

# Oak, Ash, & Thorn

The Changeling: The Lost Second Edition Companion



A SOURCEBOOK FOR  
CHANGELING: THE LOST  
SECOND EDITION

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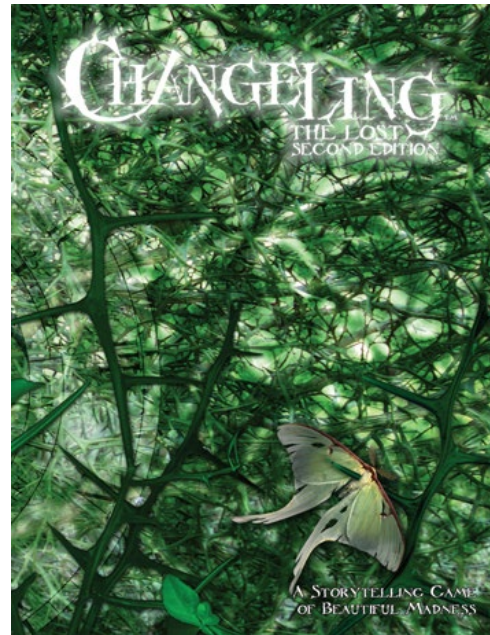
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*Requires the use of the  
Changeling: the Lost Second Edition Rulebook*



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# INTRODUCTION

*“Well, now that we have seen each other,” said the Unicorn,  
“if you’ll believe in me, I’ll believe in you. Is that a bargain?”*

— Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*

Maybe it was the remembered smell of freshly buttered popcorn that drew you back, a fondness for those childhood days when you and your sister went to the movies together every Saturday. Maybe it was the rush of wind in your hair as you drove your beloved convertible with the top down along a wide, empty highway — just you, the open road, and the engine’s roar. Could’ve been the locket you wore every day, even in faraway Faerie, with your son’s picture in it; or the infuriating way your rival used to steal credit for your best work, and the sweetness of the revenge you took when you did the same to them. Your desperate soul clung to that powerful memory like a thread in a labyrinth, and it led you home.

So now what?

The journey doesn’t end there — it *begins* there. You don’t live happily ever after. You just...live. It’s up to you to decide what that means, but you don’t have to do it alone.

**Oak, Ash, and Thorn** is a book about moving past the nostalgia that brought you back to discover that the once familiar is now unfamiliar and figuring out where to go from there. It’s about pledging yourself to something bigger than you are and finding companions who walked the same yellow-brick road you did — whether you take back your old life, build a new one, or something in between.

## THEME: MAKING A PLACE

A memory of the past led you back through the Hedge, but now it’s time to forge *new* memories. Even if you eject your fetch from your old life and refill your own shoes, you’ll find they don’t quite fit anymore. That life won’t be the same as you remember it, because *you’re* not the same. Now that your words can bind others to you and you to them, you must consider carefully when to speak them, and to whom. But speak them you will, for only oaths and bargains can serve as the mortar that keeps your defenses against the True Fae sturdy and strong.

By Oak, Ash, and Thorn; by Sun, Moon, and Stars; by Earth, Sea, and Sky, we swear: We’ll stand together. Or we’ll fall apart.

## MOOD: A MODERN FAIRY TALE

This book is about what happens after you return from Arcadia, the fairy tale your life becomes once it’s yours to live again. Sure, you’ll brave the Hedge many more times, and you might even try going back There someday to wreak some havoc or rescue a friend. But *this* place, the one you fought so hard to find again, is home. **Oak, Ash, and Thorn** is grounded in the here

and now, where changelings bring their fae magic (and problems) back with them to the world of Netflix and chill, climate change, and taxes. It's no less wondrous and no less terrible, but this book brings your characters back from the heady daydreams of Hedge and Hollow to showcase playing in the modern fairy tale setting where a **Changeling** chronicle is likely to spend a lot of its time.

## WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

Any **Chronicles of Darkness** game can take place at one or more tiers of play. Tier 1 stories take place on the personal and local scale; for **Changeling**, that usually means a spotlight on the motley and individual antagonists of relatively low power. This doesn't mean characters don't belong to courts or other organizations, just that the main focus is narrower. Tier 2 stories have a broader scope, exploring court intrigues and getting characters involved in larger or farther-ranging conflicts. They might deal more often with Huntsmen and organized enemies or get caught up in inter-court politics and schemes. Tier 3 stories can be global in scope, take characters all the way to confrontations in Arcadia with the True Fae themselves, or bring full Wild Hunts to besiege the courts in all-out war.

To put it another way, tier 1 is about reclaiming your life; tier 2 is about rebuilding your life; and tier 3 is about reshaping your life.

**Oak, Ash, and Thorn** is, in effect, the "tier 2" book for **Changeling: The Lost Second Edition**. It focuses on organizations and the ways in which changelings pledge themselves to others, specifically in the context of joining groups or expanding their resources.

- **Chapter One: Oaths of Community** is about freeholds. It expands on how to build a freehold together as a troupe and interactions between freeholds. It also presents some brief seeds for freeholds in four locations around the world for the troupe to flesh out for their games: Cairo, Egypt; Jakarta, Indonesia; Las Vegas, Nevada, United States; and Sydney, Australia.
- **Chapter Two: Oaths of Fealty** is about courts and Mantles. It details the process for striking a court Bargain in play and introduces court-like organizations that are smaller and more flexible, forgoing traditional hierarchies and cycles for more unique ways to protect themselves from the Gentry. Finally, this chapter lays out three such example groups, complete with Mantles and sample Contracts.
- **Chapter Three: Oaths of Nobility** is about entitlements. An entitlement is an inheritance, a role a changeling chooses to play, and an oath she chooses to make. This chapter presents all the rules you need to use entitlements in your chronicle, including guidance for how to create your own, and three full sample entitlements.
- **Chapter Four: Oaths of Substance** is about tokens. Tokens are objects of power, resources that increase a motley's options, and weighty items that bind oathspeakers together. This chapter details several new types of tokens, including trifles and baubles; presents a system for ripping out one's own heart and replacing it with a token to cheat death; and gives guidance for creating custom tokens for your chronicle.





NEVADA

# CHAPTER ONE

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# OATHS OF COMMUNITY

*The more people that meet each other, the better it is for all of them.*

— Fletcher Pratt, “*The Gift of God*”

When the Lost come together, even the mightiest Huntsman should tremble. A freehold is more than just a collection of courts. It’s a society in miniature, with its own heroes, leaders, and malcontents. Though they face conflict from within and without, freeholds provide the tools, support, and challenges changelings need to create a place of belonging.

## OPTIONAL FREEHOLD SYSTEMS

Despite being a small community within a large host city, freeholds are diverse collections of people, places, and assets. Changelings don’t always return to their own hometowns and many stay with the first Lost community they find, often making freeholds much more diverse places than the cities around them. The following optional mechanics bring these aspects to the forefront of a **Changeling** game.

### FREEHOLD CREATION: BUILDING THE SET

In addition to setting the stage (**Changeling**, p. 297), players can come together to create a rich and vibrant freehold. This system helps the troupe *build the set*, assembling the basic skeleton of the freehold where the game takes place, and creating a setting filled with established stakes that still has plenty of space to develop in play.

Building the set occurs after character creation and before play begins. It’s not necessary to engage in setting the stage first, but having a strong grasp of the chronicle’s themes may help focus your efforts.

To build the set, you need something to write on: a sheet of paper, a whiteboard, a virtual tabletop, index cards, or sticky notes. If you use index cards or sticky notes, you need at least six per player and six for the Storyteller.

### GATHERING ELEMENTS

Each member of the troupe (including the Storyteller) comes up with six elements for the freehold. These elements fall into four categories: **Places**, **Faces**, **Wonders**, and **Problems**. Everyone provides two Places, two Faces, one Wonder, and one Problem each.

**Places** are individual locations important to the freehold. Like sitcom coffee shops or the HQs in police procedurals, these places are always available for a scene to take place in. While many freeholds have a single base of operations, they usually also have satellite bases and other places they frequent (and secure) to ensure they don’t put all their eggs in one basket in case the Gentry’s lackeys show up. More cautious (or less organized) freeholds can be completely decentralized.

When you create a Place, write down the location’s name and a brief description.

**Examples:** *Dorsey Park* — lively public park; *Beacon Port* — crumbling community center; *Ol' Kelsey's Holler* — abandoned Hollow

**Faces** are important figures to the freehold's day-to-day life. They are not necessarily leaders or even members, but all Faces play some kind of role in its function. Faces can be Storyteller characters created by setting the stage, Touchstones, or Merits such as Contacts and Allies.

When you create a Face, write down the person's name and one important fact about them.

**Examples:** *Max Kelly* — forges IDs; *Bright Stream* — has a love trapped in Arcadia; *Garçon* — recently became a Goblin Queen

**Wonders** are fantastic elements, where the Wyrd intertwines with the mundane. Don't worry about making sure these elements have an explanation or directly link to any specific character. Those will develop in play. Wonders range from tiny, daily miracles to rare, potentially chronicle-shattering revelations.

When you create a Wonder, write it down as a brief statement; include a note about where it's located, if applicable.

**Examples:** *A Hedge gate is always open behind the freehold's local bar; Sometimes the trees speak in the Spring Queen's garden; A free Huntsman roams the neighborhood*

**Problems** are pressing, immediate issues facing the freehold. These may be hooks you wish to tackle right away, or something for the first story to foreshadow. Don't try to think of answers to or details about these problems for now, as they'll come up in play.

When you create a Problem, write down the issue and an open-ended question about it.

**Examples:** *The freehold is fated to be captured — can it be saved? Someone plots the monarchs' downfall — who is it? Our home base is physically withering away — what's causing it?*

## SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED

Once you create your elements, match them up in four phases. At the start of each phase, select someone new to start placing elements. From there, you can lay down the elements in any order.

### Phase One

First, reveal Places. The first revealed Places are strongholds for each court, one for each of the free-

hold's courts. Remaining Places can serve whatever roles the troupe wishes, such as safehouses, local Goblin Markets, meeting places, or trod endpoints.

### Phase Two

Then, attach each Face to one of the Places. Multiple Faces can be attached to the same Place, but each court stronghold needs at least one. The first Face attached to a court stronghold is that court's monarch. After that, Faces can fill whatever roles the troupe wishes, such as neutral information broker, inter-court mediator, dubious freehold ally, or a rival from another freehold.

### Phase Three

After that, attach each Wonder to any Place. Faces attached to a Place with a Wonder do not necessarily know about the Wonder, but may — or may even be its cause. A Place may have any number of Wonders attached to it, including zero. A Place with multiple Wonders is either a famous (or infamous) location for the freehold, or is about to become so, and other factions in the city can covet it, seek to destroy it, or have some other relationship with it.

### Phase Four

Finally, attach each Problem to any Place. When a Problem is attached to a Place, any Faces attached to it are directly or indirectly involved in the Problem. Multiple Problems can be attached to a Place. A Place with multiple Problems is a tumultuous area for the freehold where conflicts are likely to take place.

Once all the elements are matched, take some time to review the freehold the troupe has built. Some elements may need to be tweaked to better fit together, or the group may decide that an element fits better somewhere else. Once everyone is satisfied with their freehold, it's ready for play.

## ROOTS OF SOCIETY: FREEHOLD INTERACTIONS

Freeholds don't exist in isolation. The Hedge's trods bring cities closer together than geography allows. Freeholds in a region usually keep a friendly but somewhat distant relationship. The problems facing one freehold double with another in the mix. Even if they share the same court system, freeholds can have different ideas on how to best aid each other and the Lost as a whole. Despite this, most freeholds realize they gain nothing from extreme paranoia and keep up regular rapport with their closest neighbors.

## REPUTATION

A freehold's reputation with another is measured on a scale from positive to negative. When that reputation is important to social interactions, it creates the following effects regarding a character's Social rolls against that freehold's members. The first column applies to one-off Social rolls, while the second column applies to Social maneuvering instead.

| Reputation | Roll Modifier | Impression Level |
|------------|---------------|------------------|
| Positive   | +2            | One level higher |
| Neutral    | +0            | As normal        |
| Negative   | -2            | One level lower  |

Freehold reputations change according to members' actions. If a freehold's reputation with another would drop below negative due to story events, they're considered to be in conflict (see p. XX). The Storyteller can use the following guidelines as examples of when a freehold's reputation might change:

- Three significant gifts or favors move a freehold's reputation up one step. A priceless gift or act of true heroism or sacrifice for another freehold can change a reputation from negative to positive immediately, at the Storyteller's discretion.
- Three robberies from or slights against another freehold move a reputation down one step. A truly harmful act or significant treachery against another freehold can change a reputation from positive to negative immediately, at the Storyteller's discretion. The rival freehold may view something as a slight that wasn't meant as one, which counts.
- A freehold's reputation with another can improve after resolving a conflict if the freehold's rival believes it acted in good faith or demonstrated traits it respects. A reputation can also improve without any direct contact between the freeholds, if one displayed particular heroism, courage, compassion, or strength in exploits the other witnessed.
- A freehold's reputation can take a beating even if its members don't antagonize anyone. Depending on the court in charge at the time, its neighbors might view it as a liability due to some real or imagined weakness, hold it responsible for some-

thing it had no control over, or get jealous when it flaunts its resources and successes, for instance.

In a region with multiple neighbors, a freehold may have different reputations with each, sometimes because of the same action. Stealing a freehold's prized token and bringing it to a neighboring one, for example, is a slight to the first freehold and a favor to the second.

Occasionally, freeholds use oaths to formalize relationships. They're often minor, meant mostly as measures to guard against neighborly infighting. Sometimes, though, they can be powerful declarations of alliance or enmity that reverberate through the freehold's entire history. For more on inherited oaths, see p. XX.

## CONFLICT

Even the friendliest societies can be at odds. Conflicts within and between freeholds arise from misunderstandings, personal disagreements, scarcity of resources, or manipulation from hostile forces. The following archetypes represent the most common ways changelings clash.

**Rivalries** occur when two or more changelings or motleys vie for the same goal. These range from lofty political ambitions to intense personal desires.

- The monarch of Court Gray Sky became a martyr for her freehold. Her closest friends, Albert Greenbones and Opal Eyes, squabble to decide who will replace her, dividing the once tight-knit court.
- Liam is head-over-heels for Omar. Unfortunately for him, Victor loves Omar, too. Their competition for his heart is a hot topic in Bailey's Run. Other freeholders take bets on who will win.

**Cultural conflicts** pit courts or freeholds against each other due to differences in opinion, values, or methods; need for a resource they can't share; or, sometimes, the demands of the Wyrd itself, represented by oaths and Bargains that conflict even when the changelings themselves wish to cooperate. Cultural conflicts don't always involve hostility.

- The Whistling Man-at-Arms leads a Wild Hunt against the city's Lost, but even now the freeholds of Shadybrook and Crashing Tree cannot unite. The former wants both freeholds to hide from the onslaught, believing their fellows' approach to show arrogance, while the latter wants to combine forces to send the fae army back into the Thorns and accuses Shadybrook of cowardice.



- The courts of Hollow Creek discover a problem. The Shadow Court's Bargain demands they perform a major heist against the freehold every year, while the Mist Court's Bargain demands they whisk a freehold treasure away to the Hedge and leave it there annually. Unfortunately, this year a loyalist infiltrated the freehold and devastated its holdings, leaving only one suitable treasure for *both* courts' obligations.

**Hedgefire wars** are large-scale conflicts between freeholds. They're grim affairs, full of espionage, sabotage, and brief but hideous violence in both the mundane world and the Hedge. How a Hedgefire war manifests depends on the ruling courts and monarchs of the freeholds involved, but generally plays out much more like a gang war, guerilla war, or cold war than true battle. Letting the conflict explode in obvious fashion means drawing unwanted attention from mortal authorities and more sinister forces. A Hedgefire war usually embroils mortals, goblins, and courtless changelings as mercenaries, spies, saboteurs, and duelists. Sometimes, even other local supernatural beings are drawn into the fray, willingly or not.

The Lost try to avoid Hedgefire wars whenever possible, as it's hard to defend themselves against Gentry machinations when they're busy defending themselves from each other. Nevertheless, they happen; more often than not they crop up out of broken promises, oath-bound enmities, and perceived treacheries. Certain kinds of pledges can even drag freeholds to war regardless of their efforts to find another solution.

- Thrush Valley and Winterheart have been at war for 20 years. The fighting began over the Thistle Locket, a token with the power to alter memories. Each freehold believes the other has it and makes yearly raids to recover it. Every raid leads to fatalities, but the freeholds' enmity has yet to falter. None realize that a hobgoblin snatched the Locket years ago and used its power to keep the war going.
- Some freeholds try to force a change in leadership during a Hedgefire war to shift their strategy and gain an edge. Doing so led to Thatched Nest's downfall. They threw down the violent Hawk Court to invoke the Raven Court's cunning months before the rightful transfer of power. With their Bargain compromised, they couldn't fend off the Wild Hunt that crushed the freehold in an opportunistic ambush. None of those Lost were ever seen again.

## Conclusion and Compromise

Freeholds use a few common methods to end conflict before it erupts into something worse:

- Third parties, like a well-respected member of a neutral freehold or an entitled changeling (p. XX) with a relevant role, can mediate to find a compromise to satisfy everyone. In cases where the Wyrd enforces the conflict, the freehold might call upon a savvy Notary or hobgoblin lawyer instead to find loopholes.
- When words won't work, a sanctioned duel might. Monarchs choose champions to represent aggrieved parties and adjudicate hostile oaths between them formalizing that representation. Whichever side's champion wins gets the final say in the conflict's resolution. Whether or not these duels are fought to the death depends on the conflict's severity and the oath's terms.
- When a conflict is too fraught to produce agreement on the terms of a duel, some freeholds settle their differences by warring in dreams, thus avoiding consequences that are *too* permanent. This practice is traditionally known as "oneiro-machy."

## GROWING A COMMUNITY: FREEHOLD SEEDS

Freeholds usually crop up in cities for the same reasons other people gather there, but also because the press of humanity can help keep them grounded and dissuade blatant displays from Fae agents.

The following four freeholds are described in brief, ready for a Storyteller to expand upon for her own games — perhaps using the Building the Set optional system on p. XX.

### THE RIVER REFUGE: CAIRO, EGYPT

The city of a thousand minarets is home to the oldest known freehold in the world. Though the modern city itself has only existed for a millennium, the freehold's customs and history imply a much older origin for the Refuge, dating from well before any human settlements developed in the area. It saw the rise and fall of many mortal governments, from the Babylonians to the Egyptian Revolution. The River Refuge stood

firm through countless Wild Hunts and the treachery of the Loyal.

The freehold owes much of its longevity to the power of its patron, a being known as the Hearth. It is a flame hidden in the heart of Old Cairo, fed by offerings of Glamour. To join the freehold, a changeling must take an oath to feed and protect the Hearth.

But now, the Hearth is fading. No amount of Glamour revives it. Its flames weaken, even as the forces of the Fae draw closer.

## COURTS

The Refuge technically endures with just one court, which surprises visitors. Locals know, though, that their Bargain encompasses the same principles of cycling power and fulfilling obligations as any more monarchical organization. The freehold is so ancient that it predates the concept of courts, and its people have never seen a reason adopt the system.

The court has no official name, though Lost from outside the city refer to it as the “Court of the River” for convenience. Instead of a traditional court cycle, seemings gather as independent political forces. Three seemings at a time lead the court as the Triumvirate, each with one representative. Currently, this Triumvirate consists of the **Beasts**, the **Elementals**, and the **Wizened**. Every four lunar months, another seeming may choose a champion to duel one of the Triumvirate leaders. If she wins, the champion takes a seat on the Triumvirate representing her seeming.

## FACES

**Alshuruq** is the Elemental leader, and the eldest member of the Triumvirate. He has served since his seeming first won its spot, over a century ago. Despite his great age, his Mask looks no older than 50, and his molten mien seems as strong as ever. In truth, his body cools and hardens as the Hearth’s flames weaken. He doesn’t know why this is happening, and goes to great lengths to keep it a secret.

## STORY HOOKS

- The Darklings recently won a place in the Triumvirate from the Wizened. The transfer of power is peaceful until the Wizened leader discovers the Hearth died during the Darkling’s coronation. The two seemings blame each other and claim a spot on the Triumvirate. As long as the three ruling seemings are in doubt, the River Refuge’s Bargain is null and void. The motley must broker peace between the Wizened and the Darklings,

before the Fae discover the Refuge is defenseless.

- The Triumvirate comes to a hard decision: The River Refuge must seek a new patron. The freehold chooses the motley to parley with possible candidates. It must be kept secret; Hearth may be dying, but it still has enough power to take vengeance if it finds out.
- The Hearth isn’t dying; someone is stealing it. A motley of privateers has schemed for years to steal the court’s Bargain for their client, and now their plans have come to fruition. Can anyone stop them? What would their client do if someone did?

## THE ETERNAL FEAST: JAKARTA, INDONESIA

The Eternal Feast grew from the tradition of *slametan*, a ritual communal feast dedicated to asking the spirits for a state of peace in a household. The Lost used these gatherings as ways to find each other and share experiences. Today, the Eternal Feast is a more traditional freehold. To join, a changeling must hold a feast for other members in her own household, where they swear an oath to protect the freehold.

