

# CHANGELING: THE DREAMING PLAYER'S GUIDE

A PLAYER'S GUIDE  
AND SOURCEBOOK FOR







# CHANGELING: THE DREAMING PLAYER'S GUIDE

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## DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to: *you*.

You made this possible. Thank you for everything. We hope we did you proud.

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# Five Short Tales

The blood ran like rubies down the marble staircase, surreal and lovely. Everything was beautiful in the Parliament of Dreams. Even death. With a brush of Glamour, the eshu dismissed the will-o'-the-wisp which had led her to her missing contact. She didn't need anyone to notice that she'd been tracking the man who now lay dead on the grand staircase. Midnight black hair spilled in gorgeous, tightly kinked curls across the steps, mingling with the blood pooling below him. If one only looked at his face, he could just be sleeping – full mouth resting in a peaceful line, black eyes closed under a heavy, relaxed brow. She had never seen Lord Alami at such peace.

If only that pool of blood growing beneath him wasn't still steadily dripping. If only she'd gotten here a touch faster or made their meeting a little earlier. If only she had the courage to step closer and pull the cold iron knife out of his ribs. Shock was a strange thing, and Lynna could do nothing but stand frozen as she watched two years of work bleeding out on the steps of Parliament.

The screech of grief from someone above her ended that shock real damn fast.

"No! No, no, nono... no. Kherr, please, no... My Lord, no!" The begging voice's pitch did grow more tolerable as Lady Vilosi began a half-sobbing, dramatic stumble down the stairs towards Alami's body. It managed to detract from the shining flesh just barely hidden beneath her night dress and open robe. Weaker women would have been in love at first sight of the sidhe. Lynna had never been a weak woman. For one moment, she considered just how Vilosi knew that Lord Kherr Alami was out here dead already, considering his blood was still dripping, but there was no time for equivocation.

Lynna had to get ahold of the package before anyone else touched the body, if the Lord still had it on him. The hand-off was already thirty minutes late. If someone else found it, everything would fall apart. Everything they'd worked three years now to build; all the protections for the commoners, the precarious strings set up in Parliament to ensure the delay of certain votes, the three agents risking



their lives in Hejaz — it would all come tumbling to pieces if she didn't get those treasured mirrors and the list to go with it.

Ignoring the stomach-twisting sensation of the cold iron shoved between Alami's ribs, Lynna tossed herself onto the body with an exaggerated sob. She clutched his lapels, shaking the him like a rag doll as her own loud cries joined in Vilosi's, "NO! LORD ALAMI! BREATHE! COME BACK TO US!" Bonelessly, she collapsed down with the body, using her own form to shield the desperate search of her hands through his clothing. She had to figure out where Alami hid the package.

Vilosi finally arrived, skidding to her knees in Kherr's blood and wrapping her arms around his body from behind. She clutched him like a life raft in a hurricane as her pleas joined Lynna's. To any outsider, the scene was one of broken grief — a friend and a lover pining for their loss. Across the dead sidhe's shoulder, however, their eyes locked in a moment of cold hatred. They both *knew*. Between their bodies, blood, and cold iron, the women frantically pawed for the hidden package. The dead man had just been the delivery system.

Lynna wondered how many other promises Lord Alami had made and left unfulfilled.



Quiet and dark, the world around her glimmered with artifacts hidden deep in ill-defined corners, and the whisper of pages turning was audible from anywhere in the freehold. She sat before the balefire, its flame white and cold, highlighting the enormous gossamer spider's web that made the general structure of her home. From her place in its center, she could see the world through the stories of her minions, all the sluagh that hosted their own webs of lies, deceit, and secrets. Each filtered back to her eventually, and she sent them out on their way to those not as well-connected.

On this occasion, the message arriving was addressed to her specifically. Usually she enjoyed intercepting messages meant for anyone's eyes but hers, but the black and grey symbol denoting the Shadow Court was just as good.

*Our most eloquent and unrivaled Disquiet,*

*I've handed this note off to a rather busy black widow to ensure that it will fall into your hands sooner rather than later. Things are progressing quite nicely, and a good deal more quickly than we expected. They still suspect nothing, and haven't noticed that the trods have been changing. Even better, your web makes an excellent substitute for the Silver Path. For a while for now, we've been using it as a detour to test its efficacy. We'll be putting it to its full task soon.*

*Let Fareiya know that she might have some visitors soon. We're using her freehold as our first destination. We're sending four along. Three she can do whatever she wishes with, but the fourth is mine. I think it's time for a new apprentice.*

*Dominion*

The parchment faded to ash as she finished reading it, and she let it scatter over her web. It would pluck the right strings and let their mutual companion know of the plan. In the meantime, she picked up a pillow stuck with pins holding a partially finished lace pattern. The silver-white collar's pattern, different every time she finished it, would let Dominion know she'd received the message. The endgame was fast approaching, after all, and she would be ready.



Kelebogile left his beloved home from Moshoeshoe I Airport choosing to fly to Kasane Airport rather than Victoria Falls. The second airport was larger with more flights, but he preferred the smaller airport over adding an additional border crossing. Such tricks of wise travelers had kept him in good stead for many years of global wandering. It was not so common for his fae and their mortal relatives to travel widely, and so he and the other wandering storytellers were greeted like long lost family whenever they returned to the high snows and ice of home.

He watched out the plane's window as the vast green of Hwange National Park passed below like a green ocean of life. He comforted himself in his Basotho blanket, enjoying the last bit of air conditioning before he had to adapt to the heat of



his host's lands, and mused that he had once had a better time adapting to winter in Scotland than any time he visited Botswana. Why, he joked to himself as the plane descended, does the north have to be so hot?

Navigating the airport, he smiled to see a fashion magazine with European women on the cover wearing Basotho style shawls and jackets. That wonderful movie had shown the world what a proper blanket should look like! Kelebogile mused that once the world understood how much better the real thing was, his aunties were going to have a flood of online orders. The thought of fine ladies traipsing across St. Andrew Square in Edinburgh in his aunties' handiwork kept him grinning as he greeted his hosts and accepted a ride. He'd been sent for at the request of Queen Keabetswe, and as usual it seemed he arrived right on time.

Kelebogile was to be a guest storyteller at a camp filled with childlings from the queen's lands, there to speak of the realm and their precious place in it. After an hour in a cramped camp van, they pulled into a serene campsite with cottages circled about a large firepit. A fine view of the Chobe River painted the western horizon, marking the border between Botswana and Namibia. As the sun set, dinner was cleared and childrens' camp songs were sung, and eventually everyone drifted in to sit around the fire. He also noted wilder and grump caretakers sitting just behind the childlings, ever watchful. This is a good place, he thought, good ground for the seeds of peace.

"Children," he began, "I am Kelebogile, and in my people's language my name means 'I am grateful.' I am sent here today by my king, Kutloano Mamello, the King of High Snows. High King Kutloano chose his name when he became king, and in my language it means 'mutual understanding and patience.' I come from high up in the mountains of Lesotho, and like all eshu I have traveled the world to learn stories and bring them home to my campfire. Now, children... can you tell me the name of your queen?"

The childer fell into the call-and-answer classroom rhythm, shouting happily, "Queen Keabetswe!"

"Excellent!" Kelebogile smiled, his hands wide as if to embrace them all. "And children," he continued, "what is she the queen of?"

"The Queen of Rivers!" the children shouted in sing-song unison.

"Very good, children!" Kelebogile continued. "Ours is a realm of many kings and queens. This Realm of Seasons sees the royals rise in turn to rule over all for a time. The Seasons are not the mortal seasons; they are more than weather and crops. They happen as they will. We don't know it will change until the change is close, then we all feel it down to our bones. With each change, the fortunes of the whole realm shift. My king sits above all others now; the years have been calmer, and cool thoughts of peace have drifted even to places where there is anger and strife."

"But children: the season is changing. You feel it now, though you do not know what it is you feel. We will come from a cooling time into... something warmer. Many hope for a growing spring that will bring plenty to the realm. Some who have suffered hope for a hot summer of spears and war to bring change."

"Who chooses the season?" asked an attentive young kuino girl, her hair a cascade of colorful braids, both pairs of eyes keen with curiosity.

"Why, you do, children." Kelebogile said, looking the girl and her playmates in the eyes each in turn. "The Dreaming will look to you, the young, and it will change to match your hearts." He paused, savoring the hushed silence and the expectant eyes all around him, giving the words their moment. "The next season will come from you."



Alastair Silhouette, Firstborn of Silence, Duke of the Whisper Temple, has no interest in cheese fries. He sweeps past the posted specials with courtly disdain and enters the diner, wearing his favorite cape and a practiced scowl. There isn't a free table in the whole place, but he doesn't care: he didn't come for a meal. He'll get one, anyway — that's how boggans are — but he's really here for a good sulk. There's no better place in the duchy to savor the anguish of the everyday, and there's no better person to do it in front of than the proprietor, Leslie, who always understands.

Alastair claims his usual seat at the lunch counter, gangly limbs settling into an unnatural yet decorous perch. Leslie peeks out from the kitchen,



waves, and starts making the usual. He offers his old friend a sporting glower.

The familiar silence soothes him. He takes a moment to recline safely in his personal gloom.

"You know," she says over the hiss of the fryers, "this'll go a lot faster if you quit watching."

"I observe. It is what I do."

She shrugs. When she turns around, she's wearing a bless-your-heart smile. "Just don't mope too hard while you're waiting, then."

"My whole life is waiting." He pauses for a theatrical sigh. "When will I get the mystery back? I have danced with gods. I've played chess with four different dragons. I have spent decades learning everything there is to know about our way of life, and now it's all so... ordinary. Won't something come along to make me feel - wonder, again?"

She leans on the counter. "Darlin', the magic in this world isn't gonna show up at your doorstep to whisk you away. You gotta chase it."

"That's precisely the problem. There's nothing left to discover. I've reached the end of my scholarly pursuits, and my reward is utter, fathomless tedium."

"Whatever did you discover about our world that taught you to be sure of anything?"

He rolls his eyes with paranormal grace. "Oh, let me guess. 'There are more things in heaven and Earth, Horatio...'"

Leslie silences him with the clatter of his dinner plate on the counter.

"Enough of that." She hurries across to the other end for the ketchup and extra napkins he doesn't have to ask for. "There are more things in *Toledo* than are dreamt of in your philosophy. Now wipe that smirk off your mind and listen, for once."



Ruby shuddered as she took in the dilapidated workshop. She never wanted to return here, but the key was too important. The memories rushed back — the experiments she willingly endured, the horrors she gleefully inflicted.

"Rasmus is dead. You killed him yourself," she said aloud in an effort to keep her fear from overwhelming her.

Inhuman laughter echoed around the room. "No, my dear, you did not kill me. I was simply in need of repair." The voice was unmistakable. With a series of ratcheting *click, click, click, thumps*, the goblin emerged from the shadows.

Ruby suppressed a gasp. What was left of Rasmus had become a clockwork abomination, gears and cogs protruding from charred, fleshy lumps, face a mass of scars with one eye sewn shut and the now a complicated rig of gears and lenses.

"I've seen that look before," Rasmus said, "on the little girl who abandoned you — a one-eyed doll, too scary to look at. It was her own negligence that disfigured you, but that didn't matter. She left you to die, and you would have... had I not saved you."

"No! You twisted me, turned me into a Nightmare. I was your pet, your weapon, something I never should have been. I'm a doll! I keep people safe! I play with children when they're happy and comfort them when they're sad or scared. I forgot that for a while, but my friends, Raz and Mindy, reminded me!"

Rasmus reached for her with a wicked claw. "If they're such good friends of yours, where are they now?"

Ruby smiled as a Glamour-infused tennis ball bounced and rolled to a stop at her feet. "Right behind you."









# INTRODUCTION

Humans are story-driven beings, and story games are player-driven. Storytellers give us the bones, the world, the clues to solve a mystery, or the footpaths which might lead characters down to the end of their lives or the end of the world, but players are the ones inhabiting characters, giving them breath and life. Characters are the ones driving the bus, propelling the story forward with their choices, their personalities, the hard-won knowledge they gain living out their story arcs.

Players need a lot of knowledge to be able to tell stories effectively. They need the tools to inhabit the world their story takes place in. From political systems to social norms and taboos, creating a story requires detail, and details are what make characters seem real.

This book is for players. There won't be lot of things that the Storyteller won't know, and because it's a player's handbook, your fellow players will probably have all the information at their fingertips - but characters? Characters will find tactics, secrets, and more within the pages of this book. There will be tools for political intrigue and tools for faction leadership and

alliances. Most importantly, it'll be the kind of stuff that lets players with different agendas get the most out of **Changeling**.

For example, if you haven't had time to study up on banner houses, but you're playing a character who would know everything there is, was, and could be to know about banner houses, this is the book for you. Its purpose is to give players the lexicon of knowledge that their characters would have known their whole lives, the knowledge that gives them power, and most of all, the kind of details and customization that make a story sing.

## The Power of Choice

One of the major design themes behind **Changeling's** anniversary edition is perhaps best summed up as "fairy tales are defined by exceptions." While the book was designed to honor and carry on the game that we all loved so much, it also had the goal of making it *your* game more than ever before. That's right, yours. Where would we be without you, after all?



Those of you familiar with the original editions of **Changeling** can't have missed this in action – seemings are no longer strictly tied to chronological age, the Autumn sidhe have changed the role of the nobility after the flight of the Arcadians, the Shadow Court are the voice of the angry masses, Arts got a major overhaul, and there's a big section on how to customize existing kiths or even make new ones. (If you missed it, wow, you missed a treat. Go check it out! We'll be here when you get back.) The whole goal is to allow you to tinker, tailor, nudge, and fiddle with the game until you make the characters and chronicles you want, rather than forcing you to change your stories so they work with some "canonical" version That Shall Never Be Changed laid out in the book.

Even "little" details in this edition are more in your control than ever, because we know that *so much* story lives in little details. Especially in fairy tales. Do you want your sidhe to wear a cloak made of autumn leaves that perpetually fall in her wake, only to vanish a few steps later? Fantastic! Sure, if the cloak actually has magic powers that affect the game, you'll have to pay some points for it, but if it's purely for style – if you just want your sidhe to have a cloak of autumn leaves because damn, that's cool – then go for it! Do you want your troll to come from a long line of family members, each of whom has coal black skin and eyes like banked embers? That sounds like a great story to us!

Of course, this doesn't mean that the rules don't matter – while we always encourage you to find the rules that suit you, without stable rules of some kind there isn't much of a game to play. And while we encourage you to find the look, style, and tone that you want, make sure to discuss changes to the setting with the rest of the group before setting them in stone. After all, it's neat to have a troll that looks like he's forged from volcanic rock, but it's another thing to suddenly decide all trolls are winged like gargoyles in the middle of a session. Customization is great, but it still requires consent and consistency to make it work.

That said, players, Storytellers, don't be afraid to embrace the spirit of change and personalization set down in the anniversary edition and continued in these pages. You banded together and brought **Changeling** back from the Mists; we're doing our best to honor your dedication that by giving you all the tools and narrative you need to truly make it your own. Even if you prefer to play the game more "traditionally," eschewing some of the big setting shifts, we hope you find the updated rules, mechanics, and other tools to your liking. The Dreaming belongs to all of us, after all.

Now make it *your* home.

## In These Pages

Since this book is player facing, there's a lot of information about the world that your characters live in. Here's how it all breaks down by chapter.

In **Chapter One**, Kithain politics come to the fore. If you're playing a chronicle inspired by *The West Wing*, *Game of Thrones*, or *The Crown*, this is a great place to start. It discusses Seelie and Unseelie political gains and losses, how the Shadow Court and even commoners make their voices heard, and the distinct need for backstabbing. It's not just information; there are also some mechanics to help with creating tension and diplomatic challenges. There's also detailed information on banner houses, old political players newly returned to the stage, and new ways for players to make the political game their own, each of which adds a new layer of intrigue to house politics.

In **Chapter Two**, we dive into the secrets of the Shadow Court. Unseelie players wanting to shift the status quo and disrupt the balance of Seelie power will find a lot to play with in this deeper dive into the Shadow Court: how it works, what secrets it holds, and how it has been transformed in the days of the Evanescence. This chapter deals with the relationship between the Shadow Court and the 15<sup>th</sup> Chair in the Parliament of Dreams, and certainly will help if you want to bring some enlightened anarchy to Kithain politics. If you're planning to actually interact with Seelie nobles, this might be an especially helpful chapter to read up on, so you're aware of all the cross-court politics that everyone loves so much. Of course, it wouldn't be a chapter about secrets without some good secret societies, and this chapter addresses those as well. How to join, how well known the group is in the first place, and its very role within the complex web of Kithain society is all part and parcel to this chapter.

