking on different roles. Depending on your mood (and your audience), you can take on almost any demeanor from shy innocent to dignified hostess to worldly wise bitch-goddess.

Revelry and pleasure are your watchwords, and you do almost anything to ensure that the parties never stop and your youth never fades. Then again, maybe you won't have to do too much in the future to maintain your position. Meilge was very foolish to kidnap the High King where you could watch it happen. You don't allow such delightful opportunities to solidify your position pass you by.

Story Connection: Sabrina notices when Meilge goes off for a private "talk" with the High King during the final dance of the evening. Concerned that the king is displeased with something, she quietly follows and listens. Thus, Sabrina

witnesses Meilge's capture of David and notes when Meilge turns him over to special guards. She overhears the instructions Meilge gives regarding David's continued captivity. She hasn't decided yet what to do with her knowledge. On the one hand, she could ingratiate herself with the High King and Queen by revealing what she knows. On the other hand, she might get more out of Meilge for keeping quiet. Besides, as a member of the Shadow Court, she's hardly interested in David's welfare.

Berin O'Donnell Captain of the Guard

When the sidhe returned from Arcadia, they encountered the sidhe who never left Earth: House Scathach. It soon became clear that the returnees looked down on the Scathach, hardly considering them sidhe at all because they had mixed their blood with mortals just as the commoners had. Many Scathach sidhe were determined to prove themselves. Some, however, resented the arrogant elitism of the returnees and rebelled against the role assigned them.

Berin O'Donnell was of the latter. Denied a place by King Barabas (and in truth disgusted by the king's lack of morals), he offered his services to Duke Meilge. The Eiluned duke saw beyond Berin's house to his noble heart and desire to serve an honorable master. Meilge immediately accepted Berin's service as head of his personal guard. Berin had no idea of Meilge's true nature. Berin himself is Unseelie only because of his anger over the treatment of House Scathach. Since most of the nobles in power are Seelie, he hopes that supporting the Unseelie will lead to justice for his house (and for the commoners, who also face discrimination by the haughty sidhe).

When Berin met Sabrina, he was so impressed by her beauty and knowledge of the arts that he introduced her to Meilge, believing his liege would invite her to court. He hoped Sabrina would care for him, but doesn't resent her marriage to Martin Corvald. Instead, he holds to the proprieties of courtly

love, worshipping her from afar. Though he has heard stories against both Sabrina and Meilge, he refuses to believe they could be evil — after all, they are his close personal friends, and Sabrina is his unattainable lady love. His love for Sabrina keeps him from speaking to her concerning his desire for her — a true irony considering how many lovers she's had. Though Unseelie, Berin follows the Seelie code of honor and believes that Meilge and Sabrina do also.

Unknown to Meilge, Berin uses his position to keep the king's rages in check — at Sabrina's request. While he doesn't fully understand Meilge's true personality, Berin does know that his king suffers from fits of depression and rage. He tries to be there whenever these fits occur so that Meilge will not embarrass himself. Berin has no idea that by controlling Meilge at such times, he's actually working for the Shadow Court.

Silent and skilled in combat like most Scathach, Berin also has a gentler side. He collects puppets and is always willing to perform for faerie childlings or mortal children. As Meilge's bodyguard and captain of the king's personal guard, he has cultivated an impressive knowledge of security techniques. He excels at both the Primal and Wayfare Arts.

Treasures: Berin owns a sword that bestows Sovereign •:Protocol on any sword battle Berin engages in. The Protocol so enforced acts as if cast with five successes. In essence, this effect guarantees that those who fight against Berin (and Berin as well) abide by all the courtly rules and etiquette expected. It does not make anyone abase himself to the Scathach knight.

Image: Berin is almost six feet tall, well-muscled and exceptionally strong. He wears his dark-brown hair in a warrior's knot at the base of his neck and has a neatly trimmed mustache and beard. He prefers armor and shield to courtly attire. When he must don such garb, he invariably wears black accented with silver. Whatever his attire, he is never without his sword (unless outside the freehold in normal clothing).

Roleplaying Hints: While you support the Unseelie cause because you hope its more democratic stance will return your house's lost respect, you yourself are a strict proponent of the Seelie Code. You believe that the fae are inherently good and that those who act selfishly or in an evil manner are merely temporarily misled or mentally unbalanced. Because of this optimism, you always give people the benefit of the doubt, and are often rewarded in your expectations because they appreciate your trust. Of course, other times, your beliefs lead to your being royally screwed over. You don't let that change you; you simply don't trust those particular people again.

Despite your optimistic views, you don't let your personal beliefs interfere with your job. You aren't a naive fool, despite what others might think. When you're on duty, you are supposed to question the movements and motives of anyone acting suspiciously. You also make certain that the security is as tight as you can make it. You are secretly a member of the Red Branch Knights, one of the reasons you protect Meilge so well.

Story Connection: Despite the fact that he is not charged with the protection of the High King per se, Berin remains



rigidly on guard during the masquerade ball. He fails to notice when Meilge and the king leave during the final dance, however. He later blames himself for allowing the High King's disappearance, thinking he might have prevented it had he been more vigilant. He has no idea that Meilge spiked the single drink Berin consumed with the same Glamour-rich poison he used to make David suggestible and does not recall that the King of Willows told him to "look the other way and forget that he had done so." Berin's guilt makes him fanatically eager to locate the missing High King — a consequence Meilge failed to foresee. Under the proper questioning, Berin might throw off the effects of the drug and remember (dimly) that someone interfered with his duties.

Wisteria Hall, Savannah

COUNT MORRIG of House Gwydion

Brought up in one of the oldest moneyed families of Savannah, Morrison Dane became the ideal Southern gentleman. Though he took a degree in law, he much prefers working to revitalize downtown Savannah and raising money for the Historic Preservation Society than litigating. Luckily, his family's money and his position in town means he can pursue such interests without needing to work. His good looks assure him of plenty of companionship, though no one has yet captured his heart.

As a child, Morrison was permitted the run of his parents' palatial home, though his mother denied him entry to an elaborate enclosed garden where she had a jewel-like folly. The small gazebo had broad, shallow marble steps leading up to a domed structure covered with ivy and wisteria (he saw it over the hedge from an old apple tree he climbed). Inside the garden was also a small lily pond.

Morrison obeyed his mother's wishes that he not enter her garden, at least until the day his father suffered a stroke. Ten years old, he frantically called for an ambulance, then intruded on the garden looking for his mother. Reaching the folly, he threw wide the door, calling for his mother, and was swept up in a wave of Glamour. Looking up, he saw a tall, regal being dressed in silks, her bedecked hair held with jeweled pins, her eyes blazing with power — his mother. As he entered his Chrysalis, she lifted him fully into the folly (which was much larger than he had thought). He managed to croak out the word "father" before the Dream Dance took him and revealed his true self.

In the aftermath of his father's death, Morrig (his faerie name) learned of the fae, his place among them (as a nobleman), and who he and his mother were. Though she instructed him dutifully, it was clear to Morrig that his mother, the Countess Dulcia of Gwydion, had little will left to live. She yearned to follow her beloved mortal husband. Three years later, when she felt Morrig was ready to assume his duties as count and confident that he had good advisors, she slipped away into the Dreaming. Though he grieved at her loss, Morrig realized she had never been happy since his father's death.



Morrig has tried to rule fairly over the Kithain of Savannah and environs. He granted Lady Una Morrowind a freehold within Savannah both because she had served the Seelie Court by uncovering a plot against Elena, duchess of the Southern Coast and because he saw in the lovely lady echoes of his own mother's sadness. Any fae who wishes is welcome to visit the count's court (known as Wisteria Hall) in the folly behind his ancestral home in the Historic District — so long as they agree to behave with decorum and cause no disturbance. Famed for his hospitality and exquisite manners, Morrig rides to the hunt at least four times a year and hosts a midnight ball each year in the grand ballroom of the mansion. Most of his time is spent helping preserve Savannah, however. He is popular in both fae and mortal circles — except at Willow's Heart. Though forced to swear allegiance to Meilge, the count often works alongside the lord and lady of Vellumton to unmask the evil they all know is the true Meilge.

Morrig's athletic build has allowed him to become expert at fencing and equestrian sports. His other passions include restoring old homes and collecting fine and unusual pottery. He excels in the Arts of Dream-Craft, Primal and Sovereign. Whenever he becomes too officious and "overbearing" (a predilection of his house affiliation), his advisor, Crwen, suggests that Morrig "take a dip in the pond head first." Thus, the count has also learned much concerning the maintenance of lily ponds and koi.

Image: Handsome and regal, Morrig tops out at six feet and appears slender but muscular in the way of many expert swordsmen. He has dark brown hair, worn relatively short in mortal guise, but longer and held back by a fillet in his faerie mien. His blue-green eyes can sparkle with merriment or cloud with compassion. Fae who have seen him angry never want to repeat the experience. He prefers casual, but well-made clothes, though he feels it his duty to wear formal attire when presiding over court at Wisteria Hall.

Roleplaying Hints: Most of your life has been good. You have everything anyone could desire. Though you still mourn your father and mother, you hope that they are together somewhere in the Dreaming. Just as you diligently perform your civic duties when in your human guise, so too do you take your duties as Count of Savannah quite seriously. Commoner and noble alike are welcome within your freehold. Your only real peeve is that you wish someone could expose King Meilge's true colors. It is very difficult sometimes holding together part of a region that is swimming in Meilge's corruption. Someday, somehow, someone will catch him in a lie. You want to be there when that happens.

Story Connection: As one of Meilge's counts, Morrig is invited to the masquerade ball. If no one else fingers (to whomever investigates David's disappearance) Meilge as the most likely perpetrator in the crime, Morrig certainly will. Unfortunately, since he knows little of Faerilyth, he believes she is in on it too and also willingly denounces her. Morrig could provide shelter and funds for those seeking clues to David's whereabouts.

CRWEN

Raised in a less-refined area of Savannah, Clovis Carver learned to make do, get along and focus on a good education to get her out of the ghetto and into polite society. To that end, she studied hard and worked after school at a local fast-food chain. She tried to fit in with her family, but always seemed to be out of step with whatever they wanted. In church, she was too fidgety; at a picnic, she was more interested in finishing up school work or in running around the grassy field than in swapping stories and eating. She just didn't seem interested in boys either.

Had her parents only known how interested she really was, they might have been more worried. Only an iron discipline and the thought that her ticket out lay through excelling in school kept Clovis from wanting to bed every cute boy she saw.



She knew too many other girls who had given in, gotten pregnant and lost any chance to do something with their lives. She was determined not to let that happen to her. Locking herself away in the library kept her from falling prey to her own desires.

Finding an old book on a back shelf in the library one day, she marveled at the rich velvet cover and the gemstones worked into a sort of glyph design. She felt the book tingle in her hands. Sensing that something was about to happen, she carefully opened the cover. Clovis just had time to note that the writing seemed to be in gold ink when she was overwhelmed with the Glamour pouring out of the tome.

She awakened to a half dozen faces staring down at her: A dog-girl pooka, two weird creatures she knew were called nockers, a tall and dark eshu and two chubby boggans. She had changed as well; her legs were covered in fur, she was wearing courtly clothes and she still held the book in her hands. Knowing she was a satyr named Crwen, she finally understood all the conflicting feelings she had experienced during her life.

Crwen was taken to meet Countess Dulcia and swore allegiance to her. She joined the motley of commoners who had befriended her during her Chrysalis. Telling her parents she was going away to secretarial school, she moved into the motley's tiny apartment and immersed herself in learning how to exist among the fae. Because Crwen liked gardening, she asked Countess Dulcia if she could come to court to take care of some of the plants there. Dulcia agreed. Before long, Dulcia began watching Crwen in the garden; eventually, they began talking together, and Dulcia realized that Crwen was quite intelligent and very well-educated. Lacking many other friends, Dulcia confided in Crwen, who usually had wise comments and suggestions for her sidhe ruler.

Crwen acted as midwife for Dulcia when Morrig was born and watched over him from afar as he grew. She shared Dulcia's sorrow when her husband died and moved into the mansion (ostensibly as a lady's maid, actually as Morrig's guardian). She helped train Morrig in his duties as count, and when Dulcia decided to enter the Dreaming, it was Crwen she named as Morrig's guardian and advisor.

As advisor to the count, Crwen has made it her business to become a master of both Chicanery (to ease the heart and derail unpleasantness) and Primal (she never wants to be helpless if the count needs her). Crwen has become a scholar concerning the Dreaming and is quite astute politically.

Treasure: The tome Crwen picked up so long ago is a faerie treasure that serves to answer one question per week with the best foreseeing and advice it can give.

Image: Crwen's skin is as dark as coffee, and her eyes are a deep brown with glints of green in them. Her hair was once a mass of shining black curls, but both it and her legpelt have become sprinkled with gray as she ages. Though she is now a grump (or graybeard), her smile and unconsciously saucy walk still attract suitors and let them know they're definitely dealing with a satyr lady.

Roleplaying Hints: You are absolutely devoted to Count Morrig, just as you were to his mother. It is your responsibility to see that he rules justly and wisely, that he doesn't get too full

of himself and that no one hurts him. You know he relies on your counsel and always try to think things through. That's not always easy, but you do the best you can and consult your book when you're at a loss. You aren't totally consumed by duty, however. No satyr can exist without a few parties and assignments to look forward to; you're just more discreet about yours.

Story Connection: Crwen's book might provide some cryptic clues concerning David's whereabouts. Further, Crwen herself is a well-known scholar among the fae. She might be able to help through research or pulling in fellow scholars to assist.

Other Kithain of Note

Florist Primaeval, Savannah, Georgia

Several Kithain live within the glen known as Florist Primaeval. Lady Una Morrowind (an older sidhe) resides there with a motley consisting of Douglas Biggins (a troll wilder), Twyla (a pooka wilder), Garrett Brody (a sidhe wilder), and Dion (an eshu wilder) among others. Count Morrig granted Lady Una her freehold when she helped expose a Shadow Court plot to assassinate Elena, Duchess of the Southern Coast. The fae of the Florist Primaeval are profiled in more detail in *Freeholds and Hidden Glens*.

Elena, Duchess of the Southern Coast

Once heavily into politics, Elena has retreated into her freehold of Wild Sea in the wake of an assassination plot against her. Threatened with the prospect of killers wielding cold iron, the duchess has temporarily allowed her Unseelie side to take over. While she works to make her court impregnable and fills it with diabolical traps to snare the unwary, she has temporarily handed over governance of her duchy to Count Morrig. Once she feels secure again, Elena may emerge from her



self-imposed isolation. Whether she will have entered Bedlam by then is anyone's guess. Until then, for all practical purposes, Elena is out of the political scene (which is what the Shadow Court wanted anyway) and Morrig is *de facto* duke in her absence.

Baron Arawn and Baroness Ellawyn

Dark-haired Baron Arawn and the golden-tressed Baroness Ellawyn of House Fiona hold the freehold of Whitehall Keep (a Victorian-style bed-and-breakfast). They rule Athens, Madison and Watkinsville, Georgia, together known as the Barony of Vellumton. The area is renowned for its artists and musicians. The baron and baroness are staunchly Seelie. They are some of the few who know that Meilge projects a false face to his kingdom because their barony has suffered from some of the criminal element among Meilge's retainers. They work to unmask Meilge and to minimize his effect on their holdings. Each spring they host a grand tournament on the lawn of Whitehall. More on the baron and baroness can be found in *Noblesse Oblige: The Book of Houses*.

Duchy of Cotton

Duke Firedrake The Iron King

Born in Mobile, Alabama, in 1970, Eugene Hardesty never knew a normal life. When barely old enough to walk, he entered his Chrysalis during a Mardi Gras celebration. The self-styled "Queen of Mobile," an Unseelie eshu graybeard, rescued the apparently crazed child from his worried parents and the paramedics (who were about to take the child to the psycho ward at the hospital). Nefertiti, as the "queen" called herself, was amazed when she realized she had stolen a sidhe childling. Her first inclination was to slay him. Then she realized what a treasure she had found as Eugene explained that he was Ferdia of House Fiona.





Over the next decades, Nefertiti raised him as her fosterling. Both fae realized that he was of the level of nobility that could claim a duchy, and Nefertiti appealed to King Barabas on Ferdia's behalf. He was granted a large freehold — former holding of the Fiona known as Ferris Castle, in what had since become Montgomery, Alabama. Rekindling the Balefire in the castle, Ferdia moved there to hold court once a month. Most of his time was still spent with Nefertiti in her tiny freehold of Bellemer, a weathered sea cottage on stilts among a garden of azaleas.

Nefertiti had grown old as she watched over Ferdia. Though she was better able to cope with Banality since she was a member of the Shadow Court, she had been a graybeard when she had first adopted the young sidhe. One day, she went out of Bellemer and never returned. Ferdia searched for her, but never found any trace. Once a year, he commissions young knights to search for news of her. None have found her yet, and Ferdia believes Nefertiti has long since died. Ferdia has had no contact with his human family either since the day he was taken by Nefertiti, nor does he feel anything for them. Were he to run across them in the course of his life, he would probably ignore them (as he does most humans) unless they could provide him with Glamour.

Though he oversees his court when necessary, Ferdia loves creating chimera more than anything else — a holdover from his childling days when he had many chimerical playmates. To celebrate being officially named ruler of the Duchy of Cotton, he created his greatest chimera yet — assisted by his faithful nocker servant, "Smithie." Together the two of them forged a wondrous chimera — an enormous red dragon — and awakened in it a great love for and loyalty to Ferdia. Because of this triumph, Ferdia earned the title "Duke Firedrake."

A few years ago, Duke Firedrake met Igrania, duchess of Magnolia's Home, a large and powerful freehold in Biloxi, Mississippi. He was amazed to discover she actually called herself a duchess and insisted that her lands were separate from his. He had claim to Mississippi's freeholds as part of his Duchy of

Cotton. She retorted that he already had more than he could handle in ruling Alabama and that she (whose claim to a duchy was every bit as legitimate as his) would henceforth rule the Duchy of Magnolias. Discussions turned to bickering, then to threats and finally sabotage. Meilge's solution (prompted by the lucrative bribes from each of them) was not to decide for either of them. Instead, he proposed that the two of them should marry and rule jointly, a solution each flatly refused.

Firedrake now regrets that hasty decision as he finds himself falling deeper in love with Igrania each time they meet. He has begun to find excuses to have "truce talks" face-to-face, even if it means causing trouble on her side of the border in order to prompt another meeting. In order to be nearer Igrania, Duke Firedrake prefers to spend the majority of his time at Bellemer in Mobile.

Despite his annoyance over Meilge's insistence that the two rulers settle it themselves, Duke Firedrake has remained one of Meilge's chief Unseelie allies. The duke provides Meilge and his minions with cold iron weapons crafted from the iron ore deposits so prevalent in the more northerly parts of his duchy. Since Firedrake is his chief supplier of the potent metal, Meilge has also dubbed his favorite duke "the Iron King." Though most people assume he is Seelie, Duke Firedrake has never been so for any length of time. Brought up by an irreverent Unseelie eshu, he learned to scorn the more restrictive aspects of courtly behavior. He supports the monarchy because Meilge's patronage keeps him in power. While not a member of the true Shadow Court, Firedrake is among those who believe they are privy to the court's secrets. His Mardi Gras and Samhain celebrations are legendary and draw both nobles and commoners from all over Concordia.

As his early teaching focused on those Arts that his eshu mentor taught him, Firedrake is best at the Arts usually not associated with the noble sidhe. He is a master of both Chicanery and Legerdemain, is well-versed in Wayfare, and knows a little Soothsay. He is woefully lacking in Sovereign, which he tries to hide by pretending to be above using such "sidhe tricks." He is an excellent sculptor and collects beautiful gemstones.

Chimera: A large fiery-red dragon whose scales glitter like rubies and whose tongue is made of fire, the chimera Firedrake created serves as his mount (only when away from prying mortal eyes) and as a valued companion. The fire dragon lives in Ferris Castle and is under the delusion that it is Ferdia's seneschal. Having attained sentience, the dragon (who sometimes answers to the name Verminian and sometimes refuses to answer at all) is quite persistent and very hard to disrupt. Verminian is always left at the castle and rules the roost whenever the duke is away, demanding entertainment and feasts of Glamour, both of which are graciously provided for him.

Image: Duke Firedrake's auburn hair cascades down his back in waves, framing a face that could make those who read romance novels swoon. His gray eyes are slightly slanted, giving him a devilishly roguish look. He often wears Fiona garb, not because he needs to assert his claims, but because the colors look so good on him. He usually wears a crimson cloak, which he swirls dramatically whenever making an entrance or exit. He always carries a chimerical sword and often has a well-wrapped cold-iron dagger hidden in a boot.

Roleplaying Hints: You love being the center of attention and being in charge. While you are Unseelie, you are not rabid about it. Most of the time, you believe you simply think and act more like a commoner than a noble. Certainly sanctimonious blather about fairness and bickering over which house should rule makes you frantic. If wanting excitement, color and passion in your life makes you Unseelie, then so be it. Better Unseelie than bored to death by a duel of honor. Of course, Igrania says she is Seelie, so they can't be all bad. Maybe you should kidnap her during one of your peace meetings and show her how much fun being Unseelie — and your bride — can be.

Story Connection: Heeding a request from Meilge, Firedrake supplies the king with a cage and several bludgeoning sticks made of cold iron. He has no idea what use Meilge intends for them; he just does what he's asked. When David disappears, Firedrake makes an educated guess how Meilge used them. He heartily applauds Meilge and keeps the knowledge to himself, confident that he now knows a major secret of the Shadow Court.

Igrania of House Gwydion The Unacknowledged Duchess

Igrania remembers a white palace, long expanses of green lawn, graceful trees swaying in the cool breeze and beautiful peacocks strolling in the evening light. It isn't Arcadia she recalls, but the antebellum mansion called River Landing in Natchez, Mississippi. She must be content with her memories of it because she has not lived in her main freehold for several years. Instead, she resides within Magnolia's Home, a small freehold in the Near Dreaming reached through entering a gateway in a magnificent old magnolia tree in Biloxi. Knowing the danger of remaining too long in the Dreaming, Igrania also keeps a small apartment on the outskirts of the city. Unfortunately, she has misjudged how strong an effect the Dreaming is having on her and she is beginning to forget her mortal life prior to her Chrysalis.

She remembers that she was once Wilma Nadine Parm and vaguely recalls living in Natchez and always loving the lovely white mansion of River Landing. Igrania believes she had a normal childhood, but cannot recall any details about it. The first real memories she can recall are of awakening from a dream, realizing she was a changeling and knowing that River Landing was a major freehold. She walked over to the old mansion — run-down and sadly in need of repairs — and placed her hand on the front door. It opened at her touch. No one lived there, but when Igrania entered, she felt the freehold respond to her. She claimed it as her own and took the title the Duchess of River Landing.

A few other Kithain made themselves known to her and acknowledged her as their new ruler, but for the most part, Igrania was left alone. No one really visited. Her "subjects" are mostly home-grown commoners who feel uncomfortable in courtly surroundings. After only a short time in the house, she grew bored and lonely. Wanting to see the rest of her "duchy" she journeyed to Biloxi. Delighted with Biloxi, Igrania explored the city and discovered a small glen that held a magnolia tree. Entering the magnolia, she found herself in the Near Dreaming. Using Arts she had not remembered having until that moment, she established a



homestead that she called Magnolia's Home. Igrania was pleased with her new home as she seemed to recall more about her former life while within it. She decided she was more the Duchess of Magnolia's Home than of River Landing. Eventually, she emerged, since she didn't want to enter Bedlam.

Waiting outside the tree was Duke Firedrake. The duke had been making a quick tour of "his" duchy when he noticed that someone had entered the glen and claimed the gateway. Because of Igrania's claim he couldn't simply open the tree and walk in, so he waited to see who would come out. He was charmed by her beauty and became even more intrigued when she disputed his claim to the area.

Determined not to lose her status (as she had already lost many of her memories), Igrania stood up to Firedrake, refusing to let him bully her. She claimed the region covered by Mississippi as her own duchy. He disagreed, pointing out that Meilge, king of Willows, had granted it to him as part of the Duchy of Cotton. She retorted, "Then Meilge was wrong to do so, for I hold equal title to you and have established my claim here. Further, I am of the ruling House Gwydion and you are not, sir." She made it clear that she was willing to fight him should he press his claim.

There followed several months of back biting, appeals to the king, sabotage of one another's resources and attempts to secretly take over small sites that might serve as advance forts in each other's territory. Then the rounds of "peace talks" began. Sometime in the middle of the altercation, Igrania joined the Cat's Cradle and gained some powerful allies.

Firedrake and Igrania eventually agreed to a truce. At Meilge's behest, Firedrake proposed marriage, but Igrania refused, not wanting to become his "pet wife." She made a counter proposal: she would marry Firedrake but only if he relinquished claim to the Duchy of Cotton and made her duchess of the whole realm. He refused.

Igrania has traveled to Meilge's court several times to petition the king to acknowledge her claim. Each time he has refused,

saying she and Firedrake must settle their differences before he can make any decision. Unknown to Igrania, Meilge has no intention of giving her a duchy; he owes Duke Firedrake too much. Meilge also does not like Igrania because he knows he cannot control her. He would like her even less if he knew she had recruited Faerilyth into the Cat's Cradle.

She knows she should return to River Landing, her main freehold, but Igrania remains in Biloxi. Though convinced the duke doesn't really care for her, she prefers to remain close to Firedrake's freehold in Mobile — to keep an eye on him, so she claims. She has been so concerned with holding onto her region that she has done little to actually rule it thus far. She hopes to remedy that soon, for she keenly feels she has not been a very good ruler to the Kithain of the Duchy of Magnolia's Home. She is especially concerned by reports she's been receiving lately of a new changeling religious group operating near Biloxi.

Igrania's Arts reflect the abilities she brought with her from the Dreaming. She knows much of Dream-Craft, Soothsay and Sovereign and is conversant with Wayfare. Naturally graceful, Igrania dances well and practices Tai Chi (though she can't remember learning either one). She also recalls complex combat maneuvers without knowing why.

Image: Her regal posture belies the fact that Igrania barely tops five feet. She is a tiny bit too muscular to be called slender. Wiry and flexible, she wears jeans and T-shirts with as much grace and comportment as a court gown in her house colors. Her hair is dark brown with a hint of red highlights, and her eyes a light hazel that looks amber in certain lights. She has a beauty mark just beneath the outer edge of her right eye.

Roleplaying Hints: You mask your confusion with a bold, forthright manner. Although you cannot remember much, you know you are a duchess and deserve your own duchy—that you will never back down on. Unfortunately, you are all too aware that you should be doing more to rule your duchy and fighting less with Firedrake over his claim to it. If you could only recall more you

could get the upper hand, but you aren't certain where to start looking for clues to what you cannot remember. Despite your pretensions that Firedrake disgusts you (he is obviously Unseelie, after all), you treasure your meetings with him. Perhaps you should cease the hostilities and invite him to River Landing. Then you could insist he remain as your guest until you can convince him to forfeit his claim to your lands. Of course, it isn't just his *lands* you're interested in....

Story Connection: As a member of the Cat's Cradle, Igrania might be asked to investigate David's disappearance. It shouldn't be too hard for her to figure out that Firedrake had something to do with it (he is smirking too much). She might also defend Faerilyth from those who accuse the queen of foul play, since Igrania sees Faerilyth as something of a little sister. In any case, she intends to chaperone the queen through the rest of her tour of Concordia.

The Right Reverend Perseverance Matthews

Brought up on the evangelical tent circuit, Perseverance Matthews spent his youth acting as a living prop in his father's tent services. He learned first-hand how to stage a show, work a crowd and fake faith healings. The marks loved it when the child helped bring them forward to receive his father's healing touch. He would look up at them, eyes shining guilelessly and tell them, "Papa's gonna make you all better now. Praise the Lord!" Perseverance loved the pageantry — people dressed in beautiful clothes, the choir singing uplifting songs, listening to his father's melodious voice preaching and audience members coming forward, hope in their hearts. Dreams of a better life mingled with his father's dreams of wealth and fame. In retrospect, if he hadn't been touched by the Glamour, his life would have been strange.

By the age of five, Perseverance had already felt the pull of his other half. He loved sitting on the pier near the ocean, and he had a special taste for fish. Sometimes he dreamed he was flying. The only difficulty Perseverance faced was his mother's impatience with his constant lying. He tried to tell her the truth, but something inside him twisted his words around and he wound up lying. He took to saying little other than the lines he memorized for the show. It never occurred to either of his parents that if he *could* say them, they must be lies.

Just after his part in the show one evening, he went backstage for a snack (as usual). Suddenly, however, one of the people he'd just led forward started screaming, "Hallelujah!," and a wave of Glamour engulfed him. Rolling beneath some unused movable bleachers, he entered his Chrysalis. As he entered the dream, he felt himself changing. His feet spread and his arms crooked and became feathered; his jaw extended as he shrank, folding in on himself. He had become a pelican. Delighted with this new talent, he changed back and forth. Then he settled back to bask in the Glamour pouring from the audience.

Suddenly, someone else was with him. An older boy, somewhere in his teens, was bending over him. The boy was huge, with fists like country hams. Persey blinked, and the boy's blue skin and horns became visible. He recognized the older changeling as a



troll. Vorint (the troll) led Persey away from the revival and spoke to him about being a changeling. He asked if Persey wanted to leave home and offered to teach him what he needed to know. Persey actually liked living at home and refused. He did take Vorint up on his offer to teach him, however. Thus began Persey's double life.

With Vorint's teaching, Persey learned several Arts and something about changeling society. He even found a tiny spot he claimed as his own freehold. Pelican's Roost looks like a particularly run-down boathouse, but it's all his.

After discovering his true nature, Persey found that he could gather Glamour from the people who came to his father's revivals. He could even invoke more by his actions. An attractive boy, his role in the show had grown along with him. Now he did a mini-sermon before escorting people up for the healings. By now, he even recognized some of the regulars, people his father paid \$10 to change their disguises weekly, attend the show and be miraculously "healed" of various illnesses and injuries.

Then Persey's parents were killed in a car crash. He inherited the tent, the chairs, the podium, a trunk full of Bibles and hymnals and a choir of eight people who wanted to be paid. Realizing he would have to earn money somehow, Persey took over where his father left off. He spent \$15 on fliers advertising the Right Reverend Perseverance Matthew's New Hope Crusade. The response was all he could have wanted. People came from miles around to hear the new preacher and witness the faith healing he promised.

As people began moving to the front, Persey suddenly remembered that he hadn't hired any shills to pretend they were healed. Then he noticed the young mother holding her newborn baby. Her eyes begged him to heal her child. Drawn to her fearful, yet powerful dreams for her child, Persey walked toward her. He handed the woman a cheap card with a hand-drawn cross on it and placed a similar card in the baby's tiny hand. Hoping he could remember what Vorint had taught him, he enchanted them both and used Heather Balm on the baby. The child's pinched face gained some color, and she began to breathe more easily.

Since that time, Lena (the young mother) has become a devoted follower and quite dear to him. Repeated healings of her baby Merri have eased the child's illness. Though he has been unable to fully heal her, Persey has great hopes that he'll eventually discover a faerie treasure that can do so. His ministry is very popular, and he uses his talents to help those most in need. He has recently had difficulty preaching, however, for he is actually beginning to believe that he might have been called to be exactly what he is. His New Hope Church of the Shining Path has begun to attract other changelings as well, starting with his old mentor Vorint. Though he has spent a little time within his freehold, his many commitments to his ministry have meant he must spend most of his time outside it. He has made no effort to keep from becoming a grump since he believes the faithful find an older preacher more comforting and believable than a young kid.

When not preaching or answering mail from his many fans, Persey likes changing into pelican form and flying out over the ocean in search of an impromptu sushi dinner. His newest interest

is searching any faerie archives he can find to discover if there exists anything that can heal the little girl he is coming to think of as his daughter.

Persey excels at both Chicanery and Primal. He is an inspired speaker (all the more interesting because his exaggerated stories provide entertainment value beyond the religious message they impart), and is very surprised to discover he is also a good father. Even without preaching, Persey could draw a crowd just by singing.

Image: Of medium height and build, Persey has brown hair and eyes. His face is slightly rounded and his jaw prominent. Persey usually has a serious look whenever he is preaching, but smiles frequently when offstage. He is beginning to develop a little bit of a paunch due to Lena's excellent cooking.

Roleplaying Hints: You started out as the ultimate con man and wound up believing your own blather. Your father never really healed a soul, but you have seen the evidence of your power to help others. You now believe your powers were given to you by the creator. Your chief disappointment has been that you cannot fully heal Merri. You have heard rumors of a great faerie treasure called the Cup of Dreams, said to be able to heal any affliction. You have been combing through stories and libraries seeking any reference to the cup you can find. If it really exists, and if anyone can locate it, you will. Merri's life depends on it.

Story Connection: It is possible that by the time David is found, he will be so beaten down by Banality that he can only be healed with the legendary Cup of Dreams. Persey may be the key to finding the cup. He might also be the key to using it effectively.