Not only are feasts used for initiation and resolving conflicts between members, they play an important part in the freehold’s Bargain. When a Huntsman comes to town, the freehold announces the Hunter’s Feast, a special feast that all five courts must help prepare. Once it’s ready, they invite the Huntsman to dine with the freehold, and he must comply. There, the changelings either negotiate temporary peace terms with him, or pretend to do so long enough to find a more definitive solution. It’s a dangerous but potentially rewarding tactic; failed feasts tend to result in chaos and major losses, but a successful feast can keep the Wild Hunt away from the freehold for years. As a result, Jakarta changelings prize persuasive bargaining skills highly.

## COURTS

Due to the multiple cultures that call the country home, its many islands, and its history of colonization, Indonesia is an intricate tapestry of courts. While this freehold uses the Directional Courts of continental Asia, its closest neighbors adopt anything from the Seasonal Courts, the Courts of Dawn and Dusk, or their own localized systems.

The **Court of the North**, or the **Armor Court**, attune themselves to suffering and deny themselves life’s





pleasures so they have nothing the Gentry can take away. In Jakarta, they host feasts in the city's harbors and on the Thousand Islands that lie off the mainland, in which participants must fast for 24 hours before digging in to impart an appreciation for what they have. During the Hunter's Feast, the Armor Court delivers the invitation to the Huntsman and persuades him to attend, deriving strength from the knowledge of the danger they're bringing into the freehold.

The **Court of the South**, or the **Court of Song**, attune themselves to expression, both artistically and emotionally, and strives to set themselves completely free of self-imposed restraint. They host feasts in the city's business district, encouraging all to indulge as much as they want and hold nothing back. During the Hunter's Feast, the Court of Song lays out the freehold's terms to the Huntsman and appeals to his desires, encouraging him to try to reject his Keeper and bargain on his own terms.

The **Court of the East**, or the **Serpent Court**, attune themselves to envy and accumulate wealth in defiance of what they've lost, nurturing mundane greed to take full advantage of their situation, and using it to reconnect indelibly with human cultures. They host feasts in the city's industrial complex, framing them as

competitions to see who can flaunt the finest delicacies and most lavish meals. During the Hunter's Feast, the Serpent Court's responsibility is to win as much advantage as possible over the Huntsman in the negotiations, letting no loophole go unutilized.

The **Court of the West**, or the **Court of War**, attunes itself to integrity and discipline, maintaining close ties to human militaries and ensuring that any battle the freehold fights is undertaken according to its conscience rather than its rage. They host feasts in the city's original downtown area, with highly ritualized customs and carefully parceled portions. During the Hunter's Feast, the Court of War adjudicates the oaths that hold both sides to their words, and leads the freehold's defenses should anything go wrong.

## FACES

**Deras**, Beast of the North, isn't just a courier; he's the best one in the whole city. He was once his Keeper's warhorse, but now he serves the freehold as a go-between. He admires his court's philosophy, and follows it with harrowing feats of endurance and speed, pushing himself to his limits to outdo himself with every job. Still, he's a die-hard braggart, which makes him one of the freehold's most ostentatious Armor Courtiers.

## DIRECTIONAL MANTLES

The Directional Courts are detailed in **Dark Eras'** "Three Kingdoms of Darkness" chapter (pp. 126-133), although that presentation shows what they were like in China in the 200s. To update them for second edition and the modern day, use the following guidelines:

- Wherever a Mantle would grant a Goblin Vow dot, instead grant either a dot in Fair Harvest (**Changeling**, p. 114) for an appropriate emotion, or bonus dice equal to the character's Mantle to mundane rolls that uphold or encourage the relevant emotion (but *not* rolls to harvest Glamour from it).
- Wherever a Mantle would grant a Personal Approach, the changeling instead regains 1 Willpower whenever he risks harm to himself or his motley in pursuit of his court's Bargain.
- Northern Courtiers gain 1 Glamour whenever they earn a Beat from negative Condition effects. Southern Courtiers gain 1 Glamour whenever they strain a relationship or attract unwanted attention through unfettered expression. Eastern Courtiers gain 1 Glamour whenever they acquire something of great value at someone else's expense. Western Courtiers gain 1 Glamour whenever they accept a foe's surrender in a high-stakes fight.
- Northern and Eastern Mantle 5 may be used once per chapter, instead of once per day.
- Replace the Southern Mantle with the following: Mantle 1 grants bonus dice equal to Mantle to mundane Expression or Crafts rolls to create or perform art; Mantle 2 grants bonus dice equal to Mantle to rolls to incite Bedlam with any emotion; Mantle 3 grants an extra bonus die or additional +1 to a static value whenever the character spends Willpower for those benefits; Mantle 4 replenishes 1 Willpower whenever he achieves exceptional success when harvesting Glamour from an emotion he explicitly worked to evoke in the target; Mantle 5 lets the changeling harvest Glamour from the same person twice per scene instead of once, and the target loses Willpower both times.
- Eastern Mantle 1 and 3, and Western Mantle 1, grant dice equal to Mantle, rather than their stated bonuses.

Locals can catch him biking around town wearing a bright purple tracksuit.

### STORY HOOKS

- A hobgoblin and her loyal swarm claim the Eastern Court's extravagant pantry as their new base of operations, claiming its bounty for the new Market they're opening. Without its pantry, the court loses its centuries-old collection of exquisite goblin fruits — the ingredients that make their Hunter's Feast meals possible. The motley must convince the goblins to abandon their plan, or otherwise drive them out.
- While attending a feast, the motley listens to the beloved host give an acerbic speech, airing her grievances against the freehold. The next night, she vanishes, and a local Hedge gate is destroyed. Has she become a Bridge-Burner, or is someone framing her?
- Huntsmen and hobgoblins descend upon the freehold in a once-in-a-lifetime Wild Hunt. The

motley must help prepare the greatest Hunter's Feast the city has ever known, and foil the loyalists planning to sabotage it.

### PLACID BASIN: LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

Originally founded by former members of a copycat Court of the Leafless Tree (see **Dark Eras 2**, "Mysterious Frontiers"), the Placid Basin was supposed to cultivate a safer community, with Seasonal Courts to uphold a more secure Bargain while still following the tenets of reciprocal justice. Its purview extends beyond the famous Las Vegas Strip into the several unincorporated towns neighboring it. To join, a changeling must present a valuable trophy from a successful quest to visit justice upon a fae criminal to the currently reigning monarch as a gift. After swearing to keep the freehold's secrets, the new courtier takes a tour. Her guide teaches her all about the Placid Basin's wonders — and its terrible curse.

The Basin once came together to destroy one of the Titles of the Crystal Robed Faun in retaliation for crimes

against the freehold. Furious, the Faun cursed them to undergo a terrible misfortune in five years that would destroy Placid Basin. Four years and nine months later, the changelings still search for a means to break it as time runs out.

## COURTS

The **Spring Court** is the largest and most powerful. It doesn't only throw lavish parties on the Strip to fulfill the Bargain; it wants to instill hope that the Basin will overcome its curse and continue to flourish, keeping the hunt for a solution going in the face of despair.

The **Summer Court** led the charge to destroy the Faun's Title, and believes destroying the rest of them will break the curse. On top of its usual duties, the court undertakes the difficult task of hunting down the Gentry's other Titles through its minions.

The **Autumn Court** tirelessly works to understand the curse, hoping they can break it through less confrontational means. Their efforts have uncovered a glimpse of what it could portend: the Black Mountain fault may destroy the city in a major earthquake. The courtiers seek aid from powerful entities of all kinds in an attempt to postpone or avoid this disaster.

The **Winter Court** is the smallest of the Basin's courts. It dedicates itself to mitigating the effects of the oncoming calamity rather than trying to avert it, just in case. It builds shelters and hoards supplies for the freehold, preparing for the worst — occasionally at the expense of others, when their desperation makes their consciences fail them.

## FACES

**Jane Crossways** is a bit unorthodox for a Summer knight. The hard-drinking Darkling uses trickery and wit to get results, often haring off on her own to bring justice to elusive targets without consulting her superiors first. Still, when someone goes missing, she's one of the best private investigators in Vegas. Her Keeper forced her to lure others into Her realm at wooded crossroads, so now she fights like hell to reunite those who wander or are drawn into the Hedge with their loved ones. Her "it's complicated" Winter Court ex-girlfriend constantly worries she'll go missing herself one of these days, arguing that she should hunker down with the Silent Arrow in preparation for the curse's fulfillment. Thus far, Jane remains unconvinced.

## STORY HOOKS

- A True Loyalist representing the Crystal Robed Faun arrives at the freehold's home base. She claims the Fae wishes to make peace with the Placid Basin, and offers to lift the curse for "a

few small favors." It's an obvious trap, but some courtiers can't help wondering whether they should take the deal anyway.

- A Summer Court hunt goes horribly wrong, leading to a number of deaths in the nearby freehold of Reno. That freehold demands justice from the larger Placid Basin, and members of both fear this may be the beginning of a Hedgefire war — and possibly the first manifestation of the Faun's curse.
- A Spring Courtier found a changeling from another city who might be the answer to the freehold's problems. Breakout Billie has a storied reputation for breaking curses, and she's willing to help. The Emerald Court asks the motley to act as protection when they meet with Billie on the Strip. Unfortunately, the curse-breaker has made lots of enemies, and she's a long way from the pledges that safeguarded her back home.

## DUNE'S REST: SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

The tense union of native and colonist Lost in Britain's penal colony led to the birth of Dune's Rest. Now, it has grown to be just as diverse and sprawling as the city itself. It's easy to join; a changeling must swear to act in the freehold's best interests and follow two simple rules: always provide a fellow member shelter and never impede a changeling's safe passage. That second rule has evolved into a semi-communal sharing of Hedge trods. Those who lay claim to one still ask payment for its use, but tradition demands the price be negotiable and as cheap as the Wyrd will allow.

Lately, though, Hedge gates around the city have been forced open and refuse to close. To make matters worse, trods connected to these gates deteriorate; the worst become what the freehold calls "false trods" — roads that spiral off into unknown territory, their usual protections unpredictable at best. Safe passage has suddenly become a hot commodity, challenging the long-standing custom.

## COURTS

Two courts rule Dune's Rest, known colloquially as "mobs."

Inspiration drives the **Walkabout Mob**. They're fascinated by the new and different, and have a tendency to reinvent the wheel. They believe the open Hedge gates and false trods are simply the new state of

things, and the freehold must either create new trods to keep its security or abandon the old traditions entirely to found new ones based on wanderlust instead. They draw the ire of a quickly growing local Bridge-Burner faction, as they carve new paths into the Hedge and preserve access to the Hedgeways that won't close.

The **Home Mob** indulges in nostalgia. It defends tried and true ideas, sometimes long after those ideas become outdated. Home Courtiers take the situation in stride, certain the freehold can fix it. They study the phenomenon to discover its true nature, and try to find ways to work *with* the false trods to preserve their traditions, even if it makes the freehold less safe in the long run.

## FACES

**Sleekit Tod** is a long way from home. The cunning Riddleseeker Beast, once a Scottish Traveller, tricked his Keeper into releasing him as part of a bet, but he hadn't expected the Hedge to lead him to Sydney. The Home Mob is quite fond of the ever-grinning, behatted fox, and his closest friends are picking up on the Doric dialect in which he prefers to speak. He has a vested interest in fixing the false trods, since the Hedge is his best bet for truly going home one of these days.

## STORY HOOKS

- The motley travels on a familiar trod back to Dune's Rest, when the scenery changes without warning and the road feels *wrong*. The trod has fallen to falsehood, and getting home just got a lot more dangerous.
- The Walkabout Mob's Bargain prompts them to annually challenge their rivals in Melbourne to a battle of boasts. This year, the mob's invited the motley to take part and show everyone which city is the bravest.
- A Walkabout Courtier, believing the city's Hedge woes are a sign of the realm's natural evolution, disappears down a false trod. He returns more Gentry than changeling, convinced everyone should join him in whatever so-called "transcendence" he's found. He's kidnapping others and dragging them onto the trod, and the motley must stop him — especially now that he's done so to someone they care about.





## CHAPTER TWO

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# OATHS OF FEALTY

*The storm has brought Ulla to the cold shelter of the northern islands, to the darkened caves and flat black pools where she remains to this day, waiting for the lonely, the ambitious, the clever, the frail, for all those willing to strike a bargain. She never waits for long.*

— Leigh Bardugo, *The Language of Thorns: Midnight Tales and Dangerous Magic*

Horeb. Etna. Olympus. Mora Winddancer had been sure she'd find The God Who Climbs on the peaks of that last one, but the third time was not the charm and here she was, almost to the top of Kilimanjaro. She pressed her forehead against a smooth cliff face, trying not to vomit. She could feel the Bargain surging in her blood again. "I'm trying to find you!" she shouted up at the clouds above. "What more do you want? You want to be a god, but every other mountain is sacred to someone! Do I have to climb them all?" She received no response except her cell ringing inside her pack. Mora scrambled to dig it out.

"Mora?" The sound of Jean's voice was a balm to her soul. "Are you there? I've been trying to get ahold of you for weeks. Where are you? You need to come home. I'm worried about you."

She closed her eyes, suddenly dizzy with the thought of going home to her best friend — or more — and barely able to breathe. "I..." The world spun beneath her. The mark of The God Who Climbs' Mantle welled up within her, and the path forward forked. She took a step toward the summit, then two, and her heart firmed in her chest, transforming into a hunk of raw violet tanzanite as she ascended. "I can't," she whispered. "I can't come home. This is more important than you or me. I have to climb."

## BARGAINS AND MANTLES

Most changelings are content to join established courts. Founding a new court isn't as easy as tracking down a powerful entity and striking any old deal. Few freeholds are willing or even able to accept new courts into their power cycle, and a new freehold usually requires at least two courts for the traditional exchange of power to work. Even if a motley tries together, risking life and limb (or worse) to build a society from scratch is a daunting prospect. Nevertheless, some changelings set off on the quest to establish their own courts, whether for power and glory, as an act of political secession from an established freehold, or because they *have* no local freehold and they're willing to put everything on the line to give the region's changelings a chance at protection and fellowship.

## LET'S MAKE A DEAL

Striking a Bargain and establishing a court is a legendary undertaking, and stories about how it's done are more archetypal than historical. Most changelings can't even fathom where to begin, and established courts do their best to hide the fact that striking a Bargain is a surprisingly simple — if not easy — endeavor. It doesn't require a rare or powerful ability; changelings need only a moderate level of power, and they all already know the basics.



The Bargain anchoring a court is similar to bargains struck with humans, only writ large. Changelings make them with fundamental entities powerful enough and far enough removed from the Fae to stand between the courtiers and Arcadia's machinations. This usually means binding the court to something with a strong connection to the natural, mortal world — like seasons, elements, cardinal directions, or celestial bodies. Bargains with other non-fae entities may serve the same purpose, but can be unpredictable and have strange consequences.

Aspirant court founders must identify an appropriate entity to become the new court's patron. The Lost don't worry overmuch about the metaphysical nature of an entity. If it's powerful enough, isn't fae, is willing to cooperate, and carries some essential symbolism or mythic identity the court can hang its hat on, that's enough. Most changelings can't tell the difference between types of entities, anyway — whether it's a spirit, an *idigam*, a Strix, or an Ochema doesn't matter, and their Bargains all bestow the same general benefits. Whatever oddities the Bargain and its attendant powers possess due to an entity's otherworldly origin are just part and parcel of the process as far as the court is concerned.

## FORGING THE MANTLE

A typical courtier's Mantle rises as she grows closer to her court's ideals. A changeling with the Founder's Mark has no choice in the matter. Her inchoate Mantle *will* grow at an accelerated rate; the only question is whether she'll deliberately forge herself into the new court's ideal example through repaying each power increase with a feat that impresses or glorifies her patron, or whether the Wyrd will exact its own price when she fails to do so. A founder must quickly prove herself and grow into her new Mantle, or risk it taking control to build the Bargain *through* her as the medium.

Changelings demonstrating their worth to the nascent court's benefactor perform tasks that empower or honor it, or display their talents in a relevant context. Every court has multiple founding legends, and while some stories conflict, that doesn't mean any are false. A founder grows in understanding and power with every task she survives. Many, however, cannot change their natures and understanding of the world to embody the court's ideals quickly enough, making a court's successful founding a feat worthy of story and song.

## SYSTEMS

Once the changeling finds a willing entity, the process consists of several steps:

## WHICH ENTITIES ARE VALID?

The characters probably don't care what specific kind of entity they Bargain with, and your troupe doesn't have to either if they're comfortable with just saying "we want to make a Bargain with the Sky." Players and Storytellers who *want* to choose a particular entity from the larger **Chronicles of Darkness** cosmology, though, should use the following guidelines.

You can Bargain with almost anything if you have a way to find and communicate with it; the Wyrd takes care of the details. Want to Bargain with an arch-gashmal? An Awakened archmaster? An Inferno demon? Go for it! The specifics of the resulting court's symbolism and powers flow from the entity's nature, and the players and Storyteller should agree on these themes ahead of time. As long as players accept that if they Bargain with a Gulmoth they'll get all the anti-reality bullshit they paid for, the sky's the limit.

In mechanical terms, ephemeral entities require Rank 6+ to qualify for a court Bargain, and other types of beings need to be a metaphysical step — or several — above protagonists. You can't Bargain with a mummy, but a Judge will do. Ordinary ghosts aren't powerful or fundamental enough, but a greater Kerberos? Now we're talking. Non-ephemeral beings with power ratings that go from 1 to 10 should be hovering around the top of their scale if you need mechanics for them; the characters shouldn't expect to meaningfully oppose the entity directly with dice unless they are themselves near the upper limits of their power.

## Invocation

- The changeling must reveal her fae mien and make a formal declaration of intent to forge the Bargain's beginnings. The form this invocation takes depends on the entity. The concept of Carousing may accept a drunken plan publicly declared in the middle of a bar while Secrets requires dangerous, arcane rituals.
- If the Storyteller calls for rolls to see how effective the invocation is, they should be for investigating the kinds of rites a given entity likes, rather than

any opposed rolls against the entity itself. The more obscure the entity, the more difficult this research is.

- If the entity agrees to the Bargain, the changeling gains a Founder's Mark (see below).

### Paying Your Dues

The legendary feats come in after the changeling dedicates herself to the cause. She builds the new Mantle one dot at a time, although it happens much faster than usual. Each Mantle increase further seals her connection to the entity and grants her a measure of its power, but the Wyrd expects her to pay for each one, whether through preemptive action or repayment after the fact.

## FOUNDER'S MARK (PERSISTENT)

Your character is a founding member of a nascent court. Its budding Mantle writes itself into her Wyrd, and all who see her true form know she's on a quest to forge a Bargain in sweat, tears, blood — and victory. If she already has another Mantle when she gains this Condition, that Mantle's effects and all its Court Contracts that she knows are suppressed, unavailable while she retains the Founder's Mark.

At the end of each full chapter after gaining this Condition, your character's Mantle for the new court increases by one dot, with no Experience expenditure. If, during that chapter, she succeeded at a major task or overcame a significant challenge in direct pursuit of a goal aligning with the nascent court's patron or in a manner highly appropriate to it, she suffers no ill effects from the Mantle gain. If she's *already* performed an appropriate task that would count toward her new Mantle within the same story as she gained this Condition, the Storyteller may rule that it retroactively counts toward fulfilling the Mantle's first dot. Only one task may count retroactively.

If she *didn't* accomplish an appropriate task by the end of a chapter, she still gains the Mantle dot but also suffers a specific consequence depending on how many total times she's allowed this to happen, based on the chart below.

**Beat:** Abandon a prior obligation, greatly inconvenience or cause harm to your friends, or otherwise complicate things for your motley by taking an appropriate action to pursue the Mantle as above.

**Resolution:** Complete the Bargain; *or*, give up on striking the Bargain entirely. You may choose to actively resolve this Condition to reject the new Mantle and end the process anytime, but your character suffers the same effects she would have if she'd reached Mantle 5 without accomplishing any appropriate tasks and then backed out (see the chart, below).

### # of Unfulfilled Mantle Increases

### Consequence

1

Choose new Needle and Thread archetypes that align with the court's themes and the patron's Virtue/Vice, Influences, or other equivalent kinds of traits.

2

Gain a new minor frailty that reflects the patron entity, such as its bane or ban, or otherwise expresses the court's themes.

3

Upgrade the frailty to a major one.

4

Replace your rightmost Touchstone with the entity itself or one of its direct representatives, such as offspring or a loyal servant; the changeling must sever the old relationship in a definitive way. If you have no Touchstones, gain the new one as though it were your first (**Changeling**, p. 98).

5

Choose one: lose all accumulated Mantle for the new court and gain the Oathbreaker Condition (**Changeling**, p. 343); *or*, gain the fifth dot of the new Mantle and establish the court as planned, but gain the Court Avatar Condition (see below). Either of these resolves Founder's Mark (p. XX).



If the troupe uses these rules to create a brand new court, use the guidelines starting on p. 306 of the **Changeling** core book to design its Mantle. Everything *else* doesn't need to be designed just yet, but make a note of the trials the character goes through and consequences she suffers along the way so the group can incorporate the story they create into the court's themes, Contracts, Crown, and the final terms of the Bargain itself.