**Chapter Three** will travel beyond Concordia to examine other geographical regions and their local and indigenous fae. New kiths are introduced from Africa, South America, the Middle East, and Australia, as well the political structures of each region. This is a great opportunity for players to get away from traditional Eurocentric fairy tale influences, and to find new adventures and stories to tell. Players will not only have the opportunity to bring new kiths to the table, but also to have new backgrounds and stories to tell involving new settings from all around the world. World travelers and adventurers especially will appreciate this information, even if they're still playing in their homelands of Concordia. Everyone's looking for a good story to tell,



and there's plenty of fodder here from parts of the globe never before explored in **Changeling**.

**Chapter Four** is about fae nature and some of the consequences that come with being one of the Kithain. Awakening to your changeling nature means accepting big changes to who you are. These changes don't always come at the hands of a corrupt political system, or in a new setting – sometimes, it's about the personal choices you make, and how those choices affect your future. Read closely, because while you may have seen some of this before, there are new twists to these mechanics!

First comes a look into the elusive Síocháin, the immortals of the **Changeling** world. How does one join them? What does it mean to become one? And what do they do with their endless lifetimes? Next we'll talk about Nightmare and Bedlam: what they are, how they might present consequences for your character, and how they work mechanically. The chapter rounds out with a look at Musing and Unleashing, giving new options to help flesh out your pursuit of Glamour as well as how to look at incorporating displays of primal magic in your chronicle.

**Chapter Five** will delve into chimera – new rules for fleshing out chimerical companions and bringing them to life, as well as how to play a chimera characters. Yes. Yes, indeed. Lycians are fae born of beloved objects and ideas, brought to life by the magic of laughter, memory, or myth. They are the teddy bear someone lost at the Bronx Zoo, now having adventures on the New York City subway system; they are a song never recorded now seeking its creator; they are so many things, and now you can play them in **Changeling**. This section will talk about how a Lycian chimera can come to be, what it will look like, and how it might interact with the world of the Dreaming. If you're a player looking for something different, or a Storyteller looking to round out your chronicle with a new and fascinating sort of character, this is worth your attention.

**Chapter Six** contains a discussion of voile along with delightful new Treasures and Wonders, as well as updates for the Arts of Infusion and Tale-Craft. Infusion is the Art of fantastical creation, favored by crafters such as boggans and nockers as well as the nobles of House Dougal. Tale-Craft originally came to the Kithain from the eshu, but has spread to all changelings who appreciate the power of a good story. It allows its wielders to manipulate audiences and even step directly inside legends as needed.

There are so many new and old tools to play with, so much new knowledge to fuel your stories, so many problems for characters to triumph over. It's easiest to

dream when you have materials to dream with, and this book is filled with those to the brim.

## DISABLED IN THE DREAMING

By Elsa Sjunneson-Henry

**Changeling's** bones are filled with the marrow of mythology. Myths are often built with the structures of our common stories, told over thousands of years and meant to be the kind of story that feels like a well-worn familiar glove. These are stories that keep you warm at night. They are meant to keep us safe, too, but they are also meant to keep some out.

In many fairy tales, disabled bodies are used as examples of punishment, as depictions of seers or ghosts, as shorthand for evil. In some fairytales, disabled and disfigured women are the objects of scorn, meant to be treated with kindness in order to receive their magical gifts. In mythologies, Odin loses his eye for knowledge, and Nuada of the Silver Arm is not allowed to rule the Tuatha de Daanan when he is no longer "unblemished" after losing his arm in battle. What these different treatments of disability in our stories tell us is that disability is unwanted, or that it is a great sacrifice. It's rare for a disabled person in a myth or fairy tale to be disabled without seeking to be fixed; they must supersede their disability or die trying.

And honestly, it's not fair. Disabled people can't be your moral compass, your free pass to better magical items, *and* a clear sign of danger. We must exist in your chronicles and settings as people and fae folk first, as well integrated and fully defined as any other character.

Within **Changeling's** houses, there's an example I can give you which explores terminology and self-identification:

House Balor requires that all members must be "deformed." How we define that in our game settings matters. I have what could be called a deformity: a right eye that is clouded over with an occluded cataract. It has a white and aqua cast, and no pupil. If we're calling a deformity any "wrongness" (and I'm putting wrong in quotes, because I don't believe there's anything wrong with me at all) that is either visible or invisible, something which separates your character and member of House Balor as different from other characters, then how you select that deformity, and how you play it out does matter. So yeah, let's say my eye qualifies me as a member of House Balor, then should I always be expected to play a character in House Balor?

No, absolutely not. We have to make deliberate choices about how we integrate, about how we separate, and how we define. If any difference could qualify as a





“deformity,” then it needs to be an explicit choice that the character identifies as deformed. What does that mean for them? Do they grapple with internalized ableism, or do they wear their deformity like a badge of honor? Like something that sets them apart from the world? Making deliberate choices about how and why a character identifies as disabled, and about how they related to the very body that they live in is one of the ways to most respectfully integrate disability into any character.

While it’s not often explicit within **Changeling**, it seems right and proper to talk a bit about how to appropriately play disabled characters – and how to give disability more than just a shorthand appearance in **Changeling** games. Negotiating these old stories and tropes which we’ve learned to associate with fairies and magic is an important facet of good storytelling and good gaming.

Disability is ultimately something which lies within the realm of character development. Characters’ bodies are a part of how players envision their story: some

players draw pictures, while others simply envision their characters in their minds’ eyes. Part of what’s important here is that people remember that disabled people envision themselves as disabled. I’m going to break the rules here for a second and tell you about myself – every **Changeling** character I have ever played has always been disabled in some way. Usually they were D/deaf like I am, but sometimes they have also had the pale white eye that I mentioned above, an eye made from a cataract, not from a magical spell.

I’m here to tell you that disabled characters belong in **Changeling**, played not for tropes or for punchlines, but as characters meant to slide in and out of the Dreaming just like an able-bodied fae would. I’m here to tell you that we don’t need to fix fae with magic in order to tell a good story. Disabled characters can always have been disabled, since their day of birth, or they could have attained a disability in a previous chronicle, bodies that hold trauma and display their histories are a part of the game.



I've played a lot of disabled changelings in my day, and they've all overlapped in different ways with reality. Some have to make changes to their adaptive equipment, lest their hands grasp cold iron (my nocker with a wheelchair), and my eshu with a white cane found it difficult to navigate through parts of the Dreaming that were not fully corporeal. Magic does not always play well with adaptive devices.

As a Storyteller, I've encouraged players to explore with their senses, finding truth and lies with their hands, with their noses, with their hearing, and with their sight. They adapt beyond what the typical character, armed with the full suite of human senses, might use.

My goal for all players of **Changeling** is to encourage you to look past the easy stories, where the loss of a hand is cured by magic, or where blindness is only a marker for evil or the mark of a seer of the future. Strive to really integrate disabled characters into your storytelling. Use the mythos not to give you easy outs, but to guide you into interesting play that might open your eyes to a whole new world of story.

I find that being a disabled person is a lot like being a changeling in some ways. We are bound by the often strict requirements of our bodies, and have to navigate the world based on the adaptations we need. Sometimes, we go through life unseen, unnoticed by the world around us, or we are too unusual to ignore, and are followed by stares and glances that we cannot forget.

Yes. Being a changeling is a little like being a disabled person, at least, it is for me. So when you consider taking a flaw that is a disability, or when you design a character who is suddenly disabled by an incident during their adventures along the way, consider giving them more than just a temporary experience of disability. Explore what it is like to be different in an able-bodied world, what it is like to be the woman with a clouded eye. Disabled people are here among you and we have always been here, whether you see us too clearly or you don't see us at all.

*Elsa Sjunneson-Henry is a deafblind speculative fiction writer and editor, whose work on games ranges from Wraith 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition to Dead Scare. She has previously contributed articles about disability in D&D to Dragon Magazine. She lives in NJ with multiple furry creatures and a mysterious grandfather clock.*









# CHAPTER ONE: THE GREAT GAME

*"Politics is a younger woman's game. The bickering, the backroom deals, the endless waiting to make a single decision. After three decades, you'd think I'd be ready to retire. But then I walk up the grand path lined with ivy and roses, I see the crystal palace glimmering in a thousand colors, I hear the echo of the chaos from the House of Concordia, and I feel like a childling again. Hundreds of stories start here, thousands of dreams. I'm damn lucky to be a part of that."*

*- Lady Elena Ti'Kali, House Fiona*

The Parliament of Dreams is aetheric beauty cloaked in the icy controversy of politics. Housed in a structure that looks part glittering crystal, part pure diamond, and part marble keep, it's impossible to say whose Kingdom contains the physical embodiment of Parliament; some even say it moves around. Instead, all Kingdoms have a single Way leading to and from its grand entrance. It's a path lined with ivy and roses which opens naturally for those whom the Parliament deems worthy of service. Among the Great Houses, seats in the house usually pass down through lineages and by birth order. Most sidhe houses are quite organized and in agreement as to whom they send to speak for them; inheritance passes through blood or vassalage lines.

On a rare occasion, the path will not open for a chosen noble. In those cases, it's clear the Dreaming considers the person unworthy of speaking for their house, and the house must put forward another candidate. The sidhe do their best to cover up these instances — they never wish to appear as if their blood made a mistake. Usually, the house gives the displaced noble a comfortable position in some distant land to rethink their priorities and take a break from the bustling political life.

Among commoners, however, the path appears in many different fashions. There are stories of it opening on a massive battlefield or during political uprising. Some commoners see it in their dreams; it inspires them to lead vast changes in paradigms among their fellows until, one day, the Way opens to them in person. No matter how it



appears, it seems to know when to call someone to serve, and it always leads to the grand edifice of Parliament.

The weather around the crystalline castle tends to reflect the politics occurring inside. It is often violently changing and dramatic, especially around the commoners' assembly. A constituent can tell if the debate on a vote is turbulent or fair-weathered just by watching the cycle of rain, snow, ice, and wind for an hour or so. Awful snow storms or beautiful sunlight switch out in moments outside the windows that hold the House of Concordia. However, the opposite end of the building, where the Arcadian Order has always kept itself, shows calmer weather as a reflection of their often-glacial politics. Despite the violent weather, if a representative stays on the ivy and rose Way, they will always make their meeting on time. At least, they will make it exactly when the Dreaming thinks they should arrive.

High King David signed the Treaty of Concord in the 1970s, creating what has become the modern-day Parliament of Dreams. It focused specifically on the Arcadian Order as advised by a Commoner's Committee. It also reaffirmed the right of the sidhe to rule changelings, but with the important caveat of their agreement to listen to the commoners' voices. The Commoner's Committee was that loud entity, populated by two of every common kith from lands far and wide. Its exact duties were never clearly outlined but, when commoners questioned the sidhe about it, they said it was to give the commoners the freedom to operate and to help them adapt policy to commoners' needs.

In truth, the sidhe thought giving commoners no defined duties would mean they could keep any sort of real power from the hands of this committee. It may have worked, if the sidhe ever managed to enact clear policy or change themselves, but even in its infancy, the Arcadian Order moved slowly. When High King David disappeared, they seemed truly incapacitated. While they stumbled on for years after his disappearance, eventually the High Lord of Parliament, Ariadne, dissolved the Arcadian Parliament of Dreams in the mid-1990s in its most controversial session to date.

However, the Commoner's Committee was a separate standing body to the Arcadian Order. Given power from the Dreaming itself under the Treaty, the Commoner's Committee did its best to continue running without the oversight of the sidhe. The nobles refer to those years as dark times, but the commoners accomplished more in that decade than any Parliament before them. The Dreaming probably survived the fear- and Banality-ridden, post-9/11 world because of the quick acting work of the commoners on this committee. They sent help where needed, inspired dreams where they were dying off, got refugees out of places where it was no longer safe, and kept politics ticking when it seemed the sidhe had all but given up.

## What's In A Name?

Many names and sects are mentioned in the following text and history of Parliament. While they are written as the movers and shakers of the Changeling world, they are only effective if they help you tell *your* story. You can change or substitute any of these people, events, parties, or other characters to serve your chronicle better. Whether that is so you can have player characters in these important positions, or so an original Storyteller character can have a greater political role in your chronicle, this book suggests how things could be in any given world; it does not define how they must be in every one.

If you wish to write your own characters within this political structure, simply keep in mind the base motivations of each house, court, group, and the divisions of Parliament itself. When you write the new character, read the sections deeply to figure out how to make that character's motivations mirror those of their house or court. If they are working against the grain, what has motivated them to turn from the party line? This guide is meant to give you the outline of the spirit of the world, but you can always fill in the details as you see fit.

When Lord Ariadne reconvened the Parliament of Dreams in 2005, it had inexorably changed. No longer was it an Order of Arcadians and their advising committee, but it was a true bicameral legislature, composed of the Arcadian Order and the Committee of the Commoners. The commoner's voices were now heard throughout the Dreaming just as loudly as the sidhe who had the right to rule in their blood. The courageous, effective, and relentless work of the commoners, both during the dark centuries and the more recent Evanescence, earned them a permanent place in the political structure of Kithain society.

## THE ARCADIAN ORDER A NOBLE HISTORY

While most modern changeling historians say that the Arcadian Order only came into existence under High King David's original reign, this is not the case. The Resurgence laid the framework for the modern Parliament of Dreams and the noble house therein, but for as long as the sidhe





have ruled, there has been a body of nobles at the head of fae politics. The Arcadian Order changes to reflect the dreams of not just the mortal world, but also those of the changelings who populate the Dreaming. While it has not happened in some time, seats can appear and disappear as Great Houses rise and fall. In addition, the power of the Order ebbs and flows as the dreams of humans and their political structures change. In the dark ages, when human nobility held most of the power across the world, the Arcadians ruled the Dreaming from a strong, unchallenged position. Changelings all seemed to agree upon the natural order: for the good of everyone, *sidhe* were meant to be nobles and rule over the lesser, commoner changelings. As history shifted, however, and more people began to revolt against lords who abused their powers, the Arcadians' power began to stumble.

More commoners questioned the divine right of the *sidhe* to rule. The ruling body of the *sidhe*, not called Parliament at the time but simply the Arcadian Lords, found keeping the commoners under control more challenging than ever before. They cloistered themselves away to make decisions without the threat commoners spilling into their chambers. The centuries went on and the Arcadian Lords lost touch with the people they were meant to represent and protect. The time-honored tradition of *noblesse oblige* fell out of popularity and the selfish hoarding of power

widened the gap. The true seeding of the Shadow Court began in these dark days, as certain fae plotted to ensure that the ruling class heeded the people's interests.

As the Arcadian Lords lost power over commoners, they began fighting amongst their own ranks. Bored nobles always must find a struggle, so they turned against each other. The Seelie at the highest levels of power fought to return to their core traditions — they wished to reclaim their original duties of *noblesse oblige*; to focus more on the protection of their vassals; and to inspire orderly dreams of chivalry, knights, and “heroic” conquests. The Unseelie, however, wished to pursue new avenues of passion and rulership; they thought they would inspire service through a violent hand, not a gentle one. Modern changeling scholars note a certain turn in the Unseelie court at just about the time that Machiavelli began writing which has never completely left the dreams of the Unseelie.

The modern Arcadian Order seems, on the surface, little better than its ancient roots. The divide between the Seelie and Unseelie houses lies so deep that it's nearly unheard of for one to vote against house lines. But with seven houses on each side, voting on Court lines assured that the Order almost never got anything accomplished. Decision-making became so stagnant that the Dreaming itself intervened and a fifteenth chair recently appeared, which the Shadow



Court claimed. While this has caused quite the controversy, there are many old nobles who insist this was always the plan. The public inability of the Arcadians to accomplish ruling action was well known among the fae — exactly as the original ruling body planned centuries ago, but now for anyone to see its incompetence.

## THE STRATEGIC TRUTH

*"No brilliant plan can be seen by one's enemies. Sadly, in a court such as ours, who can you truly know is a friend?"*

– Duchess Ezani Theros

There is not a single noble sitting in the Arcadian Parliament who thinks they are anything but one of the most brilliant manipulators in the world. What's worse is, on the whole, they are correct. One doesn't earn an Arcadian seat without a spark of political genius. While the outside world sees the Arcadian Order as falling into folly, internal bickering, slothful decadence, and habitual neglect, the traditionally noble court has purposefully done little to negate these stories. In fact, they encourage certain gossips to report to wider-ranging parts of changeling society how slow-moving the Arcadians are. It means that their enemies succumb to the idea that they can relax and not constantly threaten the nobles' doorway. With the disappearance of High King David, the Evanescence, and the suspected coming Long Winter, the nobles have no wish to reawaken the attentions of their enemies. They have far bigger things to fight than commoner uprisings or nebulous Fomorian. They need to protect their people from the threat of end times, and the best leaders among them will let themselves appear to be laughingstocks to accomplish this.