Duchy of the Delta Crescent

Lisette Levay, Voodoo Queen
Duchess of the Delta Crescent

Born into a Cajun family in the bayous near New Orleans, Lisette knew from childhood that she might someday undergo a change. Black Spiral Dancer Kinfolk, the Levays took note of



Lisette's differences (time outs when she seemed to be somewhere else, her penchant for talking to people who weren't there) and assumed she'd be changing into a werewolf someday. Instead, she underwent her Chrysalis during Carnival soon after puberty. A motley of changelings acting as one of the Carnival Krewes found her and helped her through the change.

Lisette discovered she was a sidhe, a noble faerie of House Balor named Lisaniettia. Knowing what a disappointment she'd be to her hopeful family as a mere "fairy," she decided to disappear. She took a job as a waitress in a small beer-and-oyster joint in the French Quarter and got an apartment with three other girls. On her days off she explored the French Quarter, then branched out to the rest of the city. She found few other changelings within city limits. All the wrought iron in the city bothered their delicate fae natures. Finally meeting another member of House Balor, she discovered that her house had little difficulty with cold iron. She also heard about the Shadow Court — and thought it sounded really cool. Almost on a par with being a Black Spiral Dancer.

Lisette found life as a waitress all too boring, however, and decided she should meet some new people. Styling herself as a voodoo queen, she began performing fortune telling at a nearby bookshop, reading palms, cards and tea leaves. After only a short time, she found it more lucrative giving readings than waiting tables and quit her first job. Further, she was able to tell from her clients which of them possessed the ability to feed Glamour to her through their creativity. Even more frightening, she started communing with the dead for real. Contacted by a group known as the pilgrims of the Bright Road, Lisette learned about walking the Bright Road, hoping to cheat her death and reincarnate as a sidhe when the time came.

In the years that followed, Lisette made contact with various criminal groups in New Orleans, including the Setites. She also renewed her contact with her Black Spiral Kinfolk and learned of her other kin, called Fomorians. Acting on their information, she discovered and claimed an abandoned freehold called Spirit Hall in the swamps of Barataria south of the city. Setting herself up as the Voodoo Queen of New Orleans, she invited the area's other changelings to come to her "court" and party. Utilizing the swamp's spooky atmosphere, Lisette tells fortunes atop the stump of an old, twisted cypress tree that marks the boundary of her freehold. Sometimes she even summons "haints."

After the other changelings acclaimed her ruler of the city, she followed the suggestion of her fellow Shadow Court members and appealed to Meilge to declare her ruler of the Duchy of the Delta Crescent. Utilizing her drug contacts through the Setites, Lisette began supplying Meilge's gangs in return for his patronage. On the advice of the Shadow Court, Lisette claimed to be of House Eiluned rather than House Balor. Meilge was delighted to accommodate her.

For now, she is content to consolidate her allies and learn what she can from the Shadow Court. Soon, however, she won't be happy ruling just the duchy. Meilge's job appeals to her; she's just not sure she wants to live in Atlanta....

For all her acquired urban sophistication, Lisette is a child of the bayou. She grew up surviving in the swamps, learning to hunt, fish and run a skiff. She relies on her skills in fortune telling and in bamboozling the people who come to her to read their future. Lisette has mastered the Arts of Chicanery and Soothsay and is well-versed in the strange Art of Chronos. She's working on Sovereign, hoping that knowledge of that Art will prove helpful in her drive toward greater power. She has begun classes in martial arts and is a dead shot with a rifle.

Treasures: Lisette doesn't own any treasures but has access to all the ingredients for making both Dreambane and Dreamshield. Though she lacks the enormous wealth needed to make it in quantity, she could probably trade favors for just a little of the potent drug and its antidote.

Image: At 5' 10" and almost 170 pounds, Lisette towers over most other women. She has short, curly brown hair and green eyes. When she does her fortune telling she wears a long, black wig and colorful "voodoo queen" clothing. She disdains court attire, preferring comfortable jeans, tunics and boots. As a member of House Balor, Lisette has a deformity: a twisted knee that makes her limp.

Roleplaying Hints: You revel in being Unseelie like a child enjoys the sensation of being "bad." Although you still enjoy partying and thumbing your nose at authority, you are beginning to appreciate power more. While it's nice to be "queen," you wish you had more control over the Shadow Court. Sometimes you get tired of following their "suggestions." Someday, you'll be powerful and popular enough to issue orders to them. After all, they taught you that House Balor should be in command; they ought to realize that sooner or later you'll be true to your house.

Story Connection: Lisette's drug connections among the Shadow Court provide the expertise in combining Glamour with a narcotic that makes the imbibor very suggestible. Called Dreambane, it is the drug Meilge gives to David. Lisette is unhappy when Riel gives the secret to Meilge. She had hoped to use it on the King of Willows to make him abdicate in her favor. She might be persuaded to tell what she knows in return for a promise to name her the new Queen of Willows.

Pearl Baroness of the Big Easy

Patsy never knew her parents. She grew up in the Bakerman Home for Children. As one of dozens of black orphans, she had little hope of being adopted. Even that small hope faded as she garnered a reputation for strangeness. She talked to her doll as if it were alive, always pausing as though the doll were answering her; she said that the animals on the wallpaper danced for her at night. Nobody adopted her, and the house parents explained to her that talking and dancing animals and dolls weren't real. Gradually, she lost the ability to see such things.

She'd almost forgotten her early dreams when she saw her first live play. It wasn't even a professional production, just a local high school drama class' dress rehearsal, but she was enthralled with it and became infused with Glamour. She didn't go back to the home.



Over time Pearl has become a marvelous actress and storyteller. She is also a first-class riverboat pilot, when such is needed. Though Quillan has attempted to teach her how to maintain and repair their riverboat, she is all thumbs when it comes to mechanical affairs. On the other hand, Pearl has become quite good at keeping accounts and making the riverboat a financial success. As might be expected of an eshu, her most accomplished Art is Wayfare, though she is also proficient in Legerdemain and Primal.

Image: At 5' 6" and 115 pounds, with café-au-lait skin, heavy black hair and warm brown eyes, Pearl looks much like many other young women in New Orleans. When she steps on stage, however, her eshu nature shines through, converting her from a somewhat attractive woman into a beautiful star. She blossoms when in costume, whether it is for a stage show or in garb for attending court.

Roleplaying Hints: You have found what you most wanted in life. You love traveling aboard the *Mississippi Pearl*, performing for appreciative audiences, and you adore Quillan despite his pretense of being an unmitigated grouch. You've gathered a wonderful group of changelings and mortals together to perform aboard the riverboat. You've even gained the friendship of the Duchess of New Orleans. She has made both you and Quillan nobles, something you never expected. Your life has really become just like a fairy tale and you couldn't be happier.

Story Connection: Although Pearl has no direct connection with the story, one or more of the tales she knows might hold a clue or hint that helps restore David to his faerie nature once he is found.

Duchy of Palmetto

Duke Antoan (AN-tuan)

Antoan was born in Charleston, South Carolina, soon after his parents immigrated from Vietnam in 1972. He grew up attending public school and working in the family's Chinese-Vietnamese restaurant after class. Brought up to work hard, to respect his elders and to embrace traditional values, it took him until he was almost 18 before he underwent his Chrysalis.

Strangely, he was enwrapped in Glamour that he would never have experienced had he not broken away enough from his family to skip work and go to a rock concert. A whole new world opened for him. Taken from the concert hall by Mischala, the Duchess of Palmetto, he became aware of his fae nature. Duchess Mischala was much older than Antoan, a graybeard of House Fiona whose patronage was instrumental in bringing the Spoleto Festival to Charleston while Antoan was still a child. The young sidhe discovered that he was a noble of House Liam, that his house was not regarded highly, and that Mischala believed the rest of the proud sidhe would have a fit when they learned that a sidhe had been born into a refugee family!

Mischala took Antoan (who told her he was under a geas never to reveal his fae name) under her wing, then into her bed. Antoan tried to keep up both lives for a time, but exhausted

Patsy entered her Chrysalis right there in the theater. When she became aware of the mortal realm once again, she was wandering through New Orleans toward the docks. Moving as though called, she boarded a seedy-looking riverboat. It felt like coming home for the first time in her life. On board she found Quillan, a grump nocker who had kept the afloat. He was too drunk to have found her earlier, but was civil enough to allow her to stay aboard.

Exploring the craft, Patsy realized it was an old showboat. It was also a movable freehold. Naturally, the entire boat was not enchanted, but a central cabin flanked by two others held a small Balefire within it. Though Quillan had tended the freehold's Balefire for years, he had almost lost interest in life until Patsy arrived on his doorstep. Her excitement about turning the ship into an actual showboat again rekindled Quillan's fading Glamour, and he helped her refurbish it. Several coats of paint and auditions later, the *Mississippi Pearl* was open for business. Patsy, renamed Pearl, starred in many of the productions.

Paddlewheeling up the Mississippi from New Orleans to Memphis, they offered a four-day cruise, two plays, two variety shows, a little old-fashioned riverboat gambling (in costume; outfits provided for a small fee), fine cooking and a special afternoon storytelling session by Pearl. Mortals and Kithain alike have discovered the potent dreams evoked by the romance of the riverboat.

Duchess Lisette discovered the *Mississippi Pearl* and was enchanted by the whole idea. At least once a year, she travels round trip on the boat, up to Memphis and back to New Orleans. Though she knows both Quillan and Pearl are Seelie, she enjoys their hospitality so much she has named Pearl the Baroness of the Big Easy and Quillan the Baron of the River. Their titles have not been approved by Meilge (in fact, he knows nothing of them), but Pearl truly believes she has been made a noble. Quillan isn't so certain.



himself and tried his parents' patience. After a few months, he announced that he was moving out. Arguments and recriminations mixed with his mother's, brothers' and sisters' tears followed. In the end, though, his family gave its blessings.

Antoan opened himself to many new experiences, embracing all sorts of dance, music, theater and the visual arts. He even developed the ability to glean Glamour from gourmet cuisine. He and Mischala were inseparable. In mortal society, things were less pleasant. Charleston society demanded certain behavior from its elite. While Mischala came from an old, respected and moneyed family, her choice to take up with an "Oriental boy" met with stony silence and snubs. Badly hurt by the attitude and the Banality attached to it, Mischala withdrew into herself. She stopped attending concerts and the theater; she refused to even leave her freehold.

Antoan did what he could, even offering to leave so she could regain her standing. She refused, terrified of losing him. Antoan didn't fully understand what was happening to Mischala until she entered the second stage of Bedlam. Realizing what her budding insanity was doing to the land and to her, Antoan took her captive and forced her to leave the freehold. He made her face Banality, then took her to an exclusive facility where she could receive treatment.

Rather than leave the land without a ruler, since he himself was of the level of nobility to claim such, he assumed the title of duke *pro tem*. Though he intended it to be temporary until Mischala regained her senses, he was immediately attacked by the other nobles of the Kingdom of Willows as a usurper. Criticism concerning his handling of the affair reached epic proportions, especially since Mischala was a grump, and it was possible he had forever robbed her of her faerie nature.

Within a few months, Mischala was well enough to return to Palmetto Court, but Antoan also rented a lovely house set back from the road and draped by live oaks covered with Spanish moss

so she would not fall prey to Bedlam again. Though she now looked almost 40 and he a mere 20, they renewed their life together. Despite his attempt to return her title, Mischala refused it, saying she just wanted to enjoy herself. Gradually a few of the other nobles have accepted Antoan as Mischala's chosen heir, though Meilge has yet to ratify her choice. Most of Meilge's nobles choose to ignore Antoan, seeing him as a black sheep among them. Almost all of them believe that he is an opportunist or at best a gigolo; they whisper that blood will tell and after all, he's from the untrustworthy oathbreakers of House Liam.

The duke has had to be content with supporting the arts and preservation of the beauties of Charleston. Though he hosts a gala each year to which he invites all the nobles of Willows, few accept. He also finds himself faced with a hard choice: Mischala is fully a grump now, and is finding it harder to retain Glamour in the face of her own Banality. Antoan can either allow her to spend more time in the freehold with the chancing that she will slip into Bedlam again, or insist that she spend most of her time in the mundane world and watch her slip completely away from him in to Banality.

Antoan has concentrated on the Arts of Primal and Soothsay, hoping to use them to help Mischala. Though he knows much of Sovereign, he rarely uses it. He is an excellent cook, and has spent a good deal of time learning how to fight with sword and spear.

Image: Short and slender, with dark-golden skin, straight black hair and dark-brown slanted eyes, Antoan is quite handsome. He wears the colors of his house proudly when in Palmetto Court and at any faerie gatherings he attends. When not in court, he dresses appropriately for his surroundings — black tie at the opera, sports shirt and jeans for an informal shrimp cookout. He has a smile for anyone who doesn't treat him as an inferior.

Roleplaying Hints: You held a high position among the nobles of House Liam, though you are now under a geas never to reveal your true name to anyone not in Arcadia. You have loved Mischala ever since you first met her. You know others suspect your motives; if they only knew the torture you are enduring as you think about losing her either to Banality or madness, they wouldn't think so poorly of you. You try to be a good duke and hope the land is prosperous under your rule. You'd give it all up, however, if you could find the key to making Mischala young again.

Story Connection: Antoan has no direct connection to the story. He was not invited to the masquerade, and is not popular with his fellow nobles. Of course, this also gives him a unique perspective on the kingdom.

Cienzilla

Mistress of the Gullah Free Lands

Born aboard a shrimp boat in the waters surrounding the Sea Islands of South Carolina, Cinnamon grew up steeped in the lore of her people. Descendants of the slaves who once worked South Carolina's rice plantations, the islanders speak a patois of African, West Indian, Irish and English known as Gullah or "Geechee." From the beginning, she learned every story, every piece of occult lore and each craft her neighbors could teach her. She also worked

aboard her family's shrimp boat and wove baskets from sweet grass and willow twigs to supplement the family's income.

Her people's language and culture provided many stories and art forms that fed the young girl Glamour, and she became aware of her eshu nature while still quite young. When she entered her Chrysalis, she found a whole community of eshu among the islanders, who welcomed her into their midst. Granny Henrietta took Cinnamon (or Cientilla, her faerie name) as her special ward, adopting the young girl as her heir.

Over time, Henrietta explained to Cientilla that an eshu enclave had claimed a large freehold on one of the islands for several hundred years. They had arrived with the slaves and, rather than traveling the world as is their wont, they had settled together and used their Arts to try to better the lives of their human kin. More than most other groups, the Gullah had lived in such close proximity to the fae for so long that many of them knew that the eshu walked among them; some even knew the signs when a new eshu "bloomed" and became a "helpful spirit." Many among the Gullah believed that the eshu protected them from intrusion by "haints," keeping the ghosts at bay by bribing them with stories to entertain them in the afterlife.

Cientilla learned that the Gullah Free States bowed to no other faeries. While commoners claimed sovereignty over various territories during the Interregnum, the eshu of the Sea Islands made it clear they were independent of such claims. Since the return of the nobles, who stepped in and claimed many of the same places as the commoners, Cientilla has led the eshu of the islands in refusing to acknowledge them. No overlord has ruled the Sea Islands since slavery was abolished. Nor will the eshu bow to outside rule ever again.

Like her mentor, Cientilla learned to appreciate the intricate artistry of well-made baskets and bright quilts. She discovered that if she told good stories when visiting neighbors, most were happy to gift her with a basket, a handmade doll or even a new dress or a quilt in return for her tales. Many of those items held Glamour within them. She also discovered her gift for winding those tales among more conventional fare when giving tours of the islands to vacationers.

Cientilla has made it her life's work to compile a history of the Gullah people and of the eshu who traveled with them to the new world. Many of her works reside in the Black History Museum in Beaufort, and she is much in demand as a storyteller during that city's annual Gullah Festival held each May.

In the nearly 80 years since her Chrysalis, Cientilla has become one of the most respected lore keepers of the black people of the islands and a world-famous historian and storyteller. She has occasionally traveled to festivals to tell her tales, but she feels most comfortable in "the place she was put," as she says. So far as she knows, she is the oldest living changeling in the United States who has not succumbed to Banality. She plans to add at least another 20 years to that record before she even considers "going quietly."

While Cientilla knows a little something about almost every Art, she is practiced only in Wayfare and Soothsay. She is a master storyteller and no slouch at basketry and herbal remedies. Though



she used to be quite proud of her dancing, age has made her bones too brittle to risk more than a sedate step or two nowadays.

Image: Cientilla is a little over 5' 2" and barely 90 pounds. Her ebony face looks like a wrinkled apple, but her deep brown eyes shine with intelligence though framed with age lines. She wears her gray hair wound into a braid atop her head. Cientilla never had much patience with courtly garb, preferring instead to wear men's suspended trousers and shirt with an apron while shrimping and a plain house dress when attending church. In modern times, she likes wearing colorful caftans and African-inspired garb — so long as it's comfortable.

Roleplaying Hints: You guess you've lived long enough to know a thing or two. Most of the other eshu look up to you as the head of the community now, as if age made you any better suited to lead! You always thought leadership was kind of overrated anyway. People should rely on themselves and their neighbors. Of course, if these newfangled faeries who've started coming down your way looking for Glamour have their way, all the fae over 30 may get kicked out the door so the young'uns can take over. If they're so smart, how come they can't speak Gullah when it's an eshu tongue? Maybe you ain't ready to go just yet, leastwise not until you learn 'em a thing or two.

Story Connection: None, but she'd make a great character to harry player characters with as she punctures overinflated egos.

Duchy of the Triangle

Duke Murdoch of House Dougal "The Professor"

Camden Douglas was born and raised in Glasgow, Scotland. An attractive boy, if a little scatterbrained, he had no real direction in life. Nothing particularly interested him, and most days he was content to miss school. At the age of 10, just before the exams that would determine whether he went on to higher

education or trade school, Camden underwent a major personality shift. The year was 1969. Arriving through a trod from Arcadia, Murdoch of House Douglas sent Camden's essence to Arcadia and took the boy's place. Camden fell victim to a car crash that left his left shoulder crooked and slightly higher than his right. After he came out of the hospital, he was allowed to take his exams. It seemed to his teachers and parents that the accident had changed Camden in remarkable ways. He was still somewhat scatterbrained, but his academic abilities seemed to blossom. Where once he was a poor student at best, now he absorbed knowledge — especially anything to do with science and mechanics — as if starving for it. He passed the exams.

During the next few years, Murdoch concentrated on being Camden, on earning several degrees in mechanical engineering and theoretical sciences and in making contact with other sidhe of House Dougal who had returned from Arcadia. His greatest achievements were not for mortal consumption, however, but blended practical (and a few whimsical) items with Glamour to create wondrous treasures. An Eiluned duke named Meilge, who lived in America, heard of his designs and commissioned Murdoch to design and build a mask for him to hide terrible scars left from the Accordance Wars. Understanding how a terribly disfigured sidhe felt, Murdoch turned all his talent and abilities in the Arts to the task of constructing a mask to hide the duke's face. The final product was a masterpiece in alabaster and gold.

His designs were attracting attention in the mortal world as well, and he was asked to teach as a guest lecturer for a semester at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He accepted. Once in the Triangle area (encompassing Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill) with its prestigious universities, innovative medical facilities, research areas and plethora of arts, he became enchanted with the region. Before him lay a vast playground where he could tinker to his heart's delight — and even interact with mortals whose dreams paralleled his own.

Meilge had meanwhile become King of Willows. The



king heard that Murdoch was now living in North Carolina. He was delighted that the talented sidhe was within his own kingdom. Contacting Murdoch, Meilge helped the engineer apply for and receive permanent alien-resident status. Then, hoping to both reward the creator of his mask and to stabilize the area and offset the rowdy changelings of Appalachia, he created a new duchy and made Murdoch the Duke of the Triangle.

Murdoch has no idea that Meilge is anything but a wonderful, generous fellow. He loves his new home, especially his freehold located on a quiet residential street in Chapel Hill. He has attracted an assistant who helps him in his dream lab, a nocker named Langolier, and enjoys teaching almost as much as he enjoys putting around in his lab.

Most of his students just call him "the Professor," apparently some sort of reference to an old television show about a group of island dwellers. A few call him "Vulcan," a reference he does understand and actually appreciates; he has no quarrel with being compared to the smith of the gods. Though a popular lecturer, he tends to be a little scatterbrained sometimes, even walking out of the classroom in mid-lecture on occasion. Murdoch realizes that he sometimes enters his fae seeming during class; he just can't help it when he feels the Glamour that pours from his students as they realize dreams they've held since childhood and create amazing new things. Strangely, no mortals ever seem to connect him with the fae, though one overly bright student once asked if he was the son of Ether or some such.

While he isn't terribly predictable, the duke tries to hold court once a month for any Kithain to attend and speak with him concerning grievances, difficulties or requests. Such courts are almost always held sometime during the first week of the month (unless the duke forgets). He has recently become enamored of a comely satyr lass named Cissy. He wants to hold a dance at court and invite her to be his companion for the evening, but spending so much time in the lab has left him bereft of social skills. For now, he's going out of his way to be where she might be and sending her terrible love poetry — anonymously, of course.

Murdoch is well-versed in all the Arts of the Kithain, the better to utilize them in making his treasures. He is a master craftsman with a deft touch (almost the equal of nockers) in creating chimera. His skills run more toward engineering, smithing and computers than courtly abilities. He is currently taking a dance course so he'll be able to escort Cissy around the dance floor without treading on her hooves. As a loyal Scot, Murdoch learned to play the bagpipes, though the sounds he produces from them are closer to the moans of the damned than what anyone might identify as music.

Treasures: At any given time, Murdoch might have just about any strange treasure lying around in his lab. Whether it is useful or not is another story....

Image: Murdoch looks fairly nondescript in his mortal guise, with short brown hair and blue eyes. He is of average height and weight and wears trousers, white shirts and sports

jackets (with a pocket protector crammed with pens, measuring devices and such). His left shoulder is higher than his right, giving him a slightly hunched look. In his fae form, he fills out more, becoming noticeably more muscular. His hair lengthens and curls. Strangely, rather than court garb, his voile is a suit of leathers suitable for working at the forge. The duke speaks with a slight Scottish burr that is becoming mixed with a tiny bit of Southern cadence.

Roleplaying Hints: You enjoy living in the Triangle and having so many creative minds to speak and work with. You know your treasures and therefore are popular with many Kithain, and you enjoy the challenges they set you to make them wondrous items. Your one regret is that you haven't spent much time on the softer pursuits — learning courtly manners and how to woo a lady. You're determined to learn however. Nothing is beyond you when you really set your mind to it — except weaning Langolier, your assistant, away from the lab long enough to eat!

Story Connection: Murdoch created Meilge's mask. Should anyone question Meilge's apparent ability to lie with complete impunity, Murdoch might eventually figure out what's going on and explain the phenomenon. Though he attends the masquerade, he has gotten up the nerve to invite Cissy to accompany him and is far too concerned with entertaining her to notice anything strange going on with Meilge.

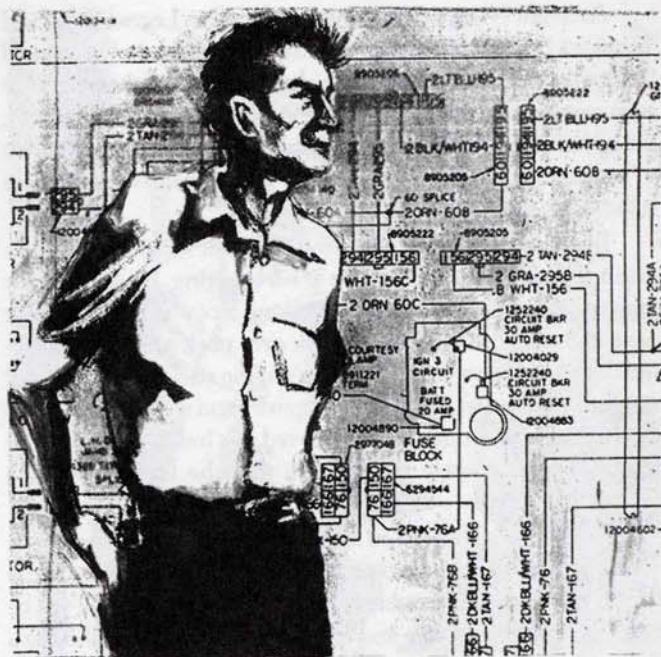
"Rooster" Langolier Duke Murdoch's Assistant

Richard Langley came of age in Charlotte, a city on the upswing and a vital part of the New South's move toward urbanization and sophistication. Despite the prosperity of the city, Langley's parents were blue-collar workers; his mother was a waitress, and his father a mechanic at a local gas station.

Richard grew up "fixin' stuff." As soon as he was old enough to hold a screwdriver, he started taking things apart to see how they worked and putting them back together again — often in unexpected ways. Soon, the Langley house was blessed with an alarm clock's with backward-running hands, the television in which the sound only worked when it was hooked up to the washing machine and a hair dryer that played a local FM station. Seeing his son's promise as a first-class mechanic, it wasn't long before the elder Langley took his boy to work with him.

His Chrysalis didn't seem to change Richard's obsession with tinkering much; it just made him more critical of flaws. Soon Richard was fixing cars his father couldn't repair and creating weird devices he hid in his "special" room in the garage. For his 16th birthday, his parents bought him his first fixer-upper car and Langolier (as he now called himself except when with his parents) discovered a lifelong passion — stock-car racing.

While he wasn't particularly interested in driving the stock cars, he was crazy to invent new and better ways of making them faster. He was soon a usual fixture around the Speedway, hanging around teams, talking with designers and watching the cars' performance at the track. He made himself thoroughly unpopular with his constant carping and



suggestions for improvements. He got the nickname Rooster because people said he was constantly crowing about his own abilities. Despite his obvious talent working with the cars, none of the teams would take him on because he was so unpleasant. One more kindly soul told him to look him up again when he grew some manners.

Angry because no one would give him a chance, Langolier got in his souped-up car and drove at random. Reaching Chapel Hill, the nocker realized he hadn't eaten in a while. He parked on Franklin Street (a minor miracle in itself) and went to a local eatery. There he met Murdoch, whose first words to him were, "What a great car! Did you do the customizing yourself?" A beautiful friendship was born.

Langolier and Murdoch spent several hours talking combustion engines and aerodynamics. Murdoch took the nocker to his apartment, and they poured over designs, photographs and various machine parts for half the night. Langolier had never felt better. Looking at his newfound friend, Langolier suddenly realized that the Professor was actually a sidhe and that he himself had slipped into his nocker mien. The discussion took a turn as they discussed chimerical improvements and crafting. Langolier wasn't that surprised when Murdoch asked if he wanted to move to Chapel Hill and become the sidhe's lab assistant. He was much more surprised to learn that Murdoch was the duke.

Despite his nocker penchant for sniping and finding fault, Langolier and Duke Murdoch get on quite well together. As the sidhe's assistant, he gets the chance to work on projects he would never have originated himself, and he occasionally gains Glamour from some of the duke's more ambitious designs. Still he has plenty of time to devote to his own work. Between them, Murdoch and Langolier have designed and constructed a stock-car engine they hope to have on the racing circuit next year. They haven't found a driver yet, but Langolier is certain one will turn up.

As might be expected, Langolier excels in Legerdemain and Wayfare. He has been toying with learning both Primal and Chicanery, but has not had time to learn more than the basics. He is an excellent mechanic and quite good at theoretical sciences, though he rarely displays such talents. Despite his claims that he's a "workingman," many of Langolier's chimerical creations are as beautiful as they are functional.

Image: Langolier's nickname "Rooster" may have had as much to do with his appearance as his bragging. He has a bright mop of orange-red hair that tops a long face with a prominent nose and thin lips. His small, dark eyes peek out from underneath tufted brows, and his Adam's apple sticks out like a ball caught in his throat. He is tall and gawky and wears oil-smeared clothes. In his fae mien, his skin is red, his hair is white and he always dresses smartly. Aside from that, he looks much the same.

Roleplaying Hints: You are as content as any nocker can be in an imperfect world. Of course, something always gums up the works, and your comfortable rapport with the duke may yet be destroyed by a pretty face and a pair of fur britches attached to a satyr minx named Cissy. Why can't things ever be perfect? Sometimes you get so angry you just have to destroy everything you've made so you can enjoy starting over. Of course, the duke doesn't understand that. Pity; In many other ways, he's the perfect companion.

Story Connection: None, unless he somehow comes into possession of Meilge's mask. He might be able to figure out some of Caliburn's powers, but the sword might not survive the investigation.

Duchy of Appalachia

Duchess Dianan

Born in Jonesborough, Tennessee, Dana McClelland spent her childhood exploring the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Even as a child she loved to read, delighting in fairy tales and romance stories. Whenever her mother caught her with a book, however, she always seemed to have something else Dana needed to do — shelling peas, hanging the washing, doing the dishes, sweeping the porch or darning socks. She often told her daughter that idle hands and a book on make-believe would lead her to a bad end.

Since there was no television at Dana's house, she visited her school friends on weekends. Attending a pajama party, she discovered that many of her friends also enjoyed telling and listening to stories — especially scary ones. Almost every scary tale featured a frail, but plucky heroine who was rescued from a fate worse than death by a tall, dark, mysterious stranger. She tried to picture herself in such roles and decided she'd want to be a little more self-sufficient. Why can't the heroine ever rescue herself? she wondered. Still, flawed stories were better than none, and even some of the sillier television programs piqued her interest.

As long as she could remember, each October Jonesborough filled to overflowing with people who set up colorful tents all

around the town. Dana's mother dismissed the Jonesborough National Storytelling Festival as a "terrible inconvenience for the locals so some bigwig could hoodwink a lot of people out of a bunch of money." She refused to let Dana attend and went out of her way to be rude to the strangers in town.

One year, however, her mother allowed her to sleep over at her friend Suzie's house during the festival. Suzie's mother and father gathered them all together and went to hear some of the stories being told. Dana was fascinated. She sat for hours drinking in the forbidden tales. Then a sprightly fellow named Jack told a story all about the Good Folk, speaking of the noble lords and ladies, so gallant aboard their fairy steeds, all clothed in light and dreams. As the rest of the audience sat spellbound, Dana stepped through a shimmering curtain that appeared before her and entered the land of the fae. Well, not really, but she touched the Dreaming as she underwent her Chrysalis.

At first it was wonderful, just like the story Jack was telling. Then it changed. She saw death and destruction and foul, blackened entities who chased her howling for her blood. She seemed to be lost on a dark, twisted path running and running as if her life depended on it. Somehow, she felt that her life did hang in the balance. If she could escape, she'd live. If not...

She recalled her name, Lady Dianan of House Fiona. She remembered leaving Arcadia and being attacked along the path back to Earth, where she incarnated as a baby. Nothing more was clear to her. Then she was falling, tangled in wild branches as the horrific things sprang for her throat. Reaching for a sword that wasn't there, she cried out for help. And she was answered. Stepping between her and the ravaging attackers rose a tall, dark figure. He swung a silvered blade at the beasts, and she heard them yelp. They scattered and disappeared into the shadows as if they had never been.

He turned and she beheld the face of Count Bjorno for the first time. *He's blue!* she thought, then shook her head ruefully, "Of course he's blue he's a troll," she mumbled under her breath.

As suddenly as her dream began, she found herself back in the mortal realm, listening to the applause as Jack bowed and left the stage. She could have sworn the storyteller winked at her as he tipped his hat to the audience. Her hand lay in the oversized palm of Billy Mjolner, chief tackle on the high school football team. Not even thinking what she was doing, she threw her arms around him and hugged him. Suzie looked at her strangely, and Billy turned bright red. Dana let go, marveling that he didn't look as he had just a few minutes before.

"We have to talk," Billy whispered to her once Suzie's attention was back on the next storyteller. He indicated a nearby store, then got up and walked away. A few minutes later, Dana claimed she needed a trip to the ladies room and went to the store. Billy was waiting for her.

In the next few hours, Dana learned of her fae heritage and that her mother was something called an Autumn Person. Billy told her he had been waiting for her for two years, but could never get close enough when her mother wasn't around or they weren't in school to help her remember who she was. Finally, they could be together as they had been once before.

Billy took her to a beautiful glade near town where she felt another upsurge of what she now knew was Glamour. An old shack rested beneath a tree just inside the glade. Billy pushed open the door just as Dana realized it wasn't a shack, but a tiny replica of a palace with miniature turrets and a red and silver banner flying from a pointed tower. Two regal silver lions guarded the red oak door. They bowed as she came near. Billy — no, Count Bjorno — held the door for her. "Welcome home, my lady," he said. It was just like a romance story.

In the years that followed, Dana and Billy graduated from high school. Dana got a job and moved out of her mother's house. Billy got a position with an ecological awareness group. Whatever time they had, they spent together. Though Count Bjorno always deferred to Lady Dianan, she realized her troll protector knew far more about being a changeling than she did. They exchanged knowledge, and her confidence grew as she learned more. She began to write romances, first stories then novels, under the pen name of Melissa Ardsley. She gained quite a following, and was able to quit her job and concentrate on her stories.

Eventually, they met other Kithain, some of whom were drawn to Jonesborough by the storytelling festival. One such visitor was Berin O'Donnell from Willow's Heart. When he reported back that a noble of House Fiona was living in eastern Tennessee guarded by a loyal troll follower, Meilge was overjoyed. At last, he had found a *sidhe* to rule over the rebellious and insular Kithain of the region. He immediately appointed her Duchess of Appalachia.