## COURT AVATAR (PERSISTENT)

Your character's new Mantle consumes her. Treat her Wyrd as one higher for purposes of dice pools for invoking Court Contracts, inciting Bedlam, and Mantle effects requiring rolls. She loses all Court Goodwill, and all Touchstones other than the court's patron entity (subject to the Sanctity of Merits). She may only incite Bedlam for, and harvest Glamour from, her court's associated emotion and no other. She no longer regains Willpower through rest, and adds one die to Clarity damage rolls.

As the Bargain's living representation, she weakens if the court reneges. If the appointed time for a ceremony, celebration, or other required event passes without it taking place, she risks Clarity with five dice every time the sun sets after that point.

If she falls to Clarity 0 for any reason, she doesn't become Comatose. Instead, she loses herself completely to her Mantle, becoming a being of pure Wyrd and an extension of the patron entity. She is no longer a changeling (and probably unplayable), retaining only her Court Contracts and Mantle. Use the rules for Hedge ghosts (**Changeling**, p. 246) to create the new being with the same Wyrd rating, and with Numina and Influences aligning with the patron entity. Depending on the entity's nature, she may gain abilities Hedge ghosts usually can't, such as reaching across the Gauntlet with appropriate Numina. She counts the court's territory — and the entire freehold's territory when her court is in power — as part of the Hedge.

**Beat:** Take Clarity damage due to a missed ritual, or choose the patron entity's priorities over other important things.

**Resolution:** Retrieve one of your character's Icons; or, fall to Clarity 0 and transform as above.

### Striking the Bargain

Once the character reaches Mantle 5 for the new court, she officially strikes the Bargain, and can't turn back. At this point, the troupe must decide on the court's themes and symbols, the effect that protects the freehold

from the Gentry's minions, the rites and ceremonies the Bargain requires as upkeep, and the court's Crown effects. They may also want to design at least a few Contracts now, especially if the character will acquire any immediately. Feel free to take Court Contracts from existing courts and modify them to fit the new court, if desired.

Once the Bargain is struck:

- The character spends a *dot* of Willpower, committing heart and soul to the Bargain.
- The character permanently loses any other court's Mantle and Court Contracts. Her old Mantle is subject to the Sanctity of Merits (**Changeling**, p. 111). She immediately gains a like number of Common and Royal Court Contracts for the new court as she had in the old.
- If the character had no Mantle or Court Contracts beforehand, she purchases the new court's Contracts as normal.
- The character gains the court's Crown as part of her Mantle and becomes its first monarch automatically. Even after she passes the throne on, she may always use the Crown's effects and it always influences her mien.
- The events of the founder's journey reverberate through the Hedge once she dons the Crown, a ripple effect that can spawn Hedge ghosts, spin changes to regional Hedge locations and trods, modify Hedgeway keys in the area, and impose temporary Bedlam on random pockets of mortals. These effects are up to the Storyteller, but should reflect the court's themes and symbolism.
- The ripple effect of the court's inception also obfuscates the facts of the tale as it propagates through the Hedge, reaches the Dreaming Roads, and then propagates back slightly altered by the dreams it touches — a phenomenon modern changelings liken to the absorption, reflection, and scattering of electromagnetic waves. Even people who were there have trouble recalling specifics after the fact, and the monarch herself might remember things differently than they really happened as time goes on, buying into her own legend as its diluted journey through human dreams adds embellishments.
- If the character *failed* to strike the Bargain, she may never try again with that patron. However, other changelings who try afterward treat rolls as though the original petitioner aids them with

teamwork while working toward the trials, until they reach a Mantle rating higher than the one the failed character achieved before giving up (or dying). These bonuses don't stack; the fourth person to try only enjoys this benefit for their most recent predecessor, not all three.

### Teamwork and Court Cycles

Motleys sometimes form when several changelings want to found a new court or freehold together. Courts often have multiple founders, and players are encouraged to explore the entire range of themes and archetypes existing within a court's symbolism as the characters grow with each trial.

- If multiple characters work together to establish the same court, they can aid each other with the trials, but *each* character must build her Mantle separately. One or several of them could fail while others succeed. Only one can become the court's first monarch unless their particular Bargain demands multiple rulers; they'll have to either choose a leader, or let the Wyrd choose for them.
- A motley can found an entire court cycle together, with each member working toward a different but thematically related Mantle and helping each other out with challenges. It's safest to do this one court at a time, leaving a margin of error in case someone bungles it or just so the clock isn't ticking for everyone at once. However, it is possible to build all the Mantles simultaneously, if the changelings are willing to risk it.

## NON-TRADITIONAL MANTLES

A Mantle is equal parts mystical identity and badge of affiliation. It connects a changeling to the fundamental principle upon which his chosen court is founded, altering his fae mien and allowing him to reap the benefits of a major Bargain he (usually) didn't have to make himself.

It's possible, though, to strike a Bargain with no intention of establishing a traditional court. A founder may make this aim clear upfront, or stumble ass-backwards into an unorthodox arrangement through misadventures or interference. Several varieties of non-court Mantles appear in recorded Lost history. They achieve unique solutions to the problem of lacking cyclical, thematic leadership by capitalizing on *other* aspects of human nature, the mortal world, or even otherworldly realms the Others cannot grasp, but their Bargains are weaker.

## SYSTEMS

These changelings purchase dots of Mantle and appropriate "Court" Contracts like any Lost (though some may object to the "common" and "royal" terminology), and their Mantle effects are comparable. Shedding their Mantle and joining a court later works the same way as for any courtier (**Changeling**, p. 112).

### Drawbacks

Eschewing the stability of a court carries a few drawbacks:

- A non-court Mantle has no Crown.
- The Mantle's bearers don't favor any emotion for Bedlam, nor do they benefit from the in-power or out-of-power Contract invocation bonuses.
- Other characters can't acquire Court Goodwill for the Mantle's group.
- These Bargains are more tenuous and harder to uphold, requiring constant upkeep. Since the group can never let someone else take the reins, it can never rest on its laurels. If members don't participate in a successful ritual once per story, they lose the Wyrd's protection and other Bargain benefits until they achieve an *exceptional* success on the ritual. Depending on the ritual, it may require one roll made by the character who performs the most significant part (such as a musical performance), aided by teamwork; or it may require an entire scene of adventure (such as an oneiromantic heist), in which the deciding roll is the most climactic one, at the Storyteller's discretion. Each subsequent try in the same story takes the usual successive attempt penalty (**Changeling**, p. 176).

- If a roll to uphold the Bargain suffers a dramatic failure, *all* members lose *all* Mantle benefits for the rest of the story. This interval drops to a chapter after the organization achieves 50 years of continuous existence, and drops again to a scene after 100 years. If, at any time, the group drops below 10 members, fails too many times to uphold its Bargain (depending on its patron's patience, at the Storyteller's discretion), or otherwise dissolves, the interval resets for anyone taking up the Mantle later to revive it.

### Benefits

These Mantle bearers tend to be fewer, more insular, and closer-knit; their Mantles grant some benefits courts don't:



- Each Mantle bearer gains Allies Merit dots equal to their Mantle, based on the group's membership.
- Motley Merits are shared among *all* the Mantle's bearers. Players can purchase *two* dots of a Motley Merit per Experience spent, as long as they remain in good standing with their organization; the Availability of any Motley Merit for purposes of borrowing resources from the group (p. XX) is reduced by one.
- Since these Mantles propagate less widely and usually don't last nearly as long, a group tends to have a slightly more personal relationship with its patron, even if no one remembers its true identity. Members may purchase the following "Court" Contract:

### DONNING THE GRAND MANTLE (ROYAL)

The changeling channels the power of her Mantle's patron, dropping her Mask and proclaiming her affiliation in regal or spectacular fashion.

**Cost:** 2 Glamour + 1 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Expression + Mantle

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** One scene

Using this Contract more than once per story inflicts the Leveraged Condition (**Changeling**, p. 342) regarding the entity; the Storyteller calls in the favor at any time, exerting the entity's influence to convince the character to perform an action with a pool of the changeling's own Mantle + Wyrđ, contested by her Resolve + Composure. She may resolve Leveraged to give in without resisting as usual. She can't use the Contract again while she's Leveraged, and that Condition lapses without granting a Beat at the end of the story.

#### Roll Results

**Success:** The changeling immediately gains Mantle 5 for the Contract's duration. For each Mantle dot she already possessed, she regains 1 spent Glamour and enjoys +1 on rolls aligning closely with the Mantle's themes, including rolls to invoke its "Court" Contracts.

**Exceptional Success:** The current use of the Contract doesn't count toward the once-per-story safe limit.

**Failure:** The Contract fails.

**Dramatic Failure:** The changeling gains Leveraged as above without gaining the Contract's benefits.

**Loophole:** None.

## EXAMPLE MANTLE TYPES

Non-traditional Mantle groups aren't limited to one Common and one Royal Contract; the Contract pairs given below are only examples, meant to inspire further ideas. Use the rules on p. 308 of the **Changeling** rulebook to create more or adapt existing ones.

Following are some example kinds of groups that form around non-court Mantles.

### FREE COMPANIES

A free company is a deliberate departure from conventional court-based changeling society, offering greater flexibility and more autonomy in exchange for less stability and more risk. Changelings form companies for a variety of reasons that mostly boil down to passionate rejection of courtly culture, either because they view it as politically or socially outdated for modern Lost, or because it reminds them too much of Gentry behavior.

The term "free company" referring specifically to these changeling groups dates back almost as far as the modern court structure itself in Western Europe, where free companies of mercenary soldiers arose in the 14th century. In the modern day, most companies around the world use that term or a comparable one, but opinions are divided on what to call their members. Some prefer *franklins*, as a reference to common people in the medieval period who owned land with neither serfdom's servitude to nobility nor upper class birth. Others prefer *venturers*, like the Italian mercenaries of old. The distinction is largely academic, but expresses the community's priorities and attitudes.

#### Burning Bridges

Most courtiers consider free companies only a step away (if that) from Bridge-Burners. Wholesale rejection of courts is, in their minds, an extreme nigh-synonymous with rejecting all things fae, and at that point you might as well set fire to Hedgeways and destroy dreams. Companies vehemently argue against this logic, drawing sharp lines between rejecting courts — the tools of the enemy, they say — and fanaticism. The truth hovers somewhere in between.

The companies' vehemence hides that Bridge-Burners *do* tend to make homes in their freeholds, having been spurned by the courts and even most courtless. More often than not, they're known and allowed, if quietly. It might be out of a sense of democratic fairness, sympathy with their cause, or even living through them vicariously; a few changelings *would* be Bridge-Burners, if they only could endure having so many

more enemies. Even a company that firmly turns out anyone who communicates strong Burner-like desires sometimes must admit that, at its root, the Bridge-Burner mentality is just a more extreme expression of its own mission statement. Only when things get out of hand do companies try to eject these overzealous members — when they commit atrocities in the name of anti-Gentry sentiment, or lash out at a Lost court.

Despite, or perhaps because of, this tendency, free companies maintain strict rules and codes of behavior to which members must agree, and opposing the courts directly is almost always at the top of the banned activities list. They differentiate themselves from Burners by this dedication — that, no matter their differing stances on changeling community, they aren't traitors to their own. They want a freer, nobler future for the Lost, not infighting and scorched-earth methods. If a company harbors too many Bridge-Burners or goes too far in its pursuit of alternative governance, its fellows write it off as a lost cause, a fallen and corrupt institution.

### Example Free Company: The Crystal Web

*The old Wized sneered at the motley of trespassers. "You tell Green Greta I'm just dandy, and to fuck right off. I'm not sworn to her or the courts anymore. None of that Faerie royalty bullshit. It's a game that plays right into Their hands, just how They like it." Electricity hummed around him, his fractal veins glowing a faint blue under his skin. "If you're not out of here in three seconds, it's open season on your email account. Hope you don't have any secrets."*

Also known as the Backdoor Company or the Silicon Guild, the Crystal Web disdains not only traditional freehold culture but the idea that changelings ought to gather in person much at all. Motleys are acceptable, but too many Lost in one place for too long is, they say, just asking for a Wild Hunt to turn up on their doorstep. Better to stay connected virtually. Better to Bargain with the Internet.

The cranky Wized mathematician Silicon Jack established the Crystal Web in the late 1980s, on the assumption that True Fae knew nothing of modern computing technology. He was wrong, but the Bargain he made held true, and his unorthodox methods attracted other changelings who made the same faulty assumption, or rejected the courts for their own reasons and preferred Jack's somewhat paranoid solution. As time went on, it became clear that technology made its way to Faerie just as easily as anything else humans dream of, but the Backdoor Company survived because Silicon Jack refused to act as its Administrator and

the thankless job of wrangling dozens of changelings interacting mostly online isn't coveted. The company ensures that each Administrator only need serve for a fixed amount of time.

The company's Bargain compels members to periodically host large LAN parties, MMO raids, web conferences, and other web-based gatherings open to the teeming masses; exposing themselves to the public doesn't come easily for changelings who meet in the cloud to stay anonymous, but they must. On the other hand, it compels the Gentry's agents to do the same, posting their plans on any publicly available site before they approach Crystal Web territory — although they don't have to tell the venturers *which* site. The company dedicates at least one motley to scouring the internet for potential trouble full-time.

The Crystal Web's members spread across the world, communicating on darknet forums and via encrypted email. Face-to-face gatherings occur in shared Hollows they call the Clouds: literal cloud-chambers, each keyed to a secret web address, floating in the sky of the BriarNet — the digital Hedge. Members research arcane problems together, trade rare tokens (especially digital ones), topple authority figures through clever application of goblin malware, and maintain a sophisticated intelligence network piggybacking on mundane surveillance infrastructure to keep tabs on important Hedgeways 24/7. A Silicon Guild motley dedicated to tracking the Others' minions and researching their specific weaknesses may possess the most complete picture of Gentry activity on the planet. Another may visit Goblin Markets in obscure Hedge corners to forge illicit Goblin Contracts whose users can't be traced. A third may consist of hackers who use literal back doors to enter the BriarNet and come back out inside an enemy's secure server.

### CRYSTAL WEB MANTLE (• TO •••••)

A complex lattice of glowing crystalline wires hums under the changeling's skin, tracing electric currents traveling along fractal circuitry in place of blood and veins. His visage glitches out or pixelates in an observer's peripheral vision, and a cacophony of voices carries faintly on the wind everywhere he goes. At its most powerful, the Crystal Web Mantle radiates static electricity and transforms the changeling's voice to sound digitally synthesized, distorted, or pitch-corrected.

**Effect:** Your character gains a Glamour point whenever he pulls off an impressive feat while staying completely anonymous.



- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle on mundane rolls to investigate or perform surveillance via the internet.
- Gain one dot of the Anonymity Merit (**Changeling**, p. 121).
- Gain the Eidetic Memory Merit (**Changeling**, p. 121).
- Any action (mundane or supernatural) your character takes to transmit information to someone else, whether verbally, textually, or in some other fashion, can be done reflexively if it would have been instant, or can be done as an instant action if it would have been extended.
- Your character is a natural BriarNet pathfinder, traversing its networked trods at the speed of data. Gain 8-again on rolls to determine whether he has the Edge in a Hedge navigation chase in the BriarNet, and double his effective Speed while traveling on a BriarNet trod.

### CONTRACT: HIDDEN PROTOCOL (COMMON)

The changeling becomes one of countless nodes along the BriarNet's information superhighway, bridging the mortal world and the Hedge's digital domain by dialing a number on a keypad, entering a password with a keyboard, or otherwise inputting an access code into an electronic device.

**Cost:** 1 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Computer + Wyrd

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** Instant

**Effects:** The changeling is never out of his service area in the mundane world with this Contract. He can use any electronic device that takes user input, whether it's a keyboard, a phone's number pad, or a microphone, to send swift communications by routing them through the Hedge. He doesn't need to know the intended recipient's contact information — only their name — and he doesn't need any mundane signal or network. He can send up to 20 words per invocation.

The recipient doesn't need a device to receive the message. It arrives somehow by happenstance: graffiti in a public restroom stall, a snatch of lyrics overheard from a passing car with a loud radio, or a random note scribbled on a dollar bill the pizza delivery person gave them as change.

Nothing stops someone *else* from spotting the message as well — including hobgoblins and others who

may watch the information pass by inside the BriarNet (whether as a news crawl on a private channel or a biplane trailing a banner across a hidden sky). Attempts to trace or intercept the message treat this Contract's invocation roll as an opposed roll.

**Loophole:** The changeling uses significantly outdated technology to send the message, such as a rotary phone, a telegraph, a typewriter, or even an Apple IIe computer.

### CONTRACT: AUTONOMOUS PAYLOAD (ROYAL)

The changeling transforms into a digital being of electricity and bits, linking the Hedge's cyberspace to mundane electronic data.

**Cost:** 2 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Computer + Mantle vs. (Intelligence or Computer) + Fortification

**Action:** Contested

**Effects:** The changeling stands on a trod within the BriarNet and opens a digital Hedgeway (**Changeling**, p. 198); he doesn't need a closeable portal. Passing through transforms him and anyone who follows into data, allowing the BriarNet to temporarily encroach into a mundane computer or other digital repository.

Traveling through the digital landscape is exactly like traveling through the BriarNet, using Hedge travel rules; however, every repository acts like a Bastion (**Changeling**, p. 221), possessing a Fortification rating based on the overall security of the data. An average college student's personal laptop would have Fortification 1, a relatively secure office network Fortification 3, and a classified government database Fortification 5; if a repository is supernaturally warded, add half its user's Supernatural Tolerance trait (rounded up) to its Fortification. If a changeling is inside his own computer, or another repository he knows the password to access, he can boost its Fortification as though inside his own Bastion. Changelings can read a digital repository's Fortification as normal, with Computer instead of Empathy.

From here, the changeling may Hedgespin to bypass security and gain access to information; make changes to files, programs, configurations, and other digital components of the repository; implant a fae computer virus; and more. When the Contract ends, the changeling may immediately invoke it again to stay in data form. If he can't or doesn't, he and anyone with him emerges from the machine, server, or other device that holds the repository into the mundane world in physical form. While the Contract is active, the changeling may navigate to a BriarNet representation of a signal or

network (if the repository is thus connected) and invoke Autonomous Payload again to ride the signal to any connected repository or system.

This Contract's invocation roll is opposed by whichever character would have the best access to and control over the target repository.

**Loophole:** The changeling dons a black hat or a white hat and sticks to the ethical implications of the hat he wears for the Contract's duration. If at any point he violates them, he must pay the Glamour cost, or the Contract immediately ends.

## TRAVELING BANDS

Not all changelings want a stationary home base. Wanderlust strikes many Lost over the course of their long lives, but some actively abhor the idea of staying in one place for too long — and the Hedge makes it child's play to go wherever they like, whenever they want. When a group larger than a motley gathers to wander together for longer than an adventure or two, they become a **traveling band**. Most traveling bands form well before striking a Bargain, and they're just as likely to run into a powerful entity on their journeys and spontaneously accept an exchange of terms for mystical protection as they are to seek one out. The majority don't realize they're doing anything differently, only realizing after the fact that what they ended up with was not a true court.

Traveling bands have little in common other than their societies' mobile nature. Some pick up new members wherever they go and leave old ones behind just as often; others are inseparable and insular, accepting few petitioners and keeping to themselves. Some travel by archaic wagon like peddlers of old, while others embark on an eternal road trip or hike trods that stretch across continents. Throughout Lost history, traveling bands have been merchant caravans, performing troupes, explorers and archaeologists, old-school skalds and troubadours, investigators and reporters, rabble-rousers, phantom thieves, bounty hunters (including some actual privateers), or just vagrants with no purpose other than to keep moving.

The nomadic life has pros and cons. On the one hand, it's much harder for a Huntsman to find changelings constantly on the move with friends and Hollows in every port; and indeed, the Gentry can't comprehend their refusal to claim territory, validating their Bargains. On the other, when the enemy *does* find them, they have no established parent or sister organization to turn to for help...and if they disappear, no one will realize it for quite a while.



Many bands go out of their way to cultivate friendly relations with established courts wherever they go and hire out their services as guides or escorts to build up social currency they can cash in for those courts' aid later.

### Example Traveling Band: Crown-of-Thorns

*“Às armas, às armas! Arm the torpedoes!” Captain Mateus bellowed, waving a bloodied sword in one hand and a shotgun in the other. “Arm the torpedoes, aye!” came the response. One massive, sucker-lined arm already thrashed in the water outside the porthole, staining the sea a cruel purple. Another smashed into the hull, rocking the entire submarine. Steel shuddered and groaned. The torpedoes thundered all together, and through the porthole the crew could see the enormous creature fall away into the depths, trailing clouds of blood. Mateus laughed, though weariness showed through her mirth and bravado. “A little critter like that is nothing. We’ll face better challenges before we’re ashore again.”*

The changelings of Crown-of-Thorns — also fondly called the Tin Can, or more menacingly, the Minute-fae of the Abyss — named their band after a venomous starfish, embarking on a never-ending mission to hunt down monstrous threats deep under the ocean’s waves. They fight with torpedoes, and swords and other weapons in the hands (or fins) of fae crewmates who can breathe underwater. Tin Can changelings combat stereotypes among other Lost painting them as foolhardy, flighty, and irresponsible; they maintain that if they didn’t prowl the depths, sea goblins would have torn open a massive hole from the benthic Hedge into the mortal world by now. Who knows, they say — maybe those goblins are doing it *right now*.