Of course, there have been foolish and cowardly nobles in fae history. No single court or kith is full of perfect beings. But the Dreaming itself made sidhe the traditional, historic rulers of all changelings. That responsibility is both a great blessing and a horrible burden. True nobility is not about public power, pride, and the privilege of position. It is doing the things that must be done to protect the people under a noble's care. In the Age of Legends, the noble responsibility was easy to fulfill. Everyone knew their place and the Dreaming was full of epic tales. But in the wake of the Sundering, discerning what it meant to be noble grew more challenging. The separation of mortals and the Dreaming represented the first true threat to the vassals whom the sidhe had sworn their whole existence to protect. And so began the long game. Infighting erupted between lesser fae and even among less experienced sidhe, but the true nobles knew they had to put many plans into place if the Dreaming was to survive the intrusion of the autumn world.

In fact, the sidhe claim to be behind the first dalliances with humans, which produced the first true changelings.

While some traditionalist nobles argued that it sullied the fae blood, those who saw the threats in the distance knew that they would have to adapt to the new age or die out forever. So, they suggested that certain fae from each kith take human lovers, and new changelings were born. The fae adapted and the fae survived. As new religions and knowledge entered the dreams of humanity, the Arcadian sidhe knew they could not survive on their old legendary rule alone. The oldest Arcadians argue that every shift in thinking and every skirmish in the changeling history was a calculated move on the part of some sidhe. While that supposition isn't entirely accurate, far more of history was purposefully laid out instead of being the result of selfish wars or happenstance. Protecting their legacy of dreams, at any cost, was always their goal.

Sadly, the subtle manipulations proved to not be enough. The world of the Dreaming still grew colder, and the Shattering presented a danger of the like no fae had seen before. When the nobles saw how quickly dreams were dying in the world, how infighting threatened to destroy the very people they were trying to protect, and how many gateways they were losing, they knew they had to take drastic action. In secret, leaders from what are now known as the Great Houses met. Most commoners say this is where the sidhe decided to abandon the world for their own protection, but the Arcadian sidhe know that they built and disseminated that story to leave in their wake from the start.

In truth, the Arcadian sidhe knew that if their kith and houses remained in great numbers, it would mean the destruction of the Dreaming. The commoners would not be able to find the passion in their fight if all the nobles were still present to protect them. They would forever wait for the last, desperate rescue from their supposed betters. Even worse, the most deeply loyal commoners would fall on swords, cold iron, and Autumn dreams to protect the nobles whom they served. The Great Houses had to do something to save those beneath them — and that something was to leave them. By disappearing behind the gate and trapping others outside, they inspired a hate and determination among their followers to be better than those cowardly nobles. They did not give their loyal vassals any reason to go on suicide missions.

They saved their world by abandoning it. Heavy is the head that wears the crown, but never so heavy as the day the gates to Arcadia shut.

## A ROCKY RESURGENCE

The Arcadian sidhe debate even among themselves whether they planned their return to the mortal world. No one remembers much other than the grand plan before the gates were shut. Once they reopened, the Arcadians had an unexpected and rocky start. They had done such



an excellent job of inspiring the people to fight for themselves and despise nobles that it was difficult to regain their previous respect. This is where many modern Arcadians began to falter — they decided that if the Dreaming no longer wished them to have ruling power, then it was not their place to forcibly take it.

Other Arcadians disagreed. The Dreaming helped with the appearance of High King David, but the Arcadians needed to step up and prove themselves worthy of their place. They could no longer rest upon the tradition of rulership or the clever plan of running away. They had to earn back the respect of the commoners and Autumn sidhe they'd left behind. Most Autumn sidhe hold even less respect for their Arcadian brethren, having survived what other sidhe said was impossible. Over the last thirty years, fae mainly blame the public disagreement between the courts (and their inability to get legislation to pass) on the divide between the Seelie and Unseelie. In truth, the most difficult challenge has been between the noble houses who think their right to rule will return naturally, the progressive-looking houses who seek to work with Concordians to create a new ruling structure, and the Autumn sidhe who walk a line between them. For those looking objectively at the situation, it's no surprise the Dreaming put the Shadow Court in an official chair in the Arcadian Order. Now, perhaps, the Arcadians can start getting work done again.

## STRATEGIES

*"Your opponent is always one step ahead. You have to accept that and let them think they have the power. But just because they're a step ahead doesn't mean you haven't hired someone to hold the carrot they are chasing, and to report their every step back to you."*

— Baroness Anne Blackwell, the Old Firm motley

## The Seelie

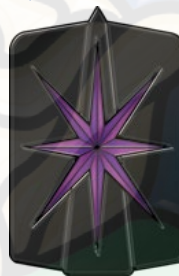
The Seelie Court is at a unique impasse in the current Parliament of Dreams. Half their code is about looking back, resting on tradition, death before dishonor, and to never forget a debt. However, changeling society has moved beyond so many of the old traditions — many argue out of a necessity to keep up with the changing world. The other half of the Seelie code ("love conquers all" and "beauty is life") is the exact sort of hope the struggling changelings need in these dark days. While less politically astute people may take that internal conflict as a need to rewrite the code entirely, the current Seelie political strategy turns that conflict into its strength.

The Seelie love of tradition has not changed, but it's been refocused. Nowadays, the Seelie pick and choose the traditions which they wish to honor the most. Ones that

would be out of vogue these days (i.e., traditions that disenfranchised a lot of people), the Seelie have conveniently decided to write out of their collective consciousness. But the traditions which inspire people to be nostalgic for older, more beautiful days and which give them comfort in cold times, they celebrate harder than ever. They inspire their followers to fight against the injustices they see in the world, claiming that the world owes their people justice, and that justice should be passionately protected.

It's important to recognize the Seelie zeal for love and beauty is also a desperately necessary political move at the moment. When things get ugly in the realm of politics, Seelie can be surprisingly distracting with their passionate inner-court affairs, beautiful artwork, or inspirational speeches. While some consider this distraction deceitful, the Seelie Court fully disagrees. To its advocates, it's a reminder of the better things in life that prevent people from becoming bogged down in misery, nightmares, and the more banal aspects of politics.

## HOUSE BEAUMAYN



While they have a seat in the Arcadian Order, the Dark Stars are rarely seen in politics otherwise. Their main contribution to the Order is to report on Thallain threats as well as the affairs of Prodigals. They rarely report, but when they do, the other lords tend to lend all ears in fascination (and worry). Beaumayn uses

this power to achieve political change they wish to see, as they are good at commanding attention when they need it. They also often sweeten political bargains with specialized research into the affairs of the outside world that no other house keeps.

## HOUSE DOUGAL



Long considered something of a sidekick to House Gwydion, the Dougal have come into their own of late, though true to form, they flex their newfound political power carefully. The Smiths focus more on demanding work and relationship building than underhanded politics.

They are masters of coalition building, and thanks to their faithful support of others over the years, they have a deep well of goodwill to draw on, not to mention banked favors. Through these social connections, Dougal now knows which house to ask for support for whatever they need passed. They do not consider this manipulation, but a sign of friendship and the ability to keep good alliances strong.



## HOUSE EILUNED



The Sorcerers love secrets and are nearly always playing the long game. As a result, they have a reputation as schemers among their fellow Seelie. They view politics as a chess game and rarely act directly, preferring obscure or innocuous moves that pay off down the line. For example: introducing two nobles at a banquet, whispering to one about the other's alliances, letting a fight start, then publicly decrying noble infighting at the next session of Parliament.

## HOUSE FIONA



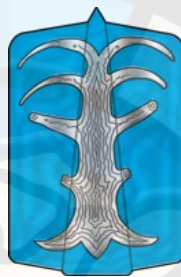
Love, hope, and passion: while it seems a messy political strategy, that's the best way to sum up Fiona's current approach to the darkening world. They believe that as things grow colder, it's more important than ever to hold to their core precepts and remind all nobles what it is they are fighting to protect. True Hearts engineer courtship, friendship, and passionate defenses across Parliament, so they can help spark the fight for causes of other nobles, instead of employing political manipulation for the sake of tradition or habit. They are not known for long-term strategy, but are masters at rallying short-term support and passionate oratory.

## HOUSE GWYDION



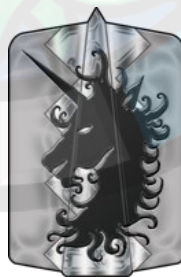
While they still hold more lands and high titles than any other single house, including the High King, the Falcons have suffered somewhat due to becoming the face of "the Man" to many younger, dissatisfied changelings. In response, the Gwydion have been doing their best to assert their reputation as the pinnacle of nobility since the Resurgence, a risky "doubling down" on their already staid reputation. At base, their strategy is to simply be better. They must be more honorable, gifted, wise, protective, and effective than any other house. It is an impossible cause, however, as their infamous rages are usually caused by their inability to be perfect. Still, the political power of the house is tremendous. While the others may grumble about it, where the Falcons go the Seelie Court usually follows.

## HOUSE LIAM



Rarely do Liam take any open action in Arcadian Parliament. They sit, watch, learn, and advise. The shame of their past still weighs heavily on them, and they spend increasing amounts of time discussing politics with commoners rather than their peers among the Great Houses. However, due to their perceived distance from high level politics, it's not uncommon for the Monks to spend most of their energy counseling and supporting the strongest movers and shakers of Parliament. Politics is exhausting, and Liam offer a steady shoulder to those making the biggest changes, whispering in their ear as they hold them up.

## HOUSE SCATHACH



As they remained behind during the Shattering in greater numbers than any other house, the Grey Walkers hold an uneasy seat in the Arcadian House of Parliament. They operate as the voice of history, reminding their cousins of the struggles of not just commoners and Autumn sidhe but mortals as well. True to form, they choose their battles carefully but speak out passionately for those they feel they are destined to defend when called to action. They treasure the role of "spoilers" in the Seelie Court as well, refusing to vote along Court lines simply for the sake of unity.

## THE UNSEELIE

There were high ranking Unseelie nobles that agreed with the plan to retreat to Arcadia, but now the Unseelie court sees the chaos in the fallout as proof that it was the wrong choice. They blame the Great Houses' current issues on the entirely too-Seelie plan of retreating into the deep Dreaming. They say it was the Seelie desperation to protect their own honor, to cling to traditions so hard they'd abandon the modern world, and their blind adherence to duty which now makes the common people hate nobility so deeply. While the Unseelie aren't entirely wrong in these statements, it's certainly painting the situation with a broad brush.

However, their position has gained enough political traction to sway many changelings to the side of the Unseelie, so they continue to loudly cry these accusations from the four corners of the map. In broad terms, the current strategy of the Unseelie Court is to blame the Shattering and the Evanescence on the Seelie code. While they take politic care to not blame individual Seelie, they rail against



Seelie beliefs and say that they are much to blame for the downfall of fae society. They've taken a 'Hate the sin, not the sinner' approach, which has gained them popularity and following.

At heart, the Unseelie do not hate the Seelie. In fact, they see a need for both sides of the coin. However, they also see the current difficult times as an opportunity to not just recruit more to their side, but ensure the mistakes of the past never happen again. The most zealous of Unseelie genuinely believe that the Seelie's staunch reliance on tradition is one of the things which began the Sundering and that the only way to truly protect changeling society is to never let that happen again. The Unseelie believe, with only the blind passion their court can embrace, that they must teach their ideals more strongly than ever to keep the Dreaming safe.

## HOUSE AESIN



Distant, beautiful, and terrible, the Aesin cultivate a purposeful air of mystery around themselves. While they are not publicly active many other places, they always have a single representative in the Parliament. Their presence there is that of the north's terrible, hushed beauty. Their actions in politics often mirror their house's deep relation to storms and nature – they are a silent support, constant backdrop, and occasionally foment violent uprising when it seems most necessary. If a Northman speaks, they are almost always heard, because it is both rare and powerful.

## HOUSE AILIL



Crawling through all levels of Parliament, the Ailil keep the politics of the changeling world moving like few others. They not only have a seat in the Arcadian Order, but they send many of their young nobles to Parliament to act as pages, assistants, runners, and (of course) spies. The Dragons try to have their fingers in all levels of the decision-making process and even encourage their landless younger nobles to assist at the House of Concordia, so they can try to pull strings there. If a political task, big or small, needs doing, an Ailil will step up to do it just for the tiny piece of control and information it gives them.

## HOUSE BALOR



Power through fear. The Balor embrace the Machiavellian changes which swept through the Great Houses during the Sundering more than any other house. They are quick to challenge both physically and mentally and do not back down from a fight. Some call the Blooded the bullies of Parliament, as they make political moves using threats and violence, but they do at least accomplish things as they go. The Balor say their vicious habits are a test of other nobles, and if a noble is not strong enough to stand against them, then that noble has not earned their voice in politics. At the same time, those who stand up to them earn their respect, and may even find themselves offered support or alliances in the future, often to their great surprise.

## HOUSE DAIREANN



Hospitality is one of their greatest tenets and they use this to their greatest advantage at Parliament. Many functions are hosted by a Daireann as they not only put out the best spreads possible, but they keep the peace through a mix of public honor and surgical brutality. Simply put, causing trouble at a Host's party will earn far more pain than it's worth, so only the most foolish or naïve even dares attempt it anymore. Hosting scores of political functions means they can whisper their intentions in the ears of all attending houses, and gain favor from the other houses when they want a political move made.

## HOUSE DANAA



The Pathfinders have yet to make a serious impact on the day-to-day workings of Parliament, as they remain primarily focused on trods and the endless worlds of the Dreaming. However, High Lord Dice relishes the house's role as a spoiler when it comes to close votes; some even whisper the Pathfinders and the Grey Walkers have a secret alliance based on breaking with their Courts and tipping the scales when it suits them. Whether or not that's true, they have banked a lot of goodwill ... not to mention considerable favors waiting to be called in.



## HOUSE LEANHAUN



The mortal world has threatened the lives of changelings for thousands of years. Their disbelief, religious fanaticism, and obsessive hunger for scientific knowledge at any cost has threatened Glamour since living memory. Or so most Leanhaun believe. But mortals should not be wasted. Their brilliant minds can be used to inspire the greatest creations before they are used up, just as mortals use up changelings. In Parliament, the Muses take mortals into consideration more than any other Unseelie house. Their political aims concentrate on how best to handle them as both a resource and as enemies.

## HOUSE VARICH



Secrets are their expertise. Everyone in Parliament knows that almost any information can be gained from this house – for a price. The Weavers make careful moves in the Order, paired with conspicuous note-taking and asking the pointed questions. However, so many other houses owe them favors that when they need something done, they simply call upon a favor. Within the house, the rule is that should a noble use one of these favors, they must contribute a commensurate amount of information to what they've spent. Therefore, the economy of secrets and power is constantly alive for the Varich.

## THE 15TH CHAIR

The Dreaming's decision to put one last chair in the Arcadian Order shocked everyone, including the Shadow Court. For centuries, the Shadow Court did its work unseen and unacknowledged. Attracting a public spotlight was considered a failure. However, with the consistent deadlock between the Seelie and Unseelie houses, and in partial acknowledgment of the clever work the Shadow Court has done, the Dreaming granted it a chair. (Or forced one upon it, depending on whom you ask.) This chair first came into being when a shadowed Way appeared in front of a member of the youngest generation of the Shadow Court. She could not ignore a call of the Dreaming, so she walked the Way and found herself beside the mysterious 15th chair in the Arcadian section of Parliament.

For the first few months, she stood as the representative to the Arcadian Order, using her new public voice to push the Shadow Court ideals of chaos and to remove power from nobles who did not deserve it. Behind her, however, the Old

Guard and the Black Court were figuring out how best to use this chair to their advantage. For the moment, they have let the young voice stand. They feed her information through a few of the New Generation that they have on puppet strings and she enacts it in Parliament. They think she is unaware of their influences when, in truth, the New Generation has come together in agreement to allow this system to go forward.

It lets the old powers feel like they still have control while, ultimately, still gives the younger ones the public power of that 15th chair. Who knows how long this tenuous arrangement will remain, but it's working for now and has allowed some previously deadlocked decisions to finally pass a vote in the Arcadian House. Of course, all those decisions have gone as the Shadow Court wished, a fact which the rest of the Parliament must uncomfortably recognize and reckon with in their future plans.