Though she does not remember living there before, Dianan has reclaimed Orchard Castle, which she built before the Shattering, as her freehold. She holds informal court there whenever other Kithain visit. She also hosts Nunnehi visitors who remember the oaths of friendship she once swore with them. Though many were displaced along with their people by the Trail of Tears, they do not forget their friends from times past. Someone she almost never sees is her mother. The woman's constant disapproval and cold Banality strip away everything Dianan cherishes about herself. She always makes certain Bjorno knows she's visiting her mother before she goes, just in case she leaves so Banalized she can't remember who she truly is.

Her chief sadness, however, concerns Count Bjorno (a title he held even before meeting her). Dana loves Billy and Dianan loves Bjorno, but the stubborn troll insists that he is her protector, claiming he but follows an oath he took upon himself long ago. He refuses to say more, though she knows there must be something else he isn't telling her. She could, of course, order him to tell her, but the proud troll would never forgive her. Sometimes, she wishes he'd be a little less noble and a little more attentive to her need for something more than his protection. She has started a book about the two of them hoping that a solution to her dilemma will present itself the way it always does to the heroines in her books.



Dianan has developed the Arts of Sovereign, Dream-Craft and Primal. She has not forgotten her vision of the things that chased her on her return from Arcadia, and she wants to be prepared should she ever meet them again. She writes very well and has a storyteller's eye for details. Dianan is a good listener and very adept at solving puzzles and problems. She often has dreams that prove to be metaphors for things that later happen.

Image: Dianan is 5' 4 " tall, weighs a little under 110 pounds and has light brown hair cut short and styled for easy care. Her eyes are a clear blue. She usually wears comfortable clothes. As her fae self, Dianan's hair becomes a cloud of gold-shot downy brown that surrounds her face with graceful curls. She wears a rich red gown with the silver lion as a decoration at hem and throat.

Roleplaying Hints: From your admittedly banal beginnings, you've come a long way. You see yourself as one of the new breed of Southern women — self-sufficient, talented, tough and determined, but no less feminine for that. You have always felt that Southern women, particularly mountain women, have been overlooked for too long, especially considering some of the difficulties and prejudice they labor under. You are certain that your mother would have been very different had she had the sort of chances you've had, to express herself rather than being beaten into repeating foolishness drummed into her head by her own parents. You won't be caught in that trap. You just wish that Bjorno would notice that you can take care of yourself. Maybe then he'd sweep you off your feet like the hero is supposed to do!

Story Connection: Dianan has no direct connection, but the Appalachian Mountains hold some strange areas within them, not least of which is a glade where a Lost One lives. The characters might meet Dianan if they traveled to Jonesborough in search of lost lore, such as the location of that glade.

COUNT BJORNO PROTECTOR OF DUCHESS DIANAN

This time around Count Bjorno was born as Billy Mjolner, a child of the great state of Tennessee. He'd known he'd be somewhere near the old freehold of Orchard Castle in Jonesborough, but he hadn't expected to be almost right on top of it. As was his wont, he became aware almost immediately of his true nature. This time things were very different. This time, for the first time in over 600 years, he had a chance to be reunited with his love, Dianan. The sidhe had returned from Arcadia, and his long wait was over.

Bjorno had reincarnated dozens of times since he had last seen her, but as soon as he laid eyes on Dana McClelland he knew she was Lady Dianan. Still, he couldn't push her into recognizing her true self too early. He had to give her time to grow up a little, to get used to her mortal body and to learn to deal with the world as a human before she faced it as a changeling. He had waited 600 years; he could wait a few more.

Bjorno in his guise as Billy Mjolner (and from his vantage point of being a whole year older) kept watch over Dana as she grew. Finally, tired of waiting for something to trigger her memories, he decided to approach her directly. Big mistake. He got within 20 feet of Dana's mother and knew why Dana had never undergone her Chrysalis. Her mother was an Autumn Person — and very strict about where Dana went, what she did and who she associated with. He searched for a way to get her alone for two years before the storytelling festival gave him his opportunity.

Jumping at the chance, he guided her through her Chrysalis, then brought her to the freehold they had shared so long ago, the palace he had kept all alone since he forced her back through the crumbling gateway to Arcadia on the night of the Shattering lest her fragile sidhe essence perish from intruding Banality.



Though she has since blossomed into her old self and even been made Duchess of Appalachia, Bjorno has never told Dianan what she no longer remembers from their time before. Thus, Dianan has no knowledge of the oaths her lover Count Bjorno swore and the geas he took upon himself in order to save her life so long ago. She does not recall the strange malady that afflicted her, eating away at her immortality. He took up the quest for the Cup of Dreams, said to be able to cure any illness, knowing that within the golden chalice lay her only hope.

He searched for three years, never able to come any closer to it. Finally, he entered the Far Dreaming and met there an old sidhe who told him the secret to finding the cup. Thus Bjorno made certain pledges to the Dreaming. First, he promised that he would forever guard that which the cup made whole again. Second, he swore that he would cast the cup back into the Dreaming once his love had taken a sip from its shining depths. Finally, he took upon himself the geas that he would forever forgo that which he most loved and, thus, gave up any right to claim Dianan's love for his own. The Dreaming made it known to him that any lapse in his promises would mean Dianan's death and the eradication of her faerie soul. Bjorno agreed.

He returned with the cup and gave it to her to drink from. As she sipped the water within it, her face took on color again, and she was made whole and filled with Glamour. As the Glamour suffused her, Bjorno smiled sadly, took the cup from her hands and rode back into the Dreaming with it. From that time on, he has always been with her, always guarded her, yet has never again spoken to her as a lover. He thinks she guessed that the cup came with a price, but he never wanted her to know the exact nature of it.

Since the Shattering when Bjorno returned Dianan to the Dreaming, a succession of tall, tow-headed boys have wasted long summer days and spent many cold winter nights near a waterfall in a glade where once lay a path to Arcadia. With the return of the sidhe, he swept out Orchard Castle and made it ready for her return. He hopes he can stand to be near her again without giving in to the love that never faltered through half a millennia.

Bjorno is a master of Primal, Wayfare and Soothsay. He also knows Sovereign, but never uses it himself. He considers Legerdemain to be little better than theft and wouldn't be caught dead using Chicanery. He is excellent with bow, sword, warhammer and lance, but prefers peaceful arts such as diplomacy to battle. He isn't above a good challenge, however.

Image: As Billy, Bjorno has pale white-blond hair and blue eyes. He is over six feet tall and 220 pounds, all of it muscle. He wears sensible clothes for tramping around in the woods taking soil samples and noting sightings of endangered species. In his fae form, he looks like the quintessential noble troll, with wavy white hair and blue skin that matches his eyes. Since swearing himself as Dianan's protector, he has worn the garb of House Fiona.

Roleplaying Hints: You have always loved Dianan, more than you love life itself. Once, so long ago you can barely recall what happiness was, the two of you were lovers. You never forgot her during all the long years and the many incarnations

you spent waiting for her return. Now she's been returned to you. You aren't sure you can stand it again. Always by her side, yet never telling her how you truly feel. She must never know why; it would shame her greatly and do nothing to break the geas. Somehow, you must endure and be thankful you once again have as much of her as you do.

Story Connection: Though not directly involved in the events of David's disappearance, Bjorno's knowledge of the Cup of Dreams and the quest he once made to find it may be sorely needed by those who wish to restore the High King. He could guide a group to the place where he last left the legendary cup. Though the treasure has, of course, moved on from there, at least it provides a starting place for a quest.

Hollis Burnette Mayor of Coal Town

Near Harlan, Kentucky, in a "holler" hidden far back in the mountains is a commoner enclave known as Coal Town. Once little more than a gathering of shacks inhabited by dissatisfied coal miners who wanted independence, it is now a thriving faerie town. It owes its existence to one person's vision — a nocker named Hollis Burnette.

Hollis was born in Harlan, Kentucky, in 1933. His father worked the coal, as did his father before him. The family lived in a company house and shopped in company stores. They were poor and undereducated and had no way out. Once you bought from the company store on time, you owed the company forever. Hollis went to work alongside his father when he turned 13. Working a coal seam — even when it was strip mining — was dirty, back-breaking, dangerous work.

Hollis dreamed of something better. Despite his exhaustion, he studied at night, reading from books borrowed from the public library. The more he learned, the more determined he became to escape the life his parents and neighbors lived. As books opened his mind, Hollis became aware of things beyond work and home. First music intruded on his awareness, then he discovered his aptitude for mechanics when one of the machines at work broke down. Rather than letting the bosses shut down the mining in that area and send everyone home without pay until it was fixed, Hollis tried to repair it. The boss was amazed that it worked.

Soon after that Hollis underwent his Chrysalis, remembering that he was actually a nocker, and understood why he was so good with machines. Without realizing it, Hollis had come to the attention of the bosses. A few weeks after he repaired the machine, they called him in and gave him a new job keeping the equipment in good shape. They also hired him for jobs outside work — fixing their cars and keeping their tools sharpened and ready. Soon he was making enough money to help his parents out of debt and to get an old car for himself.

Once mobile, Hollis was able to travel to nearby towns to find Glamour. On one of those trips, his car ran out of gas and had camped overnight. Searching for a comfortable place, he was drawn to a glen where he felt Glamour pouring into him. No one claimed the area, so he put his own mark on it. He

thought no more about it for a few weeks until the night his parents died in a fire while he was visiting a friend in another town. With his parents gone and no house, Hollis took to sleeping in his glen and discovered that he could gain Glamour from it whenever he slept there.

Over the next few months, he built a chimerical cottage for himself in the glen, which he now knew was a glade. Some way off, outside the enchanted glade, he built himself a real cabin where he lived much of the time. Within a year, Hollis spotted another nocker born into a local family. Then he located a boggan. Each new changeling he discovered became like a family member to him. Each was shown the glade, and many built cottages in it.

Before long, Hollis was the acknowledged leader of an enclave of changelings. In honor of the work most of their parents did, they named it Coal Town. Many Kithain in Coal Town — including Hollis — helped lead strikes against the company, demanding better wages, an end to exploitation and safer working conditions. Many of the Coal Town Kithain lost their fae identities to bludgeons in the hands of enforcers paid to force the workers back to work.

Seeing what was happening to his people, Hollis proposed that the Kithain withdraw from mining entirely and use their skills in other ways. Thus was born the Coal Town Handicraft Cooperative. Boggans,nockers, trolls, eshu and redcaps produced various folk arts and crafts. Hollis took the finely made quilts, statuettes made of coal, decorated brooms, baskets and furniture to the big city and placed them on consignment. Soon, the cooperative's reputation for fine work led to invitations to sell at craft shows and give demonstrations of authentic mountain crafts.

Many of the residents of Coal Town married and enchanted their mates. Whole families now live in the town. Hollis Burnette acts as their mayor. Several children have been born in Coal Town, and a surprising number of them are



commoner Kithain. Even after the sidhe's return, no nobles have ever shown a desire to live in Coal Town. Not that they wouldn't be welcome. During the Accordance War, Hollis counseled the town to remain neutral, saying that the fight had nothing to do with them. The townsfolk agreed.

When the accord between commoners and nobles was made and the Parliament of Dreams opened, the residents elected Hollis as their representative, a position he has filled for almost 30 years. The outspoken nocker has gained a reputation for honesty, toughness and the foulest mouth in the legislature. Nonetheless, with over 30 commoners looking to him as their leader and a major glade under their control, the mayor of the best-known faerie town in America has the ear of many representatives. Though not a noble, his position in Coal Town is the equivalent of many dukes and several nobles fear to offend him or his constituents.

Hollis is a gifted speaker and diplomat when he chooses to use those talents. Many see him as little more than a back-country blowhard with a foul mouth. They miss the message. Unlike mostnockers, Hollis doesn't complain just to carp; he always has a real gripe when he speaks his mind — and he almost always brings up issues that are troubling many commoners, not just those of Coal Town. He is very talented in Legerdemain and Soothsay and is rumored to know quite a bit of the Art of Sovereign as well. When not representing Coal Town in the Parliament of Dreams or acting as mayor, Hollis enjoys fixing cars and carving geehaws and whimmydiddles.

Image: Hollis has mouse-colored tufts of hair around his almost bald head. Similar graying tufts serve as eyebrows. His eyes are a startling green and he has the wiry, underfed pinched-face look of many Appalachians. In nocker form, his skin is red, his face is pasty, white and he wears well-made coats and trousers with swirl designs and a matching hat. He's still going bald. At 65 years old, Hollis believes he's the oldest changeling who hasn't given in to Banality in America (he's wrong, but he believes it).

Roleplaying Hints: You've been around a long time and seen a lot of things. The best thing you ever done was discover the glade that serves as home for Coal Town. Without it, you'd all probably still be slaving away in the company mines. You guess you done some good in parliament all them years too by making them snooty-faced, pointy-eared idjits listen. 'Course they don't like your cussin' none, but that there's their hard luck.

Story Connection: None, unless debate over the schism concerning the proper heir to the throne reaches the Parliament of Dreams. If it does, Hollis' hard-headed common sense could sway many commoners one way or another. He could form the nucleus for a new party that tries to do away with the monarchy altogether.

Gadiel of House Balor Lord of the Twisted Oak

Discovered hiding in Arcadia long after most of his house had been exiled, Gadiel of House Balor was thrust out into the mortal world — and stole the body of a 15-year-old computer wizard named Gerald Owens, resident of Oak Ridge, Tennes-

see. Though he remembers nothing of Arcadia itself, he does recall being exiled and burns for revenge against the Seelie who cast him out. In their absence, he's more than happy to vent his frustrations on any Seelie who annoys him.

A prince of House Balor, Gadiel found this new existence in which he was obeying parents too confining, so he murdered them. Reveling in their pain, he devoured the tainted Glamour they gave him through their deaths. Taking their cash, whatever valuables he could easily sell and his computer equipment, he drove away in his father's car after setting fire to the banal ranch-style house with its two-car garage.

Big cities don't have exclusive rights to drugs, crime and corruption, and Gadiel found them in Oak Ridge. Using the money he made from the sale of his parents' jewelry and goods, he set himself up in a small apartment and made contact with Oak Ridge's (and later, Knoxville's) criminal community. Selling drugs, he was able to locate needy souls whom he twisted to his own ends. As they became ever more addicted, Gadiel feasted on the Glamour their dark dreams and helplessness produced.

Over time he met other Kithain, dissatisfied like himself. They listened enthusiastically as he spoke against the Seelie and their outdated rule. Gradually, he found himself at the center of a group of several commoners and a few nobles who looked to him to express their anti-Seelie feelings. Most of them had no idea of Gadiel's preference for taint and corruption; they simply responded to his eloquence and commitment to the cause known as Modernism.

Gadiel's outspokenness attracted the attention of Count Oakleaf, Seelie ruler of the region. Oakleaf summoned Gadiel to attend him at his court. Gadiel did so. Dressing in the most sumptuous court garb he could muster, he sauntered into the count's freehold. Once there, he made an impassioned speech to the count concerning the nobles' responsibility to "lead" the commoners and listen to their grievances. The count seemed mollified. He even invited Gadiel to stay for a time and talk at



length concerning his views. Gadiel used the time to discover that the count lived alone except for two servants.

Having won the count's confidence, he attacked while the Seelie lord slept. Overpowering the count, Gadiel forced him through the trod attached to the count's freehold and carried him into the Dreaming. Having come more recently from Arcadia, Gadiel was more familiar with it than the count. Taking the unfortunate Seelie into the Far Dreaming, Gadiel abandoned him there, retracing his steps to the freehold. Though he waited for weeks, the count never returned.

Gadiel claimed the freehold as his own, renaming it Twisted Oak for the gnarled tree that guarded the approach to the entryway. He co-opted the count's servants and invited his cronies to pay court to him there. Thus, a motley of Unseelie gained control of the Oak Ridge area.

His group made contact with other like-minded Kithain among the Modernists and made their views known to the Parliament of Dreams. Gadiel was not content with this moderate approach to ridding the world of the hated Seelie. He tested his followers one by one to discover how far they were willing to go. Many surprised him with their commitment to overthrowing the Seelie. To this inner circle, Gadiel told his true intentions — he wanted to eradicate the Seelie and cleanse the world of their influence. To do so, he and his followers had to learn to wield Banality as the manifestation of modern Glamour. Calling themselves the Children of Annihilation, they even now search for a weapon they can use to destroy the Seelie forever.

Meanwhile, those followers who could not stomach his more radical leanings continue as members of the Modernists. So far as they know, Gadiel remains a Modernist as well. The commoners in the area look to Gadiel as one of the few nobles who take the commoners side against other nobles. Both Modernist and Annihilist commoners bring dozens of commoner childlings to Gadiel at Twisted Oak each year so that he can train them. Those who entrust these young Kithain to him might be horrified at what he teaches them — especially that he takes promising childlings along when he kills someone who has crossed him. Should the childling balk at helping or talk about it afterward, the young changeling disappears — supposedly sent elsewhere for more compatible fostering. The dirt-floored cellar of Twisted Oak is pocked with the graves of such "unbiddable" children.

Through his criminal contacts in Knoxville, Gadiel has contacted Meilge and been granted the right to his freehold by the King of Willows. Meilge ostensibly supports the Annihilists, though in actuality, neither he nor Gadiel have any intention of sharing real power with commoners. Gadiel knows enough about Meilge to understand he should not share all his plans with the king. Instead, he intends to keep most of his power secret until the time comes to claim the High Kingship for himself — in a world bereft of the Seelie and powered by Banality.

Needless to say, Gadiel is mad by most people's standards. As his Balor deformity is homicidal mania, that isn't too surprising. What is scary is how sane he seems while committing the most heinous crimes.



Gadiel's most accomplished Arts are Dream-Craft, Chronos and Soothsay. He is a dazzling apologist for the Unseelie viewpoint, and has an inherent understanding of the political implications of events. Personally appealing and charismatic, he excels in making others feel important and appearing to agree with their opinions. He is an excellent swordsman and has won many duels.

Image: Standing just a shade over 5' 9" and of average weight, Gadiel's most attractive feature is his large, dark-lashed pale-blue eyes. Seeming to hold within them both intelligence and innocence, his incredible eyes are framed by shoulder-length Brunette hair. His preference in clothes runs to trousers and tunics or courtly garb in deep purples.

Roleplaying Hints: You know now why you've been returned to Earth — to lead the Unseelie to glorious victory over the hated Seelie. Those Unseelie who came before you held too many scruples and too great a fear of Banality. You must court Banality and find a weapon that will smash the Seelie forever. You don't believe that any Seelie part of you still exists; if it does, you will find a way to tear it out of yourself just as you'll annihilate the weakling side of all the other Kithain. So you have to commit a few murders to accomplish your goal... well, we all have to make some sacrifices for a better tomorrow.

Story Connection: Meilge might eventually tire of having David moved around from place to place, and have him sent to Gadiel for a more final solution.

Other Appalachian Kithain

Countess Toireasa of Balsam

Sometimes called the Lady of the Black Dome, Countess Toireasa of House Fiona holds a freehold within an abandoned campsite near the top of Mount Mitchell in North Carolina. An accomplished painter, the Countess of Balsam welcomes

both nobles and commoners to her mountain court famous for its hospitality. Toireasa has a treaty with the local Nunnehi who live in a nearby village. The treaty is sealed through the exchange of fosterlings, so that each may learn the customs of the other. Toireasa is profiled in **Rage Across Appalachia**, a sourcebook for **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**.

The High Castle Crafters

Within an ancient mountain aerie near London, Kentucky live a motley of Kithain known as the High Castle Crafters. Two noble lovers, Arienh of House Fiona and Cianan of House Liam, live and work with a pooka named Fletcher, a boggan known as Lairdie and a redcap biker named Harley. The motley produce crafts and perform at area craft shows. Like the Countess Toireasa, the High Castle Crafters honor pledges made to the Nunnehi of the mountains by the freehold's original inhabitant, Lord Tamlin. Tamlin himself is a Lost One who resides in an enchanted glen near his old castle. On certain nights, the sound of his fiddle can be heard wafting on the mountain winds. More on the High Castle Crafters can be found in **Freeholds and Hidden Glens**.

Duchy of Blue Grasses Duke Araby ap Gwydion

Aaron Penworthy III was born to excess. His father and mother were owners of the prestigious Rose Garland Stables in Lexington, Kentucky, famous for breeding thoroughbred horses. Set in bluegrass country, the lavish estate holds an even more important site than the stables, though few know of its existence. In a small wooded area just off the near pasture lies a tiny stone grotto set near a trickling stream. The grotto is the entryway to a freehold set into a series of hillside caverns that were excavated to accommodate the faerie abode.

Rediscovered during the Accordance War, when it served as a place of refuge for nobles in the sidhe army, the freehold was given

to Aaron's mother, Sarah (Lady Sareffria of Gwydion) when she married Aaron Penworthy Jr., mortal owner of the land. Lady Sareffria was named the Duchess of Blue Grasses and has held the freehold since the end of the war.

Seventeen years later, the duchess gave birth to a child who harbored the faerie essence of one of her distant cousins, Araby ap Gwydion. Though she didn't know his exact identity until his Chrysalis, she suspected she would be gifted with raising another Gwydion.

Because Lady Sareffria knew she was raising a future duke (for her child would naturally be her heir), she tried to give him all the very best, everything that a noble should have. His father just spoiled him rotten. As a child, Aaron was a brat — demanding and self-centered and likely to throw a tantrum whenever his wishes were not instantly gratified. Believing he would outgrow this stage if allowed to enter his Chrysalis, the duchess pushed her son unmercifully, hauling him to every gallery, play, concert and dance recital in Lexington. His father introduced him to the joys of riding to the hunt and of breeding champions.

Despite his mother's hopes, Aaron's Chrysalis did not occur until he was almost 16 years old. By that time, the duchess was slipping into Banality and hardly cared that Aaron seemed just as spoiled as a teenager as he had been as a child. She stepped down in his favor so long as he agreed to retain her faithful seneschal Garvey. Aaron accepted and became Duke Araby.

The young duke's only interest was in breeding horses, racing and riding to the hunt. He enjoyed posturing at court and holding balls and parties, but paid little attention to the business of rulership. Kithain within the Duchy of Blue Grasses whispered among themselves, wondering if Araby could really be of House Gwydion, a house famed for its leaders. Other Gwydion nobles, hearing of Araby's poor rulership, considered him an embarrassment and had spoken of deposing him.

That he remains duke is due partly to a recent improvement in his rule of his duchy and partly to his success at breeding faerie steeds, which are much in demand. Inquiries suggest that the better rulership comes from Garvey, but the steeds are truly Araby's triumph. Still, most nobles are disdainful of the popinjay puppy who supposedly rules in Lexington.

Many Kithain believe that the duchy would be ruled more wisely by a vigilante changeling who has been battling corrupt Unseelie and ridding the area of a group of hunters — Dauntain who have been preying upon the Kithain of the duchy. The duke pays no attention to the reports of such foes, but the masked rider who calls himself Lord Justice deals with the problems the duke fails to heed. Justice has become a hero while the duke fritters away his time with frivolous pastimes. Even King Meilge has little patience with the young duke, considering him too big a fool to even be of use in Meilge's schemes.

Only Garvey knows that Lord Justice is the duke. While the wilder noble pretends to be ineffective, he secretly unmask the ills in the duchy and within the Kingdom of Willows. Araby was once known as Ardain ap Gwydion, one of Gwydion's best and most courageous knights. As Ardain, he knew Meilge when the Eiluned duke held the freehold of Summerstree before the Shattering. Even then, he knew of Meilge's cruelty and deceit



and declared himself Meilge's enemy. Now that he has returned to Earth, he seeks to prove that Meilge is unworthy to rule Willows. He cannot do so openly, however, nor can he obviously rise against his overlord. Thus, the disguise.

While Meilge dismisses him and his own people laugh behind his back, Araby watches and gathers information. He has already rooted out a nest of Meilge's drug dealers setting up shop in Lexington. Now he hopes that he can learn enough to bring the king to his knees and rescue Willows from the corruption that gnaws at its heart.

Araby is an expert rider and schooled in all the arts of warfare. He is as well-versed in stealth and intrigue as he is in courtly manners. The duke relies upon his mastery of Primal and Wayfare to succeed in his disguise as Lord Justice. He is also knowledgeable concerning Sovereign and Soothsay, but to a much lesser extent than his other Arts.

Image: Duke Araby is about 5' 10" tall, very slender and almost effete. He has very short reddish blond hair and brown eyes. He is never dressed in anything but the finest, most fashionable clothes. He always wears a large ruby ring given to him by his mortal father. As Lord Justice, he retains his height but seems more muscular. His manner is forthright and his movements sure and confident. Justice has longer hair and a well-trimmed mustache and beard, all blue-black. His eyes are such a dark brown they appear almost black. Lord Justice dresses all in black with chimerical black armor and sword. He wears a half-mask that conceals his identity. His usual mount is a black faerie steed with a white diamond on its forehead.

Roleplaying Hints: You were once the selfish, spoiled child everyone thinks you still are. You must keep up the pretense even though you haven't been such an idiot since you were 16 years old. You remember the havoc King Meilge once caused before the Shattering and vaguely recall that he was associated with several atrocities in Arcadia that helped earn Eiluned's exile. Somehow, you must expose him. To do so, however, you must lead a double life — or is that a triple life? Young heir to a wealthy Lexington family who still lives with mother and father on the estate, ineffectual and foolish duke ruling from a freehold he obviously doesn't deserve and vigilante good guy riding by night from a secret hideout to right wrongs and serve justice. Sometimes it's hard to keep all your roles straight. You're just thankful you have Garvey to cover for you when needed.

Story Connection: Though there is no direct connection, Araby might be brought in to help expose Meilge. He would certainly welcome the opportunity to expose the king as a miscreant, to end his masquerade and prove to the rest of his house that he isn't the idiot he pretends to be.

Garvey Seneschal of Blue Grasses

The Garvey family has lived in the Lexington region for as long as any of them can remember — and the boggan family has a long memory. In fact, the family history stretches back to before the Shattering, when their patriarch traveled to "the Summerlands" with his Gwydion lord. The original Garvey was the personal



servant and confidant of Duke Eliwylod ap Gwydion and swore an oath to his sidhe lord that members of his family would always be in the retinue of Gwydion's descendants. The Dreaming has made certain that the oath is kept.

Garvey was so busy bustling everyone else through the closing gates during the Shattering that he had no time to go himself. Instead, he closed off most of the freehold and made provisions to wait for House Gwydion's return — an event he expected to happen imminently, just as soon as his lord managed to overcome Banality, which shouldn't take too long, he believed.

Garvey produced an heir to keep his oath. That heir produced another heir, and the second heir produced a third. Down through the centuries, at least one boggan was born into the family each generation. Each heir took the name of his illustrious ancestor and "held the fort for the falcon." Each Garvey used the freehold and maintained it, making certain it was ready for the return of the sidhe lords. By the time a couple of centuries had gone by, the Garveys had become accustomed to ruling unofficially over the other Kithain of the region. Still, the most that the loyal boggan clan would claim was the title of seneschal.

Six hundred years after the sidhe left Earth, they returned. A year or so later, knights of House Gwydion showed up at the freehold, looking for shelter from a mob of commoners. As deeply shocked as a boggan could ever be, Garvey opened the freehold to them and explained the role his family had fulfilled for centuries. Lady Sareffria fell in love with the freehold and liked what she saw of the mortal who owned the land on which it rested. She put in her claim for the freehold should she survive the war. She did survive, and Garvey had to deal with her return and the sidhe's resumption of power in the land.

He swallowed his resentment and welcomed her home. For the most part the duchess allowed Garvey to continue handling the everyday affairs of the duchy, so he wasn't too upset. As the years passed, he even got used to having a noble around. Then she had a child. Garvey was now quite old; he'd been a grump for some

time and was feeling both his years and the weight of Banality. The child changed all that.

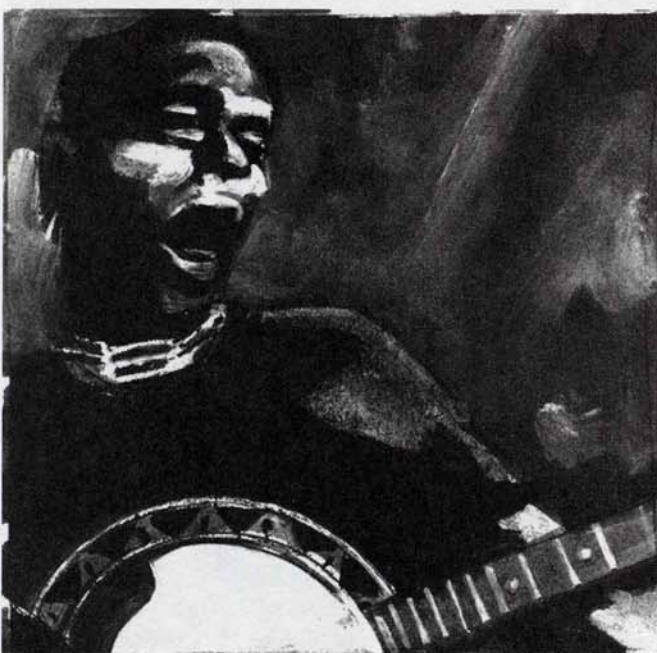
An enchanting baby, Aaron won Garvey's heart from the first. Though the child was spoiled rotten during his earliest years, Garvey undertook the boy's real education, teaching him about honor and bravery and how to rule fairly — all those qualities House Gwydion had once demanded from their people. Garvey also taught him how to ride, since the boggan's job at the ranch was as a trainer and exercise jockey.

Both the duchess and Garvey recognized that the boy must be fae, but he didn't enter his Chrysalis no matter how much they tried to throw Glamour his way to trigger it. Just as Garvey thought the boy was a lost cause, the young sidhe discovered his fae nature. Despite what others thought of him, the young duke epitomized the old Gwydion ideals of chivalry and honor — most of it due to Garvey's training.

The duke began his charade of being an inept wastrel, trusting Garvey to oversee those parts of his duchy he could not be seen protecting. Further, Garvey became the boy's confidant, the only person who knows the duke's identity as Lord Justice. Being given such responsibility and trust (not to mention all the excitement) has revitalized the old grump. Though he is now almost 50, he feels just like a kid again. He can't wait to see if Duke Araby succeeds in his goal to bring down King Meilge and cleanse the kingdom of corruption. He just hopes it won't take another 50 years.

Garvey prides himself on his knowledge of Primal and Soothsay. He is also a master of the Art of Sovereign (as many of his relatives were before him). The boggan knows almost everything there is to know about being a seneschal in a noble household. He rides as though born on a horse and is no slouch with a sword. In many ways, Garvey is quite unlike what most people think of as "bogganlike." He likes it that way. If other Kithain are focusing on his strangeness, they aren't looking too closely at the duke.

Image: Though short like most boggans, Garvey is fairly slender — the result of weight training to keep within the limits



for jockeys. As a grump, his face is lined with wrinkles, offset by bushy graying eyebrows. His once-red hair has also grayed and frames his face in a puffy halo. Garvey always dresses well, but simply. When acting as Lord Justice's manservant, Garvey enjoys wearing his all-black outfit and black half-mask.

Roleplaying Hints: Your part in the Dreaming is to play the faithful sidekick to the hero. While you can hold your own in battle, you are most valuable as an administrator and a foil to the "foolishness" of the duke. Helping your liege lord right wrongs and defeat ne'er-do-wells is certainly exciting too. You haven't felt this young in years. Of course, it isn't all a bed of roses. You can already hear the screams of annoyance when your daughter learns she has to change her name to Garvey.

Story Connection: Garvey is the fae to talk to if anyone needs to acquire a faerie steed, the only horses truly capable of negotiating the Dreaming. Also, as Lord Justice's helper, he is privy to certain information regarding Meilge.

Other Kithain of the Area

Django Hillrunner

Leader and drummer for the Cloudburst Black and Bluegrass band, a motley of Unseelie rebels, Django is an eshu of mixed black and Native American origin. The band specializes in a raucous fusion of bluegrass and African tribal rhythms seeded with the excitement of hard-driving Rock'n'Roll. They openly flaunt their opposition to the Seelie Court of Appalachia, calling it a pack of power-hungry posturers who lord it over the region's true majority population, the commoners. Singing songs of defiance and rage, the Cloudburst Band usually manages to spark mini-riots powered by Glamour wherever they perform.

Django is an outspoken supporter of the Ranters and has participated in some of that group's less-violent revels. While certain groups among the Seelie have attempted to silence Django and his band or capture them between engagements, Django's excellent relations with his cousins, the Nunnehi, make such attempts difficult.

Jiruna

Matriarch to a settlement of sluagh in western Kentucky, Jiruna found and developed their freehold — a series of isolated caverns leading off from the famous Mammoth Caves. The sluagh of the Freehold of the Mammoth are allied to no one but their enigmatic matriarch. Since Jiruna went deaf shortly after her birth, she does not suffer from the sluagh aversion to loud noises, but she is very badly affected by bright light. She has taught other members of the community sign language, which they prefer to speech. The sluagh have constructed abodes similar to those used by the Pueblo cliff dwellers, and occasionally sell their red and black decorated pottery in craft shops in Elizabethtown.

A few other Kithain know of the freehold's existence and venture there to learn secrets that are known no where else in Concordia. One such customer is Kerry Dunwood, acting Duchess of the Ozarks. The commoner noble relies on Jiruna's intelligence reports to keep her informed of goings-on throughout Willows.