Crown-of-Thorns crews do perform the duty they claim, but it’s really more of a natural consequence of combing the last mortal place where real mystery endures while embracing the absolute freedom of their vast marine playground. The band consists of roaming submarine crews whose captains take turns presiding over ceremonial gatherings; each crew comprises a few changeling motleys along with fae-touched, mortals, and the occasional hobgoblin or fetch. When they’re not fighting undersea monsters, crews engage in other seafaring activities like smuggling or trading between the Hedge and the mortal world, ferrying passengers who want to travel discreetly, performing scientific research or underwater photography with a faerie bent, or — most often — just discovery for its own sake.

Once a year, all Tin Can crews gather in the Azores archipelago for ritual revelry that lasts weeks. They trade gossip, magic, new discoveries, crew members, and even

submarines. Their Bargain with the Ocean’s Currents stipulates that during the festival, all crews become one crew and no hierarchy holds sway — anyone, Lost or mortal, can disobey orders with impunity. Anyone trying to enforce their authority is in violation of the Bargain. The festival tends to be a shamelessly raucous time.

It also hosts rites, from riotous contests of seafaring skill to sacred observances cleansing a submarine of ill fortune or consigning one to the depths for good — sometimes because it’s reached its limit, and sometimes as a tomb or memorial for those Minute-fae who died during the year. New captains ceremonially christen and name their new subs, and non-members wishing to take up the Mantle petition for membership. Each crew is autonomous, and at festival’s end they scatter to the seven seas. Throughout the year, each boat keeps the Bargain afloat by pursuing and defeating a requisite number of supernatural undersea monsters.

That Bargain compels the Gentry and their servants to cede the weather gage, or tactical initiative. The Bargain’s origins lie in the Age of Sail; when ships couldn’t sail directly into the wind, a ship upwind of its enemies could maneuver and attack more effectively. While modern tactics have developed beyond the weather gage principle and the invention of submarines lets the Minute-fae uphold their undersea duties much more easily, the Gentry still cannot attack from a strategically superior position.

### CROWN-OF-THORNS MANTLE (• TO •••••)

Countless tiny spines protrude from the changeling’s skin, and her eternally damp hair takes on the smell of saltwater and seaweed. Her eyes may darken to the black of the undersea abyss or glow like an angler’s lure. At its most powerful, the Crown-of-Thorns Mantle may prompt vestigial limbs to sprout from her back — the more potent the Lost, the more limbs she possesses — and bring on the chill of the benthic depths, carrying with it a dizzying pressure.

**Effect:** Your character gains a Glamour point whenever she discovers something she’s never encountered before in the ocean.

- Gain bonus dice equal to your character’s Mantle dots on mundane rolls to navigate, swim, fight, or investigate underwater in saltwater (not freshwater).
- Gain bonus dice equal to your character’s Mantle dots on mundane rolls to operate any aquatic vessel during an action scene or other urgent, dangerous situation.

- While underwater in saltwater (not freshwater), your character can perpetually breathe, withstand any water pressure and other underwater environmental hazards (such as freezing temperatures), speak and hear sound normally, and clearly see, as long as she stays within five yards/meters of at least two of her crewmates. Any vessel she's aboard or within 10 yards/meters of can withstand the deepest ocean depths, as well.
- Your character can call upon fate's currents to deliver a windfall in exchange for letting them wash her up on whatever shore they wish. Once per scene, you may treat a failed mundane roll as though it had rolled one success, in exchange for the Storyteller dictating your character's next action.
- Your character inflicts the moderate Poisoned Tilt (**Changeling**, p. 331) with any successful Brawl attack (including simply touching an unwilling opponent; **Changeling**, p. 184) as long as she makes skin-to-skin contact (which may require attacking a specified target, at the Storyteller's discretion) and has higher Initiative than the opponent. A target she envenoms twice within the same scene upgrades the Tilt to grave.

### CONTRACT: FULL FATHOM FIVE (COMMON)

The changeling loudly calls out, and nature's forces respond. Just as a dolphin or depth sounder uses echoes to sense its surroundings, she hears or feels her call's vibrations return through air or water, and gains a flawless mental image of her environs.

**Cost:** 1 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** (Wyrd) turns (action scenes) or minutes (other scenes)

**Effects:** At the beginning of the turn *after* she invokes this Contract, the changeling gains a mental snapshot of the physical space, and everything in it, in an area around her with a radius of (her Wyrd x 10) yards/meters. She automatically pierces mundane attempts to hide from or surprise her for the duration, and gains (Mantle) bonus dice to contest supernatural attempts. She navigates and acts without penalty in pitch darkness and other low-visibility circumstances, is immune to the Blinded and Deafened Tilts, and negates

up to (Mantle) dice in situational penalties to ranged attacks (including from concealment). She gains an Initiative bonus equal to her Mantle and a Defense bonus equal to half that (rounded up), except against opponents farther away than her echolocation can reach or those who successfully ambush her. Anyone within the Contract's range who's witnessed her invoking it before automatically identifies her by its sound or vibrations; her biosonar advertises her presence and disrupts the air or water around her in a characteristic way.

Soundproofing protects against this Contract's effects automatically. If another loud noise, such as a gunshot or scream, occurs within range, the changeling must succeed on a (Wits + Composure + Mantle) roll to maintain the Contract; upon failure, it ends immediately.

**Loophole:** The changeling uses a microphone, megaphone, or other means to broadcast her voice at a much louder volume than normal upon invocation, attracting significant mortal attention.

### CONTRACT: THE WIDENING CYRE (ROYAL)

The changeling spins in place and makes herself dizzy, calling upon air and sea to pirouette along with her.

**Cost:** 2 Glamour + 1 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Athletics + Mantle vs. Stamina + Wyrd

**Action:** Contested

The changeling becomes the center of a vortex with a radius of (her Wyrd x 10) yards/meters. Her player makes this Contract's invocation roll once and every other character in range contests it individually, whether she perceives them or not. She may exclude specific targets she *can* perceive at a cost of +1 Glamour per excluded target.

### Roll Results

**Success:** The target automatically moves their full Speed toward the changeling as their allotted movement each turn unless they spend a Willpower to anchor themselves that turn; they can use their instant action to move their Speed a second time in any direction, as normal. Anyone who comes within her melee range and wasn't excluded from the Contract's effects suffers the Knocked Down Tilt (**Changeling**, p. 330). The vortex follows the changeling as she moves, and anyone who enters the vortex after the initial invocation must contest it as normal unless she spends another Glamour to exclude them.



**Exceptional Success:** Anyone who falls prone within the changeling's melee range — due to this Contract or not — also suffers the Immobilized Tilt.

**Failure:** The Contract fails.

**Dramatic Failure:** The changeling only dizzies herself, suffering the Confused Condition (**Changeling**, p. 335).

**Loophole:** The changeling dons an authentic seafarer's hat, such as a tricorne or dixie cup, when invoking this Contract.

## LOST DYNASTIES

As grandiose as the entourages (and egos) of court monarchs can be, the head of a **Lost dynasty** has them beat in cults of personality. A dynasty forms when a changeling makes a Bargain and then handpicks recipients of his Mantle to create an elite or highly focused society — sometimes secret, sometimes not — characterized not just by oaths of fealty and participation, but by auditions or special qualifications to keep membership concentrated and loyal. Structurally and conceptually, a dynasty isn't that far from a court, but where courtiers hold posts that contribute to the court's success and rotate power based on its themes and symbols, scions of a Lost dynasty function more like an extended clan connected by personal ties — and debts owed — to the sovereign. The leader appoints a successor after fierce competition, and power usually only changes hands when he dies. A dynastic ruler has more absolute power than most court monarchs.

Some changelings describe dynasties as existing somewhere in the middle of a spectrum between courts and entitlements (p. XX), bearing resemblances to both. Some dynasties do contain entitlements within their ranks, or produce them over time as the dynastic title of rulership takes on aspects of each changeling bearing it until it metamorphoses into a heraldry token representing the dynasty itself. But these entitlements are *never* legion, and thus only the rulers themselves can ever bear their blazons.

Courts resent dynasties for what they perceive as the gauche selfishness required to grant a Bargain's protection only to a chosen few. From the dynasty's perspective, the courts flirt with disaster by accepting nearly anyone and announcing their presence so flagrantly among Lost communities. Dynastic scions argue that the risk of traitors, loyalist or Huntsman infiltrators, territorial invasions, Hedgefire wars, and getting courtiers picked off motley by motley from wherever they're scattered all over the city, isn't worth the benefits of broader and more stable Bargains.

## Example Lost Dynasty: The House of In

*"Absolutely not," said Yeong-hwan, drawing his sword. "Loyalist my brother may be, but I will never turn him over to your court's so-called 'justice.'" When his opponent drew her own weapon, brows drawn low, Yeong-hwan stood poised to strike. "This I swear, by the dream-blade passed down to me by my father, and through him, my ancestors. Don't say it —" He saw the question on her face and preempted it with a sharp gesture. "Blood is not the only way to have a family. It saddens me that you don't understand that. Now, get ready. This oath will not fulfill itself."*

The House of In made its Bargain with In itself, the Korean word for the Confucian principle of selfless love, integrity, and "human-heartedness." It encompasses the relationship and duties between two people: ruler and citizen, parent and child, siblings, spouses, and close friends. A relationship not founded upon *in* can impose no duties to it. This Wyrd-backed social contract binds the House's members together — including not just changelings and fae-touched, but their mortal families as well. The House's Bargain relies on the Gentry's inability to understand familial loyalty without oaths of obedience.

The House of In is a broad, extended dynasty with a lineage spanning nearly 1,500 years. Its founders were brothers by blood who, upon escaping, refused to leave their mortal parents in their fetches' care, and retook their lives together. They adopted newly escaped changelings into their family by oath so long as they were willing to abide by the Confucian virtues, giving them a new home and, in time, a Mantle and Bargain to protect them. Today, the dynasty's fae-touched and ordinary mortals stand equal to its Lost members, and they pay their elders great respect regardless of whether they possess Mantles or Wyrd. All family branches answer to the head of the family, the eldest member — affectionately called *hal-meoni* or *hal-abeoji* (Grandmother or Grandfather) — thus extending the freehold across multiple cities. This elder may be fae-touched or even an ordinary mortal, though it's rare given changelings' long lives. Individuals who violate the dynasty's principles of integrity and loyalty endanger the Bargain, so elders are careful about who they adopt into the family.

The House operates a *chaebol* — a large, family-run industrial conglomerate — with strong banking, shipping, and political ties. This business is the crux of how they uphold their end of the Bargain, which demands honoring tradition and the dynasty's ances-

tors, and maintaining loyalty to the family above all. It also requires upholding ethical business practices and performing annual business reviews, employee retreats, and other such group rituals to ensure their *chaebol* remains profitable. The Bargain makes the Gentry act with integrity to maintain the loyalty of their agents when they invade; if they don't, their forces rebel until they retreat back to Faerie.

## HOUSE OF IN MANTLE (• TO •••••)

Threads representing the changeling's many strong family ties run through his mien, extending out from him until they fade into invisibility. As long as he continues to respect those ties, they shine with the light of his devotion. If he betrays them, they darken to an ashen gray. As his Mantle grows, the threads weave together to form patterns that reflect his most trusted bonds; the House's elders boast whole tapestries draped over their shoulders like cloaks, documenting their long family histories in symbol and color.

**Effect:** Your character gains a Glamour point whenever he displays his genuine respect for someone with a meaningful gesture.

- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle on mundane Social rolls to close or uphold an above-board business deal.
- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle on mundane rolls to directly support one of his Touchstones.
- Gain two dots of the Etiquette Style Merit (*Changeling*, p. 122).
- Once per scene, regain 1 Willpower when you make a meaningful sacrifice to ensure someone else's well-being.
- The changeling may spend 1 Willpower to declare a non-fae relative or member of the House of In to be his Touchstone for one scene, attached to his next available Clarity box to the right of the rightmost box with an associated Touchstone, as long as one is available. Fae-touched count as non-fae for this purpose.

## CONTRACT: UPHOLDING THE PRINCIPLE (COMMON)

The changeling inflicts the same signs of disloyalty and disrespect that haunt his own mien on another changeling.

**Cost:** 2 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Politics + Mantle vs. Resolve + Wyrd

**Action:** Contested

**Duration:** Instant

**Effects:** The character must obtain proof, evidence, or a confession that another changeling has cheated or betrayed him or another House member, engaged in underhanded or immoral business practices, or definitely intends to do so. Once he has that, he must shake the target's hand to invoke this Contract. Invoking it when he doesn't have any of the above doesn't work; he can't use this Contract to learn of someone's ill intent.

## Roll Results

**Success:** The changeling inflicts a temporary version of the Oathbreaker Condition (*Changeling*, p. 343) that doesn't require the Wyrd's additional forgiveness to resolve. While this Condition lasts, it perceptibly affects the target's mien in a way that reflects their crimes and fits their mien's nature.

**Exceptional Success:** The target also can't say anything they don't believe is true until the end of the chapter.

**Failure:** The Contract fails.

**Dramatic Failure:** The target instead learns about the last time the changeling disobeyed an elder in an important matter, betrayed someone, or did something underhanded. They may inflict the Leveraged Condition on the changeling if they like.

## CONTRACT: ANCESTORS' WISDOM (ROYAL)

The changeling performs a ceremony lasting at least 10 minutes to summon the ghost of a House of In ancestor.

**Cost:** 2 Glamour + 1 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Occult + Mantle

**Action:** Instant (takes 10 minutes)

## Roll Results

**Success:** The changeling summons the ghost of a deceased House member, chosen by the Storyteller. The ghost remains until the end of the scene, and retains all of that House member's memories. It's up to the changeling to get them to cooperate, though.

**Exceptional Success:** The ghost is already willing to cooperate and needs no convincing.

**Failure:** The Contract fails.

**Dramatic Failure:** The changeling instead summons the hostile ghost of a deceased traitor to the House.



## CHAPTER THREE

# OATHS OF NOBILITY

*Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have Immortal longings in me.*

— William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*

The Daughters of Baba Yaga believe entitlements spring from the dreams of mortal prophets — destinies carved in sand. The isolationist Winter Dancers claim entitlements are manifest reflections of obscure Gentry Regalia. The Starless Wanderers say entitlements begin with a heraldry token, passed on from one noble to another until the Wyrd reinforces their self-appointed legacy. The Fires of Lagos think an entitlement begins with pure desire instead.

They are *all* right. Entitlements, both in purpose and origins, are as varied and splendid as the Lost themselves.

### WYRD'S PACT

An **entitlement**, sometimes called a “blazon” by those who carry theirs with pride or a “station” by those who view it as a position to hold, is a combination of a noble title that bestows power upon its bearer, a role she inhabits, and a responsibility to which she agrees.

Every entitlement is unique, although a few contain several roles and titles within them. “Nobility” to the Lost means more than being an elite or lording status over others (though many do). It’s a promise that encompasses the *other* kind of nobility, too — the integrity to stand for something. A changeling who claims a blazon is driven to become more of who she is. She’s not content to keep her head down and simply survive. She wants a purpose that’s hers alone, an affirmation of dignity and self after everything she lost. She wants to

find meaning in a fae existence that sometimes seems senseless and chaotic. She wants to build a legend to eclipse her past, that she might grasp the reins of her future.

Entitlements exist independently of courts and freeholds. Courtless changelings craving self-sovereignty are particularly drawn to seek this path, to validate their choice to stay independent or find a sense of belonging. Lost communities didn’t give them. Plenty of courtiers pursue entitlements, too, refusing to let their affiliations define them entirely. If an entitled changeling joins or stays with a court or freehold, it’s on her own terms, and the entitlement’s legend that grows with every deed she accomplishes is hers alone.

### CLAIMING AN ENTITLEMENT

Noble deeds spawn tales. One changeling hears stories of the Midnight Despot who controls a Huntsman with his signature blade and tracks down the current noble to petition him to name her as his heir. He, weary of duty, might relinquish the title to her on the spot. More likely, he accepts an oath that makes her his apprentice — or, if the title is especially popular, one of several apprentices. An apprenticeship oath encourages the would-be successor to follow through and may grant peripheral benefits as well as imposing tasks through which the apprentice proves herself worthy.

Sometimes, an entitled changeling has no petitioners but wants to proactively name an heir or set aside the crown immediately. Provided his title allows it, he may abdicate to whomever he wants or name any unentitled Lost as a successor, but that successor must agree, or the blazon doesn't transfer.

Inheriting an entitlement from its current bearer isn't the only way to claim one. If no one currently holds a title, whether the noble died or abdicated before passing it on or lost it through some arcane loophole inherent in its complexities, it lies fallow. However, the Wyrd can pass it on without him. An aspirant takes up the loose threads of an abandoned quest or waiting prophecy, sussing out the mazy quests of succession he must undertake as he goes along. He might research the entitlement, digging up clues from its scattered mythos like a fae scavenger hunt, or portentous events and odd coincidences might lead him like a trail of breadcrumbs to each step along the way once he unlocks the first puzzle piece.

Changelings can even stumble across the requirements of an entitlement's byzantine rules accidentally. One might defeat the loyalist who held his foster sister in captivity at a goblin-run orphanage, only to find that a nursery rhyme the children sing describes the last few months of his life; in his pocket, he finds a black lily he didn't possess moments ago. He unwittingly inserted himself into a half-fulfilled prophecy and took it to its conclusion, but as he pulls out the flower, he intuitively senses its weight as a heraldry token and gains an understanding of what pinning it on his lapel would mean. He may choose to do so, becoming a Dauphine of Wayward Children (p. XX), or he may reject the token and everything that comes with it, leaving the thread of destiny hanging for some other changeling to pick up later.

Rarely, a changeling forges a *new* entitlement. She petitions the Wyrd to grant her privileges, and it levies duties in return. Changelings aren't certain whether such an entitlement is truly new, or if all entitlements exist *in potentia* and Lost merely discover them. The process is the same as restoring a wild title (p. XX), with the five quests tailored to shaping the new entitlement. Failed attempts result in wild ranks immediately and failing five of them creates a wild entitlement that *can't* be tamed. The quests' natures differ for each entitlement; one might be a Fae Title a changeling breaks and reforges into something she can hold, while others come about in the fulfillment of Hedge-witch prophecies, in the use of powerful tokens that build heraldry over time, or in other ways.

## HERALDRY TOKENS OUT AND ABOUT

Goblins scour the Hedge for lost heraldry tokens to sell back to changelings, but rarely venture into the mundane world. Thus, the mundane world boasts more lost entitlements than the Hedge. These tokens gravitate to places that mirror their legends — the Queen of Hearts' scepter is always found in or near a rose garden, for instance.

Most entitlements are singular, but a few hold multiple, related titles. Such a **legion entitlement** contains five or six roles at most, highly coveted since a motley can claim it together. A legion entitlement remains held until its last noble lays down her title, through bequeathal or death. The legion's nobles can accept a new member if it has an unclaimed role.

## BEQUEATHAL

A ritual oath or other ceremony bequeaths an entitlement from one noble to the next, though each station has its own obscure rules for how it can be abandoned. This is more about putting the title down than taking it up. A changeling's entitlement is part of her identity — she *is* the Queen of Hearts — and letting go requires a little psychological pomp and circumstance. Then, the new noble takes it up by formally claiming its heraldry as his own. He immediately inherits all pieces of his predecessor's life directly pertaining to her identity as that noble, such as pledges, allies and enemies, magical curses and blessings, Conditions, reputation, possessions and property, or promised tasks still to perform. He may even inherit snippets of her memories and personality, which is unsettling but at least gives him some idea of who all these people claiming unfulfilled bargains and sworn enmity are.

The noble feels no supernatural compulsion to make good on his predecessor's promises, but people and the Wyrd both have expectations. Other Lost tend to be polite about this — the former Baron of the Lesser Ones (p. XX) promised to solve their goblin problem, so if the new Baron would please get on that, that'd be swell. Refusing might cause hard feelings and worse consequences, but it is an option. Gentry see *only* the title; if the Tooth Faerie always has tea with the Master of Keys (p. XX) under the full moon, the new Master had better show for their next appointment

and remember what they talked about last time. Most hobgoblins understand the concept of two changelings with the same entitlement being different people, but how *well* they understand it and how much they care varies from goblin to goblin. A Huntsman can always clearly distinguish between individual changelings regardless of entitlement, but that doesn't stop her from following through on her Keeper's desire to capture the Scarecrow Minister regardless of how many have existed since the original's durance.

Mortals might end up transferring lingering feelings onto a title's new bearer, but they're governed by what they know, not what they feel. The distinction muddies if the noble *only* interacted with them under his title, never giving a name or never meeting them face-to-face. Then they're likelier to mistake the noble for his predecessor, despite changes in personality, voice, or appearance.

## BECOMING THE ROLE

An entitlement always changes a changeling's mien. Sometimes, it also changes her Mask. Mortals cannot see the Midnight Despot's scaled, gauntlet-like hands, but she might appear to always wear gloves; they can't see the straw sprouting from the Scarecrow Minister's scalp, but they remark on how coarse his pale blond hair is.