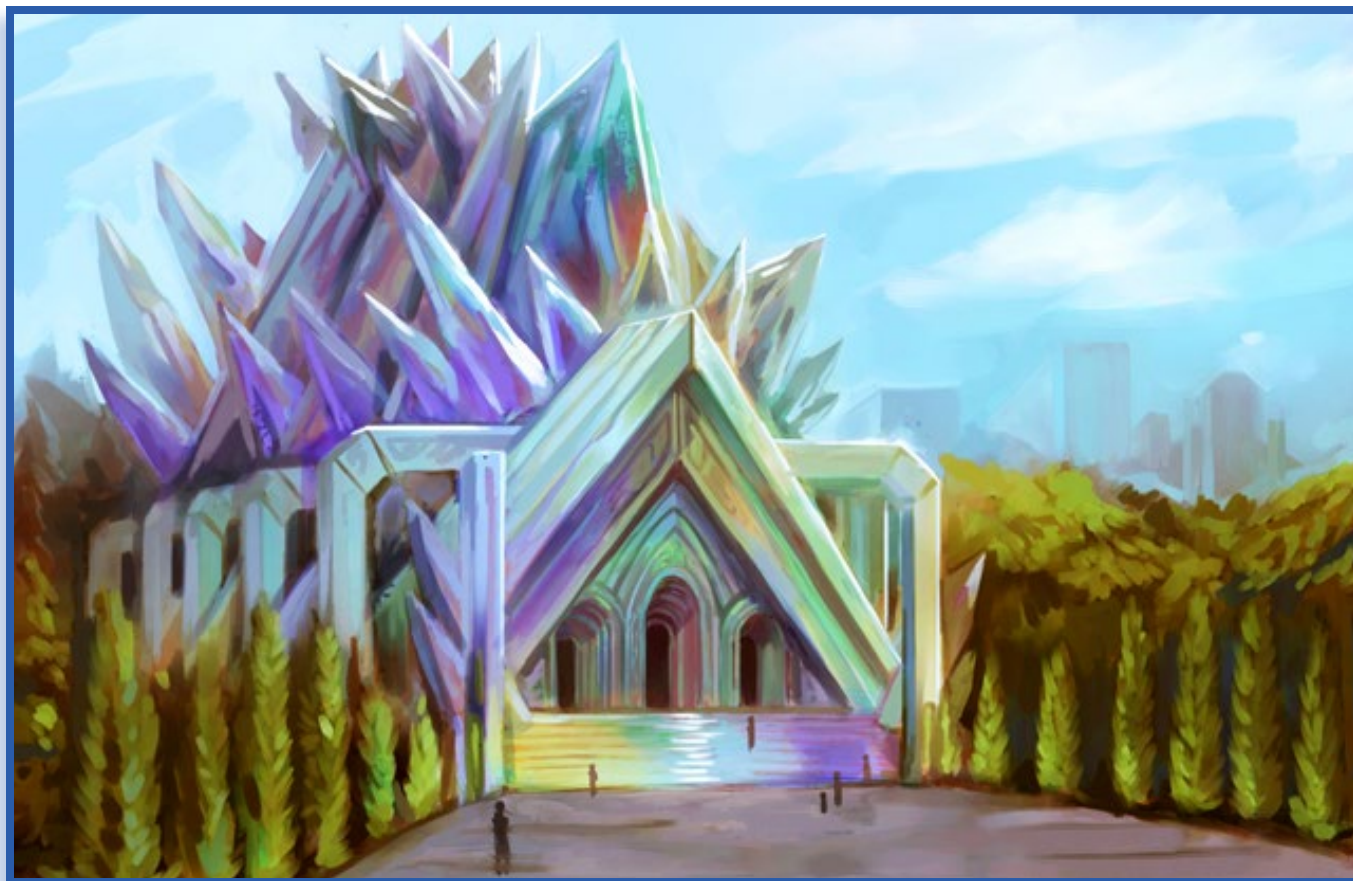
## THE HOUSE OF CONCORDIA

The Dreaming gifts the commoner kiths with a wide variety of natural skills – although it seems large-scale organization is not one of them. Before the Shattering, the natural way of things was that the noble sidhe ruled, the commoners served, and most everyone was content with the way the world turned. It was, after all, tradition. But then the Arcadian sidhe abandoned the world just as things became more dangerous than ever and the commoners had to learn to rule, organize, and protect themselves. Fortunately, adaptability is a gift that the Dreaming gave those kiths in droves, and so, the commoners began to learn to cope.

During those dark days, there was originally no central organization of those left behind. In one pocket of the world, commoners and Autumn sidhe organized into loose councils composed of a single voice from each bordering territory; they came together to help send reinforcement to their neighbors when needed, knowing they could call upon that back up themselves should things become particularly cold. In other areas, cells organized and exchanged communications only in secret codes to protect their own while sharing information about collective threats. Without realizing it, the commoners stepped into the holes the sidhe had left in their society, supported by the quiet hand of the Autumn side. They didn't do it with the iron fist of nobility, but through collective adaptation, support, and communication. This strategy worked well enough that they managed to not only survive but thrive through the coldest years of the world.

Then the Arcadian sidhe returned.





Having well taken care of themselves for centuries, the commoners (now called Concordians) were incensed by the merest suggestion of going back under the thumb of those who had abandoned them. Tradition or not, changeling society was functioning well enough without the stuck-up nobles running the place. Sadly, the scattered and disorganized commoners across the world were not prepared to effectively stand against the centralized, experienced, and most importantly, Dreaming-backed nobles. The appearance of High King David was almost the nail in the coffin of the Concordian's rule. However, enough voices continued to shout. They were not organized, but they were loud, constant, and, eventually, effective. In an effort to appease these voices, the Concordian's Committee was created to advise the Parliament of Dreams.

The initial days of the Concordian's Committee were chaos incarnate. No one knew how to make a collective decision, much less pass laws they could enforce in the Dreaming. The sidhe never requested their advice and lent little aid. Eventually, the Concordians recognized the sidhe trick – if they couldn't organize enough to be effective, then the sidhe could rule and give lip service to the commoners without ever needing to heed their people. That realization changed their ways. The Committee elected the first Voice of Concordia in the early 1990s. This Voice was to take the recommendations of the commoners to the Arcadians and ensure they

were implemented. Over time, the Voice then learned that the Arcadians were equally as ineffective as the Concordians.

That's when the Committee began to make changes. They took their experience from thousands of years of being chaotic but effective and put it to work in Parliament. They prepared for the worst and, when Parliament dissolved, they were ready to continue. The communication network they had formed across all the Dreaming remained. They took action as the sidhe floundered. They protected all Kingdoms and scattered changelings between. They thrived. And, when Parliament returned, they had earned their place in the politics of the Fae. They now held equal sway as the Arcadian nobles. And so, the Concordian's Committee became the House of Concordia. It stands beside the Arcadian Order in respect and equality in the eyes of changelings and, even more importantly, in the eye of the Dreaming.

## JOINING THE HOUSE OF CONCORDIA

The process of becoming a representative of Concordia traces its roots back to the dark days right after the Shattering, when the changelings left behind had to figure ways to organize and protect themselves without their noble rulers. The following methods are not the only ones used to select a representative, but they are the most common. In kingdoms



with noble rulers, that leader technically has a veto on who joins the House of Concordia. But so far, no one has ever used that veto. Should an Arcadian sidhe especially dare to tell the commoners no about one of their candidates, it could incite an uprising that they could not control.

## DEMOCRATIC ELECTION

In areas where the commoners do not mind meeting publicly and where they are able to in sufficient numbers, elections are the typical method of selection. The timing of these elections often falls in with the mortal campaign season – as humans have dreams of their votes and voices being heard, the changelings feel a fervor to make decisions for their own futures. Once a year, the Kithain of a territory come together in a vast celebration of their freedoms and successful survival through dangerous days. Any candidate who wishes to run finds their name on the election ticket knit together by the Dreaming itself. (This has, hilariously, resulted in some election tickets nearly 100 names long.) The Concordians check off their decisions and the Way to Parliament appears to their chosen representative. While effective, this process can result in representatives picked for their cults of personality and not their political finesse, but such is the nature of the process.

## ONE OF MANY

Not every area chooses one candidate to represent them in the House of Concordia. There are several Kingdoms whose commoners are as divided, loud, and passionate as the noble houses. These divisions come around cults of personality, different working classes, and different dreams that weave through the people of those areas. When these groups are so divisive a single voice cannot properly represent them, each section receives their own representative. This is typically their loudest or most influential member, though occasionally surprise candidates are put forward.

## CALLED TO STAND

Sometimes the Way to Parliament appears before a surprise candidate, or even someone who had no interest in politics at all. Although this method of selection is unusual, it's not unheard of, and the Concordians have learned better than to disagree when it happens. While the Dreaming does not force such unlikely political figures to step up, such is the wisdom of its choice that even initially reluctant representatives find they have something to add to the discussion, if not an important issue to raise or vote to cast before returning to their old lives.

## NOT IT!

There are still many places where it is dangerous to be a public figure. Especially in territories which resent the

thought of rulers, or where the nobility have been known to order the imprisonment or deaths of outspoken commoners, the job of representing your people to Parliament can be more of a curse than an opportunity. In these places, it's not always a question of wanting to stand so much as being stuck with the dubious honor of becoming a target for local tyranny and discontent. One of the most famous examples of this method comes from Liberty City Rising, a fiery and well-organized Shadow Court community based out of Philadelphia, whose representative changes out four times a year. With their actions away from Parliament earning them little love from the establishment, a new face is sent the turn of every season so the old one can return to running their local cells and bow out of the spotlight before something more dangerous than public office comes down on their head.

## WHAT HAVE THE CONCORDIANS DONE?

The nobility claims the House of Concordia have done little to affect changeling society. They loudly tout how chaotic the lower house has been, how things constantly change among the group of representatives, and that they have no real method of disseminating decisions to the widespread kingdoms. On the surface, the Arcadians are correct. The House of Concordia does little for public praise. However, looking beneath outward appearances, the House of Concordia has managed to accomplish more things in a few decades than the Arcadians did in centuries. They people don't take the long view the way the nobles do – they've never had that luxury, and the people's problems are often too immediate to wait long.

Protection of the people, in every sense of the phrase, has been the greatest accomplishment of the House. This tradition started during the Shattering, when community leaders sent desperately needed help to collapsing areas before they were destroyed. They have refined it down to almost a science over the centuries. Now, when someone speaks up about a place in the Dreaming that needs reinforcements, the Concordian House listens. It's one of the few times that the chaos calms. When a representative steps forward and says: "My people need help," silence falls over the chambers. They are given the time to explain the problem and experts come forward to work on a solution. In modern times, these problems range between the threat of the Dreaming going dark to Banality, overbearing nobles violently controlling their people, or sometimes the physical collapse of mortal cities. The Concordians discuss what forces are best dispatched to solve the problem, who can spare them, and assistance is sent within days.



The protection is not simply physical, however; it's philosophical as well. With the voice of Concordia and the backing of the Dreaming, commoners have more power among changelings than ever before. Arcadians who used to rule with an iron grip are now forced to acknowledge the commoners beneath their rule, lest they face the judgement of the Dreaming. After the establishment of the Concordian House, many courts have opened town halls where any changeling can come and speak directly to their nobles about various local issues. These town halls have not only helped ease the strained relations between the Arcadians and the commoners since the Resurgence, but have stopped more than one burgeoning civil war. Giving the commoners a voice saves countless lives.

Lastly, they have inspired dreams of rebellion like the world has not seen since before. Across the globe, the disenfranchised are beginning to find their voice. It is not often effective, not yet at least, but people are revolting against their oppressors through new political parties, protests like the Occupy movement, direct action, and the spread of information on the internet. While mortals have been the start of most of these movements, the existence of the House has fanned the flames. They feed back into the mortal dreams of rebellion, which comes back to the Dreaming as violently free glamour, and the cycle continues. The House has created an entire new way of receiving Glamour in the Dreaming, and these sorts of musings only look to become stronger in the future as the world changes around mortals and changelings alike.

## THE CONCORDIAN PARTIES

While the Concordian House is ever changing, there are a few parties which have managed to sustain followings and influence through the last decade. Players are welcome to portray members of these parties or, if they prefer, design their own parties along these lines. There are even a few parties in the low house who trace their roots from before the Shattering itself but have stayed active because they learned to operate through a constantly adapting society.

## THE STAINED GLASS HEARTS

Named for the vibrant, delicate beauty that keeps Kithain society alive, they are a group of commoners who make it their mission to rescue freeholds in danger, whether it's old buildings being torn down or glens being turned into mini-malls. The Hearts do not initially seem to be political in nature. However, they are well known throughout changeling society and, more important than that, they are trusted. Traveling often, the Hearts frequently act as assistants and go-betweens in Parliament, carrying messages of parlay between warring kingdoms... or leading

the charge when certain freeholds need back up. But in Parliament, they always have one loud voice in the Concordian House itself. They exercise it not only to suggest treaties and cooperation across all kingdoms, but often to give an early warning when a vital freehold is in peril. They aren't the loudest voices in the House, but they are among the most respected.

## THE ETERNAL HARVEST

To change the present, we must learn from the past. The Harvesters are a party of changeling historians whose membership stretches across most of the kingdoms in the world. They pride themselves in keeping records of everything that has been done to the commoner kiths over the years — especially the atrocities — and they vow that the nobility's cruel excesses will never be forgotten. The party formalized shortly after High King David's second return, when they realized changelings were just constantly repeating mistakes of the past no matter how ineffective. This party forms some of the most adept political arguments set before the Concordian House, backing up all their suggested legislation with historical examples of why things need to change and then proposing new strategies which have been shown to work in small pockets of the world. They experiment with different forms of government throughout the lands and have managed some excellent, small scale change. However, their strategy has not yet proven effective in the chaotic Concordian House, where they struggle to hold the Parliament's attention long enough to get changes passed.

## THE WINTER'S EDGE

Built on the backs of every political rebellion in history, Winter's Edge - also commonly known these days as simply "the Resistance" - is the party forever wary of tyranny, built by everyone who has seen governmental injustice and organized to fight it despite the odds. Their current incarnation can trace its roots to a wide range of uprisings, from the dreams of the French Resistance in World War II, to every person who has ever sang along with *Le Misérables* thinking of a better future, to every civil rights protest in the 1960s. All the legislation they bring forward is directed at making the current noble structures fall because, while their oppression continues, the Concordians will never be able to truly flourish. The most important piece of legislation they managed to pass is a demand that, once a year, every Kingdom hold a town hall with their common people. The Arcadian Order has yet to answer this demand, but the Dreaming has backed it and the changes are already happening. The party, however, is not content to wait for legislation. They send their people far and wide to stage protests the moment they consider an injustice to be hap-





pening. They are very loud, on the surface. However, so far they have rejected all offers of alliance from the Shadow Court, declaring that they wish to achieve their goals through discussion and nonviolent direct action and thus cannot condone the Court's violent ethos.

## The Mothers of Woe

It is well known that hell hath no fury like a woman scorned, and this party of is one of the most feared for that old adage alone. Comprised of a wide array of changelings who all identify as women – the party is fully open to those genderfluid, femme-presenting, transgender and the like – they are the defenders of the weak and disenfranchised across the globe. Wherever the mothers find what they would consider to be injustice against the meek or powerless, they swoop in to fight for their needs. The party started in the 1960s with the civil rights movement, a loose collection of changeling women who thought they could mirror their mortal sisters in the Dreaming, and it's grown ever since. It was instrumental in ensuring women had a role in the rebuilding of the kingdoms after the Resurgence and that none of the mortal issues of sexism bled into the Dreaming through all the political changes that the last decades have seen. Nowadays, they operate with three representatives in

Parliament at all times – a Maiden, a Mother, and a Crone. These women stand as voices for their both their age groups and their respective places in society.

## The New Dream

The mortal dreams which inspired the Anarchist Cookbook are the sorts which inspire the New Dream. Someone will always want to watch the world burn and rebuild from the ashes, and that is their dream. The party began on the backs of what was left of the failed attempts to completely revise all of Parliament, and now they are organizing for a second try. Instead of using traditional methods, though, this party has grown more radicalized. They have made an oath among their numbers that for every piece of legislation they push, they will also take a radical action in the world. These actions range from protests to bombings and always are intent on inspiring immediate change. As such, the nobility suspects the Shadow Court's hand in this group. This party is the savior and protectorate of any changeling who thinks the current system is too broken to ever fix, and support for it is growing larger by the day. In ten years, the New Dream will be seen as either visionaries or terrorists, but even the soothsayers cannot predict which it will be in the end.



## A SERIES OF TUBES

If anyone ever said that memes could not create a political party, well, they've clearly never been on the internet. "A Series of Tubes" is a party only this generation could produce. They are the changeling kids who found each other on the internet and now communicate almost strictly through emojis, memes, and txt speak. They understand the voice of the future better than anyone currently standing in Parliament, and they use their strange memes to influence votes, collective consciousness, and political topics on a routine basis. Be it a new noble in the Arcadian Order, the failure of the New State, or a new uprising somewhere in the eastern world, "A Series of Tubes" will make meme-ified brochures fly across Parliament. Their inside jokes and rumor mills have caught the ear of a variety of nobles and chimera alike. They also may be to blame for the outbreak of Pokémon chimera who have been hiding across the Parliament for two years.

## PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

The ultimate decision-making process in Parliament is voting. The House of Concordia handles votes concerning the immediate governing of various kingdoms, doling out assistance to places which are suffering or acknowledging new agreements so that the Arcadians can concentrate more on the long-term plans. Only on matters of the greatest importance do they even consult the Arcadians. So far, this relationship has worked. It is a formalizing of the system which happened when Parliament was dissolved, and the Concordian Committee kept things functioning despite having no official position. Nowadays, the Arcadian Order only steps in if they think a decision will be an absolute disaster – but they exercise this power carefully lest they be accused of overreach.