Some say Jiruna dreams the secrets as compensation for her deafness; others say that she may be deaf, but she has ears everywhere. No secret is safe if Jiruna wants to know it.

Duchy of Graceland

Duke Florian of House Ailil

His first memory was of the flag proudly displayed on the wall of his room and the matching blanket used to cover his tiny bed. The vibrant colors and evocative design of the crossed stars awoke in him a feeling of belonging and pride. Jon-Joe learned at his daddy's knee all about the cruel soldiers who savaged and murdered women and children, stole their land and food, took everything of value they had, then burned what was left behind them as they ravaged the land. By the time he could form words into sentences Jon-Joe knew that the damn Yankees had raped his land and his people, forced them to live according to laws that had no meaning to them and crushed them when they tried to gain their independence. Still were doing it, for that matter.

A good Southern boy, Jon-Joe grew up eating Southern food and listening to Southern music — especially that of the King, Elvis Presley. Though Elvis died before Jon-Joe was even born, his legend loomed large over Memphis, Tennessee, and Jon-Joe willingly surrendered to the magic of the King of Rock'n'Roll.

Undergoing his Chrysalis in a blues joint off Beale Street, Duke Florian of House Ailil didn't change too much from his mortal life as Jon-Joe Somers, but he fully embraced his fae heritage. Where once he had been a normal if chauvinistic and angry teenager coming of age in the capital of the Delta Blues, Florian discovered that he was now entitled to rule that region. Since his Chrysalis drew every Kithain from miles around, he had little trouble identifying who it was he was to rule. Most were commoners and several were black. While Jon-Joe's

father disapproved of "coloreds mixin' with white folk," Jon-Joe had gone to school and played on teams with blacks and had no problem with them. His bigotry was reserved for Northerners, not fellow Southerners of a darker hue.

It didn't take him long to discover that the western part of Tennessee was lumped in with the Duchy of Appalachia and to assert his independence. He wasn't surprised to find out that once again the South was in thrall to a High King who ruled from his Northern stronghold. Further, his own house of Ailil was considered to be a lesser house, somehow tainted so far as the others were concerned. Hoping the Southern king Meilge would be reasonable and sympathetic to his claim, Florian declared his region's independence. Meilge answered that western Tennessee was still a part of his kingdom, but that Florian could be the duke of the region if he was able to locate a suitable freehold for court functions.

Overjoyed, Florian quartered the city and began hunting for a suitable spot. Several spots held promise, but none seemed strong enough for a ducal freehold. The mid-August heat was brutal, and he only realized after several minutes within their midst that he had stumbled into an enormous crowd of people. He felt the tingle of Glamour as he looked around, for the first time aware of his surroundings. He found himself standing just outside the gates of Graceland on the anniversary of Elvis' death. Potent Glamour poured from those assembled to remember the King. Florian had found his freehold.

It didn't take him long to enchant several members of the staff and construct a secret entrance into areas of the mansion that the public doesn't visit. The Duchy of Graceland was born.

Florian is fanatically anti-Northern, and that includes wanting to overthrow the High King and split Concordia into different regions. He has recruited a number of like-minded Kithain who form the inner council of the secret society known as the Southern Cross. While he pretends to give fealty to Meilge, Florian tries to make his duchy as autonomous as



possible and to expand its borders — all with an eye to eventually becoming king of the Southern fae himself.

He encourages every project in Memphis that brings more Glamour to the city. The refurbishment of Beale Street, support for the National Civil Rights Museum that preserves the balcony where the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. was killed, and promoting more tourism to Graceland for the Glamour it brings to his court are just a few of the projects he supports. Florian also encourages musicians of every type — not just blues players, but country-western and rock artists, Southern boogie bands, folk purists, New Wave minstrels, goth-punkers and aficionados of more conservative music such as musical theater and opera produce the styles he wants Memphis to enjoy. He is very annoyed whenever bands from the North are scheduled to play in Memphis and boycotts such concerts.

While he is well-loved by his subjects, Kithain traveling from other areas (Northerners being “damn Yankees,” Mid-westerners the “lapdogs of the damn Yankees” and Westerners the “dumb wannabee damn Yankees”) find a less-than-warm welcome and southern hospitality in the Duchy of Graceland.

Florian is a marvelous musician himself, able to play several instruments. He is quite skilled in networking — especially with his support of the musical arts. His mastery of Sovereign is evident at court, as is his skill in Soothsay. The duke excels at planning raids carried out by the rank and file members of the Southern Cross against Northern Kithain and their sympathizers. For a member of House Ailil, he is very straightforward, with a knack for praising his underlings that wins him their unswerving loyalty.

Image: In his human mien Florian looks not unlike a young Elvis. He has dark, slightly wavy hair and large brown eyes. His full lips crook into the half-smile half-sneer the King made famous. As a fae, his face lengthens slightly, his hair becomes a wild jumble of dark curls, and he always wears deep midnight blue — right down to the suede shoes he affects whenever he holds court.

Roleplaying Hints: You hide behind being a big Elvis fan, even going so far as to wear blue suede shoes (tacky, but effective in getting your point across). As the leader of the Southern Cross you are far more than what you seem to be. It's time all the Kithain realized how downtrodden Southerners of all colors are by the power structure of the North. If they think it's obvious in mortal life, they ought to understand the control the Northern king holds over the disenfranchised Southern changelings. Color, social standing, or kith — these don't matter. The true battle is to kick the Yankee exploiters out of the South once and for all and to declare it the newly revitalized Kingdom of Dixie.

Story Connection: Florian is thrilled to hear that David has disappeared. He doesn't care who's to blame: he just steps up his campaign of terror to bring about decentralization. If David fell into his clutches, the Ailil lord might hold him hostage to demand that the North allow a peaceful separation of the Southern states from the rest of Concordia.

Calvert

Calvert is living proof that Florian holds no prejudice due to skin color or kith. He's the duke's bodyguard and chief terrorist. The wilder redcap remembers little of his former life except poverty — too little to eat and too many men visiting his mama. He never had nice clothes, and the kids teased him so much he finally dropped out of school. Until he was almost 11, he had no idea what being called a “moonpie” meant. He just knew he wasn't as dark as most of the black kids in town or white enough to “pass.”

To earn money, Calvert took to dancing and singing in the street. It only took a week or so for him to realize that the people didn't want to see the “king” he knew best, B.B. King; they wanted to see him sing Elvis songs. Thus was born “the Black Elvis.” Even imitating the King wasn't enough to consistently put food on the table, and he took to robbing tourists who looked like they had a lot of money and no backbone. First he used an old knife, then a gun.

His second career was more lucrative than his first until the night he tried to rob a young man who was well-dressed and looked a little like Elvis. Assuming the guy was a tourist, he backed him into an alley and demanded his money. Duke Florian had no intention of giving the mulatto his money. He did hand over a wad of folded bills in an ornate gold clip, thus enchanting the robber so he could deal with him. To his surprise (and Calvert's), the robber dropped the gun and fell to the ground, exploding with Glamour as he underwent his Chrysalis.

Seeing the newfound changeling's kith — redcap — Florian wasn't surprised to find him working as a shake down artist. When Calvert awakened from the Dream Dance, Florian made him a proposition: In return for Calvert's loyalty, the duke would teach him about being a changeling. A few local redcaps would help Calvert adjust. Seeing that he had nothing to lose, Calvert accepted.



He showed a natural aptitude for martial and security skills, becoming a deadly fighter within two years. Florian made Calvert his personal bodyguard and recruited him into the Southern Cross. From the get-go, Calvert excelled in hit-and-run raids, dross thefts and chimerical cross burnings in front of various freeholds, all without getting caught. He is now the premier terrorist of the society and much envied and admired by lesser redcaps in the duchy. He fully agrees with Florian's assessment of the South's position relative to the Northern Kithain and wholly agrees that decentralization and a new king are called for to remedy the problem. He just thinks that new king ought to be himself. After all, noble rule shouldn't be taken as a foregone conclusion any more than he would accept that Northern rule was preordained.

Calvert is quite practiced in Chicanery and Legerdemain. He's learning more about Primal all the time. From contacts among the Shadow Court, Calvert has also learned the Art of Contempt (see **The Shadow Court** for details on this Art). While he's a bully whose talents lie in causing pain and breaking bones, he's also a master of finesse, slipping in and out of places without being noticed. When able to do so, Calvert loves dancing and singing as the Black Elvis — the finest Elvis impersonator in Memphis. Because he is usually quiet, most people make the mistake of thinking Calvert isn't overly bright. Their mistake...and they only get one.

Image: Calvert has taken steps to overcome his light brown skin and curly black hair to look as much like Elvis (long sideburns, sunglasses, white suit and gold belt) as possible whenever he performs. When not "on," he looks like a fairly successful young man — perhaps a manager/trainee at McDonalds or some such. As a redcap, Calvert has gray skin and an overly large mouth filled with yellow teeth. His very anonymity as a redcap works in his favor, making it hard for others to pick him out from a gang of his kith.

Roleplaying Hints: You always felt the difference between the haves and the have-nots. Funny how it's always the have-nots who notice that inequity. Duke Florian showed you how to hit back. Now you're a leader in the Southern Cross. Someday, you'll even show the duke what true equality means when you take his place as ruler of the Kingdom of Dixie. Until then, you'll play along and build your own power base among the commoners in the duchy.

Story Connection: Those searching for David might meet up with Calvert and a cadre of terrorists just about anywhere, since they travel as far as they need to when "delivering a message" for the Southern Cross. Depending on their approach, Calvert might help a group locate David (in return for several concessions) or he might try to find the High King to kill him as a "warning" to other Northerners.

Duchy of the Ozarks

Kerry Dunwood

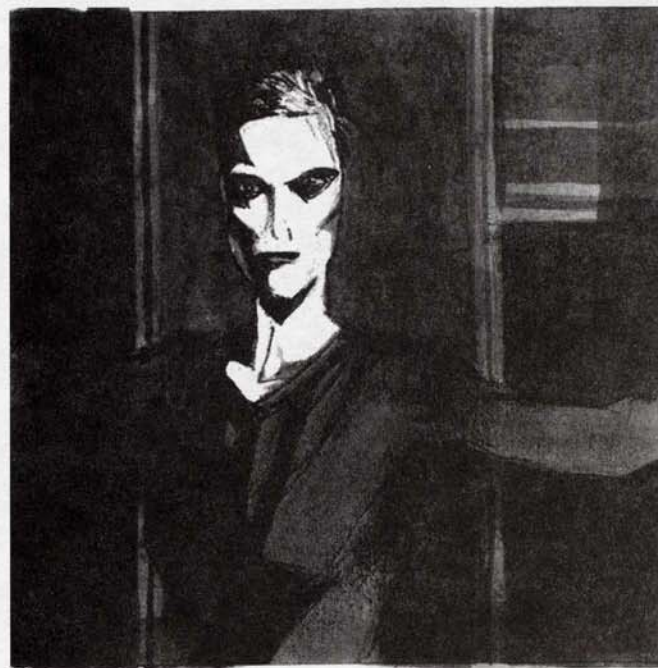
Born and raised in Little Rock, Arkansas, Kerry aspired to a career as a gymnast. Her agility, small stature and flexibility were decided assets, and she greatly enjoyed choreographing

routines in a partially darkened, quiet arena late at night or in the early morning hours. She was able to perform extremely difficult maneuvers, practically tying herself in knots; no other gymnast was half as flexible as Kerry. Problems arose to kill her dream, however. For one, she simply couldn't perform well under the brightly lit conditions of a competition. Even worse, whenever her floor exercise music (or anyone else's for that matter) was played through the loudspeakers in the arena, she literally felt as if she'd been deafened and struck by a car-sized hammer. Holding her ears, which she was sure must be bleeding from the assault, she would run from the arena as quickly as possible. She couldn't believe that other people could tolerate such a cacophony.

A few years later, she underwent her Chrysalis. By then, she'd given up her Olympic dreams and begun studying politics, though she was certain her breathy, whispery voice would never be heard over more assertive people. When she became a sluagh, she knew she'd just never fit in as a representative either. Capitalizing on her natural grace and fluidity, she danced instead. Weaving together ballet, modern dance and elements from performance art, Kerry was much in demand among the "cool" crowd in Little Rock — so long as the music wasn't too loud and people agreed beforehand not to applaud. That's where she first met Brendan.

After one of her performances, a bouquet of black roses was delivered to her dressing room (well, the ladies room that she was using as a dressing room). Intrigued by the card, she went to have a drink with the man who had sent them and found herself talking with Brendan MacLiam, Duke of the Ozarks. He proved to be charming company and asked if she would come help him form a council to run the duchy — a council composed of both commoners and nobles. Remembering her desire to enter politics, she agreed.

Once on the council, she blossomed. Though her voice was soft, her ideas were received with respect and eagerness.



The Duchy of the Ozarks was a small part, even an unimportant and out-of-touch part, of the Kingdom of Willows. Brendan and his council intended to reform the basic system under which commoners bowed to nobles and lesser houses bent to those who considered themselves better.

Though they advocated peaceful means such as symposiums, lobbying in the Parliament of Dreams and petitioning for recognition of their duchy as a commonwealth, Meilge felt threatened by Duke Brendan's popularity and deposed him, citing his disloyalty as the reason for his dismissal. Rather than bothering to send a replacement, Meilge made a move he thought would prove commoners incapable of ruling themselves — he appointed Kerry the new duchess. He believed that the other commoners would balk at having a sluagh govern them; he had no idea Kerry was already the elected leader of the Commonwealth Council, whose decisions were almost always ratified by the duke.

Kerry has served as the Duchess of the Ozarks for three years. She pays Jiruna and her sluagh spy network to keep her informed on important matters that she wouldn't otherwise hear about. Meilge pays no attention to the Arkansas duchy, nor do most of the other noble Kithain of the kingdom. For all intents and purposes, the Duchy of the Ozarks is out of the loop. The changelings there don't mind if others think they are backward; while everyone's looking the other way, they're building up to a second American Revolution, and Kerry's right out front, quietly leading them.

Despite Meilge's command that Brendan be exiled, Kerry shelters the former duke. She checks with him before making important decisions, knowing that it was originally Brendan who made the commonwealth possible. Someday, she hopes that the duchy will be able to declare itself a commonwealth for real and that she can welcome Brendan back as a valuable member of the community, if not as a duke anymore. She keeps the title herself for now only because dispensing with it would bring unwanted attention to her and might prompt Meilge to appoint some officious nitwit in her place.

Kerry is a natural in the political arena. Even whispering, she is persuasive and believable. Her agility makes her a wonderful dancer, and her manual dexterity has led her to develop her skills in archery. She still works out, doing gymnastics exercises, but her wilder's body is not as used to the discipline any more. She is a whiz at Legerdemain and delights in using Wayfare.

Image: Only 4' 8" tall and slender as a whippet, Kerry keeps her black hair cut very short. She has expressive amber-colored eyes and a thin face with a pointed chin. Though she likes very ornate and elaborate dark clothing, she usually wears less fussy clothes that speak of her commitment to being just one of the people. With the low lighting she insists on, she's certain most other Kithain can't tell how she's dressed.

Roleplaying Hints: You love secrets and intrigue as much as the next sluagh, but you've put aside your personal desires to work for the good of all commoners. While it's a surprise to you, you are actually quite good in a leadership position. You hate King Meilge for deposing Brendan when the duke was just trying to rectify an old mistake and rid the world of the

outmoded concept of rule by the nobility. You laugh every time you think about Meilge appointing you as duchess, though. The man's an idiot, and the sooner he's removed from his position, the better.

Story Connection: She has no direct connection, but Kerry has access to Jiruna's sluagh network — and more importantly, Jiruna's trust. If anyone can find out where David has been taken, it's Jiruna, and Kerry's just the woman to persuade her to look.

Duchy of Dogwood

Duke Cormac Daichi

Cordell Danvers never claimed to be anything other than extraordinary. At three, he could read, write, add and subtract. At six, he could perform lightning calculations in his head and memorize long strings of numbers — backward. Strange phenomena happened all around him — things appeared out of nowhere and as quickly disappeared, and items mysteriously popped out of people's pockets and wound up in Cordell's hands even when he was all the way across the room. His second grade teacher dubbed him Mr. Wizard as a joke.

He never knew how strange he really was, though, until he was sent to a summer camp for gifted children near his home in Richmond, Virginia. He was supposed to be at the camp to learn higher math. He ended up undergoing his Chrysalis and falling in love. Tevel Asher, one of the few Jews at camp, was a year older than Cordell and accounted one of the most brilliant students there. The two young men met and immediately clicked.

Wanting to escape notice for an hour or so, they snuck out of camp and into the nearby woods. They should have known that exclusive camps don't like their meal tickets giving them the slip. Searchers were sent out. As they came near the area where the boys were hiding, Tevel used Glamour to hide their presence from them



and inadvertently set off Cordell's Chrysalis. During the next hour, while Cordell thrashed and moaned in the throes of his first change, Tevel held him fast, helping him through it.

Cordell emerged as Cormac Daithi of the House of Eiluned—more than appropriate for Mr. Wizard. Tevel introduced himself as Ashe of House Dougal. Cormac held the rank of duke, while Ashe was entitled to a barony. The two laughed at the thought of either of them ever gaining such titles. Instead they swore oaths of fealty to one another, promising to always remain friends.

Their relationship became very strained when Ashe's parents moved to Boston where his father had a wonderful job offer. Not knowing their son's true nature, Tevel's parents also hoped they would be able to get the boy into MIT. The boys wrote long letters to one another for almost a year until suddenly Cormac stopped writing. Unknown to Ashe, the Duchess of Dogwood had spotted Cormac among the new young Kithain at court and singled him out. Having investigated the young wilder, Duchess Meregrinne invited him to become her heir—contingent on his moving into her freehold and devoting himself exclusively to learning his duties for six months. Astonished that he was even being considered, Cormac agreed. He forgot how fast time could seem to move outside versus the time spent inside a freehold.

Almost a year later, Meregrinne abdicated and named Cormac her heir. Meilge lackadaisically confirmed it, and the Eiluned wilder became the Duke of Dogwood. Though Cormac wanted to rule the duchy as well as possible, many of the Kithain there held grave doubts that a half-trained wilder (and worse, an untrustworthy Eiluned) would be as effective as the duchess had been. Both Meregrinne (who wanted new blood in the duchy) and Cormac underestimated just how conservative the changelings of Virginia could be.

After several months of snubs from his subjects, Cormac was desperate for pleasant company. He finally wrote to Ashe and asked him to move in with him, in the Freehold of Dogwood in Richmond. He didn't mention that he was now the duke. Ashe was overjoyed. He left Boston and drove to Richmond. Cormac had told him how to find the freehold, a stately old mansion on a quiet backstreet north of the river.

The two lovers greeted one another and spent a few days exploring their relationship again before bothering to pay any attention to the rest of the duchy. Finally, Cormac explained things. Ashe was amazed that his lover was the duke, then overwhelmed when Duke Cormac made Ashe the Baron of Richmond. From such a small political misstep, Cormac almost lost his duchy.

The conservative faction among his subjects disliked Cormac to begin with; they were outraged that he created a barony for his lover without even consulting Count Rual, whose county of Jamesriver the barony lay within. Despite proving that Ashe's claims to a barony were legitimate according to the Dreaming, the Old Dominion Guard would not forgive their duke.

A different problem also faced the young duke. Gwrhryr of House Gwydion claimed a freehold in West Virginia, an area that had traditionally been a part of the Duchy of Dogwood.

Citing the separation of the states as precedent, he now demanded (though politely) that it be given to him as a separate duchy. The conservatives had a fit. Adamant that no inch of the duchy be ceded to the "commoners and rabble" of West Virginia, they were even willing to accept Baron Ashe if the duke would move to crush "those upstart hillbillies."

Cormac disagreed. He believed that his subjects would respect him more if he showed some backbone and made his own decisions. He announced that Ashe would keep the barony granted to him and, further, he intended to allow Gwrhryr a trial period to rule West Virginia as a separate duchy. Ashe counseled him to be more prudent and to at least make some show of listening to the other nobles of the duchy, but Cormac had had enough.

Hoping to win at least some nobles to his side, Cormac has recently scheduled a series of balls and outings for the court—picnics, special entertainments, hunts and races. Since most of the nobles are ultraconservative, he believes that traditional amusements will both mollify them and reassure them of his fitness to rule. He hopes that once he has established himself in their social circles, they will support him in his political decisions. After all, he is a mathematician; he thinks he knows how to play the odds.

Cormac is extremely intelligent, though not always as wise as he might be. He relies on his skill in the Arts of Soothsay and Sovereign to help him rule. He hides his skill in Legerdemain, especially as he knows his use of it would gravely offend the Old Dominioners. While he has learned the forms of government, he is still too young to use them well. For an Eiluned, he is woefully deficient in Manipulation skills.

Image: Just a hair over 6' tall, Cormac has long golden blond hair and robin's-egg-blue eyes. He most often wears modern-style clothing, though has lately begun to dress as a medieval noble so as not to offend the conservatives within the duchy.

Roleplaying Hints: You were chosen from among all the candidates to become the duke. Sometimes you wish Meregrinne had never asked you to take on the responsibility or that she had stayed around longer to help you ease into power. If it weren't for Ashe's love and support, you'd probably just give up. Somehow, you have to win over the old fogies without surrendering the advances that have occurred over the last centuries. That is, after all, why the former duchess chose you as duke. You just hope you can hold your duchy together long enough to make a difference.

Story Connection: Cormac attends the masquerade ball at Willow's Heart. He doesn't notice anything going on, but he is very intelligent and might be someone who could act as a good sounding board for theories on what really happened.

Count Rual of Jamesriver

Reed Montgomery was born into a staunchly conservative old Virginia family. As a child, he believed he would someday inherit the family money, marry someone just like his mother and spend his days fox hunting or playing cards at the club or perhaps touring areas where the less fortunate people lived to



leave food baskets for them. Interspersed among these dreams, he also wanted to become a fireman or maybe a lawyer like his father.

Growing up among old money in Richmond meant growing up among the right-wing elite. Luckily, his family was also a patron of the arts and supporter of attempts to promote local artists and craftspeople. Otherwise, he might never have achieved his Chrysalis and changed from an ultraconservative mortal named Reed into an ultraconservative changeling named Rual. A noble of House Gwydion, he fit right in with the other nobles residing in Richmond and became heir to the county. When Count Sperrin was slain by a sniper, Rual became Count of Jamesriver — to the delight of his cronies among the nobles.

Rual lives at the Hunt Club, a very exclusive establishment catering to steeplechasing and fox hunting. While part of the structure is open to the private membership, another part, the section that forms Rual's freehold, is open only to Kithain. He is a popular host and receives many invitations to others' parties. At one time he hoped he would be chosen as heir to the duchy. When he was not picked, he tried to squelch his resentment, but cannot agree with most of Duke Cormac's views. Opposed to many of the modernizations Cormac supports, Rual is particularly adamant that West Virginia not be allowed to break away from the Duchy of Dogwood's rule.

Rual is very influential, not only in the duchy, but in conservative circles throughout the Kingdom of Willows and even in the other kingdoms. He is well-known in the Beltaine Blade, a fact that he hardly bothers to hide. Proud of both his mortal and fae heritage, he truly believes in rule by the nobility, but only those nobles who truly know how to rule. He doesn't believe Cormac falls within those parameters.

Rual hopes that Cormac will make another mistake similar to giving his lover a barony when other, older nobles in the area lack titles and freeholds of their own. He is certain that if

Cormac goes through with ceding West Virginia to Gwrhyr of Gwydion, the other nobles will rise up and depose the young duke. Should that happen, he has little doubt he will be chosen to rule. Naturally, once he is duke, he will offer his Gwydion kinsman in West Virginia the right to claim a county for his own. Even if he is an ignorant hillbilly, he's still a Gwydion.

Count Rual's best Arts are Sovereign, Chronos and Wayfare. His skill in subterfuge is unparalleled as is his knowledge of politics and intrigue. He is an excellent horseman and quite good in veterinary medicine as he is a chief breeder of faerie hounds used for foxhunting in the Dreaming. The count has practiced swordsmanship daily since his Chrysalis and is deadly with a blade.

Image: Count Rual stands 5' 9" and is just under average weight. His brown hair is straight and thick and his brown eyes show both intelligence and his sense of self-worth. He wears tailored clothing, though he is almost never found in a business suit. He refers riding clothes or formal wear, whether that of mortals or courtly attire. The count never raises his voice, regardless of how annoyed he becomes, as he considers it a loss of control that betrays poor breeding.

Roleplaying Hints: You were born to rule, and soon you will assume the position that should have been yours. You have a duty to lead the Kithain of Concordia. Commoners may believe that they have gained the knowledge of how to rule, but they are only playing at a game they should leave to their betters. They should learn to obey those born to the job, and trust that you will arrange things so that everyone acts for the good of all. Though the current duke is also a noble, he is just a boy with foolish ideas. Furthermore, he is Eiluned, and they are never to be trusted. He really should be eliminated for the good of the duchy. If he doesn't sabotage himself soon, you may be forced to take a more direct hand in his downfall.

Story Connection: Rual has no direct connection to the story. As a mere count (a designation that would gall him), he isn't important enough to be invited to the masquerade Meilge hosts for the High King and Queen. He does have contacts throughout Concordia, however, and some of them might prove useful.

Washington, D.C.

Duke Siva and Duchess Kali

Twins born of immigrants from Bombay, Duke Siva and Duchess Kali are actually Unseelie nobles from two different houses. Sarinius of House Balor once commanded the Unseelie army of Rome in an offensive against Kasmeara Ni Ailil of the Celts, also an Unseelie. The two quarreled for years, back and forth. First Sarinius would win, then Kasmeara would retaliate. Neither could gain the upper hand for long. The two hated one another with a passion bordering on mania. So much so that when Kasmeara was finally captured by Sarinius' troops, she slew herself rather than face his treatment of her. Playing the game along with her, he fell upon his sword as well, sending them both back into the Dreaming.



They met again much later, after Christianity had almost conquered the lands they once knew. Once again on opposite sides, they harried one another, foiling each other's plans and disrupting each other's life through constant harassment. They danced a complex step of intrigue and one-upsmanship right up until they joined hands to step through the closing gate to Arcadia when the Shattering came upon them.

Reborn as twins named Jambu and Javas, Kasmeara and Sarinius grew up the same bitter rivals they had always been. While their father tried to build a medical practice, their mother attempted to mediate between the two, with little success. As fate or the Dreaming had decreed that they be tied together in mortal life, so it arranged for both to experience their Chrysalis at the same time.

Attended by a noble of House Liam and several commoners, they emerged into the community of Washington, D.C.'s Kithain. Soon noted as hellions, the wilder twins gathered a group of Unseelie followers around themselves, forming a gang of vicious redcaps, trolls, and nockers who were more than happy to split heads, indulge themselves with dope and make trouble for the local Seelie. They were successful enough to garner the attention of the Shadow Court.

The Court had been looking for a few Unseelie to open a Shadow freehold in Washington. They found what they were looking for in the twins. Taking the names Duke Siva and Duchess Kali in honor of the gods of destruction, they overran a freehold held by a minor Seelie lord and set themselves up as the Duchy of Shadows.

The Duchy of Shadows claims complete autonomy, saying it belongs to no kingdom except Discordia. Many Unseelie are drawn to the area seeking service in the duchy, but few find it. Seemingly composed from half-expressed dark dreams and chaotic imaginings, the freehold that houses the Shadow Duchy is difficult to find. Some say it's just a myth. Those in the

know just smile. No one gets into the Shadow Duchy until they've been checked and rechecked for loyalty to the Unseelie cause.

Little more than a rumor among the Seelie, the Shadow Duchy oversees various projects in the city. They court Banality, experimenting with it to see if it can be turned to the Shadow Court's use. Their minions steal items imbued with Glamour and terrorize any Seelie Kithain they can find alone or in small groups. Their base, housed in an old book bindery turned rock club known as the War Zone, serves as a meeting place for the inner circle of the true Shadow Court.

The argumentative twins are well-known in Kithain circles around the Washington area. They are insatiable and unapologetic Ravagers. Like the gods for whom they are named, they epitomize the forces of destruction, neither asking nor giving any quarter. When not attacking someone else, they turn on one another. Neither will yield precedence; neither will call a truce. Wrapped up in their love-hate struggle, they are as likely to destroy one another as their Seelie prey. Finding few threats to themselves, they indulge in games of superiority, but should a real threat make itself known, they stand against it together as if joined at the shoulder.

Duke Siva is best in the Arts of Contempt, Primal and Soothsay, while the duchess practices Chicanery, Sovereign and Wayfare. Both are consummate warriors, though Siva is the better tactician. Kali is more subtle; sometimes it's difficult to tell she's up to something before she's in cobralike mid-strike. She loves intrigue; he excels in lies. Both can appear to be charming and gracious or ruthless and cruel, as the whim takes them. They revel in destruction and chaos.

Image: Mirror-image twins, Duke Siva has pale silvery hair and black eyes. He has six fingers on each hand and always wears specially made gloves. He prefers form-fitting clothing in the deepest wine red and black. Duchess Kali has black hair and silver eyes. Her hair reaches almost down to her knees. She too prefers form-fitting clothing, but likes to wear virginal white, the better to confuse her enemies.

Roleplaying Hints: The two of you have been thrown together by the Dreaming. Who are you to argue with that? You both enjoy the same pursuits, you just aren't willing to concede that the other may be better at any of them than you are. Life is a constant struggle to prove your superiority. You wouldn't have it any other way. That would be inexpressibly boring. Besides, conflict is the true language of hatred such as yours, or is it love?

Story Connection: If anyone goes looking for David's ceremonial court hoping to find clues within it, the twins might make life interesting for them. They routinely try to terrorize Ayame, David's seneschal. Why not add a few more Kithain to the list?

Ayame Seneschal of the Court of Mirrors

A third-generation Japanese-American, Ayame has lived in Washington D.C. all her life. Her mother and father ran an

import business specializing in Japanese and Oriental luxury goods. Suppliers to many restaurants, they also furnished the homes and apartments of Japanese ambassadors and businessmen who keep homes away from home in the capital city.

Ayame underwent her Chrysalis quite early, learning of her heritage as a minor noble of House Liam. Her mentor, Sir Zereles, was one of King David's household guard and was visiting Washington in search of a site for a secret freehold for the king. When he undertook her fosterage, he moved to the Washington area so she need not be separated from her family. As her mortal kin had once been samurai, she accepted her role and pledged herself to the High King's service. Bemused by the childling's seriousness, David teasingly promised to make her seneschal of his freehold once it was established.

The tiny childling believed the king and set about learning all the skills she would need to serve in such a position. Mastering swordsmanship was not enough; she also learned flower arranging so that the freehold would be harmonious. Ayame learned traditional Japanese arts and graces right alongside more modern pursuits. She wanted to please the king and prove to him that his trust in her was not misplaced.

Sir Zereles set about finding a freehold for the king. After two years of searching, he finally discovered the perfect spot just outside the city where he had taken Ayame for a picnic and some sword practice. In a quiet glen shaded by weeping willow trees and screened by wild rose bushes, he realized he felt the presence of the Dreaming. Searching in each direction, he and Ayame were astounded to realize the site anchored no less than eight trods. As he made grandiose plans for an enormous palatial mansion, he felt a small hand take his larger one. Looking down, he saw Ayame shaking her head.

"No," she said. "If you build something so large and intrusive, you will kill the harmony we feel."



"Have you a better suggestion?" he asked. Bowing politely, she answered. As she told him her thoughts for a freehold, he smiled and thanked her for her insight. "Truly you deserve to be seneschal here, my lady," he told her.

Thus, Zereles built a unique freehold for the king. Planned as a ceremonial site where Kithain diplomats could meet and make treaties or come together to celebrate after sessions of parliament, the Court of Mirrors rose from Ayame's design. A lovely octagonal teahouse, it is brushed with colors as subtle as renraku pottery. Its name comes from a central mirrored room among the more traditional ones. Upon touring it for the first time, David confirmed Ayame as his seneschal for the freehold for as long as she chose to remain its caretaker.

Ayame is proud to act as caretaker for the ceremonial court. She visits it frequently, but makes sure not to stay within it for long periods of time. Well into her wilder years now, she no longer needs her mentor to act as the real "guardian" of the Court of Mirrors. Though Ayame wears the formal garb of a samurai lady, she is hardly defenseless.

She holds a black belt in karate and is a skilled swordswoman (katana) and archer (great bow). Though she seems far too tiny to be able to pull the bow, her mental discipline makes up for lack of overpowering strength. Ayame's talent in creating harmonious environments encompasses flower arranging, interior decorating, gardening and landscaping, hair dressing and choosing clothing. She has also mastered the art of the tea ceremony. She is diplomatic and always graceful. Her Arts include Dream-Craft, Soothsay and Sovereign, though she rarely resorts to faerie magic. David considers her one of his realm's greatest treasures.

Image: Ayame looks like a china doll. Barely 4' 5" tall with a 17-inch waist, she wears her shining straight black hair coiled as a Japanese lady or hanging straight down her back. Her slanted brown eyes smile warmly, even when the rest of her smile is hidden behind a fan. Ayame dresses in colorful silk kimonos when at court. On the street, she looks more like a typical Asian girl in jeans and blouse.