Some titles are easy to relinquish, while others steadfastly remain until the noble dies or some other mysterious condition comes to pass. Even if she can abdicate, the entitlement is forever a part of her and vice versa, just like any oath. The Lost view entitlements as ways to reinvent themselves on their own terms, but some face struggles of identity once they've done so; the line between individual and role is blurry at best, as is the line between what an entitled changeling *does* and who she *is*. Even refusing to perform a title's duties is a definition of the self by those duties, after all.

## BLESSINGS AND CURSES

Every entitlement comes with  **blessings**  and  **curses** . These integrate with the noble's identity, and some remain hers even if she's terrible at carrying out her duty, while others are contingent on her compliance. A station's blessings include a Touchstone and several powers the noble can master. Its curse includes a penalty on specific kinds of Clarity rolls, as the title shapes her sense of self. Fulfilling a title's duty also helps the noble grow as a person.

Some entitlements extend changeling lifespans further than even high Wyrd normally can; the Forever

Queen's title is rumored to make its bearer ageless and truly immortal, keeping them alive even through what should be lethal injury until someone takes the crown from them according to its obscure rules of succession.

## HERALDRY

An entitlement's heraldry manifests as a token that both represents and aids the noble's duties and bears the entitlement's identifying crest or sigil to signify her privileges. Other Lost who see it immediately know she's ennobled, though if the crest isn't famous, they'd need to research or ask questions to find out more. The noble can hide her heraldry, but doing so never fools hobgoblins or Gentry, who recognize her title from her mien alone. She can lose the token, or someone can steal it, but those who try doing almost anything with it that isn't "give it back" suffer the Magpie's Misfortune curse (p. XX).

## ENTITLEMENT SYSTEMS

An entitlement is a Merit purchased with Experiences, which comes with an attendant heraldry token with a rating of 1-5. Before the player can buy the Merit, the character must either inherit the title from a predecessor or satisfy its arcane rules for independent inheritance.

Each entitlement gives its own version of the Merit, but they all share the following. Anything else a changeling inherits is up to the Storyteller.

- The Merit is rated at a fixed 4 dots.
- **Prerequisites:** Changeling; additional prerequisites determined by entitlement.
- Upon purchase, the character gains  **ranks**  equal to her current Wyrd. She can spend each rank to either increase the heraldry token's rating by one dot or gain one of the entitlement's five  **blessings** ; each sample entitlement lists its unique blessings and describes its token. Before she invests any ranks in the token, it's effectively 0 dots, existing purely as an identifying sigil and badge of office.
- Whenever the player purchases another Wyrd dot, the character gains another entitlement rank to spend. Thus, a Wyrd 10 entitled changeling is the pinnacle of her station's realized potential — as some Lost put it, a fully self-actualized changeling.



- The noble may spend 1 Glamour for +2 to a mundane Social roll against any fae being (including fetches and fae-touched, but not Huntsmen) as long as it reinforces her title's role or furthers its duties, and the target is aware of them.

- One Merit blessing lets the changeling regain 1 Glamour whenever she regains Willpower through her Needle in direct pursuit of her role. She may spend the Glamour immediately on anything she likes or store it in her heraldry token for later use. The token can store up to her Wyrd in Glamour. If she can neither spend nor store it, it's lost. All stored Glamour empties at the end of the story.

- One Merit blessing grants hazy, passive memories of her predecessors' adventures, along with inherited expertise. Gain a new Specialty relevant to the title's duty, such as Persuasion (Diplomacy) or Survival (Hedge) for the Baron of the Lesser Ones (p. XX). Rolls made with that Specialty achieve exceptional success on three successes.

- One Merit blessing grants sudden flashbacks. Once per chapter, the player may accept the Shaken Condition (**Changeling**, p. 344) for the character to remember a terrifying or traumatic experience from a predecessor's life as the title's bearer and gain that predecessor's Thread in addition to her own for the chapter. She must still abide by the usual limitations on anchor-based Willpower gain (**Changeling**, p. 95).

- The other two blessings of each entitlement Merit are unique. A blessing that scales with the changeling's Wyrd increases in effect accordingly as her Wyrd rating increases.

- If the changeling doesn't uphold the title's duties during each story, subject to the Storyteller's discretion, she loses one or several of the entitlement's privileges and powers until she fulfills her duties again. Each example entitlement designates which mechanical benefits are thus suspended with the "Conditional" keyword.

- The changeling gains a new Touchstone, whose specific nature is determined by the entitlement; it may be someone she already knows, or someone the Wyrd ensures she runs into soon after gaining the title. This Touchstone is attached to the

*title* instead of her Clarity track. She doesn't risk detaching that Touchstone when she takes Clarity damage, but she loses the Touchstone outright if she loses or abandons the title. If the current Touchstone dies, becomes ineligible through becoming a changeling or Hedge Denizen, or is otherwise permanently lost, treat it as though she'd lost her last Touchstone (**Changeling**, p. 99) even if she still has Clarity Touchstones left. Her entitlement blessings and token cease functioning until she replaces the entitlement Touchstone.

- Each entitlement Merit comes with a specific Clarity curse and a circumstance that generates Beats when it befalls the noble, detailed in each sample entitlement.

- Each entitlement gives three legends — rumors or stories a character might hear about the title's previous or current bearer that serve as both prompts for characters to seek more information about the entitlement and example larger-than-life tales for a player's ennobled character to live up to or subvert.

- Stealing a noble's heraldry token lets the thief use it and access anything to which the title's bearer has exclusive access through her heraldry, such as a hidden Hollow or entry to an elite club. However, such theft imposes the Magpie's Misfortune Condition.

## MAGPIE'S MISFORTUNE (PERSISTENT)

Your character stole a changeling noble's heraldry token and suffers for it. The Storyteller gains a number of jinxes equal to the token's rating and may inflict one per scene to turn one of your ordinary failures into a dramatic failure. When all jinxes are spent, your character has one full chapter to return the heraldry and lift the curse. Otherwise, the Storyteller gains a new set of jinxes when the next chapter starts.

If another thief steals the token from your character, they too suffer this Condition, and can resolve it by returning the token to either your character or the original noble; in the latter case, your character can only resolve this Condition by performing an appropriate act of restitution. If your character willingly gives or trades the token away, the recipient doesn't suffer this curse — but your character still does.

**Beat:** The Storyteller inflicts a jinx.

**Resolution:** Return the token or perform restitution if the noble already has it back. The Storyteller retains unspent jinxes when this Condition resolves and may spend them as normal until they run out.

## WILD TITLES

A noble dies without a successor. Another, bitter after too many sacrifices, deliberately abdicates with no heir. If entitlements lie fallow too long, they go wild.

Whether taking up a given entitlement involves a formal oath or not, accepting a title is effectively swearing an oath, and the Wyrd treats it that way. A fallow title is an active oath with no one sworn to it, like a carefully cultivated vine suddenly losing its trellis. Left untamed, it eventually grows wild, warping into something more *other* the longer it waits for someone to fulfill it. Some changelings liken this phenomenon to what might happen if one of their own somehow took on a Fae Title — meant for an immortal, ageless being — and then died a mortal death, leaving the broken pact upon which the Title was predicated flailing at its own nature. Others refuse to accept this comparison, seeing entitlements as the exact *opposite* of a Fae Title — routes to personal empowerment, rather than prisons of imposed identity. The truth, like many aspects of the Wyrd, is inscrutable.

A wild title can still be claimed. A changeling can take it up as-is, accepting its untamed magic as part of herself, or she can undergo quests to tame it. Sometimes, taming a wild title ends up forging it into something new. When the Master of Keys (p. XX) died in London in the 1400s, the Last Key was lost in the Hedge for nearly a century. After restoring the title, the new noble found it changed — once a keeper of secret Hedgeways, the Master now collects *all* secrets, and pays for the privilege by accepting an inevitable downfall.

Wyrd scholars haven't seen much consistency in how long a title must lie fallow before it goes wild; some only take a few months to mutate, while others survive intact for a thousand years before showing signs of dangerous vicissitude.

## SYSTEMS

Exceptional success on a kenning roll (**Changeling**, p. 107) or other magic that reveals details about supernatural phenomena can alert a changeling to a fallow title's wildness ahead of time. Otherwise, she finds out once she claims it, and must choose to accept its wild form or undergo quests to tame it. Regardless of which she chooses, claiming a wild entitlement automatically

inflicts the Oathbreaker Condition, as the Wyrd holds the new noble responsible for the oath's long abandonment. The Autumn Court and others interested in esoteric occult matters keep records of wild titles they've discovered over the years, in hopes of convincing some fresh recruit or indebted troublemaker to retrieve and try to tame them.

For each rank the character invests in the wild entitlement, whether to strengthen its token or acquire a new blessing, she faces an ordeal arising from the title's wild magic. Ignoring it, or trying to conquer it and failing, makes that rank a wild rank. Overcoming it tames or reforges that rank, pruning away its rough edges. Successfully overcoming one trial is enough to resolve the Oathbreaker Condition. Successfully overcoming *five* permanently tames the entire title, even if it already had wild ranks. The Storyteller and player should work together to decide whether any of the character's victories reforge the blazon into something related but new, shifting its role and identity.

The ordeals' nature is up to the Storyteller, but should reflect the entitlement's themes, privileges, duties, blessings, and curses, and should require at least a chapter per ordeal to surmount. They can be literal or symbolic. One ordeal might require successfully Hedg-spinning an entire trod out of Thorns, while another manifests the title itself as a child in the center of a dreamed maze, preventing the changeling from waking up until she saves the child from the chimera stalking the labyrinth.

## Using Wild Entitlements

Each wild rank a title possesses converts the changeling's rightmost regular Clarity box into a wild box instead. Whenever she takes Clarity damage in a wild box, she automatically and immediately rolls to incite Bedlam (**Changeling**, p. 110) at no cost for an emotion relevant to her entitlement, without gaining a Beat. In addition to the usual options, she may heal one point of mild Clarity damage in a wild box by spending an entire scene without her Mask in front of mortals who didn't previously know about her fae nature. She may heal one point of severe Clarity damage in a wild box by doing so for an entire chapter instead.

With at least one wild Clarity box, filling the track with damage no longer causes the Comatose Condition. Instead, the changeling gains the Cockaigne Condition, below.

If a changeling's title has five or more wild ranks, *all* her Clarity boxes go wild, regardless of how many total boxes she has.



## COCKAIGNE (PERSISTENT)

Your character can't contain her wild title's untamed magic. She continuously incites Bedlam and can't turn it off. At the beginning of every scene, you automatically spend 1 Glamour and 1 Willpower, and roll to incite Bedlam for the primary emotion the changeling feels at the time with bonus dice equal to ranks she's invested in her entitlement Merit's blessings. If she runs out of Glamour, the Bedlam continues and she suffers the usual consequences for falling to 0 Glamour (**Changeling**, p. 104). If she runs out of Willpower, this Condition resolves and she gains another persistent Clarity Condition instead (Storyteller's choice) that's relevant to the circumstances.

**Beat:** The character's Bedlam causes significant trouble for herself or her motley.

**Resolution:** Regain at least 1 Clarity; fall to Willpower 0 and convert this Condition into another Clarity Condition, as above; or undergo a new trial in an attempt to tame the leftmost wild Clarity box your character possesses. This is the *only* way to tame a Clarity box again after it goes wild.

## ELDRITCH TITLES

Contrary to what many changelings believe or dread, Wyrd 10 and normal entitlements – even wild ones – possesses no inherent path to becoming Gentry. A few entitlements, however, contain *eldritch* titles: those that demand higher Wyrd and more ominous or fantastical duties. These may possess such paths, though knowledge about them is scarce.

## EXAMPLE ENTITLEMENTS

The following example entitlements present several options for bequeathed inheritances. Choose those that fit the chronicle and the noble's player, and supplement them as needed using the examples as a guide. See p. XX for advice on designing new bequeathals and entitlements.



# Baron of the Lesser Ones

Come, Thistlehat, we were friends last week when I brought that prime cut.  
Play nice and work with me here.

Hobgoblins are unpredictable creatures with their own agendas, rules, and societies. When trouble brews between changelings and Hedge natives, they call the Baron of the Lesser Ones, although few would use that moniker aloud where a hobgoblin might hear it. That would be undiplomatic, and the Baron is nothing if not diplomatic — at least, until diplomacy is no longer viable.

Most Barons always had good relationships with hobgoblins. Even before entitlement, they frequented Goblin Markets, employed briarwolves as Hollow guardians, or simply made friends whenever they traversed the Hedge. A few come at the duty from the other side, learning to mend fences and defend the mundane world because they were constantly at odds with Hedge denizens. Either way, every Baron is embroiled in goblin affairs, whether he wants to be or not.

## PRIVILEGES AND DUTIES

Goblins treat the Baron as kin, and the Gentry view him as both changeling and hobgoblin. Goblins trust him with juicy gossip and exclusive deals and play favorites with him when assigning tasks they'll accept to pay off Debt.

In return, the Baron is a liaison between the Lost and Hedge natives. Usually, he acts as a neutral third party in negotiations, mediates conflicts, and plays messenger or delivery boy. When words fail, he's a defender for whichever side he believes is in the right. The latter duty can cost him friends, but most changelings and goblins accept that it's his job to choose sides and don't hold grudges. When they *do*, or when he clearly acts in his own best interests rather than trying to be objective, vendettas against him can be vicious and last lifetimes.

Most Barons travel from freehold to freehold and market to market, offering their services for room and

## ORIGIN TALES

- A goblin baron fell in love with a beautiful Fairest. By the time she realized her lover was false, the Fairest had already made off with her coronet and title.
- The first Baron negotiated a treaty between Lost and hobgoblins. The Lost didn't hold up their end, so the Baron appeased the goblins by promising to make it up to them — forever.
- A captive changeling turned the tables on her goblin jailor, stealing its signet ring and penning a contract in its name that granted her freedom. She reforged the ring as her own and pledged to protect other Lost from the fate she'd endured.

board or some other price. The Baron who chooses to make one freehold his home base may view himself as that freehold's exclusive attaché, or may treat his title as a business, advertising at local Goblin Markets to attract clients. A few historical Barons have served a mostly courtless clientele, reasoning that freeholders already have the resources they need to deal with hobgoblins effectively, while the courtless must hack it on their own.

## MASK AND MIEN

Barons wear durable traveling clothes on the move but change into dress duds when serving as an official or diplomat; when they must settle disputes as a dueling champion, they don military-style uniforms or elegant but sturdy clothes that are easy to move in. Everything

they wear takes on a motif of winding, thorny branches symbolically detailing deals he's made, enemies he's bested, and dangers he's escaped. The Baron can suppress this retelling with a thought, keeping a generic bramble motif instead if he likes; but he's considered always "on call" as far as the title is concerned, so he can't suppress the brambles entirely. Even his skin takes on tattoos to match.

The Baron's fae features resemble a specific hobgoblin of the player's choice. Add one goblin feature — retroactively, if need be — per two ranks invested in either token or Merit.

## BEQUEATHAL

A Baron of the Lesser Ones rarely turns down would-be inheritors, as it's a relatively unpopular title due to its overall thanklessness. Still, petitioners do exist. Some believe the Lost as a whole should treat goblins better and aspire to be the change they want to see, while others are more interested in protecting their freehold's interests from hobgoblin schemes or just making bank as a mercenary diplomat; all changelings encounter goblin problems at some point, after all.

Quitting is more difficult, as the entitlement requires recruiting a willing successor. A Baron may find himself "fired" if he misuses his title to benefit himself over others and another changeling finds out about it then successfully performs his duty *for* him. That changeling then has the opportunity to claim the title instead, and if they turn it down it becomes fallow.

Every Baron inherits his predecessor's reputation, as his success in the role depends heavily on trust. The reputations of earlier former Barons may precede him, too. Inherited allies and enemies both abound, as a Baron's duties require not only interacting with people constantly, but making judgment calls about who to support and how conflicts should resolve.

Inherited allies come with caveats, though — the Starry Ocean freehold of San Francisco Bay is glad to help, but only if he keeps his predecessor's promise to visit annually and rid popular undersea Hedgeways of dangers. If the new Baron can't breathe underwater, well...he'd better learn quick if he wants to keep these friends.

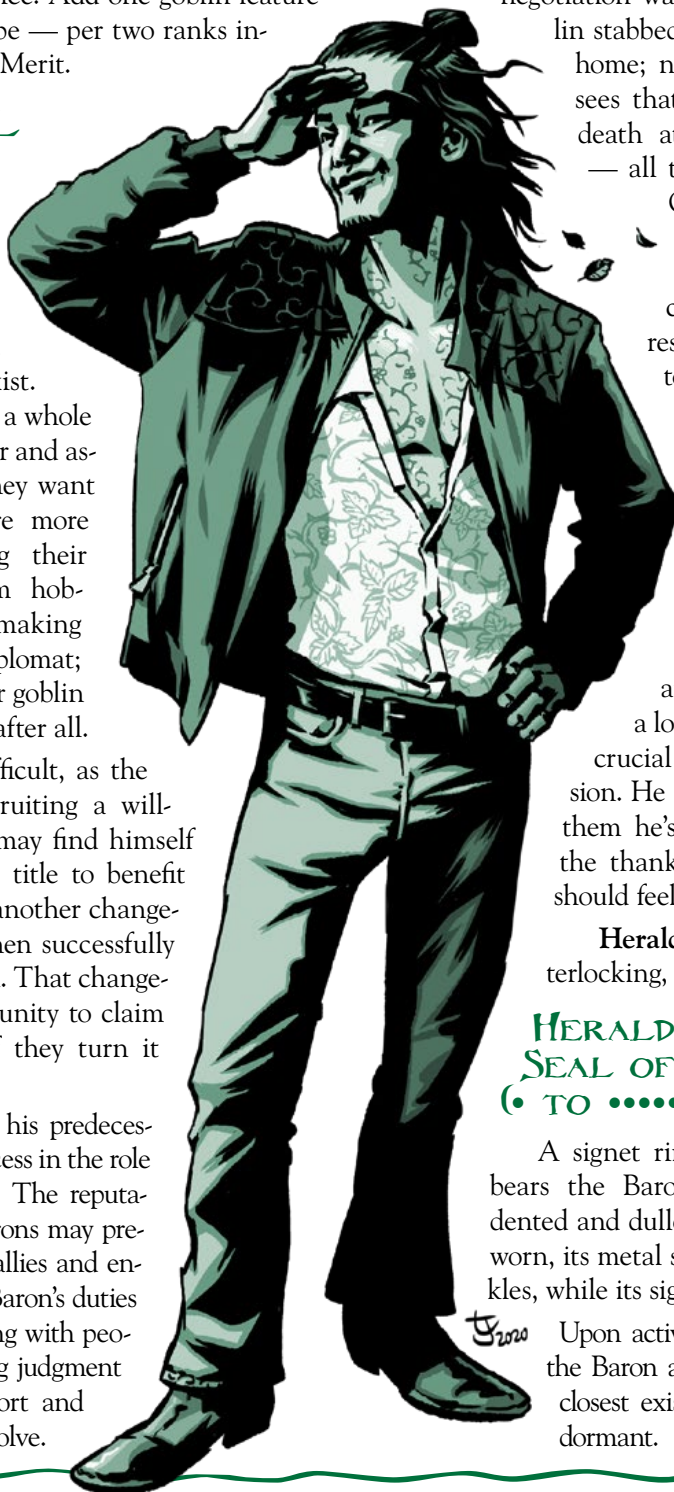
When a Baron inherits memories, they run the gamut between heartwarming reconciliations and heartbreaking betrayals. One predecessor thought her negotiation was successful until a hobgoblin stabbed her in the back on her way home; next time the current Baron sees that goblin, he remembers that death at its hands in grisly detail — all the pain and horror, relived. Others blame him for that failure, which led to a vicious battle with too many casualties and hunt him for restitution. They expect him to know the details, but he only remembers flashes of bleeding out in the Thorns to the tune of mocking laughter. Later, he visits a freehold where they welcome him with open arms and pile gifts at his feet for uniting them in solidarity and trust with the denizens of a local Hedge town, giving them crucial allies against a Gentry incursion. He doesn't have the heart to tell them he's not the one who deserves the thanks, and wonders whether he should feel guilty or flattered.

**Heraldry:** A shield composed of interlocking, stylistic brambles.

## HERALDRY TOKEN: SEAL OF THORNS (• TO •••••)

A signet ring in pewter and carnelian bears the Baron's sigil. Its Mask appears dented and dulled, but when activated while worn, its metal shines and its gemstone sparkles, while its sigil glows with a warm light.

Upon activation in the mundane world, the Baron automatically learns where the closest existing Hedge gate is, active or dormant.



In the Hedge, while the seal is active, he may spend 1 Glamour to force the Storyteller to roll twice and take the worse result for any one of the Hedge's rolls in a chase, as local hobgoblins spot the glow of his ring and actively make way for him or help him overcome an obstacle. He may do this (token's rating) times per chapter. This doesn't affect other competitors in a Hedge chase. (*Conditional*)

The Baron's player also adds dice equal to the token's rating to any rolls made in direct service to safely delivering a missive or package that bears his seal in wax.