Of course, what is voted upon, how the legislation is written, when the voting day is called, and any favor exchanges that happen up until the votes are subject to the highest levels of political wheeling and dealing. Ninety percent of what happens in Parliament are these political games which are played in preparation to any actual decision making. While they may not vote directly on most issues, the Great Houses are not idle, and most have a network of supporters in their pocket; in addition, quite a few in the Concordian House act as whispering advisors to the Arcadians, believing they are getting their wishes heard in both Houses by feeding their contacts information. On a rare occasion, the Arcadians will introduce legislation of their own. When they dare to write their own new laws,

each carries a thousand years of political force behind it and spurs immediate change. But these occasions are rare enough to be counted on one hand.

Everyone in Parliament is playing everyone else, be it through love affairs, backroom deals, promised favors, or blackmail. All these strategies are fair game between and within the Houses until a vote is called. Once a vote is officially on the table, the Dreaming itself enforces the process. Each chair in each house gets a single vote, no matter where they are at the time. There have been reports of house commanders on the field of battle, unable to return to Parliament for a vote when suddenly time slows around them, the battle freezes, and a single ballot appears in the air before them. Until their vote is cast, they can do nothing but stare at the decision. Once it is marked, the ballot whisks back to Parliament and the representative returns to their life.

A large tome of law sits at the center of Parliament. It stands as a record of all the laws that have been, are, and will be in the Dreaming. Laws which have been retired remain in the dusty pages but struck through. All manner of tricks are fair game before a vote, but once one is underway, the Dreaming itself prevents tampering with the outcome. Once a decision is officially passed, the words appear on the next free space in the book and are read aloud by the current Speaker of Parliament. Since Parliament has been reconvened, almost no blanket laws have been passed. But when they are, the entire Dreaming changes to support the decisions of the changelings who help run the world.

## PLAYING POLITICS

The game of politics is one of subtlety, layers, potential, and cynicism. If you want to play a political character, or orchestrate a politically-intensive chronicle, you should first figure out what kind of character in politics interests you most. Politics is an exhausting lifestyle and, by the end (if not the middle) of their career, most politicians have become cynical and drained. It's difficult to try every day to change the world only to realize that you need to make backroom deals with your worst enemies, struggle through months of procedure, and still watch things fail because you didn't play the game well enough. If you want to play a bright-eyed idealist, it's probably best to have your character new to the political scene. Whether she is a young radical trying to change the world from the inside out or a grump who has become fed up of someone else making the decisions, it's hard to remain an idealist after a few years in Parliament.

However, if you want to tell the story of someone who is hanging onto their last threads of dreams and ideals through the worst battles, a late career politician could be an interesting choice. After all, **Changeling** is a game of



impossible goals and trying desperately to beat the odds. Additionally, it's wise to decide if you are a manipulator or one of the manipulated. No one plays politics alone – it's just not how the dance is done. Figure out what side of the dance you want to be on, then talk to some of the other players around you to see if anyone would make a good partner in the political equation.

Although incorporating the Parliament of Dreams into any chronicle can seem daunting, it's quite easy. The most important thing to remember is that the Parliament is what the Dreaming – and, therefore, what your chronicle – most needs it to be. Half your chronicle could take place inside Parliament's chambers and focus on the bickering of the various sides. Or, if you don't want to be tied to the setting, have a representative from Parliament task players in your game with a vital mission that could change the face of the Dreaming. The politics of Parliament are an excellent way to affect the macro-level story of Changeling with micro-decisions which players make as individuals. In other words, it's a powerful way give players agency. Don't be scared to use it!

## THE GREAT GAME

*"In politics, nothing happens by accident. If it happens, you can bet it was planned that way."*

– Franklin D. Roosevelt

Within the Autumn world, Glamour is slowly but surely being overtaken by Banality. Monstrous chimera and nightmarish Thallain roam the streets, haunting changelings and mortals. The world faces challenges that compromise everything living, with threats of nuclear war, melting polar ice caps, racism, and trigger-happy world leaders. Mortals are not the only ones suffering under this global pressure. Within the Unseelie, Seelie, and Shadow Courts, tension increases, putting pressure on the Compact. Seelie Houses strive to uphold their strict communal regime in order to prevent any panic. They do whatever they can for the greater good and tirelessly try to uncover where the rise in Banality is coming from and what to do about it.

For their part, the Unseelie Houses take clear stands towards growing Banality, and are convinced that severe and direct intervention is required to create balance between the Autumn world and the Dreaming. Instead of investigation parties, they send out groups to destroy sources of Banality, even at the cost of lives. With the scarce amount of Glamour, they also go directly against Sidhe with monopolies over certain freeholds and trods, to a point where small attacks on their security systems are not unusual.

The Kithain political system is just as dramatic and full of intrigue-play as mortal political systems, if not even

## THE ART OF POLITICS

It is important to recognize that while it abstracts and streamlines the political process by design, the Agenda system is by no means intended to replace actual roleplaying, and the Storyteller should reward players who roleplay well in pursuit of their goals. For example, a player who actually delivers a rousing speech as her character rallies her supporters might be rewarded with a difficulty decrease on the relevant roll, while a group that actually designs and prints campaign materials to bring to the table ahead of an election might have their Agenda's required number of successes reduced.

There are just two things to remember – first, for this purpose, "good roleplaying" should be measured more by the effort a player makes and the enjoyment that effort provides to the group than raw thespian talent. Second, while good roleplaying should be rewarded, this standard shouldn't be flipped to punish players just because they aren't as silver-tongued as their characters and can't give a good speech. We are roleplaying, after all!

more so, as the Dreaming reflects itself on the Autumn World and vice versa. Incorporating political play into a game can therefore prove complicated and daunting for both players and the Storyteller. The Agenda system eases the mechanical aspect of politics in the game, providing a tangible framework for players to achieve long-term social and political goals.

## AGENDAS

Passing new laws would be easy if every single attempt resulted in complete agreement by every single member of society. Of course, this is far from the case. Every kith, house, Court, and motley follows different moral codes and lives different lifestyles, and individual changelings within these groups yet again present further complexity.

Agendas settle political disputes, pass laws, create debate, and help determine the lives of thousands of changelings. This system is designed to function in all strata of fae society, not only as a tool for noble and high-society changelings occupying council chairs and state positions but also for commoners and to take advantage of as well.

Agendas are based on the extended action mechanic presented in the **Changeling: The Dreaming 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**





**sary Edition** (p. 246). In brief, an extended action is used whenever completing an action takes a larger timeframe than normal to complete. Working to pass a law that impacts the lives of thousands is not a short-lived endeavor, and can take months to complete. During this time, those opposing the new law, perhaps rival nobles or powerful commoners, take action to prevent the new law or code from coming into effect.

Dynamically, the process of Agendas may take as much or little time as the Storyteller decides. An entire game session may be based on one extended action, where two houses send spies to gather information on the opposing party, try to steal important documents valuable to their case, or sabotage their opponent as much as possible before the grand finale. It may also be a small part of a larger plot, creating a short but intense session.

In addition to taking system and rolls into consideration, the Storyteller needs to remember the roleplay of the mechanic. If a group fails an attempt to gather successes, how do the player characters and their opponents within the story react? Will their reactions have lasting consequences for them later in the game? Take time to plan the different outcomes when setting up any extended actions and the different steps within them. Remember to balance both mechanics and roleplay, as use of the Agendas can seem long and boring if there is only a heavy focus on numbers

and rolls, and confusing and complicated if there is only a heavy focus on roleplay. Find what is right for the group during the preparation process explained later in this chapter.

Because the system is designed to fit into any game, a certain set of rules and guidelines would limit its features. The Storyteller is completely in charge of how the Agendas is used in her game. There is, however, a set of rules or general recommendations constructed into the system, creating its basic outline and idea:

- ⑤ A player using the Agendas to get a political concept or idea accepted into changeling society must have more successes than failures in his overall rolls to succeed.
- ⑤ The Storyteller decides the difficulty of the roll and how the idea is received.
- ⑤ The difficulty depends on a variety of influences: is the character alone in his pursuit, or does he have others backing his ideas? What is his status, and how well-liked or trusted is he?
- ⑤ If the player succeeds by a slim margin, the character will accomplish his action, but it might only barely be so. If the player's rolls overwhelmingly succeed, the character might gain additional bonuses depending on the game, scene, and context.



Highly charismatic or strong political characters have a natural advantage within the Agendas. They find it easier to present their ideas in an appealing way and know the lay of the political land. Characters with Charisma or Manipulation ••••+ and/or Law or Politics •••+ will automatically need fewer successes in order to achieve their agenda because of their social advantage and communicative skills. The Storyteller still decides the number of successes they need.

Players can have more than one Agenda in a political play, but may only advance one at a time. This provides opportunity to have several standpoints in a case, possibly making their suggestion relatable for a larger crowd and attracting more supporters, but also forces the player to prioritize the importance of her Agendas.

## MAGIC AND POLITICS

At first glance, it might seem very easy to simply use cantrips to sway potential supporters or embarrass rivals, and neophyte changelings often make exactly this mistake. After all, why bother debating when they can just toss some Sovereign or Chicanery around and make people agree with them? What they fail to appreciate, of course, is that in this new world they've entered, *everyone else* has magic too, and chances are pretty good that other fae will guess what happened if, for example, a prominent politician is suddenly struck with an inexplicable change of heart.

Of course, that doesn't mean that magic has no place in Kithain politics, just that there are certain rules – some explicit, some implied – that everyone understands govern such exchanges. What follows is a brief list of general customs and beliefs regarding magic and politics among the fae.

## FLASHY IS FINE, FORCED IS NOT

Nobody really minds if you use magic purely to present your position – using a cantrip to make a badass entrance, for example, or weaving illusions that illustrate your points while you're talking. Those sorts of things are fine, expected, and even appreciated as a sort of political theater when handled well (and viciously mocked when poorly executed). It's when you attempt to directly influence or compel the emotions, thoughts, actions, or memories of others in pursuit of your politics that you cross the line into unacceptable or even criminal territory.

## DEBATE IS SACRED

With that in mind, using coercive or influential magic in a formal political setting such as addressing the Parliament of Dreams or to rally otherwise uninterested commoners to your cause is considered extremely poor form, to put it

## CONFLICTING AGENDAS

The rolls involved in Agendas are a way of abstracting the overall opposition that the characters face regarding the implementation their goals. As such, it's not normally necessary to have opposing rolls – resistance is calculated as part of the Agenda roll itself. However, the Storyteller may wish to give powerful antagonists more agency than simply being a factor in calculating the difficulty of a few rolls. In such cases, the Storyteller may treat conflicting agendas as opposing extended challenges, in which the players roll on behalf of their characters and the Storyteller rolls on behalf of the antagonists. The first to accumulate a target number of successes sees their Agenda succeed.

When it comes to players whose characters have opposing Agendas, the Storyteller may choose to declare that it is handled as an opposing extended challenge. Abstracting the process this way helps avoid hurt feelings or assumptions of favoritism if one character's Agenda beats another's, as it is simply a matter for the dice to decide. It is also fair to have competing player Agendas resolved solely by roleplaying, though only if all players agree to it in order to prevent more socially gifted players from running roughshod over their counterparts.

mildly. Unless they've gone to great lengths to cover their tracks, when the cantrips wear off, such charlatans can expect swift reprisals from outraged targets. For what it's worth, the Parliament of Dreams has many ancient cantrips in place to discourage such unauthorized efforts, while outside those hallowed walls anyone who needs magic to convince others to follow them is seen as pretty pathetic.

## FIRST CANTRIP LOSES

When it comes to politics, it is an implied but popular notion that the first party who resorts to magic to make their case, loses. That is, reliance on magic indicates you had no valid point or retort to make, and so your opponent won the discussion even if your magic carried the moment. Although you have to be caught doing it for this to apply, the point remains.

## FAIR PLAY

Simply put, using magic on a political rival or to advance a political agenda implicitly opens up the user to magical



reprisals. In other words, if you start throwing cantrips, you'd best not complain when others throw some right back, and likely harder than you did.

## THE DREAMING IS INVIOATE

It is worth remembering that no magic can compel changelings to swear formal oaths on the Dreaming – you could use Sovereign to force someone to call you their liege temporarily, but you could not compel them to swear the Oath of Fealty. Even if you made them speak the actual words, the Dreaming still recognizes when an oath is coerced, and does not bind the speaker. Likewise, using cantrips to force someone to break a magical oath does not trigger penalties or brand the victim an oathbreaker in the eyes of the Dreaming.

## NOBILITY

Changing the tide of the political and social landscape can be difficult, whether one is Seelie or Unseelie. The noble houses of the Dreaming are set in their ways and have been for centuries. Suggesting changes is often not welcomed, and can be a slow bureaucratic process to endure. A king or duchess might hold immense power over a certain area, and may easily overturn or establish laws, but unpopular legal moves can backfire in this more democratic age where commoners are more ready than ever to voice their concerns. Here, Agendas can prove useful, as a player can use an extended action to prove to the higher ranks or to their peers why a new concept might be useful to them. Depending on the game and the wishes of the Storyteller and her players, this can spin into an intense political debate using every manipulative trick in the book.

With great power follows great responsibility. In some situations, this becomes too much for the Changeling granted the rule over an area, and it can lead their Vassals or inhabitants to rebel against their words and even try to overthrow their title. Maybe they are out of Glamour and Banality balance and thus compromise the safety of the individual changelings within their area. Agendas can also be used for opposition groups. The Storyteller can choose how much power or how many bonuses a group of lower hierarchal individuals have against one powerful ruler by looking at their overall social, communicative, and knowledge skills. She can compare these to those of the ruler's powerful friends to decide who comes out ahead.

## COMMONERS

Unlike many of their noble counterparts, commoners are deeply intertwined with the mortal world, rooted in

the Changeling Way and the balance between fae and human lives. They understand the importance of upholding traditions and not changing their ways just for the sake of change, but have learned that feudal traditions only lead to stagnation. Instead of keeping within their own secluded societies, they set out to explore the Autumn world and the Dreaming to find the best answers to their problems. Although they still have motleys with ranks and leaders, they bring a more democratic approach to their issues than the absolutist way of the nobles.

Because of the weak presence of the noble houses during the Interregnum, commoners learned to lead and provide for themselves, and the art of debate thrives within their motleys. They had to learn to get by on their own accord, and they found political and democratic discussions the best way to let as many voices be heard as possible. The Agenda acts as a natural element in these debates and can be a useful tool to get a new idea or political message through.

## THE SHADOW COURT

Commoners and nobles do not agree on much, especially not when it comes to ideology, but when asking each about their opinion on the Shadow Court, neither have anything positive to say. Members of the Shadow Court typically hail from controversial groups with clear standpoints and can be found in groups of extremists and revolutionaries. In current times, the Shadow Court are seeing an influx of members into their ranks. Many are tired of the Seelie and Unseelie Courts' lack of satisfactory response to the world's conflicts and inequality within the Dreaming. These newcomers see the Shadow Court as changelings who care about their own and only act to one another's benefit. Additionally, changelings without freeholds or trods to harvest Glamour from, frustrated individuals seeking survival in a world dominated by nobles who couldn't care less about them, often drift to the Shadow Court.

To make themselves heard, the members of the Shadow Court stage large protests and sabotage nobles who they deem unworthy of their positions. They take to social media and dig into these nobles' pasts to reveal their darkest secrets and make them seem unreliable to the public. They do not differentiate between members, and everyone – even the lowest of changelings – is potentially welcome. Despite being a savior and safe haven for some Kithain, many changeling still see the Shadow Court as dangerous. Not only are many of their political actions based on anger and fear, creating tension and irresponsible outcomes, but rumors circulate about dark creatures summoned by the Shadow Court's members, especially during their annual celebrations. Some members, want the court accepted into changeling society instead of feared and hated, though



members are split between peaceful protest and violent action as to the best way to achieve this goal.

## Example of Play: Agendas

A swarm of foul chimerical creatures bred by Thallain nightmares have descended from the mystic realms of the Near Dreaming, infesting the Barony of Pines and its Near Dreaming. They are attacking changelings and terrorizing Dreamers, giving them restless sleep and preventing them from creating much needed Glamour for the region. Lord Trayce knows he and the rest of the local nobles must act quickly to prevent further attacks and proposes an Agenda. He wants access to the Near Dreaming and the outskirts of the Pine Barrens enforced either by guards or another type of defense. However, as soon as he mentions creating warding signs to contain these malicious creatures, his liege objects. She sympathizes with the suffering of his people but worries that wards could disrupt the movements of friendly chimera and throw the area further out of balance. Still, she consents to give Lord Trayce a chance to explain his plan.