Roleplaying Hints: Though you are a modern woman, you have worked hard to learn ancient arts and to create a pleasant environment for the King of Concordia. You strive for perfection, but must make certain that it looks effortless as you do it. You know that the peace that draws King David to the Court of Mirrors is as much due to your harmony and serenity as with the teahouse itself, and you are determined never to let David see that serenity shattered. Though you are of House Liam, you have little in common with others of that house. Perhaps that is why your integrity has never been questioned.

When you are not at the Court of Mirrors, you enjoy spending time exploring your home city. That pleasure is usually short-lived, however, as the odious Unseelie twins have made it a point to attack you whenever they can locate you. Thus far, you have simply withdrawn from their assaults, believing it more important to preserve your inner peace than to put them in their place. If they do not tire of their games soon, though, you may be forced to show them how true to the samurai of old you are.

Story Connection: Ayame is greatly disturbed by news of David's disappearance. A mystery trod within the mirrored room might be a path searchers can take to bring them close to the Cup of Dreams.

Other Washington Kithain

Balthasar

The Baron of Washington

Balthasar is an incredibly cuddly raccoon pooka wilder who is fascinated by politics. He merely has to think about the Senate, the Capitol building or the White House and he gets worked up in anticipation of the Glamour that must just pour from all those dreams of justice and a better life and from participating in making laws for the country. He'll spend long periods of time in his mortal form, then remember that he's really a pooka and run off to a Senate hearing to get a good dose of Glamour. Usually, of course, the silly pooka winds up forgetting who and what he is due to the excess of Banality that hangs over most government proceedings.

His predicament has come to the attention of Ayame, who petitioned David to create Balthasar the Baron of Washington in hopes that giving him some fae politics to enjoy might dissuade him from continually returning to Banality Central. So far it hasn't worked. Most of the Kithain of Washington don't believe that Balthasar is actually the baron; those who do believe also know who really controls the capital city — the Shadow Twins — and have no intention of getting on the bad side of the Unseelie just to play at politics with a pooka.

Madame Varvara

This comely satyr is one of the best known madams in Washington. Her bordello caters to the rich, the famous, the powerful and the desperate fae. Wantonly Unseelie, she is a frequent visitor and paid informant of the Shadow Court.



Varvara is privy to some of the most explosive secrets in the halls of power and not just those pertaining to national security. She knows what kinks all the important folk have and is more than willing to supply them with whatever they desire — for a price, of course.

Lately, the madam has been conducting a little experiment at the behest of Duke Siva and Duchess Kali. She has been enchanting mortals who come to the bordello and cutting their sexual fantasies with a dose of dross. The resultant explosion of Glamour is enough to fill up every changeling in a six-block area. The aftermath has proved a disappointment, however. Many fall prey to extreme Banality just after such a treatment, and a few have attempted suicide. Of course, if the Shadow Court can find a way to harness that Banality to its own ends, well...who cares about a few pitiful human lives?

The Disputed Duchy of Winterthorn

Duke Gwrhŷr Ap Gwydion

A native of Louisville, Kentucky, Jeff Tomlin was part of the privileged elite who grew up with an appreciation of money, smooth bourbon, fine cigars and thoroughbred racing. Like his fellow Kithain in Lexington, he learned to ride almost before he could walk and had his own horse by the age of nine. Unlike his counterparts, he didn't undergo his Chrysalis until long after he was president of the bank and divorced from his second wife.

Learning he was a fae named Gwrhŷr after 30 years as a human wasn't easy on Jeff. Finding out that he held ducal rank didn't surprise him (he'd always known he was of the upper crust). What surprised him was that he didn't have a duchy. Asking around among other Kithain, he found out that the duke was a snot-nosed teenager with a brain the size of a pea.



Granted, the young man knew something about horses, but he was obviously not capable of ruling a duchy.

Ready to step in and offer his not inconsiderable leadership abilities, Gwrhryr discovered that most of the changelings of Kentucky were content to be ruled by the duke's seneschal, a boggan whose family had lived in the area since before time began. He was amazed that they preferred a boggan to a noble, and even more offended that they apparently didn't want him.

Though he appealed to King Meilge, asking the King of Willows to at least grant him a county in Louisville, he received no reply. Though almost no Kithain (and certainly no humans) in Louisville knew of the rebuff, Gwrhryr was mortified. Feeling that he could not remain where he wasn't wanted, he decided to move somewhere where nobody would know him or care about his shame. He chose West Virginia.

Once there, he fell in love with the beautiful scenery and the independence of the people. Trying to capture some of the region's appeal, he started sculpting and found that he had a talent for working clay and carving rock. Exploring the wilder areas of the state, he discovered a 19th century grist mill with additions to it that was perfect for his house and studio. It sat atop a site that opened to the Dreaming, and he claimed it as a freehold, naming it Winterthorn for the white roses that grew nearby.

After a year in which he encountered few other changelings, all of them commoners, he petitioned the Duke of Dogwood to grant him a separate duchy. Gwrhryr saw no reason why the Duchy of Dogwood should encompass both Virginia and West Virginia when another noble of ducal stature lived in the western state. The duke was ambivalent, giving him responses that weren't clear answers. Finally, Gwrhryr demanded a duchy of his own and declared himself the Duke of Winterthorn. The Duke of Dogwood tepidly agreed that a trial period could be arranged.

Gwrhryr continued to live in Winterthorn, losing track of time until he became lonely. Living in isolation, he rarely went

into town and had no friends. To keep him company, he constructed a complex chimera—a daughter for himself whom he named Irenia. Lovely and biddable, she raised his spirits, seeming never to tire of hearing him talk or watching him sculpt. Eventually, Irenia developed sentience.

The only problem with their relationship is that Duke Gwrhryr has entered Bedlam from remaining within his freehold for far too long. Bathing in its Glamour, he has lost touch with the mortal world. The duke believes Irenia to be his real daughter, an actual flesh-and-blood faerie child. Because his dreams continue to shape her, Irenia grows like a real child and has developed interests of her own. She is very fond of gardens, and Winterthorn has spent many hours constructing a hedge maze filled with flower beds to please his little girl. He keeps meaning to take her into town and introduce her to the few people he knows, but he always forgets.

Without realizing it, the duke is insanely jealous concerning Irenia. Should someone else show up at Winterthorn and show any interest in her, Gwrhryr might try to kill that person. The isolated sidhe slips further into Bedlam as time passes. Irenia doesn't mind. She knows that if he enters the final stage of Bedlam, he'll go into the Dreaming and her daddy will be with her forever in there.

Gwrhryr was once quite a good rider and a talented sculptor. His best Arts were Dream-Craft and Primal. Now he does little besides plant gardens to please Irenia and talk of the things he'll never get around to doing.

Chimera: Gwrhryr's daughter Irenia is a sentient chimera he created out of loneliness. She is very powerful, for she comes from his deepest insecurities and desire for love.

Image: Although a confirmed grump, the Duke of Winterthorn is proud that his hair and mustache are still brown. His hazel eyes seem either mad or sad, depending on his current thoughts. He used to enjoy dressing well. Now he wears baggy old trousers and work boots with a patched sweater since most of his time is spent gardening.

Roleplaying Hints: You are the Duke of Winterthorn, this gracious estate set into an array of formal gardens. Your daughter Irenia is the most important thing in your life, and you would do anything to please her. Right now, that's planting flowers. You don't mind; gardening takes your mind off the onerous duties of running such an important duchy.

Story Connection: None. David's captors might stumble across Winterthorn while transporting him around. Oops. Who knows what all that Glamour might do to the High King?

Duchy of Chesapeake

Duchess Elena-Anastasia Nicholenskya

Ellena Nicholson was born on a boat out in the Chesapeake Bay, premature by two months. Rushed to the hospital, she spent a month in the neonatal intensive care unit. The doctors and nurses fell in love with the good-natured, smiling infant with the china-blue eyes and strawberry-blond fluff of hair. So did her mother and father.

A happy, popular child, Ellena loved dressing up and attending parties. She spent hours arranging her dolls just so for the elaborate tea parties she and her friends held. In school, she always received the most valentines, and every weekend one of her friends wanted her to come sleep over. Amazed by their little girl's outgoing charm and popularity, her parents allowed her to attend most of them.

Undergoing her Chrysalis and discovering that she was a changeling hardly slowed her down. Though she knew her faerie name to be Ellarensi, she had recently been studying Russia and had fallen in love with the idea of being Russian. Rather than take her faerie name, Ell declared that her new name would be Elena-Anastasia Nicholenskya. Baltimore's Kithain welcomed the bouncy, vibrant new changeling into their midst — regardless of her name.

Singled out by a fellow Fiona, Duke Lladanyn, Elena-Anastasia was declared the heir to the Duchy of Chesapeake. In keeping with those whom she would one day rule, Elena took up horseback riding and learned about race horses and steeplechasers. When she was shown the duke's private stables, a dappled gray chose her, bonding to her and refusing to move for anyone else. Noting that his servants lacked certain talents (and wanting to thank him for his kindness to her), Elena offered to take care of arranging parties and entertainments for the duke. Relieved, Lladanyn agreed.

Her parties became the talk of the town. Elena's greatest success lay in planning cotillions for the Saining of new Kithain and in a new party she instituted known as the Preakness Ball, held after the famous race. Over time, the duke put more and more of the revels in her hands. Then he asked her to assume other duties — to attend court and make judgments in his place, to represent him at functions held in other duchies, and to draw up plans to hold a ducal lottery and to crown a new ruler. Upset that he was stepping down, yet relieved that she wasn't being thrust in as duchess, she willingly set to work planning a lavish revelry that would include riding to the hunt, a tournament, a grand ball and a feast with several entertainers. It was a glorious success.

After the feast, Duke Lladanyn called for the lottery. Elena entertained those Kithain not entitled to vote. In the midst of their game, the other changelings of Chesapeake swept in and swept her away to be crowned their new duchess. Joyful, yet a little scared, she allowed herself to be feted and crowned. Sometime during the ceremony and the party that followed, Lladanyn disappeared, leaving her the ducal treasures and a card wishing her the best.

In the six years since that time, Elena-Anastasia has risen to the occasion. She is acknowledged a canny and generous ruler. She has appointed a number of other Kithain to act as a council for her and listens carefully to all arguments before making a decision. Still, she is best known for the clever entertainments she hosts, like the time she treated the whole court to a Baltimore Orioles home game or took them all on a crab-catching expedition. She is one of the most popular rulers in the Kingdom of Willows — both within her own duchy and with Kithain from other realms. She has recently taken in a childling waif as a ward. She's about to find out if she has what it takes to entertain a child as well as she amuses adults.



While Elena knows a good bit of Sovereign she has rarely had to use it until she took in her ward. Jasper certainly knows how to tax her patience. Her knowledge of Legerdemain has helped out sometimes to return items "boosted" by less reputable guests at parties, and her Wayfare abilities allow her to know where she needs to be at all times during social occasions. She is generously endowed with etiquette and charisma and is an accomplished hostess. Her sense of timing and saying the right thing to the right person are legendary. Elena rides well, dances well and has a good sense of what will be enjoyable and what will be boring. She is terrible with weapons, having never had the need to learn.

Treasures: Unknown to Elena, along with the ducal treasures, her old mentor also left her a major faerie treasure. The card he left wishing her luck (which she has kept as a memento, but never looked at while Kenning it) really is a lucky charm. It holds within it one use of Soothsay ••: Fair Is Foul and Foul Is Fair that acts as if it has five successes. Whenever Elena needs its power to guard her life from what would otherwise be a killing blow, the card will function to protect her from it. Once used, the card becomes blank.

Image: A bubbly strawberry-blonde with crinkly blue eyes and a welcoming smile, Elena is the tiniest bit overweight from indulging in too much good party fare. The Fiona colors suit her, and she often wears court garb even when not officially presiding over a court function. Her laugh is infectious.

Roleplaying Hints: You know you aren't the smartest or the strongest among the Kithain of Chesapeake, but you try to be pleasant and welcoming to everyone. As duchess, you have gathered together a group of advisors so you can profit from their wisdom in making decisions. You've always believed that the happier people are, the better they get along, so you've made it your business to make your people happy. Some folks might argue that being a good hostess is not enough to build a duchy on; you're proof that they are wrong. The Kithain of Chesapeake obviously appreciate the social interactions you

arrange for their benefit, and have rewarded you with their love and trust. You're honored to be so popular.

Story Connection: Elena-Anastasia knows everybody, and most of them like her. As a member of the Cat's Cradle she has even more resources to call upon. She might be very helpful in gathering information leading to David's whereabouts. While many people dismiss her as little more than a party maven, they overlook the many friends her hospitality brings her — and the opportunities she creates for Kithain to meet one another in nonthreatening environments.

King Jasper the Wicked

Abandoned near a dumpster as a baby, Jake got tossed around from foster home to foster home. He always felt out of place with people paid to look after him and ran away constantly, even though he was barely four. Finally, he was taken in by an old lady who was considered his last chance before being put in juvenile hall. She scared him. Her home was filled with bits of wire, balls of string and piles of newspaper. Frankly, it was a dump. And she wasn't much better than the house. Her hair looked like a fright wig, her teeth were huge and scary, and sometimes when he looked at her just right, her nose looked skeletal and her skin gray and even more wrinkled than usual. She wasn't all supersweet to him like the other foster parents had tried to be either. She told him to shut up and straighten out or she'd eat him. Somehow, he got the feeling she meant it.

One of the things that had gotten him in trouble in the other homes was bouncing on the bed. Foster parents went crazy when he bounced on the bed. She didn't look too pleased when she caught him doing it either, but then she looked real closely at him and started laughing. Jake wasn't sure what she thought was funny, but at least she wasn't hitting him and yelling at him, so he kept bouncing, higher and higher. She threw something at him — a painted ball — and he caught it. Suddenly he was bouncing so high he thought he'd jump right

through the ceiling. He looked down to see what had happened to the mattress to make it so springy and almost choked when he saw that he now had furry legs — and that his knees were on backward!

Thus began his Chrysalis and his first really good look at his redcap mentor, Granny Olympia. She explained the facts of life to him: how the evil Seelie had tossed him out because he was just a commoner, how they had sent him all sorts of terrible places so she wouldn't be able to find him and help him, and how they could be stopped from treating other changelings that way. Jake was so angry he wanted to run out, there and then, and kill the Seelie for being so evil. But Granny Olympia told him he'd have to be trained first or he'd just be captured and tortured by their enemies. From the wise perspective of five years of age, he concurred.

Granny told him to pick a name, and he chose Jasper. Then she began his training. The satyr childling was a fast learner. He trained every day, not just in weapons, but in spying tricks and how to act innocent and helpless to fool the Seelie. A year later, Jasper was ready.

Granny told Jasper he was going somewhere where he would meet some very important people. Those people would ask him to swear an oath and he would agree. Once he swore the oath, they would provide weapons, money, and even toys for him, and he would get the chance to kill some of the bad Seelie fae. He worried all day that they wouldn't think he was good enough, and he practiced and practiced what he'd been taught.

When they arrived at an old warehouse, it was dark and spooky. The doors were locked and Jasper had to break in so he and Granny could get inside. When the lights came on revealing the most beautiful people Jasper had ever seen, he knew he'd passed a test. Very carefully, one of the beautiful ones (whom he remembered were called sidhe) sliced Jasper's finger and took some of his blood. Then Jasper swore an oath to kill the wicked Seelie whenever he was assigned to do so, to obey the Shadow Court in all things, and to never reveal that he knew anything about the Shadow Court or any of its members. He made the oath and became a member of the Childrens' Crusade.

They gave him some tattered clothes and sent him to beg for food from a particular evil Seelie woman. Instead of killing her right away, he was supposed to listen and watch and report back to the Shadow Court every thing he learned at court. When the time was right, he would be told to kill her.

A very nervous Jasper rapped on Elena's freehold door and asked for some scraps. Elena herself answered, and her heart went out to the poor little waif on her doorstep. She took him in and asked his name. Seeing that he was in a very grand place and afraid she would kick him out if he seemed too unimportant (she was evil, after all), Jasper said he was known as King Jasper. Lest she think him one of the good guys and torture him, he then added "the wicked." Thus King Jasper the Wicked became Elena's ward.

He has been living with Elena ever since and reporting what he learns to the Shadow Court. They always reward him with a special toy (which he hides) or some candy, which makes



him very happy. He isn't happy about some other things. For one, Elena doesn't seem evil at all, and she doesn't treat him like she would throw him in the trash. She's kind to him. She gives him nice clothes and plenty to eat and toys, and she's training him in faerie Arts. For another, the Shadow Court has decided that he should kill Elena and has given him a cold iron dagger to use. It makes him feel all shivery, and he really doesn't want to use it on Elena. He's not sure what to do or who to turn to.

Jasper has started learning the basics of Wayfare and Legerdemain. He is trained in the use of dagger in subterfuge and stealth. He knows how to pick locks. His best skills are in acting, though. He has Elena fooled into believing he's just a winsome waif instead of a skilled assassin. Elena is teaching Jasper how to dance, which he greatly enjoys.

Image: Jasper is small, chubby and rosy-cheeked (a far cry from the thin body and wan face he sported when he first arrived at the freehold). His hair is a mop of brown curls that matches the color of his leg pelt. His eyes are large, guileless and dark brown. People could get lost in the depths of innocence in Jasper's dark eyes.

Roleplaying Hints: You are the mighty assassin King Jasper the Wicked, here to kill the evil duchess and free your fellow commoners from the oppressive yoke of Seelie rulership (whatever that means). You're having real trouble though. The duchess has been very good to you, and you just can't picture her as an evil monster like the rest of the Seelie. The Shadow Court must be wrong about her. But that doesn't matter, does it? An oath is an oath, at least that's what the duchess says. Does that mean that you should kill her because you swore an oath or not kill her because she's the one teaching you about honor? You're so confused. Sometimes it's really hard being six.

Story Connection: None, unless he kills Elena.

Strolling Players

Though not residents of the kingdom, these two Kithain are present in Willow's Heart when the story begins and much of the story centers around them, either due to their absence or because they are suddenly thrust into the limelight.

High King David

David Ardry is High King of Concordia. The tale of how he acquired Caliburn while just a boy himself and used it to defeat a group of commoners attacking noble children during the Accordance War is a legend already told many times. David's fair treatment of commoners has won him many supporters, yet cost him the support of some of the more conservative nobles. Still, he is a great diplomat, perhaps the only one who could have ended the war as amicably as he did.

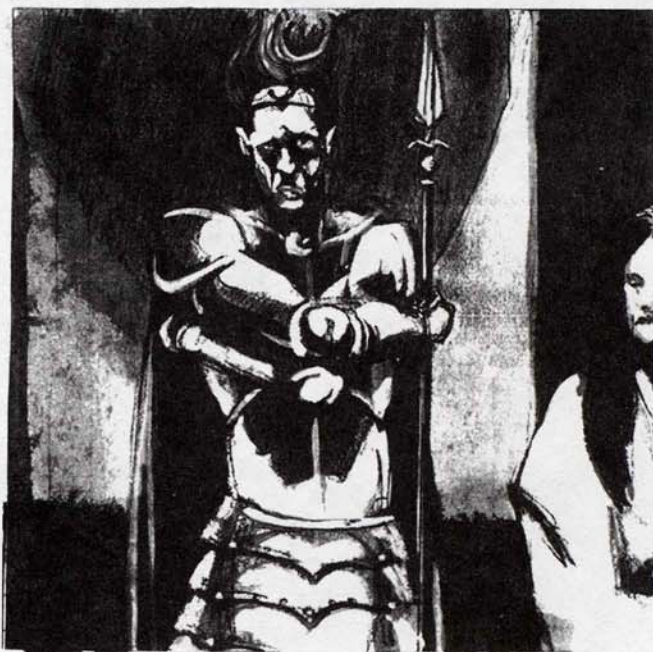
David rules from his freehold of Tara-Nar. He and his new wife, Faerilyth, had just begun a Grand Tour of the Kingdom of Concordia so that all his subjects could meet the new High Queen. Falling prey to a Glamour-dosed poison that made him highly tractable, David believed the Parliament of Dreams had deposed him and repudiated him as High King. In believing it

and being confused by the drug, David agreed to surrender himself to Meilge and hide. He thus repudiated his kingship, and Caliburn disappeared from his side. Because his sword left him, David fully believed he had lost his crown. Several mortals working under Meilge's orders took David away and beat him unconscious with iron-tipped clubs. David awakens with no knowledge of who he was or who he is. Thus the land is left without a true High King and darkness falls across Concordia.

Lleu Arduwyd

Often called the perfect knight, Lleu certainly fits the Gwydion ideal. Originally from the Kingdom of Grass, Lleu opted for service in his cousin, the High King's, freehold. His comely face, strong body, shining chestnut hair and brilliant green eyes attracted much attention there, but he had already seen a fair lady and fallen in love with her from that first glance. He intended to speak with her about his feelings when he discovered she was Faerilyth, King David's betrothed. His heart broken, forbidden by his honor to speak to her of his love, Lleu now worships her from afar, trying to content himself with courtly love for his unattainable lady.

When David disappears, Lleu is torn. He feels it is his duty to search for the missing High King. His pride is gravely wounded when Caliburn chooses a mere commoner as its bearer and the one chosen to undertake the quest for the missing king. Nevertheless, he is happy to stay by the queen's side and protect her from those who would try to depose or harm her. Such a position leaves him all too close to her, however, with the temptation to declare his love or at least slake his passion. Again, his honor and good name prevent such from happening, but he feels soiled nonetheless, for he hopes in his most secret of hearts that David is dead and that he may pursue Faerilyth's love with honor. And by that betrayal of his oath to David, he finds himself forsworn without ever acting wrongly. More on Lleu can be found in *Noblesse Oblige: The Book of Houses*.





CHAPTER FIVE: GALLAIN AND OTHERS

*If someone were to fall into intimate
slumber, and slept
deeply with Things —: how easily he
would come
to a different day, out of the mutual
depth.*

*Or perhaps he would stay there; and
they would blossom and praise
their newest convert, who now is like
one of them,
all those silent companions in the wind
of the meadows.*

—Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Sonnets to Orpheus*

Numerous supernatural and enchanted creatures populate the lands comprising the Kingdom of Willows. This chapter gives a selection of Gallain, Inanimae, Prodigals and magically aware mortals. The individuals detailed here are not a comprehensive listing of all the supernaturals of the region, but are

those most likely to interact with the changelings of the Kingdom of Willows. Numerous World of Darkness supplements contain information that might be helpful in fleshing out the Kindred, Garou, wraith and mage complements of the region. Storytellers should feel free to add their own characters or ignore those presented here.



Gallain

Creatures of the Dreaming, the Gallain resemble the Kithain in the manner of distant cousins. Similar in that they come from the stuff of dreams and imaginings, they nevertheless have different magics and abide by standards that separate them from mainstream changelings.

Nunnehi

Five Nunnehi families occupy parts of the Kingdom of Willows. The may-may-gway-shí and thought-crafters tend to reside along the coastal regions near Virginia and Maryland, while the nanehi, yunwi tsundsi and yunwi amai-yine'hi inhabit the ancestral lands of the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw and Creek near the Tennessee/North Carolina border). Additional information on some of the Nunnehi of the Kingdom of Willows can be found in *Rage Across Appalachia*, a Regional Sourcebook for *Werewolf: The Apocalypse*, and in *Changeling: The Dreaming*.

Rules for creating Nunnehi characters can be found in the *Changeling Players Guide*.

Gray Eagle, Chief of the Echoza Council Lands

Gray Eagle serves as the war chief for a group of Nunnehi braves who have claimed a small spirit glade on the grounds of the former capital of the Cherokee nation. From their hiding place in the forests near the restored Cherokee Supreme Court building, these Nunnehi wage a guerrilla campaign of harassment against the changeling population of Meilge's realm.

In his role as leader of a people at war, Gray Eagle sees his actions as just retribution for the crimes committed

against the Cherokee nation by the changelings and mortals who invaded and stole ancestral lands. In addition, he recognizes in the person of Meilge the same faerie spirit who came from across the sea centuries ago to erect a freehold for himself without bothering to request permission from the nanehi who already held claim to the land. Gray Eagle's vendetta against the Half-Faced Serpent is personal, inspired by dreams of the ancient past, as well as tribal.

Gray Eagle's mortal life resembles his faerie existence in style and purpose. As a confirmed Indian rights activist, Gray Eagle advocates aggressive methods of forcing the white government to restore tribal lands, return stolen artifacts and bones and make restitution for centuries of wrongdoing. He is outspoken in Nunnehi councils, passionately opposing peacemakers like as Chief Crying tears (see below) and urging all Nunnehi to rise up and seize back their ancient lands. He believes that only when all of the foreign changelings are driven out of the Pure Lands will the Higher Hunting Grounds once again open to the native faeries. As a mortal, he attends rallies and demonstrations to speak for increased vigilance and to protest.

Gray Eagle has honed his talents in war, so he excels in all forms of armed and unarmed combat, including the use of firearms and explosives. As a nanehi, he is well-versed in the history of the Cherokee, particularly as it pertains to their losses at the hands of the American government. He has spent a good deal of time in the spirit world and has bonded with a spirit companion, an eagle spirit who sometimes materializes in the physical world and accompanies Gray Eagle on his raids. Gray Eagle's command of Wayfare enables him to escape capture by both Meilge's knights and government agents, while his knowledge of Primal assists him in bringing the forces of nature to bear. His skill in the Nunnehi Art of Spirit Link allows him to contact his tribal ancestors for advice and assistance.

Image: Gray Eagle appears to be a young Cherokee male in his late teens, although his chronological age is nearer 40. He dresses in traditional clothing and usually wears war paint on his face. In mortal guise, he often wears a worn leather jacket and faded jeans. He carries a bow and hunting knife with him at all times; as a mortal, he also packs an automatic, concealed inside his jacket, or a hunting rifle, carried openly whenever possible.

Roleplaying Hints: The time for peace ended long ago with the forced evacuation of most of your people from their native lands. Your body hosts one of the ancient spirits of the invisible world, and that spirit cries out for vengeance. You are the willing instrument of retribution.

Story Connection: No direct connection, though Meilge might try to imply that the local Nunnehi are somehow responsible for David's disappearance. Characters willing to take the risk may attempt to parley with Gray Eagle for information. Although Gray Eagle does not know (or care) what happened to the High King, he can reveal some of the reasons for his hatred of Meilge.

Izusa Whitestone, Elder of the Little People

Since her birth in 1940, Suzie Jefferson knew she was different. Her great-grandmother raised her on stories — not only of her proud African heritage, but also of the Creek and Cherokee blood that pulsed singing through her veins. Even as a child, however, Suzie felt there was something more. A wise voice inside her whispered other stories to her at night after she had gone to bed. These magical dream-*tales* opened to her a world of proud and beautiful spirit-people who spoke to the spirits of plants and rocks and animals and who lived in secret places hidden in the earth. Someday, the voice said, Suzie would learn who she really was.

On Suzie's eighth birthday, the whole family traveled from their home in Childersburg, Alabama to the nearby De Soto Caverns, where her Uncle Jimmy, a full-blooded Creek, worked as a tour guide. While Suzie's parents and siblings toured the caverns, Uncle Jimmy managed to take Suzie aside and lead her away from the rest of the tour group. Sensing that she was about to learn the truth about the voice inside her, Suzie's excitement grew as she and her uncle traveled deeper and deeper into the vast caverns. The next thing she knew, a dozen slender, diminutive people stepped out from behind stone pillars or just "appeared" beside her. As she looked at them, Suzie felt her body change, becoming a younger version of the strangers who accosted her. All at once, Suzie realized that these little people weren't strangers after all; they were her true family, and she was one of them. And so was her Uncle Jimmy.

With her uncle's help, Suzie (now renamed Izusa Whitestone) managed to keep in touch with her Nunnehi family, the *yunwi tsundsi*. During her frequent visits to their freehold of Spirit Rock deep within the De Soto Caverns, she learned the ways and customs of her true people. When she was 16, Izusa left home to take care of her now aging Uncle Jimmy, a move that enabled her to participate fully in the life of the people of Spirit Rock.



Now, nearly 40 years later, Izusa has attained the status of elder among the *yunwi tsundsi*. Although she spends most of her time within the freehold, teaching the younglings as she herself was taught, she occasionally visits her mortal family. Remaining out of sight, she manages to help them in small, unseen ways after the manner of the "little people." She also looks for signs of faerie blood in the newest generations of her kin.

Image: As a mortal, Izusa appears as a middle-aged woman of mixed blood. The combination of African and Indian features has toned her skin a dark mahogany color. Her high cheekbones, dark eyes and full, expressive mouth give her a wise but approachable countenance. Her long black hair coils tightly at the back of her neck. As one of the *yunwi tsundsi*, Izusa becomes shorter and slimmer; her features take on a sharper cast. In both forms, she dresses in a pastiche of styles, combining African jewelry with Indian beadwork and fringe.

Roleplaying Hints: You are the product of three proud bloodlines. Although, as an elder, you have the right to remain within the freehold, soaking up the sustenance of its Medicine-rich surroundings, you also feel the need to give back some of the beauty life has given you. You do this through teaching, through making lovely onyx beadwork presents to give to friends (and sometimes worthy strangers) and by using your gift for remaining unseen to secretly help your mortal family in little, thoughtful ways. Someday, you will turn your faerie self loose and send it onward into another body; when that day comes, you will be ready for it, but not a minute before.

Story Connection: None, although changelings who have occasion to visit the De Soto Caverns in the course of searching for David might benefit from Izusa's wisdom.

Crying Tears, Chief of the Walkers on the Mountains

Awakening in his teens to the knowledge that his mortal body hosted the spirit of one of the *nanehi*, John Crying Tears gladly accepted the honor that had fallen to him. A vision quest led him from his mortal home on the Qualla Boundary Cherokee Reservation in western North Carolina to the rock formation known as Chimney Tops in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. There, in a secluded place inaccessible to even the most experienced climbers, he discovered a place within the spirit world occupied by others of his kind.

That was many years ago. Now Crying Tears serves as chief for the Nunnehi who call themselves the Walkers on the Mountain. Within their spirit-realm, these native faeries preserve the old traditions and stories of the Cherokee. In addition, they attempt to bring to life new stories of hope and the return of the Higher Hunting Grounds.

In recent years, under Crying Tears' advice and urging, the Walkers have made a tentative alliance with a sept of werewolves that inhabit the Great Smokies. Discovering that a pooka had already insinuated herself among the werewolves as an ambassador of sorts, the Nunnehi of the Chimney Tops decided that they too would make a treaty with the wolf-people, lest they find themselves once again pushed out of their ancestral lands.



So far, the three-way alliance between Nunnehi, American changelings and werewolves seems to be working. The three groups meet occasionally in councils (disguised as camping trips to mortal eyes) and discuss common goals such as the return of the spirit world to the physical realm, the need to protect the small population of red wolves recently reintroduced to the national park and the dangers presented by the steady encroachment of the modern world's Banality (which the werewolves associate with the Weaver).

Crying Tears is a charismatic leader whose knowledge of the customs and history of the Cherokee give force to his decisions and command the respect of his followers. Skilled in the ways of the warrior, he also possesses a gift for song and dance, which he exercises during festivals and powwows as a way of celebrating both his faerie and human natures. His mastery of Primal, Sovereign and Wayfare assist him in all facets of his position as leader of his faerie tribe, while his limited knowledge of Soothsay allows him to choose the best times for carrying out his visions of peaceful alliance.

Image: Crying Tears resembles the great Cherokee chiefs of history and legend. His handsome features exhibit strength and patience, although his dark eyes can flash with sudden anger when aroused by those who deface the beauty of the natural world or trample on the rights of his mortal kin. He dresses most often in traditional clothing, though on rare occasions, when he must interact with the mortal world, he may adopt modern dress. He carries himself with the dignity befitting his station as a leader, but his movements indicate his skill in war and dance.

Roleplaying Hints: Your vision of an alliance between the children of the spirit world has become a near-reality. You have dedicated yourself to its success, though your knowledge of history has alerted you to the fact that you cannot always trust the words of the pale-skinned — even those who walk in the skin of Wolf. Your leadership of the Walkers depends on

maintaining the respect of those who follow your advice; even now, you face constant challenges from other braves who believe that compromise is impossible. You try to discourage your people from raiding or harassing the freeholds of the usurper changelings.

Story Connection: He has no direct relevance to the story, but at the Storyteller's discretion, Crying Tears might have witnessed a dark van traveling through the park at great speed in the early hours of the morning following David's disappearance. Additionally, the Nunnehi leader could put interested changelings in contact with the Garou who have a caern in the national park. (See *Rage Across Appalachia* for details on the Garou of the region.)

Aiyana Flower-That-Blooms, Story of Her People

Because of her parents' employment as costumed interpreters for Jamestown Settlement's "Indian Village," Aiyana has spent most of her life near the homeland of her Powhatan ancestors. When, in her early teens, Aiyana discovered her Nunnehi heritage, she also realized that the sweat lodge — part of the "living history" exhibit — was actually a Nunnehi freehold, a place of cleansing and a doorway into the spirit world.

As one of the thought-crafters, a Nunnehi tribe associated with the Powhatans and other Algonquins, Aiyana discovered her natural talent for herbal healing and for interpretive dancing.