**Catch:** The user must affix his seal to a missive or package he doesn't actually *want* to see safely delivered to its destination, and send it on its way in good faith, within the same scene.

**Drawback:** Upon activating the seal, the Baron gains a temporary version of the Hedge Addiction Condition (**Changeling**, p. 340), as though he were faetouched. It isn't persistent and resolves the first time he fails to resist its pull and enters the Hedge when it's highly inconvenient or dangerous to do so.

## BARON'S BOND (••••)

**Additional Prerequisites:** Empathy 2, Intimidation or Persuasion 2, and one of the following Merits: Gentrified Bearing, Hob Kin, or Interdisciplinary Specialty (Goblins)

This entitlement Merit grants the following blessings:

- Glamour gain; see p. XX.
- Enhanced new Specialty; see p. XX.
- Additional Thread; see p. XX.
- Gain Allies (Wyrd/2, rounded up) for a particular group of hobgoblins, such as all merchants of a specific Goblin Market, or all briarwolves; these Allies remember favors previous Barons did for them. (*Conditional*)
- Gain a hostile oath (**Changeling**, p. 214) to one specific changeling, whether the character knows that changeling already or not, leftover from unresolved enmity resulting from a predecessor's

actions as Baron. Definitively fulfilling this oath refills *all* spent Willpower.

**Touchstone:** A mortal the Baron rescued from danger in the Hedge.

**Curse:** Clarity attacks suffered while favoring hobgoblin interests over changeling ones add damage dice equal to ranks invested in this Merit.

**Beat:** The Baron resolves a conflict with goblins, peacefully or otherwise, in a way that personally inconveniences himself or his motley.

## LEGENDS

- Once, a Baron became a Goblin Queen but didn't put down the title. He became known as the inventor of the Hedge fund — a complicated web of Goblin Debt and favors owed to layers upon layers of middlemen instead of directly from one party to another. He used this fund to help mortals who couldn't pay their debts, and to apply leverage to both changelings and hobgoblins whenever conflict arose.
- Once, a Baron turned Bridge-Burner and waged a one-changeling war against the Hedge's denizens, abusing his power and position to sabotage negotiations, destroy Hedgeways, and encourage freeholds to turn on their goblin allies. Eventually, a clever young changeling stopped him by tricking him into burning his own title out of himself and taking it up in turn to repair the damage her predecessor had done.
- Once, a Baron inherited a sworn oath of bloody vengeance against his own husband, who had long ago killed another Baron's Goblin Queen sister for crimes against his court. Heartbroken, but driven by duty and knowing the Wyrd would punish his lover if he abandoned the oath, the Baron ruined his own marriage until love turned to hate — he knew his husband would never go through with the final duel otherwise — and let his beloved slay him. Confessing the truth as he lay dying in the arms of the Lost he adored, he passed the title on, resting assured that the oath was fulfilled and no Baron of the Lesser Ones would ever hunt his lover down again.



# DAUPHINES OF WAYWARD CHILDREN

Hello, little one. You look lost. Do you need help?

The Dauphines always number three. One, the Sophomore, the eternal rebel; two, the Chaperone, the whimsical caretaker; three, the Dowager, the protective guide. Together, they shield those more lost than they are, giving them a place to call their own — and opening their eyes to what lies on the other side of the faerie ring.

Changelings know better than anyone what can happen to a child or teenager adrift in the world without reliable guardians. While anyone can fall into a True Fae's trap or linger a little too long in the forest at dusk, youths with few or weak ties to the mortal world are more susceptible. The Dauphines of Wayward Children gather and protect these vulnerable souls until they either return home, find *new* homes, or grow up and leave their changeling governesses behind. While these wards' lives are never ordinary, most wouldn't trade the wonders they experience for anything, not even when terrors come along for the ride.

Many who take up this legion entitlement were once wayward children themselves: orphans passed from foster home to foster home, kids left alone when their guardians met tragic ends or abandoned them, or runaways who preferred life on their own to wherever they came from. Others lost their own children, whether to tragedy, estrangement, their own fetches, or coming back from Faerie in a time not their own. Some seek the title out of compassion or a desire to relive their own childhoods vicariously through their charges.

## PRIVILEGES AND DUTIES

For many Dauphines, the youths the Wyrd brings into their lives would be privilege enough. The entitlement commands great respect in most freeholds, although monarchs tend to see its nobles as nannies for the youngest Lost and fae-touched in the community, paying them in favors or

## ORIGIN TALES

- Children kept disappearing into the Hedge of Hamelin until three changelings acquiesced to the town's plea to lead the children away before the pipe-playing Gentry menace could.
- A duplicitous Keeper with three faces ate three children a day, one per face — one at noon, one at twilight, and one at midnight. The faces' three vassals killed the Keeper and grew three lilies on Her grave: one yellow, one blue, and one violet.
- A little girl wished three wishes on a shooting star. She wished for no more rules, no more dull lessons, and a new mother to replace the one who didn't love her. Each of her three wishes became one of the Dauphines.

resources to take the often-troublesome teens off the freehold's hands for a few days. Such aid has nothing to do with the Dauphines' official duties, but few turn down the request anyway, as long as "a few days" doesn't turn into "indefinitely."

Each title enjoys its own flavor of a Dauphine's privileges:

- **Sophomore:** known as a trickster and maverick, with a reputation for winning young hearts over with promises of freedom and a magical life over which they'll have complete control. Lost monarchs bend over backward to give the Sophomore and her charges what they want (within reason) and try to usher

them politely out before something important disappears into a pocket-sized Hedgeway or the courtiers find themselves on the receiving end of a food fight assault. If the Sophomore *belongs* to a court, its ruler must resign himself to shenanigans.

- **Chaperone:** her reputation as a mysterious but compassionate caretaker who can work miracles precedes her, making her the Dauphine changelings turn to most often to babysit anyone from unruly hob imps to orphan fae-touched to their own children. It can be a burden, but it also makes the Chaperone the one everyone trusts with what they prize most — not just their children, but the keys to their Hollow or the secret word that summons their quicksilver mount.

- **Dowager:** known for her Mama-Bear protective streak and the strict rules she imposes to teach wisdom, responsibility, and independence. This often includes self-defense, so the courts know better than to mess with the Dowager's kids, and she can count on fellow Lost to provide them with shelter, resources, and escape routes when too much trouble calls. Freeholders know that if they refuse and anything happens to one of those youths, the Dowager's duty-bound to take it out of their hides.

The Dauphines' duties revolve around taking in wayward children in ways peculiar to their titles. No Dauphine may take an unwilling child as a ward, and the three are required to help each other keep their children safe.

- **Sophomore:** offers a care-free and wondrous life filled with anything the children could ever want and teaches them how to get it. She and her wards shun any commands but those of their own hearts. Some recruit mischievous sorts to ragtag gangs of thieves and scoundrels, while others take their charges into the Hedge at every opportunity to mold them into expert Goblin Market hagglers and loophole-



lawyers. Those with more riches or magic to throw around simply cater to the children's every whim, no matter how ridiculous. A few have turned their makeshift families into raucous warrior bands, conquering Hedge territory for the fun of it and taking whatever they want from the unfortunate hobgoblins there.

- **Chaperone:** takes care of her wards, providing for their needs and teaching them life lessons and supernatural lore; but, she may never do so straightforwardly. Her lessons are couched in strange tests, magical puzzles to solve, scavenger hunts, and other roundabout but wondrous methods. The Chaperone is the most beloved of the three Dauphines, which is heartwarming but can lead to trouble down the line: competition between her wards or between the Dauphines, separation anxiety when inevitably the changeling or a ward must leave, and kids putting themselves in danger on her behalf even when she tells them not to. Some Chaperones make a point of popping in and out of the children's lives to prevent these issues, but often that only makes them love her *more*.
- **Dowager:** protects her charges by acting as disciplinarian, guardian, and tutor. Many Dowagers adopt military or martial arts training techniques, but their duties don't dictate the means — only the results. Accidents and unavoidable disasters are bound to happen eventually, but the Dowager must do everything in her power to ensure that when they do, the children are prepared and will survive. Not all Dowagers focus on physical self-defense; some teach the ability to defend themselves socially or magically, or by fleeing and hiding whenever trouble starts. Others teach the art of winning hearts and loyalty, so they always have someone to shield them. A few take more dangerous or questionable routes — encouraging the children never to trust anyone but them, for instance. The final duty is punishment. The particulars are up to the Dowager, but she must effectively punish both children who misbehave or put each other in danger and anyone responsible for a ward's peril or harm, even if indirectly. While the Dowager is duty-bound to be strict, nothing stops her from doting fiercely on her charges as well and many do.

## MASK AND MIEN

A Sophomore's mien grows more impish or fantastical. Some become childlike pixies or mischievous fox-people, while others gain bombastic or flashy miens designed to attract attention and spark wonder. Their Masks make them look younger or more innocent than they are.

A Chaperone's mien becomes more mysterious in an inviting way — enormous wings made of rainbows that can wrap around a child to comfort him or spread to take her flying far above where he can't follow, or a trail of twinkling stars in her wake, for example. Her Mask makes her look more like her culture's idea of the perfect parent or benevolent authority figure.

A Dowager's mien becomes sterner and sharper, perhaps giving her a hawk's face or literal iron fists, while her Mask makes her look older than she is or graces her with a spirited resting bitch face.

## BEQUEATHAL

The Dauphines collect young Lost, as well as mortal children, to groom as successors. Succession is always fraught with emotion, whether it's teary goodbyes or resentful rebellion, because a Dauphine can only willingly pass her title on to one of her wards. Once a child leaves her care or reaches the age of adulthood in their society, they're no longer eligible. And, once a title is passed on, the Dauphine must leave the children to the new recipient immediately. If she doesn't extract herself from their lives, disaster inevitably befalls the successor she chose, forcing her to take the title back until she finds another heir.

Aside from the children themselves, a Dauphine may inherit all manner of strange things connected to, or given to her predecessors by, charges that grew up and moved on. She may even inherit gifts she gave to her *own* Dauphine caretaker as a child. Most Dauphines end up with at least one Hollow or mundane place for her wards to live in, and she usually ends up living there too, or at least visiting often.

Many Dauphines inherit a boatload of promises her predecessors made to her children, which can get awkward when those promises are things like "I will never forget you" or "we'll always be together." Even if the Wyrd didn't back them as pledges, a Dauphine feels them in her bones and always knows when she meets someone who was once a predecessor's ward. Kids who are fae-touched, whether because of the Dauphine herself or someone they knew before they met her, sometimes transfer their promises to her — which turns all her successors into their promise-bound changelings, for the rest of those Avowed's lives.

**Heraldry:** A stylized lily of the appropriate color: yellow for the Sophomore, blue for the Chaperone, and violet for the Dowager.

## HERALDRY TOKEN: DAUPHINE'S LILY (• TO •••••)

To mortal eyes, the three lilies are brooches composed of dried flowers, fragrant but long dead. Behind

their Masks, they're vibrant, living flowers, each one corresponding to its Dauphine's heraldry color.

Upon activation, the Dauphine may speak the name of one current ward per dot of the token's rating into the flower. She gains immediate knowledge of how far away and in what direction each of those wards is. This sense lasts for the scene, updating in real time; she can't deactivate it early, so she must choose the wards she tracks carefully. (*Conditional*)

She may also activate the lily to point her toward the nearest wayward child who *isn't* any Dauphine's ward; this sense also lasts for the scene and can't be deactivated early.

While activated, the lily grants bonus dice equal to its rating to certain kinds of rolls: Hedgespinning rolls to amaze or impress a ward or grant their heart's desire (yellow); Contract rolls to lead a ward through a series of riddles and adventures to learn something new (blue); or mundane rolls to protect or avenge a ward (violet).

Finally, if the Dauphine spends 1 Glamour while interacting with one of her wards and shows them the lily, its sparkling pollen drifts into the child's eyes and allows them to see through fae Masks for the scene. She may do so a number of times per scene equal to the token's rating.

**Catch:** The user tells someone a treasured or haunting secret from her childhood that they didn't already know.

**Drawback:** The user gains a Condition (see *Changeling*, pp. 344-346): Wanton (yellow), Spooked (blue), or Stoic (violet).

## DAUPHINE'S GIFT (••••)

**Additional Prerequisites:** Two dots in Presence (Sophomore), Manipulation (Chaperone), or Composure (Dowager); two dots in Persuasion (Sophomore), Empathy (Chaperone), or Intimidation (Dowager); Wyrd 3

This entitlement Merit grants the following blessings:

- Glamour gain; see p. XX.
- Enhanced new Specialty; see p. XX.
- Additional Thread; see p. XX.
- Gain a token with a rating equal to (Wyrd/2, rounded up) that your character inherited, representing a gift from one of her title's previous

wards. The gift was a mundane object but becoming part of the entitlement granted it power. Use the rules on p. XX to design this token with the Storyteller or use an example from either chapter 4 of this book or starting on p. 224 of the *Changeling* core book.

- The Dauphine's non-changeling wards all gain the Lucid Dreamer Merit (*Changeling*, p. 123). She always treats their Bastions as possessing Fortitude 1 (*Changeling*, p. 221). Successful mundane actions inside a ward's Bastion gain one additional success that can only be used to generate dreamweaving shifts; if this would give the player enough successes for an exceptional success, it counts as such. (*Conditional*)

**Touchstone:** One of the Dauphine's mortal wards. (*Conditional*)

**Curse:** Clarity attacks suffered as a result of losing a ward for any reason, including because they grew up or left of their own accord, add damage dice equal to ranks invested in this Merit.

**Beat:** The Dauphine abandons an important responsibility or suffers harm to herself or her motley in the process of chasing and collecting a new ward.

## LEGENDS

- Once, a Sophomore and her charges traded all their memories to a hobgoblin in return for never growing any older. She eventually persuaded the goblin to reverse the trade for herself, tiring of her carefree life in the Hedge, but the immortal children are still out there, waiting for the next Sophomore to inherit them.
- Once, a Chaperone hosted a massive Easter egg hunt for all her charges. Its real purpose was to determine which of them would inherit the Blue Lily, but she didn't say so. Nor did she warn them that, halfway through the hunt, their eggs would hatch into goblin chicks. The true winner wasn't the one who found the most eggs, but the one who best cared for their new pets.
- Once, a Dowager was murdered by one of her own charges, who made off with the Violet Lily. The mortal boy didn't inherit the title, though. He simply held onto the token, knowing someday another changeling would come seeking it — for a Lost privateer secretly recruited him as an apprentice, and he's eager to earn his keep.



# Master of Keys

A secret beyond imagining? What will you give me once I uncover it?

Secrets, mysteries, and hidden things lurk in every dark forest and dragon's hoard. Any pirate prize pried from a long-lost undersea wreck is bound to have wonders locked behind its rusty latch. People lock their emotions and memories away deep within themselves, wellsprings of Glamour just waiting for release. Strange otherworlds lie through invisible portals few can open. The Master of Keys inherits the privilege of discovering them all.

As the Master's title can only be claimed through a convoluted scavenger hunt for the answers to questions that may not even have been asked yet, few changelings come to this entitlement who aren't already obsessive truth seekers or treasure hunters. Fewer still are those who find but reject it — the lure of the Last Key's powers of revelation (p. XX) is too compelling to ignore. Whether it's the door to an ancient castle, the true potential of an abandoned curse, or the solution to the riddle obscuring a monster's secret origins, the Master can unlock it.

## PRIVILEGES AND DUTIES

Many supernatural beings — fae and otherwise — grant the Master of Keys access to their secret sanctuaries and troves of mystical resources to cultivate goodwill, knowing he could enter on his own anyway and plunder their secrets willy-nilly if he had a mind to. Beyond that, the fruits of his own labor are the entitlement's primary privilege.

The Master is expected to hunt down new secrets constantly; and more importantly, to *keep* them, thus converting them into new keys in his collection for his future successors. "Secrets" in this context are anything he can obtain by unlocking something, literally or metaphorically, if its discovery is meaningful. For example:

- Breaking into a prison just to release a prisoner doesn't count, unless discovering who the pris-

## ORIGINS

- A Playmate stole the key to his Keeper's heart and offered its return for the keys to unlock everything else in the world.
- A Wized crafted the key to immortality by forging a token out of secrets he'd won from other people in games of chance. But, like every token, it exacted a price — his own doom.
- A farmer plowing his fields dug up a faerie bound in iron chains one day. He released her, and in return the freed True Fae sculpted him into the Last Key, that others might dig up treasures just as fine.

oner is, where they are, what they look like, or some other detail is an important revelation.

- Helping someone remember a repressed memory or finding the key to a lonely man's heart doesn't count unless doing so makes a dramatic change in someone's life.
- Breaking into a safe to steal money doesn't count but doing it to steal photos that can prove a criminal's guilt does.
- Unlocking a gate to the Underworld doesn't count unless he does it to find the ghost who knows his enemy's secret name.
- Unlocking the true potential of an overlooked ingénue or dormant magical relic only counts if he (or the ingénue) didn't already know what he would unleash once that potential was realized, and that realization is important.

Some Masters focus primarily on one kind of secret, while others sample a little of everything. Keeping a secret doesn't necessarily mean telling no one at all, but rather ensuring that the information or item doesn't fall into hands that would reveal it to many or use it against the Master himself or his allies. Sometimes this means keeping a secret that could save a friend or bring a killer to justice; in those cases, the Master must decide which duty is more important.

Freeholds with a lot of skeletons in their closets hate when the Master of Keys is in town, but that doesn't stop them from bartering for his help tracking down secrets they desperately need and can't get themselves. Whether a given Master is altruistic, mercenary, or vindictive, others can count on him to follow a trail to its end no matter what.

## MASK AND MIEN

To a mortal's eyes, the Master's pockets jingle as he walks, spilling keys of all shapes and sizes whenever he pulls out his handkerchief or takes off his jacket. Even if what he's wearing doesn't have pockets — even if he's stark naked — keys just *appear* wherever he goes, scattered all over the sheets when he wakes up in the morning or rattling around in the trunk of his car. In his mien, these keys are *part* of him; his fingers, toes, and even his tongue become keys. These keys are, of course, never made of iron.

## BEQUEATHAL

The Master of Keys cannot abdicate his title. It's his until the day the doom his Last Key portends befalls him. Once it does, the Last Key retreats into obscurity until a new Master discovers it through a series of arcane revelations,

accomplished during a feverish hunt for an important truth or treasure the changeling refuses to abandon, even when it proves more dangerous and difficult than he could have imagined. This entitlement tends to lie fallow for long periods of time, waiting to choose just the right changeling with just the right kinds of drives; but a changeling who deliberately sets out to find it may earn its favor if he's dedicated enough.

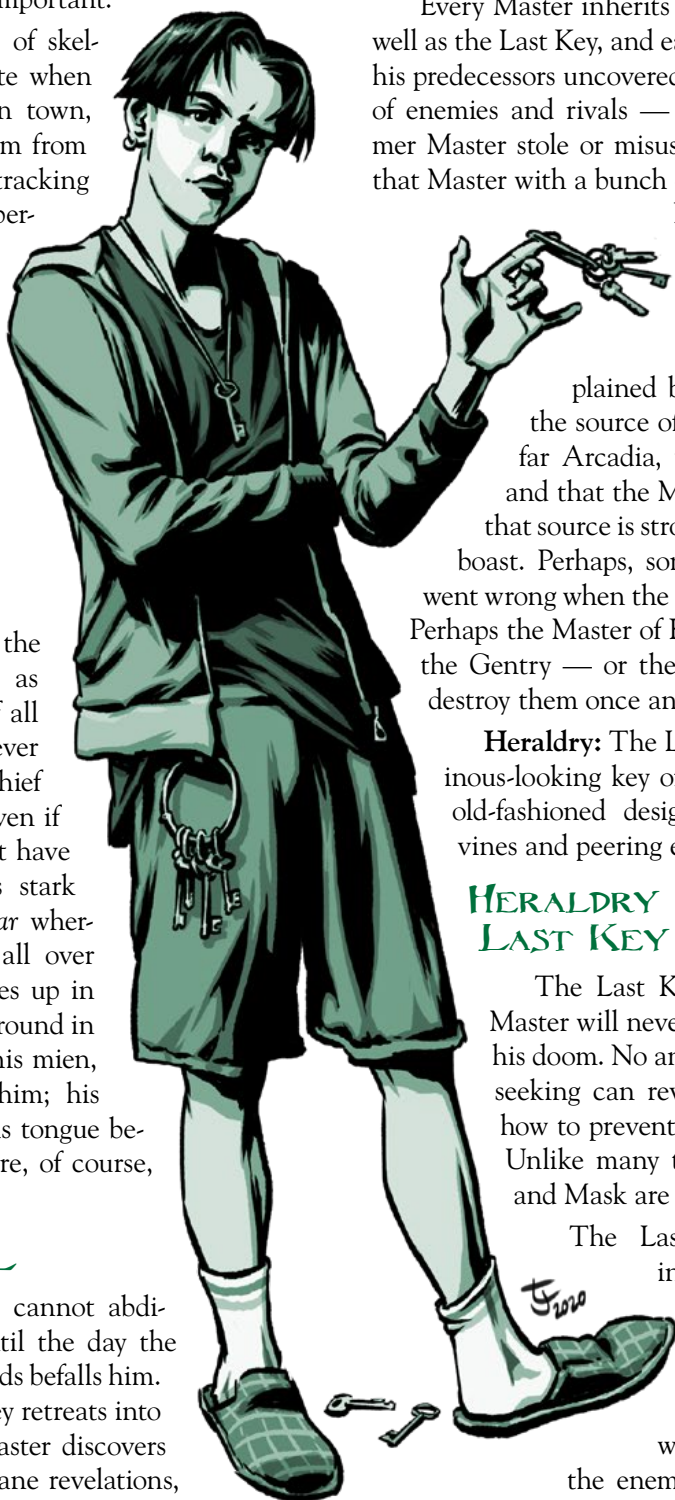
Every Master inherits a collection of lesser keys as well as the Last Key, and each one keeps a secret one of his predecessors uncovered. He also inherits a plethora of enemies and rivals — people whose secrets a former Master stole or misused, and people who trusted that Master with a bunch of secrets now in a stranger's hands. Weirdly, Masters occasionally inherit vague secrets or memories from the *future*, a phenomenon that remains largely unexplained but is thought to imply that the source of the Last Key's power lies in far Arcadia, where time means little — and that the Master of Keys' connection to that source is stronger than most entitlements boast. Perhaps, some say, it means something went wrong when the title went wild centuries ago. Perhaps the Master of Keys is an unwitting agent of the Gentry — or the one destined to eventually destroy them once and for all.