Lord Trayce is a widely respected and trusted face amongst the commoners of the Pine Barrens, known for selfless heroism. Although he is not the most gifted politician, he is a stalwart ranger who earned his people's loyalty through his many heroic deeds. The Storyteller decides it will be a Manipulation + Politics roll to convince his liege. Trayce has Manipulation 2 and Politics 2, and he's worried he may not be able to sway her. However, the decision is popular among the common folk, and combined with the urgency of the matter and Trayce's past heroism, the Storyteller decides this will decrease the difficulty somewhat. The Storyteller decides Trayce's player Dom must score at least 10 successes to convince his liege (difficulty 6). The rest of the players decide they want to have a long session based on gathering enough support and evidence to make the reluctant liege see the logic in their Agenda, and the Storyteller decides the extended action will take one week of play.

During this week, the players use time to investigate the borders to see with their own eyes how dangerous and urgent the threat is. First they use their Dexterity + Melee to fight back some monstrous beings. Sean's satyr character Banger has Dexterity 3 and Melee 2, netting two successes. Next they try to win over inhabitants living in the perimeters of Pine Barrens and the Near Dreaming to gain a larger following, with Trish's character Izzy using her Charisma + Expression, and gaining an outstanding five successes. Trayce himself must make the roll for the speech, and so he waits his turn. If the motley had more time, they could ask for more rolls, but the situation is urgent, so they must make do with what they have – fortunately, they have seven of the ten successes needed!

As the week progresses, the Storyteller weaves the progress reflected by the group's mounting successes into the fiction, setting the stage for Lord Trayce's final Manipulation + Politics roll. With his motley helping him, he's already a lot closer to his goal. At the end of the week, Lord Trayce presents his ideas and evidence for his liege, using all the new knowledge he has gathered over the extended action. Now if he can just manage *one* convincing speech ...

## SUITING A POLITICAL GAME TO PLAYSTYLES

The political aspect of **Changeling** has always been prevalent and important. It is used in everything from major decisions regarding implementation of new Escheat to deciding which moral codes the individual changeling lives by. Furthermore, no matter whether the game takes place in the Parliament of Dreams and on a grander scale determines the future of both the Seelie and Unseelie court, or whether it focuses on intense personal play, politics in the mundane and Autumn world will always influence the game. The darkening winter world brought on by Banality is threatening the fae, and when changelings meet members of opposite courts, they often do so with distrust.

A game can take a turn for the positive in the pursuit of creating balance and quell the awakening beast of Banality, once again seeing Glamour blossoming, or it can focus on a full-on war between the courts. Perhaps some houses will put differences aside and fight for mutual survival, to change the questionable ways of the Shadow Court, or see the alternative way of the Samhain celebrations and join their ranks. To which degree politics is included in a game is up to the individual Storyteller and her players. This section will provide tools and methods on how to explore and build a game suited for different playstyles.

## EXPLORE EXPECTATIONS

Even when playing within the same system, all players dive into the game with different expectations, goals, and hopes for themselves, their group, and the Storyteller. In order to create a fun and immersive game of **Changeling: The Dreaming**, the Storyteller needs to align the game that she runs with her player's expectations. When running a game based on politics or with politics as a main game element, it is important to explain to players what that concept means in her particular game. Does the Storyteller want to explore deep personal play within the group based on difference in ideologies and codes, or is she considering a game where the players determine the fates of entire houses and courts? This is not only to provide an overview of the game for the players, but also



to decrease the overwhelming effect mentioning the word “politics” can have on some. Not every group member finds this aspect of the game interesting, but pitching how politics can be included in almost every situation and playstyle might aid them opening up to the concept and help to create a game that is immersive and interesting for everyone – players and Storyteller alike.

Leading a conversation about what players see as a political game helps a group gain a common understanding and knowledge about the dynamic they can expect, and also provides guidelines for the Storyteller to build her game. Take time for a preparatory session before the game to learn what thoughts the group have regarding the inclusion of politics in the game, and asses any potential concerns or fears. Building a foundation of trust and clear communication on which a game can grow prevents doubts and confusion further in the game, and creates an environment in which players feel safe asking questions to clarify the subject at hand. Encourage players to write down any questions they have regarding the game and show interest in their thoughts in order to help the Storytelling process.

## HEAVY POLITICAL PLAY

Ever since the Interregnum, changeling society has been highly influenced by a feudal and hierarchal form of government, with the establishment of the Seelie and Unseelie Courts and later the Shadow Court. Their fundamental differences in ideology and moral code creates a strong foundation for games that include an elevated level of political play. Focusing on the very top of the political hierarchy can create an exciting game, with powerful liege lords in dispute over territory in the Autumn world or freeholds within the Dreaming. It grants the participants a certain degree of power and control, even enough to spawn wars. However, in order for a game not to overwhelm its players, heavy political play is best suited to seasoned **Changeling** players, as a certain knowledge and understanding of the game and its setting is often required to effectively wield large amounts of in-game power.

## CHAOS OF THE COURT

The annual Samhain celebrations of the Shadow Court is approaching in the Kingdom of Willows, but this year, King Meilege has little patience for their mockeries. He begrudgingly accepted the previous years’ celebratory events, knowing that denying their rituals would create more problems than allowing them their way. Now though, in the face of political uncertainties and dwindling sources of Glamour, Meilege wants the citizens of his Kingdom to feel safe and not have to fear rowdy crowds and hordes of drunken fae in concealing costumes. He has officially cancelled all but the Shadow Court’s tamest forms of celebration. How members

of the Shadow Court react to this decision and express their dismay could result in any number of dire consequences for the Kingdom of Willows.

## LIGHT POLITICAL PLAY

As an alternative to traditional high-level political play, light politics present a more personalized and dynamic method of play. With few exceptions, changelings follow the codes of their Courts, and have little freedom to bend the rules. Light political play caters to the players and Storyteller wishing to develop a plot where decisions made on a grander scale become visible and prominent all the way down to the individual level. In this kind of play, the concepts of Agendas revolve around how powerful the will of an individual can be, or how effective a small rebellion can suddenly become within a house, Court, or region. Agendas in this playstyle can give players plenty of opportunity to explore the themes of hierarchy and control versus free will and chaos.

## JEWELLED BIRDS UNCAGED

The strict feudal system of rule in changeling society does not sit well with every member of its ranks, especially not those of younger generations. Social media and modern technology provide young Kithain with the power of communication across states and countries, and as a result, the Romantic ideals of wedding within the Court to which you belong do not always fall into place. When Lady Alayne Grace, a proper Leanhaun noble, abruptly falls in love with Kat, a mortal, it upsets her brothed, the influential Countess Glynann Jones. Not to mention this sudden fling threatens to rekindle hostilities between their lands that the noble marriage was meant to lay to rest. However, the young couple is in love, and may risk it all to be together. Players can use this scenario in an Agenda play in a classic *Romeo and Juliet* inspired game where noble houses are in dispute and war is in the air. This can lead to political and ethical discussions between players. The characters in love will need to appeal to their opposing families and can use the tactics mentioned in this chapter to do so.

## BANNER HOUSES

Although the Great Houses maintain their grip on Kithain politics and culture, they are not the monolithic, single-minded entities outsiders might assume. There are personal alliances and rivalries to be considered, of course, as well as various societies – some secret, others less so – that nobles form with other like-minded members. Beyond even those groups, however, an old tradition has recently been formally recognized by the Parliament of Dreams and





blessed by the Dreaming itself. Namely, the offshoot branches of nobility known as banner houses.



## ALLIED HOUSES

Banner houses sometimes become allied with certain Great Houses aside from their own, especially if they held neighboring territories for a long time. A remote valley in Appalachia where the only nobles are a Liam banner house and a small Balor stronghold might, over time, grow to trust each other and work closely together against local threats. Oaths of friendship and marriage solidify these bonds, and while the banner houses remain firmly set in their loyalty to their Great Houses, it was not uncommon for them to incorporate colors or sigils referencing their allied house. The Liam banner house from this example might still use the blasted tree of Liam, but display a black tree against a silver field in order to showcase their ties to their longstanding (if unlikely) Balor allies.



A banner house is perhaps best imagined as something like a divergent branch of a family tree. It's still connected to the whole, and has more in common with its cousins than not, but it sports some definite differences too. Organizationally speaking, they fit somewhere beyond a political faction or secret society, but still well short of a full-fledged Great House.

Banner houses have long been an informal tradition, born of the desperate time following the departure of the Arcadian sidhe. The Autumn sidhe held the remaining nobility and loyal commoners together as best they could, guiding what was left of the Great Houses through this new world awash in Banality. Many elevated commoner kiths into their ranks, sometimes for the first time in the history of the House, but even with an infusion of new blood, the Houses were too small and too scattered to maintain a coherent hold on Kithain politics. Thus, banner houses were born.


A banner house typically began when a single family line of one of the Great Houses held onto a particular territory – or in rarer cases, a duty – for so long that they came to be recognized as a distinct entity within that House. This was more common in remote areas outside the reach of regular Kithain politics, where a family could grow into its own identity over time and there was no large aristocratic





## The Tally

Players may be wondering since the vote was so close, which Great Houses were the ones that supported recognition for banner houses, and which ones were against it? The answer is for players and Storytellers to decide, as suits the political needs and dramatic possibilities of their own chronicles. And it may not fall along the lines you expect...



presence to encourage orthodoxy. As generations passed, these families came to adopt their own heraldry, flying such banners beneath the symbols of their Great Houses to signify that while their loyalties had not shifted, they were forces in their own right.

Of course, it is important to note that when speaking of banner houses, “family” does not necessarily mean “related by mortal bloodlines,” although such lineages are certainly possible. Between the reincarnation of fae souls into new bodies, Kithain marriage oaths, and bestowing titles for worthy deeds, there are many ways changelings might come to be considered family. Still, as a rule banner houses remained small, close-knit groups to avoid the perception of challenging or splitting off from the Great Houses, as well as the practical matter of holding land in isolated areas with small populations.

It is little wonder, then, that banner houses became a common – if still unofficial – practice between the Shattering and the Resurgence. Far-flung communities of fae found a sense of loyalty and community beyond the Great Houses, and the Great Houses were prevented from further fracturing. Although traditionalists gritted their teeth to see a banner flying beneath the colors of a Great House, even the most reluctant had to recognize the fact that Kithain society, already fragile, did not need dozens of wholly new houses vying for power and recognition.

When the Arcadian sidhe returned and reasserted control of the Great Houses, many regarded banner houses the way gentry might regard distant and decidedly rustic relatives. It was lovely that they were part of the family, of course, and no one would ever ask them to leave, but... wouldn't it be best if they perhaps didn't advertise their “uniqueness” quite so much? Especially while in polite society? Word went out, and banners were struck from freeholds around the world.

The matter did not end there, however. The Autumn sidhe and their loyal allies were outraged at such a blatant

disregard for the communities and traditions forged during the abandonment of the Arcadian sidhe. The Parliament of Dreams saw many protests over the years, and there were even demonstrations in areas where banner houses had grown especially deep roots. However, the Arcadians' grip on the Great Houses was tight in the years immediately following their return, so that there was great outrage but little actual progress on the issue.

The tension finally boiled over less than a year ago, as the heads of no fewer than one hundred banner houses signed a formal request, called the Edict of Recognition, and lodged it with the Parliament of Dreams. Knowing staunch traditionalists would rally against the measure, these nobles called in every favor and every marker they'd accumulated, in some cases going back decades or even centuries, and pressured every peer of conscience they could find. By fortunate happenstance, the issue caught fire within the typically fractious lower house, turning into something many commoner groups rallied behind as well – if only to stick it to the Arcadian sidhe.

Though the measure passed overwhelmingly in the lower house, despite Herculean efforts on the part of its supporters to win hearts and minds, most political observers believed that the request would die in the upper house. After all, even the most sympathetic Great Houses still tend to vote conservatively compared to their rank and file. It was a tremendous surprise, then, when the Autumn sidhe and their supporters turned what might have been a sweeping veto into a fierce battle. In the end, the proclamation finally passed with an 8-7 vote... with the Shadow Court casting the tiebreaking vote in favor of the measure. Shocked traditionalists held onto a final hope – that the Dreaming itself would refuse to ratify the Edict of Recognition – but were quickly disabused of the notion as the ratification took place in a burst of celebratory Glamour.

Now old banners fly proudly over freeholds where they've long held sway, banner lines celebrate their unique lineages, and young nobles see a chance to make their mark on the political landscape in a way that goes beyond factions and secret societies to create communities and even families of like-minded nobles. While it remains to be seen what sort of impact the newly empowered banner houses will have, there's no question they're finally enjoying their day in the sun.

## RAISING THE FLAG

With official recognition and its attendant popularity comes what the Arcadian sidhe feared most: applicants clamoring to have their personal crests and standards recognized. Fortunately, despite the pearl-clutching of the traditionalists, raising a banner is not exactly as simple as



## OATH OF THE RAISED BANNER

*"This day I raise my banner in the sight of [Great House], adding House [Name] to its rolls of honor, and pledge to bring glory and distinction to my kin wherever it may fly. Should I betray the trust they place in me, may my banners burn and my bones break, that I may never again bring shame to those that trusted me."*

**Mechanics:** In addition to giving the banner house legitimacy with the Dreaming, this oath grants the founding aspirants -1 to the difficulty of all Willpower rolls while in the presence of the house symbol.

doing some sewing and making a claim. While the actual formation process allows for some variation, several elements are necessary for the formation of a recognized banner house.

While commoner motleys have inspired and formed the backbone of banner houses in the past, at least one actual noble (Title • • +) is required to file the petition for recogni-

## FOREIGN FLAGS

Banner houses occupy a special niche in lands outside of Europe and North America. As Kithain nobles claimed foreign lands alongside their mortal cousins, whether as conquerors and colonizers or traders and explorers, they brought their Great Houses with them. However, the far-flung nature of these outposts and their exposure to customs and cultures unfamiliar to most Kithain made them prime candidates for the sort of idiosyncratic development that marks many banner houses.

To the shame of all Kithain, some of these banner houses reflected the worst of the excesses of colonialism, but others were more progressive, and existed much more harmoniously with local mortal and fae cultures. As time passed, many came to be populated by descendants of mortal natives, further shaping the banner houses into something more reflective of their own beliefs and practices. It is not uncommon for Great Houses to be dominant in name only in some parts of the world.

tion. This noble is known as "the aspirant" throughout the process. By the Edict, these petitions are presented to the High Lord of the house or her designated representative, which in turn weeds out pranksters and impulsive types. Wasting a High Lord's time is the sort of prank only the most daring tricksters would attempt, after all.

The aspirant's petition must convince his Great House that the banner is worthy of recognition, which is no mean feat. Each House has its own standards for accepting a banner house and, despite hand-wringing and doom-crying from traditionalist nobility, the bar for acceptance is universally quite high, as a banner house is a reflection of its Great House. Often, aspirants are gently but firmly steered toward joining or forming a political faction, secret society, or other organization as more reflective of their true goals.

Should the banner claim be deemed to have merit, the Great House next sends aspirants on quests or puts them through ordeals as part of earning full recognition. The difficulty of these trials reflects how mixed the feelings of the High Lord or Lady are on the subject of the banner house in question. Traditional houses, such as Gwydion and Balor, tend to be hard and exacting on aspirants. Houses that more fully weathered the Interregnum, such as Liam and Scathach, tend to be less demanding due to their long history of welcoming banner houses in their midst.

If the aspirant fulfills the obligations required by the High Lord, then the new banner is raised at the end of a House ceremony. The details of these ceremonies vary by Great House, but all include the aspirant taking the Oath of the Raised Banner.

From a player's perspective, the decision to create a banner house for a chronicle – or allow the players to raise their own – should involve few important questions: Is the banner house distinctive and evocative? Do any existing factions or societies already cover the territory or purpose the new house would serve? If the banner house is retroactive, that is to say being created with decades or centuries of established history behind it, does it fit the history and tone of the area? The culture of the Great House it belongs to? If so, what distinguishes it? If not, why is it tolerated? If the banner is brand new, how will it fit with the Great Houses and other banner houses already in play?

## IN THE STITCHING

As far as game mechanics are concerned, banner houses work much the same as regular houses, with a few notable alterations. Full membership in a banner house requires the Title Background; as usual, commoners may swear oaths of loyalty and service to the house but only nobles receive its mechanical traits. It is important to remember that a noble is still considered a member of the Great House the



banner house is sworn to, with that loyalty expected to supersede any other duties.

As far as etiquette is concerned, now that they are officially recognized, banner nobles use the name of the Great House, followed by “of the banner [Name].” For example, the current head of House Tinean might introduce himself as follows: “Lord Eric Trayce ap Beaumayn, of the banner Tinean.” If he was only going to reference one house, it’s considered proper form to use the Great House. Using only the banner house for introductions or identification, while not technically inaccurate, is likely to draw some unfavorable attention from other members of the Great House concerned with whether the banner is growing too independent.

Although they are optional additions and subject to Storyteller approval, a banner house may have a version of its own Boon and Flaw. Referred to as Distinctions and Faults, in order to distinguish them from the traits of the Great Houses, they are not as powerful or debilitating but still reflect a banner house’s particular idiosyncrasies. Distinctions and Faults are counted in addition to a Great House’s baseline Boons and Flaws; they do not replace them.