Aiyana soon joined her parents working for the Jamestown Settlement. Her outgoing personality has made her a popular tour guide, although occasionally she gives demonstrations of early Powhatan gardening and agricultural techniques. Her touch evokes riotous growth in the plants she tends in the settlement gardens, a quality that led her to call herself Aiyana Flower-That-Blooms.



Aside from her talents in cultivating plants, she also touches minds and hearts through her interpretations of ancient times. Aiyana is much in demand to play the role of the famous Powhatan princess in vignettes based on the John Smith/Pocahontas story.

Although many of her fellow thought-crafters resent non-Nunnehi changelings, Aiyana believes that all the children of the Dreaming must learn to cooperate with each other. She sees herself as an ambassador to mortals and changelings. She has turned down opportunities to join raiding parties, saying that she is a planter of seeds, not a destroyer of dream-flowers.

Image: Aiyana is tall and willowy in her mortal form, not unlike the popular images of her illustrious ancestor, Pocahontas. While on the job, she dresses in traditional Powhatan garb. At other times, she wears comfortable clothing, usually with traditional-style jewelry she fashions herself. In her true form, she is even comelier; she decorates her face and arms with body paint in the way of her ancestors.

Roleplaying Hints: You are the embodiment of history — the story of your Powhatan ancestors and the story of your faerie kin. It is your responsibility to see that the tales of the past do not die and that the lessons of the past are allowed to fall in fertile soil and blossom. You enjoy meeting with mortals and non-Nunnehi; they are the ones who need your gifts the most.

Story Connection: None. Visiting the Jamestown Settlement and meeting the thought-crafters who reside nearby might provide a pleasant — and enlightening — interlude for characters questing for the High King.

Smiling River, Eternal Seeker

Smiling River has never known his mortal family. Abandoned as a baby inside Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge on Maryland's Eastern Shore, he was taken by a hunting party of may-may-gway-shi (rock fishers) to their freehold, the Blackwater Hunting Grounds. Hidden in the most secluded part of the

wilderness preserve, the Hunting Grounds became Smiling River's new (and only) home.

His constant exposure to the freehold's potent Medicine awakened the latent Nunnehi spirit within him, and Smiling River emerged fully into his faerie nature simultaneously with his first step. As a youngling, the boy was curious, pestering his elders with questions about rocks, water, fish and anything else his active mind could fasten on. When he became a brave, his inquisitiveness only increased.

Unlike other rock fishers, Smiling River actively seeks encounters with mortals who visit the wildlife refuge. He often appears — seemingly out of nowhere — to assist lost explorers to safety, asking them questions about life outside the Blackwater Refuge while guiding them back to the area's designated trails. In this manner, Smiling River has gained an erratic education about the world of mortals. Although he does not understand much of what he has learned, he has determined that one day soon, he will put his newfound knowledge to the test and explore the vast lands outside the refuge.

Smiling River is skilled in Wayfare, Spirit Link and Primal, but knows almost nothing of other faerie Arts. He has superb hunting, swimming and wilderness skills, but is woefully lacking in most "civilized" abilities, such as driving and etiquette. Although he speaks English, he can neither read nor write the language.

Image: As a mortal, Smiling River is short and muscular. His dark hair hangs in loose, tangled curls to his shoulders. His face is open and friendly, and he carries himself with the grace of a wild creature. When roused to anger, he projects an almost feral sense of menace. In his true form, as one of the rock fishers, Smiling River's face is almost hidden by his mane of unruly hair. His skin has a fine coating of otterlike fur. He dresses in handmade clothing and usually carries with him a few painted rocks to give as gifts to people who are especially kind to him.

Roleplaying Hints: The world is a big place, and you want to explore every part of it. Your family does not agree with you, believing that you should stay within the safety of your freehold and its environs. Your need to know as much as you can about the strangers who visit Blackwater cannot, however, be ignored. As soon as you are able, you are going to step outside the confines of the wilderness preserve and see what happens.

Story Connection: Smiling River might be intrigued with the idea of joining a group of outsiders on a great quest.

Leaping Waters, Trickster of the Blackwater

Jimmy Lee Barnes learned to swim before he could walk. As soon as he was old enough, he learned to paddle a canoe. After his older brother taught him the joys of kayaking, Jimmy spent available moment practicing his skill at riding the white-water rapids. With his father and brother, Jimmy spent many weekends camping in the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, not far from their home in Oneida, Tennessee. In between the hours spent paddling and kayaking along the rivers that lay deep within the Big South Fork, Jimmy





listened as his father talked about his own boyhood and told stories to entertain his two sons.

Jimmy's favorite stories were the ones about his mother, who died when Jimmy was born. Like the son she never knew, Lila could swim like a fish and ran the rapids with the best of them. The discovery that his mother was also a full-blooded Chickasaw awakened in Jimmy his other passion — Indian lore.

As he grew into adolescence, Jimmy developed a prankish streak. His jokes were never malicious, and he usually chose his targets carefully. On camping trips, litterers and people who failed to respect the wilderness came under attack, finding their trash piled up inside their sleeping bags or discovering their backpacks crammed full of their carelessly tossed aside cigarette butts. Jimmy couldn't explain why he did such things; he only knew that it felt "right" to do so.

When he was 15, Jimmy went camping by himself, biking to his favorite spot in Big South Fork. During the middle of the night, he awoke suddenly, hearing the sound of water crashing all around him. Then he heard a voice call out to him, filled with the rushing noise of the river. As if in a dream, Jimmy walked the half mile to the nearest riverbank. While he stood, looking out over the cascading water, he seemed to see shapes in the darkness, illuminated only by the moonlight glinting off the swift-moving stream. Touched by the Glamour of the moment, Jimmy entered his Chrysalis.

Taken by the *yunwi amai'yine'hi*, the water people, to their freehold of White Foam deep within Big South Fork, Jimmy spent several glorious days and nights becoming acquainted with his Nunnehi self — his true self. At the end of his camping trip, Jimmy went home to his father and brother. His father took one look at him and said, "I see you've found your mother's people."

From that time on, Jimmy spent more time with his newfound Nunnehi family than he did with his mortal kin. Calling himself Leaping Waters, he has become one of the water people's most vigilant and inventive wilderness protectors.

Leaping Waters is an expert swimmer and boater. In addition he knows general wilderness survival and excels at concealing himself in order to pull off his most successful pranks. He has a good grasp of Chicanery, Legerdemain and Wayfare and has begun to learn the Nunnehi Art of Spirit Link.

Image: Jimmy is a slightly built young man in his midteens, with shoulder-length black hair, prominent cheekbones, and eyes that smile even when he is angry. He dresses in hiking clothes in his human form. As one of the water people, Jimmy's body becomes more slender, his eyes grow larger and darker and his skin acquires a fine coating of silvery speckled scales — like the trout whose form he has learned to take.

Roleplaying Hints: You still care for your mortal family, but the water people are your real kin. Being in the water, on the water or near the water makes you feel alive. You only wish other folks could understand just how precious the rivers are. Somehow, you'll find a way to teach the worst offenders proper respect for nature — even if it kills them.

Story Connection: No direct connection to the ongoing story. Characters traveling through the Big South Fork, for whatever reason, might run afoul of Leaping Waters' pranks if they fail to respect the wilderness lands around them.

Lost Ones

The Kingdom of Willows contains a few unique creatures who are both more and less than Kithain. Among these are the Inanimae (covered later) and the Lost Ones. A few Lost Ones, ancient faeries who remained behind after the Shattering but did not undergo the transformation into changelings, inhabit hidden freeholds from which they never emerge. A few are detailed here. Storytellers may use these as guidelines when creating (or discovering) other Lost Ones within the southern Dreaming.

Lord Tamlin, Fiddler of Lost Dreams

Long before the arrival of colonists from Europe and the changelings who accompanied them to the New World, the Cumberland Mountains of eastern Kentucky served as a refuge for a small band of *Fiona sidhe*. Led by Lord Tamlin, these fugitives from the Sundering made peace with the local Nunnehi and received permission to build a freehold. When the Shattering forced them to depart for Arcadia, Lord Tamlin stayed behind to hold open the decaying portal so that his household could make their escape. Left alone and vulnerable to the tide of Banality that was sweeping over the world, Lord Tamlin would have perished if not for the assistance of the Nunnehi. The native faeries helped the *sidhe* lord weave a powerful ward of Glamour and Medicine around a mountain bald, a site that now serves as both shelter and prison for the ancient faerie lord.



Tamlin spends much of his time in slumber within his hidden refuge. On the occasions when he does wake, he entertains himself by playing ancient melodies on his fiddle. The music escapes the confines of his freehold, emerging as ghostly tunes that seem born from the very air itself.

Despite his centuries of isolation, Tamlin remains relatively sane, unlike other Lost Ones who have completely succumbed to Bedlam. He believes that his music has helped him preserve some connection with the outside world, though he cannot access it directly. The sidhe lord longs for the time when the Dreaming will either return in force to restore the severed connections with the mortal world or else vanish altogether, bringing his sorrowful sojourn to an end. He has sensed that some of his household have returned from Arcadia and, within the cocoon of his Glamour, he hopes that this event signifies a fortuitous end to his lonesome vigil and a reward for his sacrifice.

Tamlin possesses extraordinary abilities in Kenning and Gremarye and a prodigious musical talent. He is one of the true fae, so most of his abilities exceed the norm for modern changelings. He retains a fierce hold on his sanity, though he frequently slips into dreamlike states akin to catatonia.

Image: Tamlin embodies the Fiona ideal. Seen in his natural state, his beauty radiates like a glowing torch. Fine features, long red hair and dark emerald-green eyes give him the appearance of a faerie king. He still wears the colors of his house. He has no mortal guise.

Roleplaying Hints: You pass from sleep into dreams and from there into pained wakefulness. Your music sustains you, feeding you with hope and sorrow and reminding you of those who are no longer nearby. Someday, this will all end — how, you do not know. For the time being, it's a song before sleeping and a lively air upon waking, and nothing but dreams in the space between.

Story Connection: Lord Tamlin ap Fiona has no connection with the story, although he once knew (and detested) Meilge ap Eiluned. The High Castle Crafters might elicit the characters' aid in solving the mystery of the Dancing Ground (Lord Tamlin's freehold) in return for their assistance in looking for the High King. The music from Tamlin's fiddle, additionally, might help replenish exhausted supplies of Glamour for characters who spend the night near his freehold.

Ceridwyllia, "Sweet Magnolia"

The Lost One who inhabits a freehold locked within a stand of pink magnolia trees outside Natchez, Mississippi, has dwelled within her palatial dream prison for centuries, since the Shattering caught her unaware. A noble of House Eiluned, once known for her powerful sorceries and her affinity for nature, Ceridwyllia quickly pulled together as much Glamour as she could in order to construct a wall of dreams between herself and the harsh material world.

In her fear, she ripped Glamour from a band of local Nunnehi, destroying their faerie natures and removing their spirits from their part of the Dreaming. This action thrust Ceridwyllia irrevocably into her Unseelie nature just as she completed the final enchantments to seal her entirely within a pocket of the Dreaming. The mortal world closed around her and abandoned her to her desperate, frightened, murderous dreams.

Over the centuries, Ceridwyllia has grown more and more maddened with her desperate state. Her nightmarish dreams have taken shape around her, forming themselves into hideous chimerical beings that alternately torment and grovel before her. Some of these creatures have begun to awaken to a kind of sentience and whisper to her of dark happenings in the world beyond her grasp. This only serves to intensify her fear that one day someone will penetrate her sanctuary and bring about her destruction. To this end, she has devised certain protections that



will discourage outsiders from approaching her guarded realm and punish those who persist or ignore her warnings. For her, existence within the Dreaming has become a perpetual sojourn in the realm of Nightmare.

Like all true fae (those who never took mortal form), Ceridwyllia's abilities far exceed those of normal changelings. She possesses a keen knowledge of plants and herbs, has a truly enchanting singing voice and, true to her Eiluned house, can manipulate anyone or anything to do her bidding (though she has little opportunity to do so in her present circumstances). She is a master of Sovereign and Chicanery with some knowledge of Dream Craft and Primal.

Image: Ceridwyllia is tall and slender, with torrents of dark chestnut hair framing her delicate face and cascading in ripples down her back. Her eyes are a pale blue, giving her face the vacant innocence of a china doll. She dresses in gowns of black and pink gossamer, spun from her dreams. Like all Lost Ones, she has no fleshly embodiment.

Roleplaying Hints: Every day they get closer, those who mean to harm you. You have held yourself apart from the great coldness outside for what seems like thousands of years, though perhaps only a few days have passed since you hid within the Dreaming. It doesn't matter; only survival matters. To that end, you send your fears outward from your home, hoping to keep yourself safe and inviolate as long as you can. Sometimes you wonder what it would be like to break through your enchantments and step outside; most of the time, however, you know that it would be your death.

Story Connection: Unscrupulous Unseelie acquaintances of the characters might put them in touch with the "wise lady in the magnolia grove," knowing full well that Ceridwyllia's advice is often deliberately misleading and malicious.

Inanimae

Faeries who have bonded with inanimate objects bear the name Inanimae and exhibit traits and powers beyond the understanding of most changelings. A few examples of southern Inanimae are listed here to provide Storytellers with ideas for expanding on these mysterious denizens of the Dreaming. While nymphs are technically Inanimae, they are listed separately.

Statuaries

Also called golems, these creatures reside within statues found in public squares, historic parks and museums. A passionate and determined Inanimae who calls himself Emancipation has inhabited the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., since its construction. Other statues throughout the Kingdom of Willows (and, most likely, all Concordia) contain their own resident faeries, attuned either to the vision embodied by the statue or to the stone from which it was carved.

Akin to statuaries, the Inanimae called cemeterians inhabit the monuments that mark burial sites and serve as tombstones or memorials. The Look Homeward Angel that marks the grave of Thomas Wolfe in Asheville, Riverside



Cemetery contains a loquacious faerie who watches over the author's boyhood hometown. Changelings who pass by cemeteries late at night can sometimes hear the muted conversations and sense the elusive movements of cemeterians.

Other Inanimae

In the Duchy of the Triangle, a number of nockers involved in the computer industry claim they have seen evidence of faeries residing within hardware and, in some cases, software. Rumors of an Internet of dreams has assumed the status of folk legend among these fae who work with high tech.

Some Inanimae have achieved a degree of mobility not usual for their kind. These are the ones who have linked themselves with the steamboats that ply the Mississippi or carnival rides in state theme parks.

Nymphs

The Inanimae known as nymphs inhabit natural objects, such as trees and rock formations. Though some have freedom of movement, many are confined to a limited sphere of activity. They nevertheless interact occasionally with local changelings.

Muireann, the Angel Oak

The nymph bound to the majestic Angel Oak near Charleston, South Carolina, watches the world change around her with a mournful fascination. A few of the local changelings know that the ancient tree houses the spirit of a nymph, and some Kithain have sought her advice and counsel, knowing that her many years have given her great wisdom and profound insights.

Although those blessed with faerie sight enjoy the gentle company of the nymph and bask in the peaceful Glamour she



exudes, none understand the sorrow buried deep within her ever-aching heart.

Long before the Shattering, a few sidhe traveled across the ocean to seek refuge in the western lands. One of these, Gofraidh of House Gwydion, built a freehold near modern-day Charleston. On one occasion, when Lord Gofraidh was inspecting his new lands, he encountered a beautiful maiden sitting beneath an oak tree of unsurpassed splendor. The two creatures of the Dreaming fell in love instantly. Although, as a bound nymph, the Lady Muireann could not stray far from her tree, Lord Gofraidh spent as much time in her company as he could, sometimes neglecting his other duties as the head of a faerie household in order to be near his heart's joy.

When the Shattering fell upon the land, Lord Gofraidh helped the other residents of his freehold escape to Arcadia, then returned to the island where Muireann's tree stood, hoping to convince his beloved to come with him. Through her tears, Muireann told her sidhe lover that such was impossible. She and her tree were bound to remain rooted to the mortal world; she could only trust that they would also anchor themselves in what was left of the Dreaming as well. She urged Gofraidh to leave her and save himself before it was too late. Gofraidh refused, choosing instead to remain in the embrace of his beloved until the darkness and icy chill of the Shattering trapped and shattered his faerie spirit beyond retrieval.

Over the ensuing centuries, Muireann has come to terms with the overwhelming sadness that enveloped her at Gofraidh's death. She takes an interest in mortals and changelings alike, delighting in watching them as they rest beneath her leafy branches. When approached by changelings who can see her faerie form, she is a gracious host, offering wisdom and comfort. Though polite and helpful, Muireann always avoids forming close relationships with other changelings.

Image: Muireann's mortal form is that of an ancient oak, majestic and powerful in aspect. Her faerie nature reveals a slim

maiden with nut-brown skin and long, flowing hair that changes colors with the seasons. Her eyes, though warm and friendly, sometimes fill with tears for no apparent reason.

Roleplaying Hints: Centuries have passed, yet to you it seems almost yesterday that you watched your greatest joy fall prey to the Shattering's icy knives. You try not to let your sorrow blind you to the beauty that still lies within your sight, but you will never again allow yourself to feel too deeply or become too attached to anyone.

Story Connection: The Angel Oak has no direct connection with the search for the High King. She can identify, however, with the loss of a loved one and might have some wisdom (at the Storyteller's discretion) that could further characters' search for David.

Evangeline, The Lady of Bayou St. John

Within the city of New Orleans, not far from Lake Pontchartrain, Bayou St. John stands as a fragile reminder of the natural world. Inhabiting the bayou, bound to a magnificent, moss-draped cypress tree, the nymph known as the Lady of Bayou St. John strives to maintain her tenuous connections to both her natural focus and the Dreaming to which she belongs.

Some of the changelings of New Orleans visit the Lady's tree. There, in the radius of her influence, these visitors automatically manifest their true selves as the Dreaming surrounds them. Within the Lady's sphere, changelings can see her dual image as tree and faerie; few who see her leave her presence without weeping for what they see.

The Lady is ancient, as old as the tree that serves as her anchor to the physical world. Because of her age, she has wisdom that far exceeds the eldest of the fae and, in some cases, the oldest members of other supernatural species. Although her true name remains a secret, she has developed a liking for the name Evangeline, having heard Longfellow's poem from a local eshu whose mortal family contains Cajun blood.



Evangeline senses that her bayou — like most wilderness lands — is under attack from malevolent forces in both the material world and the Dreaming. Both she and her tree seem afflicted with a gnawing lassitude and a sickness of the spirit. Changelings who seek her counsel often leave gifts of Glamour, which help stave off the malaise temporarily. Sooner or later, Evangeline fears that the city will devour this oasis of natural beauty, bringing to an end her existence in both worlds.

The Lady of Bayou St. John possesses unlimited amounts of Kenning and ancient lore. She is also adept at presenting insights into puzzles, often in the form of a riddle or allegorical folk tale. Though limited in her ability to leave the area of her cypress, in faerie form she possesses a natural grace and is accomplished in both song and dance. Her knowledge of Soothsay and Primal gives her great control over the natural world and allows her to see into the distant future.

Image: Evangeline's mortal form is a tall, stately cypress overhung with long fronds of Spanish moss. Even to human eyes, this tree bears a feminine grace and seems to exude an inexpressible sadness. The Lady's faerie seeming resembles a delicate, brown-skinned woman with long mossy strands of dark olive hair. Although she is still quite beautiful, the sickness that affects her and her tree makes her seem to be on the verge of fading away. The sadness in her eyes brings tears to anyone who meets her gaze.

Roleplaying Hints: So much noise, so much tumult surrounds you that even in your sanctuary you cannot help but feel the weight of the world begin to press in upon you. You long for the company of the mobile ones, the changelings whose short lives and frenetic activities invest you with life and gaiety for a time. They have questions, and sometimes you have answers. Perhaps your advice can lead eventually to a better time.

Story Connection: Evangeline's knowledge of ancient faerie lore might provide the characters with important leads on their quest for David. In addition, the Lady might offer to hide Faerilyth should the High Queen be in need of a protector. Evangeline knows every inch of Bayou St. John and also has friends throughout New Orleans who can come to her assistance at a moment's notice.

Prodigals

Vampires, werewolves, mages and wraiths comprise a class of supernaturals referred to by changelings as Prodigals, faeries who have lost their connection with their faerie heritage and who have transformed into something else entirely. The following section describes the various types of Prodigals found within the Kingdom of Willows and details a few individuals who may have occasion to interact with local changelings.

Vampires

For the most part, vampires and changelings run in different circles. Whenever they do overlap, cooperation and alliances can occur. Changelings are drawn to the dark Glamour vampires exude and can become caught up in it to the exclu-

sion of other activities, so most who contact the Children of Lilith keep it short for their own protection. On their part, vampires who taste Kithain blood can find it profoundly disturbing. Some, however, acquire the taste, much as mortals become addicted to harmful drugs. Still, all rules have exceptions, and some of the Kithain of the Kingdom of Willows have connections with local Kindred.

Few cities in the American South are large enough to support more than a handful of vampires. Major cities, such as Atlanta, Charleston, the Research Triangle of North Carolina, Memphis, Nashville and other Southern metropolises rival the cities of the Northeast, Midwest and West coast in vampiric residents. The smaller cities and towns, however, hold only one or two Kindred at most; a vampire will occasionally claim an entire county as her feeding grounds. In addition, the countryside and wilderness areas of the Kingdom of Willows support a few of the feral vampires known as Gangrels.

Storytellers wanting more information on the development of Kindred society in the South may find these details in *New Orleans by Night*, *D.C. by Night*, and other sourcebooks for *Vampire: the Masquerade*.

Dominic G. Fellowes, "Family Friend"

Though King Meilge prides himself on his connections to Atlanta's crimelords, many of these underworld bosses actually serve another master — the elusive, nocturnal gentleman known as "Mr. D."

Dominic G. (for Giovanni) Fellowes, in fact, has exercised control over Atlanta's major criminal operations for the last 120 years. Arriving in Atlanta in the early part of the post-Civil War Reconstruction era, Dominic quickly cornered the market in prostitution, smuggling, the black market, gambling and extortion.

When his operatives informed him a few years ago that a new player had emerged on the scene, Dominic arranged for an



evening meeting with the newcomer. Intending to size up his rival and, if necessary, put him in his place, Dominic found himself instead responding favorably to the distinguished, disturbingly alluring gentleman who introduced himself as Mr. Willows. An unlikely partnership emerged from that meeting, and an association based on mutual respect has resulted in something akin to "friendship."

Dominic has several havens scattered throughout the city. His primary resting place, the basement of a Victorian mansion on the outskirts of Atlanta, remains a secret to all but his most trusted retainers.

Image: Dominic appears to be a slender, sickly looking man in his mid-30s, with slicked-back black hair, heavy-lidded dark eyes and a strong chin. He dresses in hand-tailored suits (usually dark gray) and silk ties. His speech is cultured, with no trace of an accent. A pair of ghouls, one male and one female, accompany him wherever he goes.

Roleplaying Hints: Your family believes that you have the entire city of Atlanta firmly under your control. You allow them to continue in that assumption. So far as you can tell, the man who calls himself Mr. Willows does not appear to be a threat to you. So long as you can work with him, you will. If he proves inconvenient, however, you know lots of ways to rid yourself of any problems he might cause.

Story Connection: Several of Meilge's plans for abducting the High King have come to Dominic's notice; one of the goons Meilge selected to baby-sit the Banalized David actually answers to Dominic. Thus far, Dominic merely knows that "Mr. Willows" arranged to have a "rival" removed. He isn't certain yet if he should take steps to acquire control of this important prisoner himself. The Giovanni also knows of Meilge's strange commission of an iron cage, although he has no idea of its purpose.

Werewolves

Werewolves and changelings share a connection with the Wyld. Both are creatures who thrive on spontaneity and abhor the steady encroachment of the modern world into regions they consider sacrosanct. Some changelings, particularly the sidhe, remember ancient ties with certain tribes of werewolves. In many parts of the Kingdom of Willows, Garou and Kithain have found common ground, and strong friendships have arisen between individuals of both species. In Atlanta; Baltimore; Washington, D.C. and the Research Triangle, Bone Gnawers and Glass Walkers share their love for creative and nonharmful technology with nockers, boggans and members of House Dougal. The many Celtic festivals scattered throughout the South draw large numbers of Fianna Garou, bringing them into contact with local changelings, particularly pooka and members of House Fiona.

Just as changelings have a sinister aspect, so too do the werewolves. Some Black Spiral Dancers, servants of destruction and chaos, actively work with the Unseelie fae of Houses Balor and Ailil to bring about the triumph of disorder and universal ruin.



As always, the extent of cross-connections between the Garou and the Kithain remains in the hands of individual Storytellers, who can find additional information on werewolves of the South in **Rage Across Appalachia** and other sourcebooks for **Werewolf: the Apocalypse**.

Monica Hawthorne, Entrepreneur to the Fae

As a member of the Garou tribe of Glass Walkers, Monica has no fear of technology, but views it as a part of humanity's natural creativity and thus acceptable to Gaia, the spirit of the Earth. As a graduate student in engineering at the University of Chapel Hill, she attended several lectures given by Professor Camden Murdoch. Sensing something extraordinary about the gifted but decidedly eccentric professor, Monica looked more closely at him, drawing upon her Garou abilities to penetrate his mortal shell. Delighted at discovering a member of the rare race of faeries, Monica sought out the Professor and revealed herself to him.

Since that time, Monica and Duke Murdoch have maintained regular contact with each other. She is one of the few non-Kithain to visit the sidhe lord's laboratory and view some of his prized inventions. She is trying to interest Murdoch in the idea of starting up a small business to market some of his more durable creations. So far, Murdoch has declined her offer, fearing that his Glamour-infused machines and gadgets will not survive the Banality of the modern marketplace.

Image: Monica is tall and broad-shouldered, with short dark hair and bright blue eyes. She dresses in stylish clothes, even when attending lectures, and usually carries a laptop computer and cell phone. As a wolf, she has dark brown fur and a stocky, well-muscled body.

Roleplaying Hints: Professor Murdoch's dream-tech may be just the solution to bridging the gap between the Weaver's creations and the Wyld's abhorrence of technology. You don't exactly understand why the Professor is afraid to release his

inventions into the world. You would love to bring the changelings of the Triangle into an alliance with your fellow Garou. There are few enough of each of you in the region that cooperation may spell the difference between defeat and victory in the coming war against the Wyrms — or the Endless Winter, as the Professor calls it.

Story Connection: Monica has no direct connection with the story, although it is possible that she can assist characters who win her trust through her Gifts and abilities to travel through the Umbra.

Mages

Changelings and mages can make interesting if often volatile combinations. Mages thrive on reinterpreting reality; like changelings, many mages — those who belong to the Traditions — decry the static (i.e., banal) paradigm of the modern, techno-rational world view. Members of the Technocracy, who are responsible for much of the world's refusal to accept anything irrational or magical, have a harder time dealing with changelings on anything other than an antagonistic basis. There are, of course, exceptions to this generalization, but circumstances must be extraordinary for a changeling and a Technocracy mage to cooperate. Marauder mages, who create their own chaotic world view wherever they go, sometimes acquire changelings as companions or allies; many Kithain, however, find their presence too disorienting to deal with.

Many Traditions and Technocratic Conventions exist, albeit in relatively small numbers, throughout the Kingdom of Willows. Their associations with the local changeling population are as varied as each mage's individual "dream" of reality.

The Celestial Chorus has numerous members active in the Bible Belt, where the language of religion gives them a foothold among the majority of Southern "believers." In New Orleans and a few other places where voodoo has a following, the

Euthanatos have gained a strong hold. Dreamspeakers find their magick effective in Native American communities and among the sizable black population of the South, while a few Verbena have discovered wellsprings of Quintessence in the Southern backwoods, often on ancient faerie sites.

Storytellers may use information from **Mage: the Ascension** and its various sourcebooks to embellish the mage population of the Kingdom of Willows.

Annalee Bonnedieux, "Spirit Talker"

Annalee's mother was a self-initiated priestess of a small sect, based in New Orleans, that borrowed its beliefs from many traditions; voodoo, Catholic, evangelical, Santeria and Wiccan practices gave the Church of the Open Soul an eclectic and ageless feel. Charismatic and hands-on healing sessions led to outbursts of the "spirit," sending participants into bouts of glossolalia (speaking in tongues), prophesying and sometimes among particularly sensitive individuals, convulsions.

Hand-picked to succeed her mother as high priestess, Annalee seemed well on the way to fulfilling the church's expectations until one meeting, when she felt something break apart within her, as if some nascent creature were bursting through a shell. Wracked by convulsions, she fell writhing to the floor of the basement apartment used by the church. The episode passed, but the girl refused to open her eyes or do anything except breathe. Her mother refused to take her daughter to the hospital, insisting that the spirit was moving inside her daughter and that she belonged at home.

For three days, Annalee languished in a deep coma. During that time, she experienced a series of eerie dreams, in which wise men and women came to her in a timeless place and spoke to her of truemagick.

When she awoke, she realized that something profound had happened to her. The next evening, a tall, thin woman with coal-dark skin and bright green eyes visited her. She introduced herself as Sister Moriah and informed Annalee that she had just found her way into the Tradition of mages who called themselves Dreamspeakers.

Since her Awakening, Annalee has left her mother's church to study with her mentor. The two women work with community service organizations to improve the conditions of the city's poor while at the same time attempting to heal the many rifts they see in the spirit world around New Orleans. Annalee has recently discovered the existence of a small community of changelings based in the Big Easy. Although their dark dreams disturb her, she is determined to bring the truth of the spirit world to these misled creatures. She hopes to wean the woman who calls herself Duchess Lisette away from contact with the city's Setite vampires, but Sister Moriah has warned her that doing so may prove costly.

Image: Annalee is a waiflike young woman of mixed blood. She has café-au-lait skin, honey-blond hair and pale-blue eyes. She dresses in wispy scraps of second-hand clothing and usually carries a shoulder bag filled with various items she finds useful in working her magick.



Roleplaying Hints: The spirit world around New Orleans is dark and frightening. Many things are out of balance, and it is your duty to try to restore harmony to the distressed ancestors and totem children who dwell beyond the Barrier. If you were a death mage, you might try to eradicate the perpetrators of the malevolence you sense; as a Dreamspeaker, however, your inclination is to heal and transform, rather than destroy. At least, for now.

Story Connection: Characters who know anything about Dreamspeakers may look up Annalee for assistance in searching for evidence that David's spirit has left the world. Annalee will be able to assure them that the ancestors have not encountered David on the Bright Path or in the lands of the dead.

Wraiths

The Restless Dead abound in the Kingdom of Willows, bound to the region by Fetters of many kinds. In the backwoods and bayous, victims of crimes of passion, feuds and vendettas haunt the sites of their deaths. In the cities, homicides, suicides and accident victims remain close to the people they have left too soon or the things they have not yet accomplished. The ghosts of coal miners buried under thousands of tons of rock in Kentucky, of drowning victims along the Mississippi flood plain, and of careless wilderness daytrippers in the Ozarks, Appalachians and Cumberland Mountains linger near their graves or look in on their loved ones from beyond the Shroud.

The ghosts of war choke the Southern Shadowlands. The South contains sites of bloody battles from the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the Civil War and the numerous conflicts between native people and encroaching settlers. The ground in some parts of the Kingdom of Willows radiates a dark Glamour that has little to do with that faerie realm's tainted king.

Storytellers seeking to combine fairy tales with ghost stories should consult **Wraith: the Oblivion** and its sourcebooks,

particularly **Necropolis: Atlanta**, the **Wraith Players Guide** and the **Shadow Players Guide** for additional information on Southern wraiths.

The Colonel

Stalking the battlefields from Antietam to Shiloh, from Chickamauga to Vicksburg, the tattered figure clad in the faded uniform of a Confederate soldier makes his lonely pilgrimage in the darkest hours of the southern nights. Wandering through the battlegrounds, oblivious to commemorative markers and plaques that attest to the passage of time, he stoops over now and again, as if contemplating some invisible form lying on the ground at his feet. Sometimes, he kneels to whisper words of comfort to an unseen, fallen comrade or, more often, to close the eyes of a dying form — likewise undetectable to anyone but himself.

If anyone approaches him, either in the physical world or by entering the Dark Umbra of the Shadowlands, he regards them sadly with haunted eyes. "Have you seen my brother?" he whispers in a voice that comes from a vast inner well of sorrow. "I think I killed him in the heat of battle. Or maybe it was in another place."

The wraith who calls himself "the Colonel" remembers little of his mortal life except that he fought for the South during the Civil War, while his younger brother remained loyal to the Union. The Colonel has undergone so many Harrowings in the Tempest that surrounds the Shadowlands that most of his memories have been stripped from him. The one memory that lingers and that holds him to the Skinlands (the physical world) is the sight of his bloody saber buried in the chest of a Union soldier — his brother.

The Colonel may attach himself to any changeling character who even superficially resembles his brother (whose description is left to the Storyteller). Unseelie changelings who are members of the Pilgrims of the Bright Road may find him a useful and informative companion and ally, for if his memories of his physical life have faded to almost nothing, his knowledge of the events occurring on his side of the Shroud are sharp and incisive.

Image: The Colonel appears to be in his mid-30s, with shoulder length chestnut brown hair and a full mustache. His brown eyes are soft and sorrowful. His handsome face is marred by a gaping wound on his left cheek — the remnants of the musket blast that ended his mortal life. He wears the clothing of a colonel in the Army of the Confederacy, though he is missing identifying regimental patches and other markings that would provide easy references to his true identity.