**Heraldry:** The Last Key itself, a stylized, ominous-looking key of silver, with an elegant and old-fashioned design reminiscent of creeping vines and peering eyes.

## HERALDRY TOKEN: LAST KEY (• TO •••••)

The Last Key represents the secret its Master will never unlock: the one that spells his doom. No amount of divination or truth-seeking can reveal the doom's nature, nor how to prevent it, though many have tried. Unlike many tokens, the Last Key's mien and Mask are identical.

The Last Key passively tarnishes in the presence of someone who secretly means the Master deadly harm at no Glamour cost, though it doesn't reveal who; this works even if he can't perceive the enemy. It regains its polish after



one moonlit night has passed. If he encounters another secret enemy before then, he has no way of knowing. If he chooses to allow the enemy to act against him and they do, he regains 1 Willpower as the token rewards him for letting his doom approach closer.

When activated with Glamour, the token grants the rote quality on (token's rating) rolls per story to unlock locked things, including Doors in Social maneuvering and mystical barriers or gateways with unorthodox "keys" in addition to physical items. Barriers that have no keys at all don't count. (*Conditional*)

**Catch:** The user dramatically failed one of his own actions this scene, or dramatically fails a later action within the same scene to regain the Glamour he spent to activate the Key.

**Drawback:** The user suffers the temporary Obsession Condition (**Changeling**, p. 344) pertaining to whatever he finds after he uses this token to unlock something.

## KEY MASTERY (••••)

**Additional Prerequisites:** Investigation 2, Empathy 2, any Merit pertaining to uncovering secrets (e.g. Diviner, Hedge Sense, Trained Observer, etc.)

This entitlement Merit grants the following blessings:

- Glamour gain; see p. XX.
- Enhanced new Specialty; see p. XX.
- Additional Thread; see p. XX.
- Gain one dot of the Safe Place Merit (**Changeling**, p. 125), which contains a 2-dot Library (**Changeling**, p. 123) for a Mental Skill of the player's choice. The Master can use the Last Key to make any door in the mundane world lead there, as a form of portaling (**Changeling**, p. 109). (*Conditional*)
- If the Master spends an extra Glamour when portaling into or out of the Hedge through a closeable portal, he may specify a new Key that opens the dormant Hedgeway he leaves behind, as long as it's something that could be researched and is possible for mortals to possess or do. The old Key no longer works.

**Touchstone:** A mortal whose secret the Master knows and keeps. (*Conditional*)

**Curse:** Clarity attacks suffered while choosing to keep a secret when its revelation would aid him, or an ally, add damage dice equal to ranks invested in this Merit.

**Beat:** Upon investing at least one dot in this Merit, the Master gains an additional Aspiration tied to pur-

suing a dangerous secret. Once he fulfills it, he replaces it at the end of the chapter with a new one.

## LEGENDS

- Once, a Master accidentally unlocked a portal to the Underworld, and couldn't figure out how to close it again. When a powerful ghost emerged with an army and tried to kill every changeling in the city to add their ghosts to its ranks, the Master gave up his own life in exchange for the freehold's safety, and his ghost remains a slave in death to this day.
- Once, a Master found a Huntsman's heart among human dreams, and used his power to find the key to that heart. The Huntsman served him faithfully until the day Gentry forces arrived to destroy her; to save her life, the Master bound her heart to his Wyrd (p. XX) as a token, and now he and the Huntsman share body and soul.
- Once, a Master made a deal with the Smiling Lady, a True Fae who protected him from his Keeper in exchange for secrets about her own escaped changelings. Those changelings found out about it and killed him for his treachery. Now, anyone who inherits the title also inherits this deal, and the Smiling Lady expects him to honor it.

## DESIGNING NEW ENTITLEMENTS

Players and Storytellers may create entitlements together, or the Storyteller can create the basic concepts for a few entitlements and drop leads to them for characters to discover if the players would rather be surprised.

### STEP ONE: PURPOSE, PRIVILEGES, AND DUTIES

First, decide in narrative terms what the entitlement's purpose is and what kinds of privileges and duties go with it.

Then, the Storyteller decides whether anyone currently holds the title and, if so, who it is and what kinds of trials they'll impose on a petitioner. If not, instead decide how to introduce the fallow title in the story and what kinds of quests the character must undertake to claim it. They can even decide it's gone wild, if the player agrees to that complication.

Finally, decide how the changeling knows the title exists. Will she read an ancient legend and follow it to its source? Find an unclaimed heraldry token at the end

of an unrelated adventure? Stumble across the fulfillment of a prophecy accidentally?

## STEP TWO: MASK AND MIEN

Decide whether and how the entitlement affects the Mask's appearance, and what changes it wreaks on the changeling's mien. Such changes are comparable to those a Mantle might cause, anywhere between minor and all-encompassing, but they must be noticeable.

## STEP THREE: BEQUEATHAL

Figure out what requirements the entitlement has for putting it down and picking it up; can the noble simply abdicate whenever she likes, or must she perform some task first? Can her successor take it up without fuss, or must he earn the right? These are story hooks that inform how the character gains (and maybe loses) the title.

List a few things the entitled changeling inherits along with the title by default, including Storyteller characters with a vested interest in making sure she upholds — or forsakes — her duties. The Storyteller can add more later, but the character should acquire a few bequests right away.

If the inheritance includes a token, pledge, or other element with mechanical benefits, it should be one of the Merit's two unique blessings (below); remember, the heraldry token is separate from these bequests. More narrative inheritances are built-in story hooks for the character and her motley, so make sure they're interesting enough for players to want to chase. A predecessor's unfinished business always produces good bequests.

## STEP FOUR: HERALDRY

Creating the heraldry has two parts: designing the sigil that represents the noble and designing the token that bears it. The sigil doesn't have to be elaborate — a simple bit of symbolic imagery will do. Imagine the character flashing a badge to prove his nobility; what symbol would represent him? The sigil can even be a stylized representation of the token itself, like the Dauphines' lilies (p. XX).

Use the rules on p. XX to design the heraldry token. It must have a variable rating of 1-5, and at least some of its effects must scale with its rating to give players something to invest in. The token's form should either match the sigil's image or be easily worn or shown to display the sigil, like a signet ring or sash.

## STEP FIVE: ENTITLEMENT MERIT

Create the four-dot Merit representing the entitlement's blessings and curses. Give it a few prerequisites that make sense for what's expected of the noble. Its associated Touchstone should be a non-fae character — usually a mortal — that represents a relationship to the *title*, rather than to the character personally. Remember, the Touchstone can be inherited, so it isn't necessarily the character herself who forged the relationship.

Of the five blessings, three are predefined; see p. XX. Of the two unique blessings, one must scale with the noble's Wyrd rating, as an additional reward for increasing Wyrd. Both blessings should be roughly equivalent to a three-dot Merit; a blessing that bestows actual Merit dots shouldn't exceed three total dots.

The Clarity curse brings the character's identity as the noble and her identity as an individual into conflict. Consider what kinds of actions the changeling might think are necessary to uphold her duties but would be personally painful or traumatic. Clarity attacks suffered while performing those actions add (invested ranks) dice to the Clarity damage roll.

Come up with what earns the player a Beat when the character does or undergoes something appropriate to the title. It should be something the character wouldn't enjoy but encourages the player to have her act like the noble she is. These Beat criteria work just like Condition resolutions; see **Changeling**, p. 182 for guidelines.

## STEP SIX: CONDITIONAL BENEFITS

Finally, choose which benefits are conditional — that is, which ones the character loses access to if she neglects her duties for too long.

Conditional benefits involve external elements, like Merits that represent other characters or access to restricted places, or abilities that rely on others' reactions; the Touchstone is a good fallback if too many of the other privileges are internal.

They're also *positive* elements without complications; an Allies or Contacts Merit is valid, but a hostile oath — while beneficial — comes with an enemy who periodically shows up to duel the noble, so losing access to it isn't much of a loss.

Conditional benefits are important to the entitlement's identity; greasing the wheels with goblin allies is a major part of the Baron's shtick, so losing their favor is an obvious sign he's abandoned his responsibilities.

Conditional privileges might be attached to the Merit, the heraldry token, or both.





# CHAPTER FOUR

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# OATHS OF SUBSTANCE

*To see a World in a Grain of Sand  
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,  
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand  
And Eternity in an hour.*

— William Blake, *Auguries of Innocence*

Tokens are embodied oaths: pacts frozen in time and space, for changelings to call upon at their leisure. Infused with Wyrd, even the inanimate submits to its reciprocal tyranny.

All tokens don't follow the same rules, though. Sometimes, a changeling finds a whisper in a shard of ice, and when she speaks it into the air, the ice melts, gone forever. Sometimes, the Gentry pluck thoughts and fears out of human dreams to adorn their royal bodies or hang above their beds. Sometimes, a changeling rips out her own heart and replaces it with a stone egg that won't hatch until she's granted three wishes to an innocent child.

This chapter covers special types of tokens and ways to use them, as well as guidelines for players and Storytellers to design their own tokens.

## TRIFLES

The Lost refer to weak, single-use tokens as trifles. Using a trifle robs it of its magic or irrevocably damages it. Trifles come with no other drawbacks, though, making them appealing to changelings wishing to avoid aftereffects. Trifles also lack catches, preventing non-fae from using them — a boon for those who don't want their magic to fall into mortal hands or the clutches of malicious supernatural creatures.

The difference between trifles and goblin fruits sometimes confuses changelings who visit the Hedge infrequently. Goblin fruits give up their bounties straight off the vine; trifles, even naturally occurring ones, require refinement or preparation before harvesting their magic, even if preparation amounts to “yank a tooth out of a troll's mouth.” Goblin fruits also possess innate Glamour, while trifles need an infusion to function.

Trifles can't be mass-produced, but fae can create them in batches. The unscrupulous sell trifles without warning of their single-use nature. This tends to happen in shadier freeholds or with traveling merchants, as developing a habit of selling trifles as proper tokens is an excellent way to destroy one's credibility. In the freehold's political theater, however, a changeling just might have to screw someone over to get ahead.

## SYSTEMS

Trifles lack catches; activation always requires 1 Glamour. Trifles also lack individual drawbacks, since only being able to use each one once is their drawback.

Trifles can be Hedge- or oath-forged, and up to three trifles can be created at a time; creating more than one in a batch makes them identical in function if not in form. If their forms and histories differ enough,





the process yields a strange amalgam of themes and abilities in the resulting trifles. It takes three scenes to Hedge-forge a batch of trifles, and the Storyteller rolls a chance die to determine whether the token remains undisturbed. It takes two oaths to oath-forge a batch. Trifles cannot be stolen tokens; anything pilfered from a Keeper is too weighty in importance.

One Token Merit dot grants three trifles. Using all three counts as losing the Merit dot for purposes of the Sanctity of Merits (*Changeling*, p. 111).

## EXAMPLE TRIFLES

Below is a list of sample trifles to use in a chronicle or as guides when creating new ones.

### BARTERER'S COIN

This coin doesn't look like much, with verdigris tarnishing its surface. When activated, the coin turns a shiny emerald color before disappearing in a puff of golden smoke. Until the scene's end, the coin's user benefits from +1 and 8-again on all rolls to barter or haggle.

### KRAKEN INK

Krakens not only stalk the Hedge's watery depths but wander onto its shores and into its skies, too. Unlike

squid ink, kraken ink functions in air as well as water, sublimating into smoke. Changelings and goblins stabilize kraken ink by refining it into a lightweight, easily transported powder that remains inert until infused with Glamour. When a changeling throws a handful of active dust, it explodes into inky smoke, inflicting the *Blinded Tilt* (*Changeling*, p. 327) on everyone present until the scene's end.

### SEEMING SONG

Seeming songs consist of magical sound, bottled up for later. Any score or recording can birth a seeming song, although most trifle melodies reflect their creator's seeming, court, or other defining characteristic. An unbottled seeming song infused with Glamour stirs the heart and Wyrd of any who hear it. For the scene's duration, any changeling who hears the tune can employ the benefit of the user's seeming for any Arcadian Contract she invokes, even if she hasn't learned it. If a hobgoblin or other fae creature without a seeming activates the song, it's bound to have strange consequences.

### SORCERER'S BREW

To mortals, this concoction appears as vile, sludgy water collected from some swamp or effluent pipe. In-

fused with Glamour, it's no less disgusting, but it takes on vibrant neon colors, with eyeballs and newt hearts floating within. The taste churns the stomach and some changelings have trouble keeping the stuff down. For those who can stomach it, the user achieves an exceptional success on three successes when using any fae power, such as inciting Bedlam, invoking Contracts, and using her kenning, for the scene's duration.

## TROLL TEETH

These trifles appear as elongated lumps of limestone, but changelings recognize them as broken canines and tusks. Trolls' teeth are brittle when removed and crack open easily when infused with Glamour. Squirming, goblin-faced maggots and blackened, craterous decay rot their insides away. The trifle's user chooses one character she can see and smashes the tooth to activate it. The target experiences every mild ache, joint pain, and muscle spasm they have ever had all at once. While this deals no damage, the pain aggravates the victim, inflicting wound penalties as though their rightmost Health box were filled with damage until the scene's end. Further wound penalties from actual damage stack to a maximum of -5.

## WINNING TICKET

Lottery tickets provoke a treasure trove of modern superstitions. This ticket carries its fair share of luck; a tumbleweed of thorny vines bursts out of it when it's activated, shredding it. For the scene, every random guess the user makes is entirely accurate. She can guess a cell phone's passcode on the first attempt, call a specific person without knowing their number, and choose the correct fork in the road without any investigation. This does not impart any knowledge or make navigating the Hedge any easier, and the changeling doesn't recall specific information she guessed after the trifle's power expires.

## BAUBLES

Philosophers in Rome's Marble Court argue that the True Fae are greed made manifest, caring nothing for other beings' autonomy or rights. When the Kindly Ones desire something, they take it and leave a shoddy counterfeit in its place, whether it's an object or a person. Every changeling lives this experience.

Not every theft is so brazen as to require a fetch, though. Sometimes the Gentry creep into dreams like spiders and pluck out the juiciest bits to create jewels and trophies. Most victims wake feeling like something is missing but blissfully ignorant of the solipsistic creature pillaging their minds; changelings *can* tell when something's been

plundered this way, and they're not sure the knowing is any better. The Gentry carry these stolen mementos back to Arcadia, molding them into solid objects. Be they eidolons, props, memories, or emotions, each becomes a token, accenting the Fae's raiment or home with a hint of dread or sparkle of long-lost love. The Lost most commonly call these dream-tokens **baubles**.

The Gentry use baubles as decorations or toys, but to changelings they're far more valuable. A bauble is a catalyst that lets a changeling bend the waking world to her whims as if it were a dream. Autumn sorcerers especially prize these tokens, but any court or Goblin Market carefully guards any baubles it manages to get its hands on. With research and a bit of luck, baubles are powerful tools in a mortal's hands, too.

Someone unfortunate enough to provide fodder for a True Fae's bauble is closely connected to that bauble through what changelings call **dramaturgy** — what others might call sympathetic magic, or an effigy. She's intimately familiar with the thoughts and emotions it represents, and particularly susceptible to its effects. See **Kith and Kin**, Chapter 2, for more about dramaturgy.

## SYSTEMS

Baubles enable oneiromancy in the mortal world. The user designates a mundane action for dreamweaving that resonates thematically or symbolically with the bauble's Crux (see below) and spends 1 Glamour before rolling. This roll suffers a penalty equal to (6 minus the bauble's dot rating). If it generates excess successes, the player can spend them on dreamweaving effects without spending additional Glamour, although bauble-fueled oneiromancy can only create subtle shifts. If the action's roll fails, the spent Glamour is lost. Fulfilling the bauble's catch negates the Glamour cost just like a standard token, allowing characters lacking Glamour to use baubles as well.

Each bauble has a **Crux**: a descriptive phrase embodying the original dream from which the bauble was crafted. Its wielder can only enact oneiromancy shifts reflecting the token's Crux. A bauble made from the eidolon of a beloved pet can generate the positive emotions necessary to bestow the Inspired Condition but cannot inflict Frightened unless the Crux is explicitly about being terrified for its safety or similar. Likewise, a bauble created from the fear of being watched can make a wall grow eyes but can't transform a house into a volcano.

For purposes of the bauble's oneiromancy, treat objects and ordinary animals as important props, mortal characters as important eidolons with effective Wyrds equal to their Resolve, and supernatural characters as



oneiopomps. Targeting the one whose dreams created the bauble grants 8-again on the roll.

Changelings can't use oneiromancy in the Hedge even with a bauble, but the Hedge is psychoactive and responds to the bauble's preserved memories, nonetheless. While taking an action designated for Hedgespinning, the user may activate the bauble with Glamour before rolling to enjoy a bonus equal to the bauble's dot rating as long as the action aligns with the bauble's Crux; this spent Glamour is in addition to the usual cost for spending excess successes on shifts, but Hedgespinning this way can produce paradigm shifts. Fulfilling the token's catch waives the Glamour cost entirely, permitting characters without Glamour to shape the Hedge, although using the catch to Hedgespin can only produce subtle shifts no matter who does it.

All changes introduced through dreamweaving or Hedgespinning with a bauble fade at scene's end; Conditions introduced this way lapse without generating Beats, if not resolved first.

All baubles are stolen tokens; only the Gentry can produce them, barring some unknown and uniquely powerful magic. Thus, they're usually only found in Arcadia. However, enough of them have leaked out to make them known, fiercely coveted, and fought over. Like any stolen token (**Changeling: The Lost 2e**, p. 225), a changeling might steal a bauble in her escape, bringing it home or dropping it out of her pocket to get lost in the Hedge. Her Keeper might give one to her as a gift, or award it as a prize for some grand achievement. A True Fae might trade or lose one to a goblin, who passes it around at market.

## DARK DREAMS

Baubles weigh upon the mind, their emotional burdens slinking into even the most skilled oneiromancer's dreams while she sleeps. The bauble's user can weaponize this effect, digging its talons into a victim's dreams to make them toss and turn all night long. These dreams aren't necessarily nightmares, but they are uncanny and unsettling, filled with imagery from the bauble's original dream. The same effect, to a lesser degree, haunts the bauble's wielder; she finds its symbolism vaguely infesting the edges of her dreams, reflecting in mirrors, and hiding in her peripheral vision.

## SYSTEMS

Once per chapter per target, a bauble can inflict a disturbing reverie reflecting its Crux and original dream. The user spends 1 Willpower and a variable amount of Glamour with the bauble in hand to activate it, then touches the target. If the total of (the bauble's rating + Glamour points

spent) is higher than the target's (Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance), they don't regain any Willpower next time they sleep, and they gain the temporary Obsession Condition (**Changeling**, p. 344) relating to the bauble's Crux. The bauble's user can reduce the Glamour cost by one (to a minimum of zero) by fulfilling the bauble's catch but must always pay the Willpower. The bauble provides no insight into the target's traits; the changeling must discover them on her own or guess at how much Glamour to spend.

If the target's dream produced the bauble in the first place, they also gain the Persistent Addicted Condition (**Changeling**, p. 333), driving them to repeatedly recreate the dream in their waking life and luring them into difficult and dangerous situations. No matter how pleasant the original dream was, reliving it through the bauble is always strange and disconcerting.

A character capable of paradigm shifts in dreams can definitely tell whether a Bastion she's inside belongs to the bauble's original dreamer with a 9-success paradigm shift, as though finding something important (**Changeling**, p. 219). Otherwise, she must investigate the dreamer based on context clues from the bauble's dream-memories, which she can view clearly by lucid dreaming while inflicting the dark dream on herself; she must overcome her own Resolve + Wyrd to do so.