### Designing Distinctions and Faults

When creating new Distinctions and Faults, the best guideline is to look at the existing mechanics associated with those traits for the Great Houses. They are designed not just as rules elements, but also as narrative elements that underscore the fundamental nature of the house itself. In essence, the Dreaming ensures that the house’s legacy is made manifest in its members, for better and worse. Like the great noble families of the mortal world, houses contain proud traditions and dark secrets, and that is what these traits should evoke during play.

While players and Storytellers are encouraged to get creative with Distinctions and Faults for their banner houses, they should keep a few basic guidelines in mind:

- ⑤ They should not enhance existing Boons or negate existing Flaws.
- ⑤ They should not copy the Boons and Flaws of other houses.
- ⑤ They should either be less powerful and/or much more situational than Boons and Flaws.
- ⑤ Distinctions and Faults are optional, but a banner house cannot have one of the two – if it has one, it must have the other.

## SIGILS AND HERALDRY

No banner house would be complete without its own iconic banner imagery. Players and Storytellers can use

## PERSONAL HERALDRY

Many nobles and even some long-established freeholds employ some form of informal personal heraldry. For example, a Gwydion iconoclast may choose a black falcon for her personal heraldry, and when two nobles from different Great Houses are married it is common for them to display a “wedding banner” with their house symbols quartered on a neutral field. However, personal heraldry, while fascinating in its own right, is not the same as raising a banner house. Banner houses are distinct political and cultural entities, and as such require formal recognition.

existing **Changeling** house heraldry as a baseline, then design iconography that captures the heart of the house. Many banner houses use one or both of the colors of their Great House in order to show their ties at a glance, sometimes reversing primary and accent colors, but these are not absolute rules by any means. Strong designs rarely involve more than two or three symbolic elements, lest a banner become too “busy” and hard to identify at a distance.

Since many of the Great Houses do not conform to traditional heraldic conventions as mortals know them, players should not feel bound by those conventions for banner houses, either. At the same time, even more modernized houses like Leanhaun and Dougal are wary of bending so far that banners based on jokes, memes, or other tongue-in-cheek modern references are approved. After all, the banner still reflects on the Great House that it flies under, and to date, jokes and poor taste have not made the cut.

## ALTERNATIVE SETTING: GLOBAL HOUSES

This optional alternative setting element expands on concepts from the Foreign Flags sidebar from p. 38, seeking to make the Great Houses less culturally specific to Europe and more explicable as universal entities. Simply put, in this version the Great Houses are more closely linked to core concepts and emotions, and have thus arisen in different forms around the world. With most European and North American fae would still know them by their current names and heraldry, and their game traits remain the same regardless of the location, the names and symbols of the



houses otherwise vary widely in accordance with the local beliefs and customs.

In other words, at its heart, House Gwydion embodies the concepts of pride, justice, and righteous fury. So anywhere those concepts can be found, a house arises to embody them, perhaps slightly shifting priorities or attitudes but retaining essential traits. In Nigeria, it might be known as House Shango instead of House Gwydion and focus more on justice, but at its core, the two houses share the same motivating fire. The only limits are that a particular culture never has more than 14 Great Houses, and they are always half Seelie and half Unseelie; these restrictions are enforced by the Dreaming itself.

This alternative might seem to make changeling politics a vastly more confusing landscape, except that linked houses – that is, houses that arise from the same core concepts, just in different places – automatically recognize each other as such. The Dreaming fosters relations between these brother and sister houses, as they're known, and while they do not always get along, they recognize that they share similar roles in the political landscape. Indeed, as travel grows easier and the world grows smaller, it seems as if the Dreaming may have planned this all along to foster unity among the disparate changelings of the world.

## NOTABLE BANNER HOUSES

While a number of banners have already been officially recognized, here are a few of the most well-known and intriguing that have emerged so far.

### HOUSE FIRINNE

**Sworn:** Ailil (allied Beaumayn)

**Sigil:** An ornate silver key on a black field

**Nicknames:** Wardens, Homebodies (vulgar)

**Heads of House:** Duchess Severa & Duke Alexander “Blackheart” Aetherington, co-rulers of Nocturne Keep

Only recently raised, the banner of House Firinne nonetheless already flies over a handful of freeholds in Concordia, and with the attendant fear and uncertainty of the Evanescence, it's sure to continue spreading. The Wardens are bound not by blood but by a very specific, very dangerous duty – they stake claims on land with deep ties to the Fomorian and the Thallain. The Firinne use a combination of magic and arcane research to identify places once used as gateways or otherwise considered “sacred” to these foul beings, and establish holdings there.

Once in place, Firinne do their best to cleanse the sites if possible and clamp down on them. If this proves impossible, they work to drive off any Thallain and other lurking horrors, including occasional nests of Prodigals drawn to the dark energies of such places. Given the un-

savory reputation of House Ailil, it's only natural that the Wardens have been accused of claiming these lands as part of some dark conspiracy, but for their part, they just keep their heads down and attend to their duties. Persuading their house their goals were worthwhile was hard enough; they have little time for the prejudices of others.

Fortunately, despite the cloud of suspicion over their operations House Firinne has already forged strong ties with House Beaumayn, sharing information both arcane and mundane as they work to stave off Endless Winter and understand exactly what's behind the surging numbers of Thallain and other nightmare creatures. It's dangerous work and already attracting a lot of unhealthy attention from dark corners of the Dreaming, but that only tells the Wardens they're on the right track.

**Distinction:** Thallain find members of House Firinne difficult and implacable foes. Thallain face an increased difficulty of +1 for all rolls targeting or directly opposing a Warden, including relevant Arts and Birthrights.

**Fault:** Firinne do not like to travel far from their steadings. Should a Firinne travel more than an hour from their appointed lands, or journey into the Deep Dreaming, difficulties of all rolls are increased by +1. A member may suppress this penalty for a scene by spending a Willpower point, but any Willpower spent in this manner may not be recovered until the Warden spends at least one night in their appointed lands.

### HOUSE TINEAN

**Sworn:** Liam (allied Gwydion)

**Sigil:** A gold phoenix with wings unfurled on a black field

**Head of House:** Lord Eric Trayce of the Barony of Pines

**Nicknames:** Redeemers, Furies (vulgar)

Banner houses sometimes blur the line between political entities and secret societies, and House Tinean is perhaps the best example of this gray area. In the public eye, the Redeemers perform a vital if often overlooked service, namely going to great lengths to seek out fae that have temporarily fallen to Banality and restoring them to their Kithain natures. For generations, they've acquired a reputation for pulling off daring rescues from places like asylums and nursing homes, as well as finding lost fae when no one else could. And this reputation is not wrong, exactly... but it's only part of the mission of this deceptive, secretive clan.

In addition to their work reviving fallen fae, the Redeemers also see it as their sacred duty to exact revenge on mortals and Prodigals who take Kithain lives. Although their main focus is on those who do so intentionally, the Tinean will occasionally deliver retribution for accidental killings if they feel the loss warrants it. Granted, such punishments are still less extreme than those visited on any who take life deliberately,



but as the Redeemers note, it's not necessarily about what is fair, it's about what is required to balance the life that was lost.

The current head of the house, Lord Trayce, is more merciful and understanding than some of his predecessors, but he has recently been under pressure from the house's Gwydion backers to undertake some major retaliatory strikes on their behalf. The Falcons have long provided material and political support for the Redeemers when their own Great House could not, and now it appears the bill has come due. Although he recognizes their invaluable assistance, Lord Trayce worries about just how far they want his family to go on their behalf... and what will happen if he refuses.

**Distinction:** Natural hunters and trackers, Tinean subtract -2 from the difficulty of all rolls involving locating fae who are missing or temporarily lost to Banality, as well as rolls related to locating those they suspect of having killed one of the Kithain.

**Fault:** The Furies have trouble leaving a comrade behind, or letting a slight go unanswered. They must succeed at a Willpower roll (difficulty 6) in order to leave a fallen ally behind or not immediately offer a direct response to a serious insult or threat.

## HOUSE BARGHEST

**Sworn:** Daireann (allied Scathach)

**Sigil:** A snarling black dog head on a green field

**Head of House:** Baron Donovan Cōyotl of Hanging Hills

**Nicknames:** Devil Dogs/Grims, Lapdogs (vulgar)

One of the oldest banner houses on record, House Barghest has in fact claimed to be the first ever founded by titled commoners. While this claim is contested by Kithain scholars, in no small part due to the number of pooka that have historically filled its ranks (including its current head of house), none dispute their ancient lineage. The Devil Dogs began as sworn commoners in service of the house of hearth and venom, acting as huskarls, guards, and huntsmen

for their liege lords while developing a fearsome reputation for feral cunning and bestial ferocity.

After the Shattering, House Daireann desperately needed to bolster its ranks, and so it made their elite household guards an offer – more titles and a banner house of their own in return for their continued loyalty. Ever since then, it's not uncommon to see high-ranking Daireann nobles attended by an honor guard of Devil Dogs in their trademark green and black. Due to their storied reputation, they sometimes hire out temporarily as guards and hunters for other houses of both Courts. Seelie members, while uncommon, are known as Grims after the more benevolent black dog legends of the British Isles. They're teased by their comrades, but so long as they're loyal to the house as a whole, nobody takes any real issue with their Court identity.

Indeed, given House Barghest's thoroughly Unseelie roots, their old alliance with House Scathach may seem odd on the surface, but it arose from two primary factors – geographical overlap and more importantly, philosophical alignment. The Gray Walkers respect clever warriors and also have a high percentage of titled commoners, so when they're not on opposite sides of a battle, the two houses actually get along quite well. They frequently spar and train with each other, not to mention go carousing together, a good-natured rivalry going back to the early days of the Shattering.

**Distinction:** The Devil Dogs really are exceptional guards and watchmen. They cannot botch an Alertness roll so long as they are actively guarding someone or something they've sworn an oath to protect, and may spend 1 Willpower to negate surprise in such situations as well.

**Fault:** Some old prejudices run deep, even after centuries of service. House Barghest members may not rise higher than Title •••, and suffer a +1 to the difficulty of all social rolls aside from Intimidation when they involve nobles from houses other than Daireann and Scathach.







# CHAPTER TWO: SHADOWS AND LIGHT

*"We're gonna rise up, rise up!"*

*– Lin-Manuel Miranda, Hamilton: An American Musical*

## The Shadow Court

For millennia, the Shadow Court existed as a reflection of Kithain society, providing a place for changelings to vent their darker urges and caricaturize the folly of their supposed betters. With the return of the Arcadian sidhe and their brutal reassertion of leadership after leaving their citizens to suffer in the wake of the Shattering, a number of changelings sought an alternative solution. The return of the "royals" brought back the opposition to their leadership with a vengeance, especially as the Arcadian sidhe apparently expected to be greeted with open arms and deferential obedience. While the Autumn sidhe managed to mitigate the situation, the Shadow Court's ranks swelled following the return of the Arcadians, surging them to the political contender status they hold today.

Having achieved surprise representation within the Parliament of Dreams has only made the Court ever bolder. Once secretive to the extreme, the firebrands swelling the ranks of the Court now openly host protests and rallies against unfair laws and cruel nobles. Mirroring modern grassroots political movements, they seek to bring greater equality to the lives of all changelings and to abolish the power standings that consistently raise few to status, wealth, and influence and leave others to either live off the kindness or pity of others or take whatever they can get for themselves. Rumors that the Shadow Court hides darker factions within it have yet to significantly deter this influx of new members.

Even if changelings are unwilling to join the Shadow Court themselves, it's gained widespread if nominal support in the wake of younger changelings awakening in a world of political turmoil and renewed efforts for civil rights. The number of Shadow Court members is hard for leaders



outside the Court to estimate, as sympathetic changelings inflate their numbers when they host public appearances, offering support of specific causes if they can't agree with the Court's message as a whole. Somewhere between activist group and menace, depending on who you ask, both the Seelie and Unseelie Courts watch them carefully.

## Courtly Reception

Most consider the Shadow Court to be a group of radicals, extreme even for the contrarian Unseelie. The way they see it, the Seelie Court made the rules, the Unseelie follows the rules when they're useful and challenges them when they aren't, and the Shadow Court wants to tear everything down and rebuild from the ruins. While it could potentially be beneficial to reconsider the quasi-feudal structure changing society labors under, most Unseelie — particularly the ruling sidhe who benefit from the current system — aren't in favor of the chaos and open rebellion that would come from removing all rules, titles, and responsibilities at once. Those that support the Shadow Court often end up joining them, if they can find their way in.

Of course, once they join the ranks of the Court, new members may learn about some of the more secret efforts, including the willingness of some within the Court to work with the dreaded Thallain. The growing divide within the Shadow Court itself is drawn along those lines, with those invested in a safer method for changing Kithain politics and those willing to do whatever's necessary, consequences be damned.

The Seelie tend to fall into two camps when it comes to the Shadow Court. Half believe that acknowledging something gives it power, and remain steadfastly and intentionally ignorant of the Court's influence. The fifteenth chair in the Parliament is something impartial (it sides with either of the other Courts about as often as a coin toss would, so the Seelie say); the protests and rallies are just the most ambitious and outspoken of the Unseelie wilders, and nothing more. Burying their heads in the sand, they refuse to even entertain the notion that a third Court could possibly crop up, allowing at best that the Unseelie Court has a rather vocal radical faction, but nothing so insidious or independent as its name implies.

On the other side are the Seelie that have become aware, either through direct experience or reliable word from their allies, of the secrets the Shadow Court tries its best to hide. While not exactly eager to admit that the Thallain have found a way to consolidate power under their noses, and even less pleased that the Unseelie Court would think it permissible to work with such creatures, these Seelie are inclined toward merciless persecution of the Shadow Court. Protests for more voices, rallies for rep-



## SHADOWS AND SHIMMERS



Though extremely rare, Seelie fae occasionally seek to join the Shadow Court, especially Accordance War veterans, commoner rights activists, and others who agree with its revolutionary politics. They don't get far in the power structure; no one's willing (or stupid) enough to sponsor one of the Seelie, but having them in the lower ranks is useful enough that they aren't actively driven out. These members commonly petition for a return to traditions that have fallen out of favor, justice for tyrannical nobles, or fair treatment for commoners. Notable efforts have included changing ruling Courts with the seasons and creating "minor courts" for Autumn and Spring. Often called "shimmers" by the Shadow Court proper, due to their often short-lived and surface level participation in the Court, these rare Seelie are nonetheless a small but growing presence.



resentation; fine. Crossing the line into opening the door for the Fomorians, and counting their minions as allies? Even the kindest-hearted among the Kithain find it hard to forgive such an act, and the short-sightedness that goes along with thinking the Thallain would be content as pawns and patsies goes beyond optimistic and into plain stupidity.

## THE PARLIAMENT OF DREAMS

While the Seelie might have imagined the Unseelie and Shadow Courts were both ecstatic at the appearance of the 15<sup>th</sup> chair in the high house Parliament, the divide between the two groups left the Unseelie Court uncertain and the Shadow Court unexpectedly vulnerable. Previously, the Shadow Court had preferred to remain largely out of sight, but the appearance of a Shadow Court chair in Parliament sent the leaders of the Court reeling. Whispers ran through the Black Court that the changelings had caught wise and petitioned the Dreaming to undermine them, knowing the Parliament wouldn't stand to have a Thallain influencing their decisions; the changelings themselves thought the Dreaming had betrayed them to side with the Thallain, allowing them to infiltrate the ranks of the leaders and take them down from within.

The divide brewing within the Shadow Court grew deeper the day the 15<sup>th</sup> chair appeared, and the friction between the factions only grows with every Parliamentary



session. For now, with a leader both sides within the Court assume to be a figurehead appearing before the Parliament, the camps' leaders are forced to negotiate between themselves. The Thallain, inconvenienced more than anything by a system they hope to eliminate, monitor the situation with a wary eye and let their mouthpieces negotiate with the other half of the Court. Though they care little enough for the Kithain and their governmental games, like all fae creatures they have a healthy respect and fear for the Dreaming itself. As it backs the Parliament, they find their hands tied when it comes to dismissing the Parliament's rulings, but at the same time, the Thallain know that trying to influence them will surely out themselves as the usurpers they are. Trusting their adherents to toe the line appropriately, the Thallain continue their machinations as far out of sight as they can manage. The changelings outside the influence of the Black Court are more eager to use their position to enact meaningful change, but still look to find ways to push things further from the structures established so long ago.

To the surprise of both the Seelie and Unseelie Courts, to date, the Shadow Court's rulings in the high house don't appear to favor one side or the other. The Seelie, put at least somewhat at ease by proof that the Dreaming didn't simply hand the Unseelie Court the keys to the kingdom, take the victories they can get. The Unseelie, meanwhile, attempt to probe further into the logic behind the Shadow Court's decisions. The pattern behind their votes is inscrutable and at times even seems contradictory. Some suspect different members of the Court appear at different sessions in an effort to pursue personal agendas — the representative often appears hooded or masked and rarely speaks, making a rotating roster of attendees possible — but no solid proof yet supports this theory.