Roleplaying Hints: You didn't mean to cause your brother's death. In the confusion of swords and rifles and the press of bodies as two armies clashed up close, you never knew who caught your sword's thrust until he fell at your feet. His sightless eyes condemned you to this eternity of searching for his remains. If you could remember where you fought, your task might be easier. In the meantime, there are so many others who are in need of your comfort and your pleas for forgiveness. You



sometimes touch the minds of the living in the course of your wandering, hoping that one of them might lead you to your goal and allow you to make your peace and rest in the arms of Oblivion.

Story Connection: If characters can "connect" with the Colonel, the wraith can provide them with the information that no one fitting the description of David's mortal form has entered the Shadowlands.

The Dauntain

Changelings who have denied their natures serve as some of the Kithain's most dangerous opponents. Some have willingly destroyed their faerie souls, believing themselves possessed by demons. These Dauntain make fanatic witch-hunters and can be found in the Kingdom of Willows conducting purity crusades or stirring up the Moral Majority to stamp out signs of perversion and unwholesome displays of the imagination. Other members of this group remain ignorant of their faerie natures but devote themselves, nevertheless, to the eradication of forces and mysterious events they don't understand. Many of the Dauntain act as psychologists, prison wardens, logic professors and police investigators. More information on the Dauntain and their motivations can be found in **The Autumn People**.

Mortals

Most changelings in the Kingdom of Willows maintain contact with their mortal families or have friends and coworkers who know nothing of the Dreaming or its creatures. Interactions with the mortal world form important parts of changeling chronicles, and Storytellers should use as many sources as possible to create realistic human allies and antagonists for their changeling characters.

Aside from family members, friends, lovers, business and professional associates and other humans a changeling might encounter in the course of her mortal life, southern changelings may also meet up with faith healers, itinerant preachers, snake-oil salesmen, smooth-talking local politicians, small-town sheriffs, gangs of good ole' boys, members of the local chapter of the KKK and any number of other "typically" southern archetypes. Artists, dancers, poets, craftspersons and other creative individuals serve as potent sources of Glamour for changelings in the Kingdom of Willows.

While most changeling chronicles tend to focus on events that take place within freeholds or in the Near Dreaming, Storytellers should keep in mind that the real world lies on just the other side of the Mists and that when a changeling temporarily loses her faerie self to Banality, there is still a whole world outside waiting to claim her attention.

A few mortals fall into special categories that lift them above the common crowd of unaware humans.

The Enchanted

Changelings often enchant mortals to bring them more fully into the Dreaming. The reasons for doing so are as varied as the changelings who engage in the practice of enchantment. Kithain often seek to enchant lovers, best friends, children and outcasts either to share with them the wonders of the Dreaming or, less admirably, to use them as servants and Glamour-dolls.

Many mortals in the American South have a lower Banality threshold than in some other parts of the country. In metropolitan areas such as Atlanta, Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, mortal disbelief in the supernatural is on a par with most major urban centers; in areas of the Southeast blessed with populations whose ethnic folk history predisposes them to accepting the miraculous or the magical, mortals tend to offer less resistance to being brought into the world of changelings. In particular, African-Americans and Celtic-Americans have strong beliefs in the existence of creatures from the spirit world or faerie. The backwoods, hinterlands, bayous and other wild places of the South contain many enclaves of mortals who refuse to accept their encounters with haints, Fair Folk and bogeymen as mere superstition. These individuals are relatively easy to enchant and suffer less from the experience than mortals raised to disbelieve anything that fails to fit the rational mindset.

The Enchanted, a sourcebook for **Changeling: the Dreaming**, gives rules for enchanting mortals and for creating Enchanted mortals to use as characters or Storyteller personalities.

Autumn People

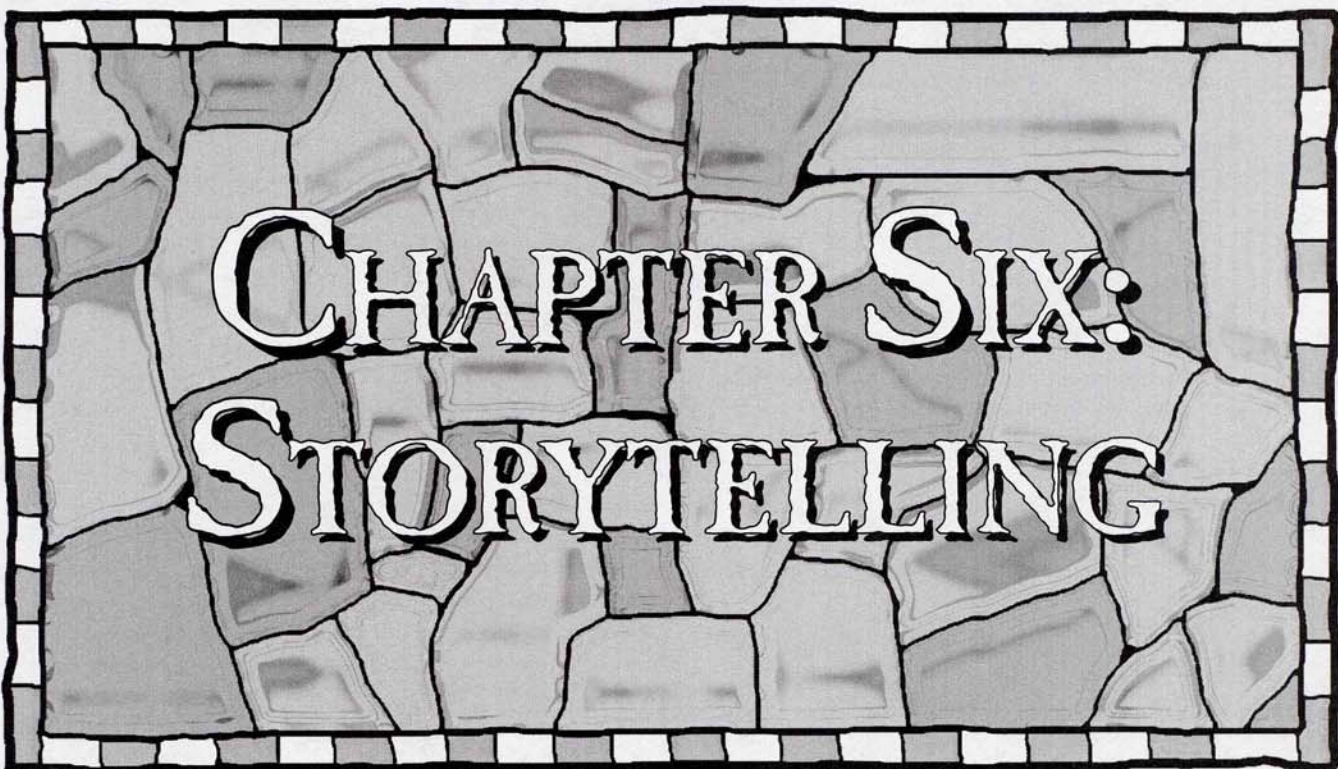
For every mortal who falls under the spell of a changeling, there is one whose excessive Banality serves as a karmic backlash, driving the Kithain out of their faerie selves by his mere presence. These are the Autumn People, humans so riddled with soulless disbelief and stultifying mundanity that they act as wet blankets tossed over a parade of Dreamers.

The Kingdom of Willows has its share of these party-poopers. Autumn People exist among hate-mongers, who dwell on turning minds against anything that is not normal or 100% "American"; petty politicians, who see the world in terms of votes and personal gain; and rationalists, who may belong to any profession or social class and who have denied themselves the ability to imagine anything better than what they see and feel. Not a few Southern preachers have twisted the promise of their religion into a spiritless campaign for dollars and empty devotions. Many conservative religious factions suppress creative or individual thinking because they fear it will distract their flock from "what's in the Good Book." King David's quartet of kidnappers fall into the category of Autumn People, as does the mother of Appalachia's Duchess Dianan.

The Autumn People describes these crass opponents of the Dreaming for Storytellers who wish to inject these implacable foes into their chronicles.







CHAPTER SIX: STORYTELLING

Bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear....
— William Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis*

This section provides ideas for telling stories based in the Kingdom of Willows. Many of these suggestions feature the characters outlined in Chapters Four and Five and should serve as starting points for indigenous changeling characters beginning play within the region, more advanced characters arriving in the area, or newly created outsiders. This chapter also includes information to help the Storyteller enhance the mood and atmosphere of stories set in the Kingdom of Willows.

In addition, this section also launches the events of the ongoing storyline, beginning with the masquerade ball given by King Meilge to honor the visiting High King and Queen of Concordia. Several complex issues are at work in this chronicle.

To help Storytellers better understand what happens at the ball and shortly thereafter, a little background on the major players in the drama is offered here.

Prelude to the Quest

King Meilge has long desired the throne of Concordia. His original intent was to depose High King David through both his criminal connections and his supporters in the Golden Sickle. When a beautiful young sidhe named Faerilyth became his ward, Meilge knew he could use her to further his ambitions; he simply wasn't certain how. Just as he had arranged the assassi-

nation of his predecessor, King Barabas, to clear his way to the throne of Willows, so Faerilyth through marriage, alliance or some other means could open doors otherwise closed to him. To this end, he arranged for his young ward to visit the High King's stronghold. At Tara-Nar, he knew she would meet important people who could advance her standing (and therefore his) in the highest court of the land.

Before their exile from Arcadia, David and Morwen had been lovers. Hoping to remain together in exile, they tried to inhabit the bodies of children known to one another. By accident (or someone else's design), when David and Morwen took on mortal bodies, they incarnated as brother and sister rather than unrelated neighbors. Still devoted to one another, they could no longer have the same sort of relationship they had formerly enjoyed in the Dreaming. Both David and Morwen assumed they would continue to love one another; they would modify that love to feelings appropriate to siblings, however.

Both tried to do so. David was more successful than Morwen. When Princess Lenore first became David's heir, Morwen needed a week or so to adjust to someone else claiming his love and attention. She soon accepted Lenore, though a few Kithain suspected Lenore's being a little girl eliminated her as a true rival. Despite the uneasiness generated by their truncated love, David trusts Morwen implicitly, and she is totally loyal to him. Whenever David leaves Tara-Nar, he places Morwen in charge.

Then Faerilyth arrived. David was away, and Morwen was in charge. Distrusted for her Eiluned blood and her association with Meilge, the young sidhe was Morwen's opposite. Dark, mysterious and sorcerous rather than light, open and honorable, Faerilyth found few supporters in David's court. Though Morwen was not actively hostile, she reserved judgment, waiting to see if Faerilyth would reveal a more sinister personality. Because so many courtiers distrusted her, Faerilyth withdrew into herself, becoming more secretive and less approachable. Had she been more open concerning her unhappiness, Morwen would have been kinder and compelled to draw her out. They might have been friends. Instead, Faerilyth's aloofness worked against her. Morwen became distrustful of Faerilyth's motives — especially after David returned.

The High King was immediately attracted to the Southern beauty. He sought out her company and discovered that what others saw as cool poise was instead sadness and loneliness. Hoping to make her feel more at home, he spent time in her company, taking her to concerts and the theater, even just sitting and talking in the garden. Faerilyth blossomed from David's attention, and as Faerilyth's true nature emerged, she and David fell in love.

Morwen went ballistic. Sharing David with a child was one thing; losing him to an untrustworthy Eiluned fortune-hunter was another. When she spoke to him concerning Faerilyth's motives, David made it clear that he would hear no ill words about Faerilyth. Realizing she would lose David if she



persisted, Morwen backed down and went underground. Calling together a group of David's most loyal knights, she convinced them to watch Faerilyth and make certain she presented no danger to the king. These knights would later form the core of the Morwenist faction.

In the Kingdom of Grass, a young noble of House Gwydion was becoming known as the best knight in Concordia. Llew Ardwyad, a cousin to the High King, believed that he could better serve his house and Concordia as one of David's knights. He sought and received permission to travel to Tara-Nar to dedicate his service to the High King. As soon as he arrived and met the King, Llew pledged himself to David. During the next few weeks, Llew proved beyond a doubt that his reputation was not exaggerated. Winning every tournament, the Gwydion knight was gracious to the losers and suitably humble concerning his achievements. Courteous to ladies, friendly to the court and honorable to a fault, Llew quickly became one of the High King's best friends and the most sought-after knight at court.

Llew was not interested in the other women of the court; he had seen the lady he knew his heart would belong to forever the first night he arrived. With her dark hair and violet eyes, slender grace and quiet demeanor, Lady Faerilyth from the Kingdom of Willows was his ideal woman. Whenever he had the chance, he watched her secretly. Yet, before he could proclaim himself to her, he discovered that her heart was pledged to another.

Against the advice of many of his nobles (whose protests were spurred on by Morwen), David proposed to Faerilyth. She refused him initially, saying that she was not popular with his court. To marry her might cause difficulties for him. David argued that losing her would cause him many more difficulties; finally, she consented. He saw only one solution to her unpopularity: let his courtiers get to know her better. Then they would see her intelligence, grace and political astuteness. He declared he would make her his equal, bestowing on her the rank of High Queen. Numerous discussions later, Faerilyth realized that if she did not accept the crown alongside him, David might very well abdicate in favor of his heir. She agreed.

On Beltaine, David and Faerilyth were married. The ceremony was followed by Faerilyth's crowning as High Queen of Concordia. Morwen, her face a frozen mask of disbelief and anguish, served as one of Faerilyth's bridesmaids. Llew, his eyes never leaving Faerilyth but his features composed, was one of David's attendants. Meilge came from Atlanta to give away the bride. Once the marriage was done and the crowning a reality, David announced that he and the High Queen would be making a GrandTour of the kingdom so that the people could meet their new queen. Meilge immediately suggested that they begin the tour in the Kingdom of Willows. He requested a month or so to prepare for the royal visit.

Happier than he had been in years, David assented, granting Meilge the honor of hosting their first stop along

the tour because the Eiluned noble had been Faerilyth's guardian and mentor. As always, David asked Morwen to act in his stead while he was absent. Lenore was sent to stay with Queen Mab.

Realizing that through fate he was about to achieve his goal, Meilge rushed home to Atlanta and put his plan into effect. He commissioned a cold iron cage and several cold iron weapons from Duke Firedrake of Alabama. From his criminal and assassin contacts, he solicited a supply of Dreambane, a Glamour-enriched drug — and an equally important cache of Dreamshield, Dreambane's antidote. The drug makes changelings susceptible to suggestions and suppresses their ability to think rationally. Meilge's covert activities underway, he arranged for a masquerade ball as part of the "planned" festivities.

During the ball, Meilge tricked both Faerilyth and David into consuming wine laced with the drug. Taking David aside, he convinced the High King that his nobles had risen against him over dissatisfaction with his marriage and the declaration making Faerilyth High Queen. Convinced that he had been deposed and that knights intending to kill him were on the way, David allowed Meilge to send him to safety after being assured that Faerilyth was already safe. As he truly believed he had been deposed, David gave up the kingship, thus repudiating it, and Caliburn left him to seek the next High King.

Strangely, Caliburn itself was somehow reacting to the drug in David's system. Almost as soon as the sword departed, it felt that David had not been in his right mind when he abdicated. Intending to immediately return to David and restore his sanity, if it could, Caliburn found that the essence it identified as David was gone. Caliburn knew that the High King could not have disappeared so quickly unless he had fallen prey to Banality or disappeared into the Dreaming. To find him, Caliburn would need an agent, someone pure of heart who could carry the High King's sword but covet neither it nor the King's power. The sword began its search. Within minutes, Caliburn found a worthy bearer: a young eshu named Seif.

Beaten unconscious with iron weapons and locked within a cold iron cage, David was taken from Willow's Heart. Placed in the hands of Meilge's highly banal agents (two humans and two Autumn People), David does not remember who he is, much less his faerie nature. Under Meilge's instructions, David's captors will move him around, never allowing him to encounter anything that might provide him with Glamour. As before, when Meilge preferred not to dirty his own hands in killing King Barabas, he hopes that Banality will finish David off. The High King is no longer a young man. Though he has spent enough time within freeholds that his aging has been retarded, too much time in the mundane world could forever suppress his faerie nature.

Meilge's plan is to claim the throne for Faerilyth. Since David is missing, she will obviously turn to her mentor, and he



will help her by becoming her chief advisor and minister. He plans to allow her to rule for a year or two, then take over when she meets an unfortunate accident.

Others have different plans (see "War", below). Faerilyth remains queen and continues the tour — as she believes David would have wanted her to do. Lleu stays by Faerilyth's side, becoming the Queen's Champion. Seif, bearer of Caliburn, begins the epic quest to find the High King. And David? Who knows where he may be? That's for other stories to determine.

The quest is under way, and the tale is begun.

The Chronicle of Caliburn

Beginning with this book, an ongoing storyline runs through the successive kingdom books for **Changeling: the Dreaming**. In brief, the story follows and embellishes upon the tale begun in the fiction piece that opens this book. The disappearance of David and Caliburn's choice of a commoner as its bearer are but the introduction to an epic story. Future chapters will be written in other kingdom books as the quest moves to other parts of Concordia — and even into the Dreaming. Each succeeding book in this series will add new details and new twists to this story, introducing new characters and catching up with old favorites as the needs of the tale demand. This is a story of history in the making, with as much emphasis on what is to come as on what has been.

While the storyline provides an ongoing adventure against which stories in the various kingdoms can be played out, it is not laid out as a predestined adventure. The framework is there; it's up to individual Storytellers to decide what goes inside the frame. Storytellers may utilize the background events to customize tales for troupes interested in playing through the grand quest or may ignore it altogether. Nevertheless, even if the quest itself is ignored, the fact that these events are transpiring in Concordia has an effect on and colors each place that the characters visit and the Kithain that they meet. The land itself is bound up with David's welfare; his absence has a profound effect on his kingdom.

Obviously, there are more stories happening just within the Kingdom of Willows than that of David's disappearance. Many others will present themselves with each successive kingdom book. Even troupes who are primarily concerned with finding the High King and returning him to his throne will occasionally need to devote themselves to other quests or to a few days of much-needed rest. That's when the other people and places detailed in the book come into play. Almost anyone might be at a party the characters attend (such as Meilge's masquerade ball, which half the kingdom attends). Such chance meetings might lead to invitations to visit, discussions of common interest (and resulting travel to a place where that interest may be indulged), or even an attraction between a Storyteller's character and a player's.

Letters from mutual friends asking for assistance or offering an unusual item for sale, news of strange happenings, even kidnappings with clues leading to the area the Storyteller wants

explored can entice characters out of the main thrust of an ongoing storyline. Naturally, characters may find there are connections they never would have suspected. Even the chance to make friends who support the same cause they do should motivate characters to go places and meet people. After all, on the eve of war, people need all the friends they can get.

War

Did we say war? Well...yes.

High Kings can't just disappear without causing a few political upheavals. The Accordance War was settled because David was revealed as the High King and was willing to reach an accord with the commoners. His ascension to the throne of Concordia ended a costly and vicious war. With his disappearance, those who were never truly satisfied with compromise now have the excuse they needed to again assert dubious claims and air old hatreds. Almost before the news of David's absence reaches them, many of these changelings are planning campaigns against old enemies. This time, there's no David to stop the fighting.

Nobles may blame Meilge, Faerilyth, Eiluneds in general or even assume commoners are to blame. Each theory evokes a new round of accusation and plans for revenge. Every secret society known to Seelie and Unseelie moves into high gear, hoping to come out on top — or at least ahead.

Nor are the commoners any more rational. Caliburn chose an eshu as its bearer, rather than a sidhe. Many commoners see this as justification for a push to unseat the nobles. Several commoner groups who have their own agendas jump at the chance to advance their own aims. Commoner/noble distrust and hatred rise to the highest levels they've been since the end of the Accordance War. Tempers on both sides fray as the stability of the land is undermined by David's absence.

Those who might put a stop to the conflict are caught up in it themselves. Caliburn wants David back. Until the High King is restored, the sword refuses to choose another king. Realizing David acted while not in his right mind, Caliburn does not accept his abdication. Until a sane David gives up the throne voluntarily, the sword still considers him king. Other nobles may want Caliburn to choose a new ruler; the blade will not.

Faerilyth insists upon her right to the throne, though she too hopes David will return. Rather than return to Tara-Nar, the High Queen believes it is important for her to make connections with the nobles and commoners throughout Concordia. Though she never wanted the crown, David gave it to Faerilyth upon their marriage. She will not now shirk the responsibility he placed on her shoulders.

Many nobles and commoners support Faerilyth, won over by her charm and their belief in her innocence... and because it furthers their own aims. These Kithain have formed a political faction, the Royalists, to advance the cause of the queen. They will undoubtedly clash violently with other factions who hold different views.

Morwen denies that Faerilyth may claim any right to the throne. Morwen thinks that Meilge and Faerilyth were working together to overthrow the King and that Faerilyth was sent to seduce and betray David and lead him into a trap. She asserts that David left the throne in her hands, and that she will not surrender it to anyone but her brother. Should he not return, she will consider crowning Lenore High Queen and herself assume the title of Regent. The knights Morwen recruited to oppose the marriage have formed the core membership of a new political faction known as the Morwenists.

Even within their ranks, however, there are differences of opinion. Some Morwenists agree with Morwen herself and support the idea of crowning Lenore; others think Morwen herself ought to simply declare herself High Queen. After all, as David's sister, she should hold equal rank.

Still others see this as a chance to throw off the shackles of a High King and assert regional supremacy. Others want no kings at all and believe a return to the days before the Resurgence is in order. With so many factions at odds, it would be strange if war didn't threaten Concordia. All it would take is the right spark.

To some extent, the upheaval in the land reflects the confusion that David is experiencing. The Dreaming itself enforces the link between the king and the land, and until David is restored to his right mind, it is unlikely that peaceful solutions will hold for long. Unless David returns or Caliburn accepts another as the rightful King — or Queen — Concordia will certainly become the Discordia that many Unseelie long to see, and war will once again tear the Kithain asunder.

Elements of the Story

This is a knight's quest. The deposition of David and Meilge's plots against him are merely a background to the beginning of the real tale: the quest of a commoner (apparently) seeking knighthood. He is really seeking his own honor and the restoration of the rightful King to Concordia; this is, in a way, a coming-of-age story — of the commoner knight (Everyman) and of the Kingdom of Concordia itself, which has gone through a stormy adolescence by means of the Accordance War. Concordia has only now just begun to experience itself as a mature land. There are still issues to be grappled with, and the land must grow along with its changelings. So must David, who was barely out of boyhood when he took the crown. This event is his first real test. Will he survive it and recover Caliburn? Does it really matter if he does, so long as the land is not long without a rightful king or queen? Does the ruler make the sword or the sword make the monarch?

One of the main themes explored within the story is that of people's true faces, as opposed to the masks they wear. The true worth of Seif, the eshu storyteller, is masked by the fact that he is not noble. Even though David's cousin Lleu is an honorable person, he lets his own concern with appearances interfere with his duty because he is angry that Caliburn entrusted itself to a commoner rather than him.



Meilge appears honorable on the surface and indeed believes that he is doing what is best for Concordia. To some extent, there is a loyalty to the office rather than to the person who holds that office (but only if Meilge holds the office). David is forced into a mask: By taking away David's Glamour and hiding him among the mundane, Meilge has stripped David of his faerie self and clapped such a heavy mask (banal mortality) on the king that he may never discover his true identity again.

Even Faerilyth is masked. Everyone makes assumptions about her guilt, not looking beyond the surface of her Eiluned house. Even those who believe her innocent, however, fail to penetrate the masks they force upon her: Lleu sees her as the unattainable ideal; ambitious Kithain cast her in the role of High Queen regardless of the cost; Morwen sees her as a seducer and betrayer; Meilge sees Faerilyth as his means to ascend to the throne of Concordia. Few see her for what she truly is — a grieving young wife who tries to hold her husband's kingdom together in his absence.

What masks will the characters take on as the story advances? Will they assume several different ones according to circumstance and need, or will they be content to assume one role and play it to the end? Do they even know who they truly are and what they really want?

Other Story Ideas for Kingdom of Willows

The Chronicle of Caliburn and the search for the High King constitute major events taking place (at least in the beginning) within the Kingdom of Willows, but these are not the only stories worth mentioning. King Meilge's realm contains many other occasions for involving changeling characters in a variety of stories and explorations of the imagination. The following suggestions are meant to inspire Storytellers to look beyond the "headlines" to find the undercurrents that make the Kingdom of Willows a fertile proving ground for stories of all kinds.

Decay in the South

Dreams stagnate and turn rotten unless they acquire new meaning as times change. Although he maintains a passionate interest in the modern world and its technological and commercial achievements, King Meilge has allowed other aspects of his kingdom to degenerate. His land suffers under the weight of his personal ambitions and his antiquated ideas of social superiority. Not a few of his courtiers and nobles follow his lead. In many parts of the Kingdom of Willows, leadership and power go to the established aristocracy rather than to meritorious young changelings with new dreams. A group of Kithain might seek to overthrow the old, decadent rulership. In the process of revitalizing the Dreaming, they encounter opposition from more conservative changelings who fear loss of power or who cannot understand the need to respond to change.

COUNTRY STORY

Much of the Kingdom of Willows consists of rural communities far from the mainstream of modern life. Many other communities only seem to be cities; they are really small towns in which everyone knows everyone and one person's business becomes neighborhood news. It is difficult to get lost in a crowd where there are no crowds to speak of. Changelings in such insular communities find it difficult to disguise their true natures from families and friends. Against a backdrop of barn dances, CB jamborees, harvest festivals and folk celebrations, Storytellers may build mini-chronicles revolving around the struggle to maintain a successful double life where secrets are a rare commodity. On the other hand, mortals in agricultural and rural communities often have a stronger belief in the supernatural and in folk tales. Being a changeling where folk actually leave milk out for the Fair Folk might not be as tough as it seems.

Battlefield Dreams

The Civil War and the Accordance War have both left their marks on the South. During the War Between the States, changelings often found themselves opposed to oathmates or kithmates. Reborn faerie spirits may remember facing each other across the battlefield. Family feuds date from the Civil War, extending across generations. The Accordance War also cut across Seelie/Unseelie and commoner/noble lines in the Kingdom of Willows. Many of the Accordance War veterans are still alive and still remember who supported them and who opposed them.

A group of changelings may find themselves caught between two powerful graybeards who see them as pawns in a battle that rages long after the war has ended. Strange alliances may result from these machinations as the characters attempt to bring opposing sides to the bargaining table at last or else join wholeheartedly in the prolonged struggle.

Regional Stories

Each duchy in the Kingdom of Willows has its own special flavor and its own set of conflicts — and thus, potential stories.

Willow's Heart

Not all of Meilge's courtiers are sycophants who blindly support his policies and ambitions. His critics include the baron and baroness of Vellumton and Savannah's Count Morrig. Characters allied with these nobles may undertake an investigation of Meilge's court in order to uncover evidence of wrongdoing that might lead to unseating the King of Willows. Such a story would involve subtlety and finesse in order to successfully unmask the extent of Meilge's inner corruption.

The Duchy of Cotton

The rivalry between Duke Firedrake and the self-titled "Duchess" Igrania has achieved the status of legend. Characters owing fealty to either the duke or Igrania may become caught up in the love/hate courtly games of these notorious Kithain. Allegiances may shift as the characters hear both sides of the story from its two principals. A story involving this lovers' war

contains within it aspects of Shakespearean comedy, in which misplaced letters, elegantly bad timing and gross misrepresentation or misunderstandings take all participants (and even some innocent bystanders) on a wild ride along the slippery border between comedy and tragedy.

The Duchy of the Delta Crescent

Rumors abound about the strange practices of some of New Orleans' (and greater Louisiana's) Kithain; most of these rumors center on its exotic and enigmatic duchess. Characters may decide to explore for themselves the truth behind these rumors. Along the way, they may encounter individuals who seek to prevent them from learning certain secrets about Duchess Lisette, as well as some good-hearted Kithain who wholeheartedly support the Duchess of the Delta Crescent.

The Duchy of Palmetto

Changelings who have fallen afoul of King Meilge (or any other noble in the Kingdom of Willows for that matter) may attempt to seek refuge in the Gullah Free Lands. In order to find sanctuary, they must first gain the approval of the freehold's leaders — either by agreeing to a test or by performing some important service for the local changelings. Even if the characters succeed in finding acceptance, what happens when their enemies invade the independent faerie realm and demand the characters' surrender? Will the harried changelings go quietly and preserve the freedom of their newfound home, or will they ignite a conflict that may lead to the conquest of an unconquerable people?

The Duchy of the Triangle

The socially inept Duke Murdoch desires to improve his courtly manners in order to further his romantic interest in one of his subjects. He requests lessons in courtly arts from the characters. While this seems to be a lighthearted romp on the surface, the characters may, in fact, discover that Duke Murdoch's freehold contains numerous strange and potentially disruptive chimerical creations that could cause unforeseen complications in an otherwise straightforward story. The duke's fascination with technology may also force characters to consider redefining their notions of what constitutes Banality. Can a stock car inspire Glamour?

The Duchy of Appalachia

The duchess of the realm unexpectedly disappears, and the characters join her sworn protector in a desperate search for her. Has Duchess Dianan fallen afoul of her hostile mortal family? If so, the characters may need to brave the combined forces of the Dauntain and their unknowing supporters, the Autumn People in order to rescue the duchess. Or has Dianan encountered something even more dangerous to her faerie nature in the sinister Dreaming that surrounds Oak Ridge, Tennessee? This story could involve changelings in some extremely dangerous situations, threatening the loss of both their mortal and faerie existence.



The Duchy of Blue Grasses

A faerie steed belonging to Duke Araby is missing. The duke fears it has been stolen and asks the characters to find it, promising them fine faerie horses of their own if they succeed. He suspects several of his rivals in the Kithain horse-racing circuit, but knows that it would be impolitic to accuse them outright of horse theft. If the characters look too closely into the affairs of the duke, hoping to find leads as to who has taken the faerie mount, they may uncover more than they bargained for.

The Duchy of Graceland

The characters hear rumors of a growing secessionist movement that has its origin somewhere in the Duchy of Graceland. Depending on their feelings about the politics of Kithain society in Concordia, the changeling characters may travel to the duchy in order to verify the rumor and warn the Parliament of Dreams or to join the incipient rebel movement.

The Duchy of the Ozarks

King Meilge has exiled one ducal ruler of the Duchy of the Ozarks. He suspects, however, that the ex-duke has not, in fact, left the Kingdom of Willows. The characters receive a formal request to travel to the duchy, search for the former duke and, if they find him, deliver him to Meilge for just punishment. Once they arrive on the outer edge of the Kingdom of Willows and interact with the local changelings, the characters may begin to question their mission. Will this be the beginning of a change in loyalty for characters who have supported Meilge until this point? Will this, instead, provide characters who secretly oppose the King of Willows with an opportunity to make new allies?

The Duchy of Dogwood

The conflict between the old guard and the new generation of changelings has reached an impasse in the Duchy of Dogwood. The characters receive an invitation from Count Rual to participate in a weekend of fox hunting in the Dreaming. Over the course of their stay, the characters hear at length of the count's unhappiness with the policies and ineptness of the current Duke Cormac. During one of the fox hunts, the characters find they are pursuing a particularly elusive fox; their quarry, actually a pooka ally of Duke Cormac, leads them onto the duke's estate, where the characters can make their own assessment of the Duchy of Dogwood's ruler. They may either agree with Count Rual's assessment of Cormac's unfitness to rule, or they may see potential in the wilder duke and offer their assistance to him. Either way, the characters must take sides in what may prove to be an extended and messy political struggle.

The Shadow Duchy

Changeling characters visiting Washington, D.C., may encounter an eccentric politician conducting a very unortho-

dox campaign, using slogans such as "Glamour for the Masses" and "Equal Rights for Dreamers." Is the enthusiastic would-be statesman involved in some practical joke that threatens the secret of Kithain existence? Or is he part of something more sinister, such as the rumored presence of the Shadow Court in the halls of mortal power?

Duchy of WINTERTHORN

A group of West Virginia's changelings appeal to the characters for assistance in bringing their duke back from the depths of Bedlam. Can the characters succeed in rescuing Duke Gwyhyr from his own insanity and save the duchy's existence in the process? Or will they, instead, become trapped in the duke's strange madness?

The Duchy of Chesapeake

Duchess Elena-Anastasia's life comes under threat from a surprising and disturbing source. The characters may get wind of the plot to assassinate her through any number of methods, either through chance or through their own efforts. Once they do so, however, they need to decide how to go about protecting the duchess (assuming they aren't in on the plot themselves). Once they discover the assassin's identity, they must decide if the individual — a mere child — is worth saving. Their choices may haunt them for the rest of their faerie (and mortal) lives.

Nunnehi Stories

Many opportunities exist for changeling characters to interact with the Nunnehi who inhabit the Kingdom of Willows. Characters may need to defend Willow's Heart or one of Meilge's lesser freeholds from a Nunnehi raid. If the attack should result in the characters' capture, they may discover the reasons why the local Nunnehi detest the King of Willows. Such a story might result in the ransom of the characters by friends and allies (for appropriate amounts of Glamour or some other form of restitution). If the characters find themselves agreeing with their captors' grievances against Meilge, they may wind up being adopted into the local Nunnehi family.