Contact with a bauble's emotional gravity warps its bearer's dreams. Every bauble possesses the same drawback: It doubles the amount of sleep required to regain Willpower and increases the Fortification of the user's Bastion by the bauble's dot rating when the user herself is the oneiopomp, thus making it incredibly difficult for her to change her own dreams. A changeling with one bauble regains 1 Willpower every two nights of sleep, a changeling with two baubles regains one after four nights, and so on. Locking the bauble away doesn't help; the Wyrd knows who claims ownership and enforces the toll anyway. Once per chapter, if a character has no remaining Willpower when she goes to sleep and fails to regain any due to possessing a bauble, or if her player dramatically fails involuntarily while she's trying to weave her own dreams, her player takes a Beat.

## EXAMPLE BAUBLES

Below is a list of sample baubles to use in a chronicle or as guides when creating new ones.

### NAMELESS MASK (●)

Created from eidolon extras, Nameless Masks are nondescript, carved from wood and lacking any distinguishing features. Gentry who create these Masks never don them; instead, they force their servants to

wear them, to ensure nothing distracts from the True Fae's splendor. The cleverest of those servants use their Nameless Masks to escape back through the Hedge, although some of their fellow freeholders argue that their Keepers might have let them escape on purpose.

**Crux:** *I lose myself, alone among the faceless masses.*

**Catch:** The user remains anonymous to everyone else present for the scene's entirety while people are present who could recognize her. If she's recognized after using the bauble but before the scene ends, she must immediately pay any Glamour cost she negated.

### SPIDER SHAWL (••)

Silver webs and black spider patterns criss-cross this gossamer red shawl of finely spun silk. One of the Good Cousins wove it from dreams of acute arachnophobia.

**Crux:** *Spiders crawl everywhere, spinning webs with too many legs.*

**Catch:** The user eats a live spider right before activating the shawl.

### THE DELICATE KNIFE (•••)

The True Fae who crafted this bauble didn't change the original prop at all. In dreams, it was an assassin's

favorite weapon, fast and lethal. The Kindly One *had* to possess such an elegant stiletto, so she plucked it out and wove a lattice of metal around it. Now dreams of sudden death follow it wherever it goes.

**Crux:** *The greatest threat is the one unseen.*

**Catch:** Once drawn in the scene, the knife must taste blood from blade to hilt before it activates.

### PANIC PENDANT (••••)

Everyone has that dream. She's onstage in the spotlight but memorized none of the song's lyrics. His un-begun thesis is due in an hour. They have an interview on the other side of town they forgot to prepare for and can't reach in time. The dreamer stands on the precipice of a doom of their own making. The Gentry adore the blind, flailing panic these dreams elicit, which they forge into dark chalcedony stones set among rose gold.

**Crux:** *A forgotten deadline leaves me well and truly fucked.*

**Catch:** The user deliberately misses her own important deadline while using the Panic Pendant.

### KID'S LATCHKEY (•••••)

This tarnished house key was forged from the eidolon of the dreamer's father, who was constantly just on



the other side of a closing door or pulling away in his fancy car whenever the dreamer approached. The True Fae swooned at the exquisite heartbreak wrought by this figure of abandonment and detached love, and the time-worn key it made feels like loneliness and resentment.

**Crux:** *Even the ones who love you most will leave you before long.*

**Catch:** The user deliberately abandons a companion or loved one to a dire fate when she's needed, within the same scene.

## EMPTY HEARTS

An Icon is a piece of a changeling's soul left behind in the Hedge during her mad flight from Arcadia. But what is a soul, if not a pact between the spiritual and the material? If it's an oath the world dreamed up, well, oaths can be broken; why not swear a new one? An Empty changeling reclaims her agency by vowing that no one will ever take from her again — not her freedom, her home, or even her life. She fills the hole in her soul with a token, binding it to her Wyrld to render her life inviolable.

Other Lost treat the Empty with awe and fear, wondering what could drive them to use such desperate magic. Some fell into their durances because their Keepers “rescued” them from death's door and now take extreme measures to avoid being in that position ever again. Some had Keepers that styled themselves after the Grim Reaper or Thanatos; these Empty evade death to ward off the Gentry's gaze. The all-too-human terror of death consumes many Empty, driving them to cling to life long after they should wither like roses in winter.

Some Empty aren't avoiding death at all. Instead, they feel their souls are incomplete without more Icons, but they have none remaining or can't find any more. In desperation, they bind a token into the gaping wound, hoping to perfect their soul and remove the desolation they feel within. A few changelings become Empty through sheer hunger for power, as a way of hotwiring their Wyrld with sorcerous might.

## HOLLOW RIBS

The Empty are rare and possessive of their secret rites. Their hidden hearts are vulnerable, and paranoia convinces them that any knowledge of their history or practices could leave their one weakness in the hands of their enemies. Would-be Empty must scrounge through ancient texts and personal journals for scraps of lore, or bargain with Goblin Queens, Huntsmen, or even the Fair Folk themselves to learn the proper method.

**Systems:** The changeling must possess a token

with a dot rating equal to or lower than her Wyrld. She travels into the Hedge's Thorns and spends at least one full scene there before tearing out her heart, as a paradigm shift requiring seven successes. The Thorns shred bits of her soul, making room for the token. She places the token over the hole in her chest, spends 1 Glamour, and takes one lethal damage point as the token sears her flesh to cauterize the wound and bind itself to her soul. From that point on, she is unkillable — although the Wyrld charges a hefty toll for invincibility.

The bound token isn't literally inside the Empty's chest; its physical form vanishes as she completes the process. It becomes part of her and haunts her dreams as an important eidolon. No one can steal the token from her (except perhaps a True Fae who turns it into a bauble), and she never needs to spend Glamour to activate it, with or without the catch. The token likewise fixes her soul in place, preventing it from being stolen or altered by any means.

Once per chapter, the changeling can spend 1 Willpower and touch a target to pass the effects of the token's drawback onto that target instead of suffering them herself, though she earns no Beats this way. She *can* bind a trifle, but using it still destroys it, so it's purely a desperation move. Baubles can't be bound.

Removing her heart allows the Empty to store more Glamour in the space left behind. She increases both the total maximum Glamour she can hold and the maximum Glamour points she can spend in a turn by the token's dot rating.

She can reverse the binding process by performing another seven-success paradigm shift after spending another scene in the Thorns and taking another lethal damage point to release the token back into physical form and thrust her heart back into the cavity. Without her heart in hand, she's stuck with the token in its place — or nothing at all, if she chooses to release the token anyway. Leaving the hole in herself empty inflicts the Soul Shocked Condition (**Changeling**, p. 345), which can't resolve until she first fills that hole.

## DEATHLESS HUSKS

Empty changelings cannot die, but they are far from invulnerable. Prick them, and they bleed. Infect them, and they fall ill. Nuke them, and you'll never find their radioactive remains, but that isn't the end for them. Nestled deep within the changeling's dreaming subconscious is the Wyrld-bound token and as long as it exists, the Empty can weave herself back to life.

The Empty's great irony is that their immortality offers

little protection from their greatest enemies. Rival courtiers or angry Bridge-Burners may want them dead, but the Gentry and the Huntsmen want to drag them back to Arcadia *alive*. Some Empty avoid a Huntsman's chains by intentionally provoking — and fatally losing — a fight with them. This tactic works as an emergency escape route, but the Huntsman quickly realizes they no longer need worry about accidentally murdering their quarry.

**Systems:** Mortal wounds can't kill the Empty, but they *are* inconvenient. When an Empty changeling would die, his body disintegrates into refuse, like a dead fetch. This debris reflects the changeling's Mantle, so a Winter courtier might dissolve into snow, or an Autumn sorcerer into orange leaves. If the Empty lacks a Mantle, his body crumbles into a pile of Hedge thorns.

Meanwhile, death launches the Empty through his Gate of Ivory, stranding him in dream form inside his own Bastion. He gains both the Lost and Soul Shocked Conditions (**Changeling**, pp. 342-345). To resolve Lost, he must navigate to his token-heart's important eidolon with a paradigm shift costing nine successes and then retrieve the dream-token in the eidolon's possession, although the eidolon isn't automatically predisposed to being helpful. Claiming the token may involve negotiating with the eidolon, defeating it in a duel or game of wits, navigating a trap-filled maze, or any number of bizarre challenges. This eidolon reflects the token's nature fused with the changeling's own subconscious qualities, including his seeming, kith, Needle, Thread, or other defining characteristics; it's an eidolon, not a prop, and draws its sapience directly from the Empty's soul.

Soul Shocked can't resolve until the changeling makes his way back to the Hedge, and he can't simply wake up from his Bastion without a body to wake up to. Token in hand, he must emerge onto the Dreaming Roads in dream form. He remains an insubstantial dream-wraith until he reaches the Hedge proper, at which point he must Hedgespin himself a new body, building it out of Hedge-stuff with either a single paradigm shift requiring seven successes or a series of five separate subtle shifts requiring three successes each to reconstitute major body parts one at a time.

## TELL-TALE HEARTS

Holding her still-beating heart in her hand after tearing it from her chest, the changeling must keep it out of the hands of rivals who would use it against her or foes who would use it to kill her. Canny Empty lock their hearts away in difficult-to-find or heavily guarded locations, like at the top of the Burj Khalifa or inside the Chernobyl exclusion zone. Bastions make good for-

resses to hide a heart in, as the Gentry know well, but a changeling's heart gives the dreamer fae nightmares just as a Huntsman's does.

By replacing her heart with a token, the changeling marks herself as more fae than most Lost, forcing her to obey obscure, ancient oaths and taboos governing deep faerie magic.

**Systems:** The Empty trades one set of vulnerabilities for another. She gains a new major taboo in addition to any other frailties she possesses. Emptying herself is rough on her Clarity, provoking a four-die breaking point when she makes the attempt — even if she fails. Anytime an Empty changeling suffers Clarity damage for any reason, she adds her bound token's dot rating to the damage dice pool.

Anyone who holds the Empty's heart — even mortals, if they know enough to try it — can seal her statements (**Changeling**, p. 210) without spending Glamour, and she may not refute the sealings with her own Glamour. By spending a Willpower point, the heart's possessor may replace one of the Empty's Aspirations with one of his own until chapter's end. Swearing an oath on a changeling's heart ties her fate to its fulfillment, even if she isn't a participant; if anyone breaks the oath, she suffers a consequence appropriate to that oath and the method of its breaking, such as taking a point of lethal damage or gaining a negative Condition like Lethargic. If *she* breaks it, she suffers this consequence in addition to the usual Oathbreaker Condition. This leverage makes Empty hearts supremely valuable, so goblins charge an arm and a leg for them (sometimes literally) at market.

Destroying the Empty's physical heart doesn't immediately kill her, but it imposes the Ravaged Condition (**Changeling**, p. 344) and she takes one point of aggravated damage at the end of each scene until she can Hedgespin a new heart. Doing so requires a paradigm shift with nine successes as well as spending a Willpower *dot* to infuse the new heart with true soul-stuff.

## CUSTOM TOKENS

Wild and weird, tokens are multifarious and can provide a staggering variety of benefits, both numerical and narrative. A token's powers and scope determine its rating, but assigning these values is as much art as science, given the vast breadth of options available. Treat the advice in this section as guidelines rather than rules. The most reliable way to determine a token's rating is to compare it to existing ones whenever possible.



You can approach the process either by choosing an item and determining its effects based on its form and history, or by deciding what you want it to do first and then figuring out a compelling and thematically appropriate object and origin. The following steps are presented as a default progression, but you can tackle them in any order you like.

## ORIGINS

Where did the token come from? How was it forged and from what? Did the character create it themselves, and if so, was it deliberate or an accident? If not, who did, and how did it come into the character's possession? All these questions help inform the token's powers and drawbacks.

## BENEFITS

A token's powers should be fairly niche, especially by comparison to Contracts and other fae magic. A token does one thing and does it well. Its abilities align with both form and origin, expressing a story and an unspoken agreement in what it does and what it costs. Two token pistols may both shoot people, but the one forged with hostile oaths of vengeance is a whole different animal from one that marinated in the Hedge under the watchful eye of a peaceful Goblin Queen to keep it out of violent hands.

Most tokens aren't so niche that they can only be used by specific people, though. Tailor powers to work under relatively broad circumstances, even if they're *more* useful for those who invest in a particular Skill or belong to a certain seeming. For example, Driver's Little Helper (**Changeling**, p. 226) grants exceptional success on three successes to handle a vehicle, but that's rarely useful to characters lacking dots in Drive. By also negating the untrained penalty, the token makes it easier for any character to make use of it.

Tokens usually don't need a built-in penalty to counteract their benefits; that's what drawbacks (p. XX) and Glamour costs are for. A token only ever costs 1 Glamour to activate without the catch — never Willpower — and only ever takes one instant action. Most token effects last for the scene but some are exceptions, such as the Ace in the Hole (**Changeling**, p. 225) or any token that imposes a Condition, since Conditions have resolutions based on story events instead of fixed durations.

However, if you create a token that's particularly powerful or universally applicable, consider building in a potential downside that creates interesting scenes and hard choices. For instance, the Crown of Thorns (**Changeling**, p. 228) doesn't say the changeling *can* use

one of its abilities per turn — it says he *must*. This may be exactly what he wants, but in the chaos of an action scene or intense conflict, others are bound to act unpredictably, and the character could face a choice between letting go of the token's great power and turning that power upon his friends. The downside comes with inherent story potential, rather than a simple dice penalty or resource cost.

The following chart is a referential guideline for where common, generic token benefits fall in terms of dot rating. You can use it as a list of options for quick and easy token generation, or as a tool to estimate the rating of a more specific or unique effect based on its comparative effectiveness to those listed.

If a token has especially limited application, remove a dot; if it's especially broadly applicable, add one. A token combining more than one effect simply adds their dot values together; no token can exceed five dots.

| Dot Value | Benefit  |
|-----------|--|
| •         | Minor narrative effect impacting one target  |
| •         | Bonus or 9-again to one Skill  |
| •         | Reveal vague or limited information  |
| ••        | Temporarily avoid or negate a penalty or Tilt's effects  |
| ••        | Minor narrative effect impacting a specific category of targets, or a more substantial one affecting one target  |
| ••        | Bonus or 9-again to multiple Skills, or 8-again to one Skill   |
| ••        | Bonus or 9-again to a single Attribute   |
| •••       | Bonus or 9-again to multiple Attributes, or 8-again to one Attribute   |
| •••       | Reveal specific or well-hidden information   |
| ••••      | Minor narrative effect targeting everyone close by, a more substantial one affecting a specific category of targets, or a major one affecting one target |
| ••••      | Magical effect, such as a Condition or environmental Tilt, impacting limited targets over vast distances or everyone in a small area                     |
| ••••      | Rote quality on a single Specialty   |

- Major or complex narrative effects that impact a whole area
- Rote quality on a single Skill
- Magical effect, such as a Condition or environmental Tilt, impacting everyone in an extended area or a basic assumption of the local environment (e.g. opening all Hedge gates or eclipsing the sun)

## THE IMITATION GAME

A token can mimic other supernatural effects to an extent, although its magic isn't as versatile as Contracts or as convenient as seeming and kith blessings, and it's not a good idea to bypass the necessity of bartering with goblins for Contracts or belonging to a particular kith to access specific powers. It's *especially* not a good idea to let a player create a custom token that mimics an ability another player's character acquired through other means or shortcuts established systems of advancement — for instance, don't make a token that lets a player skip all that messy “joining a court” business to access Mantle effects.

A token mimicking a Common or Goblin Contract has a rating of two or three, while powers aping Royal Contracts rate four or five. A token's means of replicating these powers is always sideways or cumbersome and should never replicate them *exactly*. For instance, boots that allow walking across ceilings would serve the same general purpose as Boon of the Scuttling Spider (*Changeling*, p. 144), but might do so by reversing the user's personal gravity or otherwise preventing her from walking on ordinary horizontal surfaces while active.

Avoid creating tokens that duplicate seeming or kith blessings unless they're more niche versions that only mimic the function, not the method or themes. Likewise, if a token duplicates a Contract's basic function, don't give it a seeming's additional Contract benefit.

Those without Glamour can use tokens with catches, so tokens that would only do anything for changelings (e.g. one that affects Clarity) should be rare, as they shut down story options.

## CATCHES

Just like Contract Loopholes, catches relate to the token's themes and function, and require deliberate action or sacrifice on the user's part in place of spending Glamour.

For the most part, create catches the same way you would create Loopholes (*Changeling*, p. 308). The differ-

ence is that catches are more of a tit-for-tat deal with the Wyrd, with a greater likelihood to deal damage, cause real inconvenience, or put the user in danger. Think in terms of what a goblin merchant might say to a mortal asking, “It sounds too good to be true, what's the catch?” Perhaps the merchant replies, “No big deal, just give up your dreams for a week,” only for the mortal to later realize it's not such a small price after all, since they don't recover Willpower when they sleep during that week. This also means the catch must be something a non-changeling can do, and it usually isn't anything blatantly supernatural. Most mortals don't jump to assuming a token is magic when it works — they instead feel that this coin must be lucky and they ought to hold onto it, or similar.

## DRAWBACKS

The Wyrd's price for using a token is suffering its drawback, but making *players* suffer is not the point. Drawbacks pose the question: Is using this magic right now worth its cost? It can be a question for the character or the player, but either way, the ideal answer is “sometimes yes and sometimes no.” Like any other Wyrd deal, the drawback should create fun complications that drive story opportunities, rather than punishing a player for using her resources. The idea is to *tempt* her into using them so you can ramp up the drama while she feels accomplished doing something weird and fae.

Like catches, a drawback relates to its token's power and origins. For instance, a token revealing secrets might inflict the Paranoid Condition as the user sinks into irrational fear of other secret-hunters stalking her to steal them. Drawbacks always reward players with Beats when they come into play, encouraging them to take bold risks in the face of potential peril. As a result, most drawbacks involve Conditions, which naturally grant Beats when they resolve. If a drawback isn't a Condition, it should explicitly award a Beat whenever it endangers the user or complicates things for her.

## MASK AND MIEN

A token's Mask and mien impact the game's mood. A smoke bomb whose mien resembles a seed pod releasing spores tells a different story than a cursed skull stealing victims' eyes, even if both inflict the Blinded Tilt. Feel free to reinterpret an existing token's Mask and mien to make them more appropriate to your character or chronicle, if it already does what you want mechanically. Tweaking a token's appearance and activation behavior is an excellent way to explore themes and generate story hooks.



## TRIFLES

Trifles hold weaker, fleeting magic. They could be less potent than a one-dot token or possess equal power but more limited utility. Their single-use nature is their drawback, so they don't need another; getting three per Merit dot compensates for their narrower scope. Since they don't have catches, and thus only characters with Glamour can use them, their effects can more often be specific to changelings or other fae. Due to their drawback's transitory nature, trifles don't generate Beats.

If a token's concept requires a more powerful effect but you want the option to use its power up all at once, consider instead creating a regular token with a *catch* that destroys it, like the Ace in the Hole. If an alternative activation method or use by mortals is a central conceit of the item's concept, it should be a proper token instead of a trifle.

## BAUBLES

Designing a bauble doesn't require figuring out specific powers. A bauble's most important feature, and the primary one you'll invent, is its Crux: a short phrase describing the dream from which it originated, defining how it can — and, by extension, *can't* — alter a scene.

The Crux should be specific enough that the bauble isn't useful all the time for all things, but broad enough that it can fuel actionable oneiromancy in more than one way. It should encourage player creativity to use the bauble in clever and unique ways, rather than giving her *carte blanche* to dreamweave in every scene. A Crux can be based on a specific eidolon or prop, or a more general feeling or subconscious thought that featured in the originating dream. The best Cruxes extrapolate a theme from the symbolism of the dream aspect they came from; a bauble made from the eidolon of the dreamer's deceased fiancé might focus on lost love, general grief, a specific thing the dreamer misses about that person, the fleeting nature of mortality, marriage, or even ghosts.

A bauble's dot rating determines how easy it is to use, which is a product of its importance to the original dream. Consider what it meant to the dreamer. An eidolon extra from a passing dream produces a one-dot bauble, while the monster representing a dreamer's existential terror in a recurring nightmare produces one rated at four or five. More important memories intrude into the waking world and other people's minds more powerfully.





So, you're home. What now?  
Gonna run and hide for the rest of your life to make sure  
They never find you again?  
Screw that. Don't let Them scare you.  
Take up space. Make noise. Write your name across  
the sky and let Them know you're not going anywhere  
without a fight. You brought the fairy tale to your  
home turf, and you make the rules here.  
Your words have power now,  
so use them. Build a community.  
Bargain with gods. Defy traditions.  
Choose a role to play, and write your own script.  
Bring dreams to life and grasp immortality.  
Nothing will ever be the same again.  
And that's a promise.  
— Pretty Penny, Summer Court Elemental

Oak, Ash, and Thorn is a companion book to *Changeling: The Lost* Second Edition, expanding on what's in the core book.

It contains:

- Expanded rules for freeholds and a selection of seeds for sample freeholds in four international locations.
- Rules for creating new court Bargains and an introduction to non-traditional Mantles, including free companies, traveling bands, and Lost dynasties, with a playable example of each.
- Entitlements, the titles of nobility that changelings assume to inherit mystical legacies from the Lost who came before them, including three full examples with accompanying tokens and Merits.
- Expanded rules for tokens, including two new types with examples, guidelines for creating your own, and a system for ripping out one's heart to become unkillable.

# CHANGELING™

THE LOST  
SECOND EDITION