Alternatively, Nunnehi characters from any part of the Kingdom of Willows may decide to learn more about Kithain politics and society by acting as ambassadors to one of the duchies. This type of story provides the Storyteller with the chance to present the Kingdom of Willows from a completely different point of view.

The **Changeling Players Guide** provides complete rules for the creation of Nunnehi characters.

CROSSOVER STORIES

The Kingdom of Willows contains the potential for crossover stories featuring characters from other lines of the Storyteller system. In general, the southern portion of the United States has fewer supernatural creatures than many other regions of the country. For this reason, changelings may need to seek allies with the Gallain, the Prodigals and other

supernaturals who share similar goals. In some cases, supernaturals from a particular area have more in common with each other than with their kin from other regions. Thus, a sidhe from the Duchy of the Ozarks may feel closer to a local Bone Gnawer (or even a Gangrel vampire) than she does to a noble of her house from the Duchy of Apples (the American North-east).

While differences may place Southern supernatural creatures on different sides in internal conflicts, the same erstwhile enemies may ally with one another against a threat from outside. Once that danger has been taken care of, however, it's back to business (or war) as usual.

The following possibilities for multi-system games are intended as suggestions. Storytellers and their players can undoubtedly expand on the ideas presented here.

• **Changelings and Vampires** — Meilge's criminal contacts have connections with both Giovanni and Setite vampires in Atlanta and throughout the Southeast. A group of Southern changelings may ally temporarily with local Ventrue or Brujah Kindred in an attempt to break up this unholy crime conglomerate.

Malkavian vampires, by virtue of their slender hold on reality, often fit right in with changelings' dreams. Some say that the Malkavian clan has an ancient compact with the fae, and it is this that makes the two supernatural groups allies. A Malkavian may befriend a group of pooka or sluagh, thus helping create all kinds of wonderful chaos for the supernatural — and mortal — community in which they reside.

• **Changelings and Werewolves** — The dedication of the Garou to the preservation of the land's natural places has much in common with changeling's concerns about preventing Banality from overwhelming the world with stagnation and cold technology. An alliance between changelings and a local werewolf pack might prevent an important piece of wilderness from falling into the hands of unscrupulous land developers.

Love of folklore and folk music might bring together Fianna Garou and their ancient allies, the sidhe of House Fiona, or might unite Uktena werewolves with local Nunnehi. The resulting alliances might save vital cultural landmarks or ancestral lands in the South from the clutches of scientists and catalogers.

• **Changelings and Wraiths** — Although most changelings have little to do with the Shadowlands, a few dare explore the darker side of the Dreaming. A mixed troupe of wraiths and their changeling Fetters might become involved in plots and schemes that alternate between the mortal world (or Skinlands) and the Shadowlands that exist on the fringe of the Dreaming.

Samhain, one of the major holidays of the Kithain calendar, commemorates changelings whose faerie souls have passed from the Dreaming into the lands of the dead. On this night, the barriers between the worlds grow paper thin, and it is possible for changelings and wraiths to communicate ancient secrets and visions of the future. Truly eerie tales can come from these encounters between the Restless Dead and the Children of the Dreaming.

• **Changelings and Mages** — The Verbena have long had congress with the Fair Folk. A group of changelings in the Duchy of Appalachia may encounter a coven of backwoods witches. The presence of a party of witch-hunters may require cooperation between the two groups to ensure their mutual survival.

Even Technocracy Mages can find some possible areas of peaceful contact with changelings. A group of Void Engineers associated with the NASA Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia, might mistake local changelings for an "alien species," resulting in an unlikely alliance based on a misunderstanding that is, nonetheless, truer than it seems.

How to Tell a Southern Story

The following section provides suggestions for infusing stories based in the Kingdom of Willows with local color and flavor, emphasizing the history, culture and traditions of the American South.

The Storytelling Tradition in the South

The Southeastern United States has a long tradition of storytelling. This storehouse of the imagination began with the legends and myths of the Native American tribes who relied on the oral transmission of information and lore. The English, Scot-Irish and Welsh settlers in the South brought with them folktales from their own lands. Later, black slaves passed down stories remembered from Africa in an attempt to keep alive their heritage despite their captivity.

Modern Southern Storytellers keep the tradition alive and vibrant through their interpretations of mountain "Jack" tales, Gullah stories, Cajun "Ti-Jean" tales and the ubiquitous ghost stories.

Storytellers planning on running chronicles that will capture the unique feel of the Kingdom of Willows can benefit from reading examples of all types of Southern stories — or, better yet, by listening to recorded versions of folk tales or attending storytelling festivals to experience live storytelling first hand. The magic of a tale is in the telling, and Storytellers can incorporate many techniques of yarnspinning in their changeling chronicles and stories.

Establishing Mood

Storytellers can use many tricks to create a mood appropriate for their Southern-based stories. Scenic descriptions that incorporate peculiarities of the local landscape can create visual images in the minds of players that help them to imagine the world in which their characters move and act. Conjuring up the immense pine cathedrals of the virgin forests of Appa-

lachia; the stark, wild beaches of North Carolina's Outer Banks; or the easy flow of the muddy Mississippi River as it rolls relentlessly into the Gulf of Mexico is merely a matter of using the right words. (Pictures also work wonders in creating the setting for certain scenes.)

Many scenes take place in eating establishments. Regional recipe books can help Storytellers bring local cuisine to the forefront, thus establishing that the characters are, in fact, eating Creole cooking or sampling seafood in Maryland.

Those Funky Southern Accents

In a word, don't. Although imitating the Georgia drawl, the Appalachian mountain twang or the clipped Tidewater vowels might seem like a good way to emphasize a story's "Southernness," most attempts at reproducing accents fail miserably. Furthermore, accents are only noticeable to those who don't have them. When all changelings come from one region, none of them seem to speak with an accent. The best way to reproduce Southern speech is through attention to speech patterns and vocabulary. If you are from the South, you know this already. If you aren't, go to the movies (see the filmography in the Introduction); while a few actors have bad accents, many of them — such as Jodie Foster in *Silence of the Lambs* — accurately capture the sound of Southern speech.

Avoiding Stereotypes

Too often, Southerners fall victim to stereotyping, finding themselves shoved into pigeonholes labeled rednecks, hillbillies, Southern belles, good ole' boys and other more-or-less unsavory categories. This is not as bad as it seems, because all stereotypes contain a modicum of reality. Storytellers should feel free to use stereotypes liberally throughout their Southern chronicles so long as they add a new dimension to the stereotype.

Let the players encounter a dyed-in-the-wool redneck who happens to be a gourmet chef and who can lovingly discuss the best way to make a Hollandaise sauce even as he is customizing his monster truck for the next rally. Create a Southern politician who opposes gun control and supports prayer in schools but advocates equal rights for women and funding for the arts. Introduce into your story a mountain woman who holds a degree in nuclear physics or who regularly hacks into the local phone system through her satellite-linked laptop. Present your changelings with a Cherokee "professional" chief who sees his job catering to the tourists as a way to teach outsiders about his culture as well as a means of making a living. The possibilities for destroying the Southern stereotypes while reinforcing the Southern image are as varied as the stereotypes themselves.

Timeline

1975	Meilge is elected King of Willows.
1992	Faerilyth becomes Meilge's ward.
1997	Meilge discovers Dreambane.
January 1998	Faerilyth visits Tara-Nar; David and Faerilyth meet and fall in love.
February 1998	Morwen recruits nobles to watch Faerilyth.
May 2, 1998	Faerilyth and David's Beltaine marriage.
May 3, 1998	David proclaims Faerilyth High Queen; Faerilyth is crowned.
May 4, 1998	Grand Tour of the kingdom is planned.
May 5, 1998	Meilge commissions cold iron cage and weapons.
June 6, 1998	Masquerade ball welcoming King and Queen is held; David is kidnapped; Seif receives Caliburn.
June 7, 1998	The Quest Begins.





Thought-Crafters

Common to most of the Algonquin people, these native faeries are thought to be the children born of tales about the mythical hero Manabus, credited with bestowing upon humans the secret of fire and other skills necessary to their survival. Like Manabus, thought-crafters delight in making things and creating something new. They see the process of invention as a way of bringing the Middle World (the physical realm) into harmony with the Upper Realm of the spirits.

Most of the human tribes who revered the thought-crafters have dwindled to a few remnants along the Atlantic coast. In the Southeast, these native faeries tend to congregate along the Chesapeake and in the Tidewater region of Virginia. These persistent Nunnehi continue to keep alive the hope that one day their dreams will reopen the gates to the Higher Hunting Grounds and reawaken the hopes of their mortal Dreamers. To this end, thought-crafters all dedicate themselves to finding new ways to bridge the gap between the mortal world and the Dreaming. They do this through perfecting some kind of handicraft and by creating stories and poems meant to inspire creativity in those who hear them.

In addition to their inventiveness and artisanship, thought-crafters have also inherited the trickster streak attributed to Manabus, often identified with the Great Hare or Trickster Spirit. Youngling thought-crafters display a prankishness that lasts well into their transition to braves, while elders often use puzzles and tricks as teaching aids.

Thought-crafter encampments lie concealed within the boundaries of national parks, forests and other areas designated as wilderness preserves. Here they maintain their old customs and work to repair the broken ties that once connected the Middle World with the Higher Hunting Grounds. In some areas, thought-crafters maintain showcase villages in the mortal world — historic reconstructions that double not only as freeholds but as living-history museums. Here mortals can experience life as it was before the arrival of European colonists. Those Nunnehi who act as caretakers-in-residence in these villages see themselves as ambassadors from the Dreaming.



Today, thought-crafters support many of the restitution movements among the remnants of the Algonquin tribes from Maine to Virginia. In the tradition of the Powhatans, who first sought peace between their people and the pale-skinned settlers from across the sea, the thought-crafters seek to forge new relations between themselves and the sons and daughters of those who displaced their ancestors. This time, however, they will not settle for the short end of the bargain.

Appearance: Thought-crafters resemble idealized versions of the various Algonquin tribes who serve as their Dreamers and whose human forms host their faerie natures. Both males and females wear their dark hair long and sometimes style it elaborately. Though they usually favor traditional dress from their host tribe, many thought-crafters adopt modern dress when they leave their faerie holdings and interact with the mortal world.

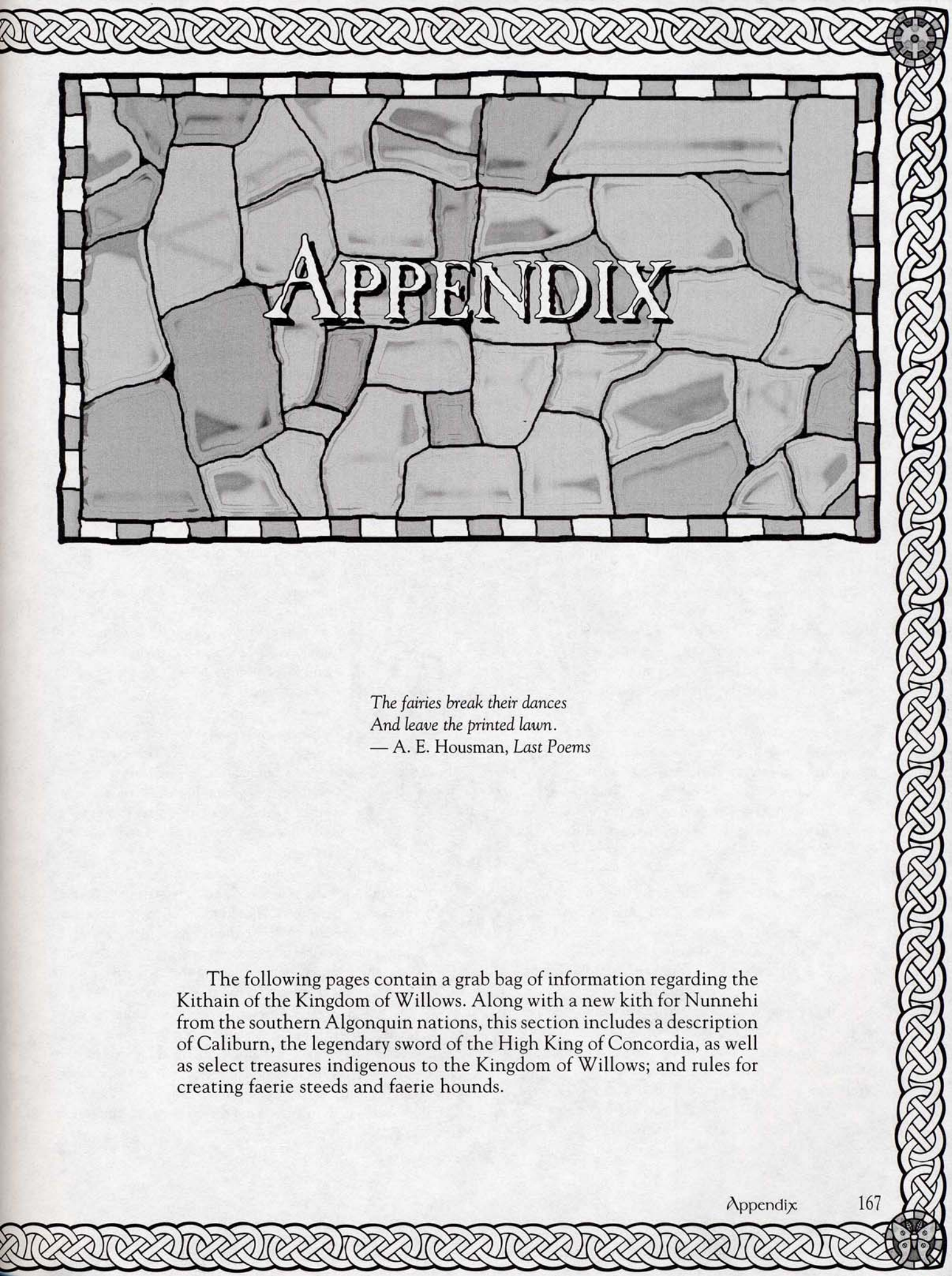
Lifestyles: The thought-crafters tend to live in secluded wilderness encampments as near to the original tribal lands of their human tribes as possible. Some prefer to dwell in cities along the Chesapeake and in Tidewater Virginia, near the remnants of their mortal kin, making periodic visits to wild places to refresh their supply of Medicine (Glamour).

- **Younglings** demonstrate an incorrigible curiosity and a fearless nature. Their large, dark eyes sparkle with barely contained impishness. Fond of games and pranks, most younglings also enjoy making things (although their initial attempts at inventions often have unusual and surprising results).

- **Braves** frequently decorate their bodies with ceremonial tattoos and body paint to signify important changes in their lives. Handsome, like their mortal kin, they take great pride in their appearance. Thought-crafter braves attend powwows and craft fairs throughout the country, demonstrating their creative talents and serving as emissaries to other Nunnehi tribes.

- **Elders** tend to spend most of their time close to home, gathering Medicine and focusing their energies on attempts to reopen the doors to the Higher Hunting Grounds. They dress more conservatively than braves or younglings; though they age more slowly than mortals, their faces begin to show the weight of years and mortality.

Affinity: Prop



APPENDIX

*The fairies break their dances
And leave the printed lawn.
— A. E. Housman, Last Poems*

The following pages contain a grab bag of information regarding the Kithain of the Kingdom of Willows. Along with a new kith for Nunnehi from the southern Algonquin nations, this section includes a description of Caliburn, the legendary sword of the High King of Concordia, as well as select treasures indigenous to the Kingdom of Willows; and rules for creating faerie steeds and faerie hounds.

Birthrights:

• **Nimble Fingers, Clever Minds** — Thought-crafters gain one extra dot in Dexterity and Wits, even if it raises those Attributes to 6. In addition, when involved in physically manipulating objects or solving puzzles or riddles, they may lower their difficulty for such rolls by one. This bonus to Wits affect both the character's mortal seeming and fae mien, while Dexterity only affects the character's fae mien and cannot be used in the presence of mortals.

• **Inspiration** — Their dedication to healing the rift between the Middle World and the Higher Hunting Grounds makes it possible for thought-crafters to restore Medicine to those who have lost it. Successful attempts to harvest Medicine (see **Changeling Players Guide**) gain the thought-crafter one additional point. They can also bestow this ability on other Nunnehi who accompany them in their quest for Medicine. Being in the presence of a thought-crafter for a day and a night enables Ravaged mortals and hopelessly banal changelings to regain some of their stolen creativity (changelings gain a point of Glamour, while mortals regain their creative spark). Whether a changeling who has become Undone can be restored in this manner is the Storyteller's discretion.

Outlook

• **May-may-gway-shi** — How long will they survive when their beloved rivers and seas fall prey to the wastes of thoughtless mortals? It is our duty to hasten the return of the way to the Higher Hunting Grounds so that we can once again cleanse the world. The rock fishers' survival depends on it.

• **Nanehi** — Our Southern cousins understand the importance of preserving traditions, but they are too afraid to make new traditions. If they could look forward instead of backward, they would be worthy of their high opinions of themselves.

• **Yunwi amai'hine'hi** — The water people, like the rock fishers, suffer from the carelessness of mortals, yet they don't spend much time bemoaning their fate. They share with us the spirit of the trickster. This gives us much in common.

• **Yunwi tsundsi** — Like us, these little people enjoy making things of beauty and usefulness. If they would show themselves more often, we might become fast friends.

• **Non-Nunnehi Kithain** — With the exception of the eshu, who did not come to this land with dreams of conquest, we deal most carefully with the changelings who have invaded our ancestral lands. Some are worthy of trust, but others do not understand that they are usurpers. We actively seek alliances with the eshu; they, too, respect tradition and know the value that stories have in preserving our connection with the Dreaming.

Frailties

• **Call of the New** — Thought-crafters find it almost impossible to resist the lure of new experiences. Whenever one of these Nunnehi faces something she has never done before, she must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 8) in order to resist attempting it. Obviously suicidal actions such as leaping off cliff faces or jumping into a vat of toxic waste do not require rolls to resist; they aren't crazy, just curious.

Quote: *See this? Not only is it finely made, but it has a few improvements to it that I dreamed about just last night. I can't wait to try it out....*

Nunnehi Totem Spirits

Their ability to enter the Umbra, or spirit world, gives Nunnehi the ability to acquire the patronage and assistance of totem spirits, usually those associated with plants, rocks or the elements. The **Changeling Players Guide** provides rules for acquiring totems and examples of totem spirits; **Rage Across Appalachia** and **Axis Mundi: The Book of Spirits** offer additional examples of totems for Nunnehi characters. Two additional totem spirits, especially appropriate for Nunnehi in the Kingdom of Willows, are described below.

Magnolia

Background Cost: 2

While her beautiful, aromatic blossoms are fragile, Magnolia's leaves retain their dark green color year-round. Though mostly found in China, a few varieties of Magnolia thrive in the American Southeast, usually near sources of abundant moisture. Her essence makes an intoxicating perfume, while her broad leaves serve as a welcome source of shade. Magnolia is somewhat justifiably vain, but she remains secure in her knowledge that beauty is its own reason for being.

Traits: Magnolia grants her Nunnehi children an additional point of Appearance and Seduction 1.

Taboo: Magnolia forbids her children to pick her delicate blossoms; she requires them to plant a tree in her honor once every year.

Willow

Background Cost: 3

Willow loves water and prospers best near river banks and in moist regions. In the South, willows serve as sources of both shade and adornment. Willow bark tea is a potent herbal curative, while his wood and branches can be used to make beautiful and useful objects, such as baskets and woven jewelry. The ability of Willow to withstand strong winds has achieved the status of folk legend. At once strong and pliant, Willow embodies inner strength and adaptability.

Traits: Willow gives his Nunnehi followers an extra point of Stamina and Crafts 1.

Taboo: Children of Willow must seek to protect willow trees from wanton destruction.

TREASURES

The faerie treasures listed below are indicative of the sorts to be found in the Kingdom of Willows. While other more powerful treasures exist, these have a distinctive regional feel. One other treasure has been included since it is important to the ongoing story: Caliburn, the High King's sword. While no one (even David) knows all the powers the sword possesses, a few are well-known and others a matter of rumor. The sword's established powers are revealed here, though not all of these are known to anyone other than David.

Caliburn

Known as the "sword of light," Caliburn is an extremely powerful treasure. There is even some argument that Caliburn is not, in fact, a treasure, but a unique item that defies expectations and explanations. The usual rules governing treasures are held in abeyance so far as Caliburn is concerned.

Brought to the mortal realm in 1969 by Lord Dafyll of House Gwydion, Caliburn was used by that noble in the Accordance War.

Caliburn is a longsword (almost the size of a two-handed blade) that comes to an exceedingly sharp point. The blade itself appears silver, but shot through with wavery streaks of gold. The guard forms a stylized moon and star, and is set with an enormous diamond that flashes rainbow prisms when it moves. Wrapped in gray leather bound with silver wire, the hilt is slender and elongated and capped with another diamond. The sword's sheath is of simple black leather, though some folks claim they can make out the word "Caliburn" worked into the leather's patterning. To mortal eyes, the blade appears as an old sword, too pitted and rusty to be interesting.

Personality:

Caliburn is a peacemaker. Though it will fight for its wielder, it does so to put an end to conflict. Irrevocably tied to both the Dreaming and the land, it seeks stability under a compassionate and fair ruler.

Known Powers:

- Caliburn recognizes the true King (or Queen) and may only be fully utilized by that person.
- At the desire of its wielder, the sword may inflict either chimerical or real damage — even though it is a treasure rather than a chimerical creation.
- The sword glows with a brilliant golden light when used in a just battle by a worthy wielder.
- In such a battle, the legendary blade gives its wielder the equivalent of Melee 3 unless the person already exceeds that ability (in which case it offers one more dot in the skill).

These abilities are available to anyone whom the sword allows to wield it.

While many Kithain believe that Caliburn is sentient, few know how — or if — the sword communicates.

Powers Known to David:

- Caliburn communicates only with those people it chooses. It uses some form of telepathy to do so, rather than speech. The

blade can make its wielder aware of, options he might not have considered or been aware of and may offer counsel or suggestions if asked for them.

- The "sword of light" can enforce up to three levels of the Art of Sovereign. The blade can utilize Protocol, Dictum and Grandeur on behalf of its chosen, though if that person misuses the power, Caliburn cancels the effect immediately.

- The sword enchants any mortals it touches. Such enchantments last for up to a month unless deliberately broken.

- Caliburn can protect itself. It is capable of using Wayfare •••••: Flicker Flash to remove itself from dangerous situations. Since it cannot take its wielder along, it rarely does so when in someone's possession. Should someone that the sword disapproves of lay hands on it, however, it may opt to utilize this power. The blade needs nothing besides itself to perform this maneuver.

Other powers unknown to David:

- Not only can the sword remove itself from danger, it is capable of hiding itself. The blade usually uses Chicanery ••: Veiled Eyes for this. If that Art fails, however, it may induce Chicanery •••: Fugue in its viewer, making him forget that he ever saw the sword.

- Caliburn's sheath bestows the powers of Primal •••: Oakenshield (usable for the duration of one battle) and Primal ••••: Heather Balm (only usable on its wearer once per day) upon its chosen wielder, so long as the sheath is worn.

The sword may have other powers it has not yet revealed.

White Lightning

This potent home brew (the making of which is a favorite pastime of boggans and nockers) engenders in the drinker a point of temporary Glamour. The Glamour must be used before the drink runs through the imbibers system (within about two hours) or it is lost. Taking more than one cupful of White Lightning (in an attempt to get drunk or to gain more Glamour) reverses the Glamour gain and instead forces the imbibers to act as if under the effect of Chicanery •: Fuddle for the same amount of time. Three cupfuls induces unconsciousness in most changelings. When used on someone, perhaps to make her more receptive to suggestions or to render her unconscious, the effects last half as long and the person receives a Willpower roll to resist the effects (difficulty 8). White Lightning (at least the faerie version) has no effect on mortals unless they are first enchanted.

Riddlemaster

When played, this hand-carved mountain dulcimer answers questions or riddles through a specific form of Soothsay •: Omen. Rather than providing visual clues, the instrument gives the player cryptic references regarding her query by sounding out appropriate songs and ballads. The clue may be in the title or lyrics of the song. For example: if a changeling needed a particular ingredient for making a potion to render other Kithain pliant and didn't know how to discover what that

ingredient was, she could play the dulcimer in an attempt to find out.

The dulcimer might sound out the song "The Yellow Rose of Texas" in reply. This could mean that the ingredient is some sort of rose (perhaps even a yellow one), that it can only be found in Texas or even that it is something yellow. Obviously, the dulcimer is not intended to solve every riddle, but multiple uses are possible (although too frequent use simply makes it go out of tune), and even a hint can sometimes be helpful. Those who play the dulcimer need only strum it to invoke the cantrip; they do not actually have to know how to play it. Someone who does play dulcimer receives more detailed information than those who cannot play the instrument.

Fiddle Focus

Each of these finely made Appalachian fiddles serves as a focus for faerie Glamour. Individual fiddles are created to perform one specific effect. The effect is usually one from the first three levels of an Art. For example: A fiddle created to perform a Legerdemain effect might perform a Gimmix or Ensnare while one created for Wayfare might be used for Portal Passage. Playing the fiddle brings forth the effect and also provides a point of Glamour to power the cantrip. Those using one of these instruments must know how to play it.

Dreambane

Meilge's need for a drug to help him befuddle and kidnap High King David resulted in the creation of this potent powder. An edible version of sodium pentathol, Dreambane is infused with Glamour and washed through with the cantrip Captive Heart (••••• of Chicanery). Mixed in any liquid, the powder becomes odorless and tasteless, yet releases its potent effect on whomever drinks it — so long as that person is Kithain or enchanted. Once consumed, Dreambane makes the imbiber highly suggestible. Such an individual could be made to think or believe almost anything. In response to such beliefs, actions taken by a person under the influence of Dreambane could encompass just about anything, except those that are obviously suicidal. Thus, Meilge was able to make David believe that he had been deposed and that his life was in imminent danger. Dreambane is hideously expensive, and thus far, Meilge is the only changeling with a reliable supply of the drug.

Dreamshield

Dreambane has only one antidote, which must be consumed along with the drug itself to be effective. Dubbed Dreamshield, the small pill is held in the mouth as a person imbibes the liquid Dreambane. As the pill dissolves, it coats the imbiber's throat, stomach and digestive tract, preventing the drug from entering the bloodstream and taking effect. When swallowing the concoction, the individual must open himself to his own Banality to power it. Freely utilizing Banality in this fashion forces another point of Banality on the changeling doing so.

CREATURES

Faerie Steeds

Some of the first European changelings who arrived in the new world brought with them magnificent and graceful horses who bore the manifestations of enchantment within them. These faerie steeds prospered in the Glamour-rich atmosphere of Colonial America. In Kentucky, Virginia and several other regions of the South, landed commoners who specialized in breeding horses also worked to preserve the faerie bloodlines of their enchanted mounts. Freeholds within the plantations and farms of these horse breeders allowed access to the Dreaming

When the sidhe burst through the Mists via the newly opened portals, many rode through the gates mounted on Arcadian steeds. Some of the elegant and ethereal horses died immediately upon contact with Banality, their faerie natures unable to withstand the cold, soulless reality that confronted them as they entered the mortal world. Others managed to mimic the actions of their fae riders, instinctively achieving the same kind of transferences as their masters by implanting their faerie essences into the bodies of mortal horses. These Arcadian steeds, while capable of breeding with commoner steeds, comprise a "bloodline" in and of themselves.

Faerie horses can be bred to produce other faerie horses, probably because their spirits, unlike the sidhe, are not as highly individualized or particular. Faerie blood — that is, descended from one of the long-time commoner steeds or the newer Arcadian "breed" — is all that is required to pass along the faerie "gene." Usually only one parent needs to have faerie blood; if both sire and dam are faerie steeds, the resulting horse exhibits exceptional or above-average traits, but is also more sensitive to Banality.

Normal faerie steeds (with one non-fae parent) can withstand the mortal world sufficiently to compete in horseraces, dressage meets and other competitions. Commoner steeds are a little hardier than their Arcadian counterparts (who suffer from the same increased sensitivity to Banality as the sidhe). Nevertheless, Arcadian steeds are able to participate in many activities alongside normal horses.

Double-blooded fae steeds, however, have problems racing or hunting outside areas charged with Glamour. Their activities (and most of their existence) are confined to freeholds and other enchanted lands. This is, perhaps, fortunate because they are so much faster, stronger and "finer" than their mortal cousins that their presence in a race or horseshow against non-faerie horses would undoubtedly result in the unmasking of their true essence. Despite the time they spend in freeholds, faerie steeds do not contract Bedlam, as their animal natures make them immune to it.

Faerie mounts can be bred with different breeds of horses to produce variations such as steeplechasers, pacers,



Quarter horses and draft animals. Arcadian steeds most often combine with Arabians, Paso Finos, Tennessee Walkers and other horses known for their fine confirmations and elegant gaits. Breeders of faerie steeds used for races try to alternate commoner and Arcadian bloodlines when infusing faerie blood into their Thoroughbred and Standardbred lines.

Image: Always large and beautiful, faerie steeds appear in the mortal world as particularly sleek and healthy specimens of their respective breeds. They evince a variety of colors, just as their mortal counterparts do. To faerie sight, these steeds all appear to glow somewhat, as if lit from within or from a glimmering much like glitter that sparkles on their coats and manes.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5, Appearance 4, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Empathy 1, Intimidation 2, Kenning 2

Attack: Trample or kick/5 dice; bite/3 dice

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated
Glamour: 5, Banality: 3, Willpower: 4

Special Powers: Faerie steeds can enter the Dreaming along trods. They are capable of following a Silver Path so long as it remains visible, and can even leave the path without becoming lost if the area they enter equates to a homestead or freehold. Thus, they are able to race while within the Dreaming. Steeds may leave the Dreaming as easily as they enter it.

Faerie Hounds

Like faerie steeds, these hounds exchange places with the essences of mortal dogs. Similarly to the horses, some (known as common hounds) have existed, reincarnating again and again, since before the Shattering, while others are recent arrivals from Arcadia (called noble breeds). Because most of the dogs kept by the fae are hunting animals, they are all referred to as "hounds," but that is a general term. A few working breeds and lap dogs also crossed over with their sidhe masters, and all sorts of dogs — even mutts — have been crossed with faerie canines. Mutt-faerie crosses are called "mongrels" by the sidhe, who shudder at the notion that any fae, even a dog, would incarnate in such a creature.

Nevertheless, faerie hounds can be bred with almost any breed to create faerie versions of everything from greyhounds to papillons. Some changelings believe that the introduction of faerie blood into otherwise normal pedigrees is responsible for the creation of some of the more exotic new breeds appearing on the dog show circuit. As with the faerie steeds, double-bred faerie hounds are more susceptible to Banality and cannot compete against mortal dogs without their true nature becoming evident. Like faerie steeds, these canines are immune to Bedlam.

Image: Faerie hounds look like their mortal counterparts, but larger and more attractive. Should they show at

such events as the Westminster Dog Show, judges would find they are the perfect examples of their breeds. When seen with faerie sight, their Glamour becomes apparent. Their coat colors are more vibrant, and the features of the breed are exaggerated (i.e., pointed ears become daggerlike, and bushy tails become veritable waterfalls of fur).

Attributes: Strength 4 (3), Dexterity 3 (4), Stamina 3 (2), Appearance 4, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 3 (2), Dodge 3, Empathy 2, Hunting 3, Intimidation 3 (2), Kenning 2, Stealth 2, Tracking 3

Note: These ratings apply to hounds, mastiffs and coursers; ratings for smaller breeds appear in parentheses. Lap dogs not bred for it may have lower scores in hunting and tracking.

Attack: Bite/5 dice; claw/4 dice; overbear/no damage (success in a resisted Strength roll pins the quarry)

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated
Glamour: 4, Banality: 2, Willpower: 5

Special Powers: Faerie hounds may enter and leave the Dreaming and interact within it just as faerie steeds do.





Kingdom of WILLOWS



Map Key

- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| A - Echota Council Lands † | 13 The Home Place | 25 Ozarks |
| 1 Willow's Heart | 14 Trinity Manor | 26 Dogwoods |
| 2 Wisteria Hall | 15 Orchard Castle | 27 The Hunt Club |
| 3 Barony of Vellumton | 16 Coal Town | 28 Court of Mirrors |
| 4 Ferris Castle | 17 Twisted Oak | 29 The Cleansing Place † |
| 5 Magnolia's Home | 18 Court of Balsam | 30 Shadow Duchy |
| 6 River Landing | 19 High Castle: | 31 Winterthorn |
| 7 Pelican's Roost | Dancing Ground | 32 Chesapeake House |
| 8 Spirit Rock † | 20 Chimney Tops † | 33 Assateague Dunes |
| 9 Sweet Magnolia's Grove | 21 White Foam † | 34 Blackwater Hunting |
| 10 Spirit Hall | 22 Bluegrasses | Grounds † |
| 11 The Mississippi Pearl | 23 Freehold of the Mammoth | |
| 12 Palmetto Court | 24 Graceland | |

† Nunnehi Holdings

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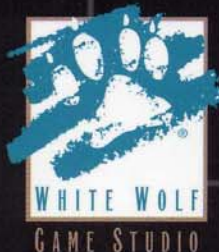
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