Despite the initial alarm and unease surrounding the appearance of the chair, the three Courts have since accepted the development, albeit grudgingly, and have finally managed to make headway on a number of deadlocked topics. Which is, perhaps, exactly what the Dreaming intended all along when it forged the 15<sup>th</sup> chair.

## FRACTURED IDEALS

With the movement at risk of collapsing over leadership differences, it's become increasingly apparent to members of the Shadow Court as of late that there's a difference of opinion somewhere up the line about the Court's true purpose. What was once a movement for and by the people has itself begun to stratify into leaders and followers, those who have a voice and who don't. For many Kithain new to the enchanted world, discovering that their true nature comes with neo-feudalism politics is simply not acceptable,

and they flock to the Shadow Court in hopes of remodeling changeling society to something more progressive. Discovering a smaller court attempting to direct the actions of the Shadow Court as a whole hasn't yet caused them to jump ship; a number of new members have simply forgone the orders that come down from above in favor of pursuing their own goals.

For their part, many older members who believe the Shadow Court lost its way when it got into bed with the Thallain have put their support behind the new generation, adding their voices to challenging the current leaders on unfair practices, demanding better representation, and pushing for an alternative form of governance over changeling society. Others have doubled down on the Court's darker direction, following the orders of the Black Court as they plot a more direct and drastic plan of action. Some fall between, wary of the Thallain but supportive of the idea of total, violent revolution.


Right now this means one thing: standoff. While neither side can afford to attack or take out the other, having two groups operating under the name of the Shadow Court muddies the waters for outsiders looking in and confuses potential allies and would-be supporters, who aren't aware of the schism. As a result, the Shadow Court is seen by turns as both too dangerous and too conservative, hamstringing their ability to pull support from a number of locations.

The Unseelie who originally founded the Shadow Court did so to be the voice for the oppressed. In the wake of their abandonment by the sidhe, it seemed the commoners no longer needed the Shadow Court, as the few who stayed behind were happy to support other leaders willing to step up into the empty roles left by the abdicators. Still, the Shadow Court lived on, watching with a wary eye as newcomers filled positions and claimed leadership, ensuring things remained as equal as possible and that no one abused their newfound power to oppress or silence others. The original founders retreated to the background, quietly influencing things when needed, but mostly watching as the new order shaped up.

With the return of the sidhe and their blatant expectations of simply taking back the positions they'd held, the Shadow Court flourished once more. Many commoners and even some Autumn sidhe unceremoniously ousted from positions they'd held for years flocked to the Shadow Court, where their political skill and deep resentment combined to foment rebellion. Embittered Seelie changelings even changed Courts to join the Unseelie ranks and fight back against the leaders who had abandoned them without a second thought and expected all to be forgiven.

While some were satisfied with demanding reparations from their recently returned compatriots, others wanted





to punish the powers that be for up and leaving the moment things turned bad. Promises to do and be better fell on deaf ears for a portion of the Court, who knew their brethren weren't willing to go as far as was necessary. When glimmers of dark Glamour brought the first nightmares back to the Autumn World, the Shadow Court was there to greet them and offer a deal. Preying on the sidhe suited the interests of both the rebels and the Thallain; removing them meant the Kithain could punish them as they saw fit, and the Thallain had support in tearing down everything they hated about changeling society.

Unfortunately, these changelings underestimated their crueler cousins, who banded together in secret. Using the information willingly handed to them by the Shadow Court, they established what they called the Black Court: a group of Thallain seeking to use their Kithain cousins' own ambition against them in order to snake control from them entirely. Able to call their own kind to them and bolster their own ranks, the Black Court quickly took control of the radical faction of the Shadow Court, and to this day influences the decisions and actions taken by a considerable portion of the Court's adherents. While the Shadow Court pushes for reform, the Black Court angles for utter anarchy and brutal reprisals — not replacing leaders or styles of government to better suit society, but removing them entirely and watching society itself crumble in the vacuum left behind. Believing this to be the way to honor their ancestors, the Fomorians, the Black Court awaits the day they can restore their chaotic reign to the world.

Well aware of the other side's opinions and reputation, the Black Court and the Shadow Court play off each other and are more than willing to throw members of the opposing group under the proverbial bus to further their own goals or disrupt the other side's efforts. While the identities of most of the Black Court's members remain unknown, the high-ups in the Shadow Court know for sure is that one of the Thallain of the Black Court is a seavartal, a figure just as certain that they should be ruling as the sidhe were when they returned.

While the Shadow Court's leaders aren't aware of how to stop the seavartal, they're on the lookout for anyone acting odd, especially if they hold a position of power. Eager to be rid of them as soon as possible, hopefully striking a fatal blow to the Black Court in the process, the Shadow Court has bounties out for either information on any Thallain activity, or proof that someone has been dealing with one. The Thallain, knowing they aren't accepted, have retreated to unknown locations where they take what information they can get through their channels and disperse orders to their followers, who treat their duty to their leaders with the utmost gravity.

## The Black Court

The Unseelie who founded the Shadow Court underestimated their bedfellows when they invited the Thallain to join their cause. Assuming them to be easily manipulated monsters, the changelings never anticipated the formation of the Black Court. The Thallain, more than willing to take advantage of their cousin's naiveté, played into the assumption long enough to establish themselves and their own ruling force. Even now, some ranking members of the Shadow Court's elite still dismiss the Black Court as a myth, a straw man created by those that oppose the Shadow Court in order to discredit their efforts and paint them as something more sinister than they truly are. For the Thallain, the longer they can remain hidden in the deepest shadows, the longer they have to lay the groundwork for their own plans before setting things into motion.

Longing for the days of the Fomorian Dream before the Tuatha de Danaan had power and before changelings were even a concept, let alone a reality, the nightmarish cousins of the fae are content to remain murky, misunderstood boogeymen, the creatures of myth to myths themselves. Their presence in the Autumn World is known to but few, primarily those powerful enough to call upon and "control" them. Outside of the Shadow Court itself and the dogged hunters of House Beaumayn, that number drops virtually to zero. A secretive lot, they keep to themselves as much as possible; even those plagued by their presence may not be entirely aware of their antagonist's nature.

When they were first invited to join to Shadow Court, the Thallain knew exactly how many doors it could potentially open. Without much of their own foothold in the Autumn world, and with most Kithain spurning or outright attacking them at every turn, any opportunity to find a corner to settle in came as a welcome reprieve. Though they're forced to play the fool to keep the Shadow Court happy, they've taken advantage of their newfound acceptance and begun to organize in ways never imagined before. Organizing amongst themselves into pseudo-courts, almost all Thallain in the Autumn World have some knowledge of the others, and operate as a loose group toward common goals.

The more ambitious and intelligent among the Thallain do the bidding of the "masters" while also angling for better positions, offering suggestions and advice that steer things in their own favor. Often, this means pushing the changelings in charge toward violence, or directly undermining recent political decisions as best they can. Thallain enjoy discrediting nobles, riling up the common folk and turning them against each other, and pushing otherwise peaceful rallies and protests toward riots and violence. The more they can turn the commoners against the nobles and



everyone against their friends and neighbors, the closer they get to their goals.

To this end, the more subtle Thallain that can blend in with Kithain communities often end up working as spies for the Shadow Court. Installed as lesser members of a Court or sent to ingratiate themselves to a noble house, these spies learn everything they can about the society they're infiltrating, filtering it back to the Black Court. They make sure their leaders only hear what they want them to hear, omitting anything that doesn't suit their own causes. As their true nature becomes harder to hide the longer they remain in one place, infiltrators often bounce around different locations, gathering what they can and moving on before they're discovered.

While the Thallain don't operate under the same rigid system as the changelings do, leaders of the Black Court have their own small "fiefdoms" where they've been invited in by the Shadow Court. There are no titles, no nobles, and no real decorum, but it's a chance for the Thallain in an area to meet up and discuss what's been going on. As it's in their best interest to have passing familiarity with each other and an idea of where the others are operating, they typically meet at least once a season to share meaningful news and, if they have any special tasks assigned directly by the Black Court, report on them as well. Members stationed in rival territories will work out the best ways to incite war, operatives in opposing Houses will share the best weaknesses to exploit and strengths to counter, and anyone in danger of being discovered can work with others to remain hidden.

Although they are loathe to admit it, the biggest obstacles to the Thallain being more effective are their own selfish, destructive natures. Even as they recognize the benefits of working together, they can't help but constantly vie for dominance, backstab each other, and sell each other out for personal gain. Without a strong – and absolutely terrifying – leader to keep them in line, they quickly fall to pieces. Even then, the best they can hope for is to settle on grudging respect, knowing that working together is the only way they'll get to their common goal. While backstabbing is common, anyone found working against the others in an effort to undermine the coming of the leaders has far worse things to face than whatever the Kithain call justice.

While the Thallain all agree that changeling society needs to fall in order for the rule of the Fomorians to rise, they don't all agree on exactly how to get there or what to do with the changelings once they succeed. Some posit subjugation, others execution; some seek to turn the tables, creating a second Shattering after shaping the Dreaming in their image, leaving all changelings in the Autumn World once and for all, and letting it all perish. Few truly wish to destroy the souls of other fae creatures, even if they are unseemly to the Thallain; they might be monsters, but

## KNOWN MEMBERS

Far-flung and often in flux as Banality takes its toll and new Thallain awaken, the members of the Black Court have their own ways of communicating, even over long distances. In need of Glamour as much as anyone else, members of the Court are often guardians of small freeholds hidden deep in the Far Dreaming, where they're unlikely to be disturbed. Last the Court has heard, five influential members are spread over the globe, their freeholds deep enough in the Dreaming to lead nearly anywhere in the Autumn World.

Fareia, a ghast of considerable reputation, claims one; the most isolated of the lot, she houses two other ghasts, both members of the Shadow Court but not its inner circle, and rarely enters the Autumn world herself anymore. Chiska, a kelpie currently without a lake to occupy, remains in his freehold within the Dreaming, and uses the underwater trods leading into it as a way to ensure his privacy. Ardentere, an exception to the rule, uses their ability as a mandragora to remain safely insulated while in the Autumn World, and travels often; they can reliably be found wherever mangroves grow. Elissa, a Siochain sluagh known more commonly as Disquiet, keeps her finger on the pulse of changeling society for the Black Court, learning all she can and filtering it off to the others and the rest of the Shadow Court as she sees fit.

Lastly, the current leader of the Black Court, a severtal by the name of Dominion, flits about changeling courts, never staying anywhere for long before returning to their freehold. Passing for one of the sidhe, they keep an eye out for suitable changelings to corrupt or wilders to sway to the cause before vanishing again and sending out their orders.

that doesn't mean they aren't pragmatic. Everyone and everything has its purpose, even in the chaos of nightmares. Sometimes, that purpose might just be as a sacrifice to appease an unforgiving god.

Differences of opinion lead to friction and division of Thallain population; the Black Court, willing to put aside such petty differences until they've actually succeeded, consider this infighting one of the largest setbacks in achieving



their goals. With grudges lasting multiple lifetimes and sabotage efforts leaving behind rippling collateral damage, the Court often finds one group has taken a step forward, only for another to take two steps back. Already, they've progressed from rumor to irritating truth to potential threat in the minds of a number of outside leaders. While closing their ranks protects them from investigation, it also cuts them off from pushing advantages or taking the next step after success. Always paranoid, they do what they can from the shadows, trying to set the stage for a definitive strike that will let them claim victory in a single, fell swoop.

## INTERACTING WITH THE BLACK COURT

Members of the Shadow Court have the biggest chance of running into the usurpers of the Black Court. Despite acting as pawns, the Thallain often reach out to find others to play in their own game. If they can convert changelings to their cause and radicalize them in support of the Fomorians, their goal of bringing about the never-ending nightmare comes one step

closer to reality. On the other side of that coin are the Seelie who have heard the rumors that the Thallain have returned, and hunt them to try to quash whatever dark rebellion they have in the works. In an effort to preserve changeling society as it is, they staunchly stand against the influence of their darker halves. As they see it, the Shadow Court's protests might at least have some merit, but the Black Court is nothing more than antagonists bent on destroying everything the Kithain changelings worked together to build. Changelings roped into working with the Black Court directly often don't realize just how awful their intentions are until it's too late.

Whether a changeling sides with or against the Black Court, encountering its supporters leads to a number of possibilities. Here are a few potential hooks.

- ⑤ The staunch Seelie leader of the local freehold has suddenly converted to the Unseelie Court. The rest of his motley is deeply concerned, and turns to the group of player characters as impartial outsiders to investigate their friend's sudden change. They're particularly concerned with his new charge, a peculiar boggan who





seems unusually unfriendly for the kind-hearted kith. A boggart in hiding, he's working for his superiors to claim the freehold for the Thallain.

- ⑤ At first, the martial arts studio seemed like a godsend: a place for children to learn how to constructively let out their anger and frustration, a way to get them to exercise, maybe even a place for the unruly ones to learn some discipline. It didn't take long for opinions to change. Spurred by their teacher, the students only grew more aggressive and destructive; the oldest, in their teens, followed his words as gospel, proving to others how "strong" they were by bullying and beating up others. The instructor, one of the huaka'i po, waits eagerly to summon them all for his first march through town.
- ⑤ The Unseelie population in a quiet suburban neighborhood is increasingly disenfranchised by the oppressive reign of the Seelie choking out everything else. When an enrapturing sidhe arrives, promising to give them the voice they deserve and help them fight back against the Seelie, they flock to her banner. Little do they know, they're pledging themselves to one of the sevartal.
- ⑤ Dreamers have been vanishing left and right in a normally quiet and pleasant town. While it's created havoc in the channeling community, it's sent shocks of terror through the mortals as well; reports of murders, complete with visceral descriptions of the victims missing internal organs, has them fearful of stepping outside. The police, without much to go on, are stumped, but the local Court knows someone is targeting Dreamers specifically. Hiding with a group of redcaps, a ghost watches his handiwork tear the community apart.
- ⑤ The lake at the edge of town was always a favorite spot for lazy summer visits and late-night bonfires. Changelings in particular loved it for the selkies that would stop by for the warm weather. This year, not a single one has gone in the water, and they're all packing up to leave barely a few days after arriving, saying only that it's changed and they won't come back until it's safe again. Unbeknownst to the locals, a kelpie has moved in to observe the Kithain, spurring stories of drownings in the lake and driving the selkies away.
- ⑤ As a "test community," the Thallain in an isolated changeling community have managed to take over and rule with an iron fist. The Dreaming nearby is wild and dangerous, interrupting the Silver Path and disturbing well-known trods. While the Fomorians have yet to make an appearance, the Minor Nightmare stands as a beacon to Thallain everywhere, proving their goals can be achieved. They hope that as more communities fall, their leaders will return.

## LIVING IN DENIAL

In any community, there are those who staunchly believe that certain things can't exist. No matter how much evidence stacks up, no matter what leaders or experts say, until they've seen it with their own two eyes (and maybe not even then), they refuse to entertain the possibility that the improbable is real. For a large number of commoners in the Seelie Court and a disturbing number of the lesser nobility, the malicious goals of Shadow Court are just one such concoction. Most regard the rumors as a mix of fear-mongering, conspiracy theory, and ancient superstition.

The Shadow Court, and those in support of the Black Court in particular, are more than happy to let them labor under their delusions, and even encourage it by spreading fabulously fabricated stories. Eager to maximize on such an easily exploitable form of camouflage, members laugh along with those who consider it an impossible notion, playing it up as a few commoners in the Unseelie Court with delusions of grandeur and a hero complex impressive even for wilders. While the rumors of corruption might be widely known, and some might take them seriously, knowing that as a whole changeling society regards the Thallain "court" as an old wives' tale tickles the Black Court. Changeling society and the Kithain are little more than such stories to the mortal world, after all, and yet they exist, too.

The commoners of the Seelie Court are far and away the largest group of deniers of the Black Court's existence. The idea that the Thallain, the monsters under childlings' beds, could possibly organize into a functioning faction? Preposterous. The notion that they could infiltrate and influence commoner-led grassroots organizations, and even change the Seelie laws and rules? Even more so. That some of them have managed to crack open the Deep Dreaming enough to allow enough of the nightmares through to create their own society? That's a hell of a punchline. Insulated from the Black Court's influence by their comfortable positions as commoners without much to risk, they can't imagine their nightmarish counterparts staging a coup; even if they live under a particularly despotic leader, they can't imagine such a thing could exist.

Ultimately for the Seelie, if there's to be change, it goes through the system. The system works, they tell themselves, and their leaders will hear them. If it didn't work, why would they have it at all? Doesn't the Dreaming back the sidhe, the Great Houses, the Parliament of Dreams? They believe there's nothing to be gained in the aggressive and self-serving tactics of the Unseelie, and can only imagine that a Court fabled to be entirely composed of the loosest cannons of the bunch would be a disorganized, ineffectual, unnecessary mess. There are so many things to be concerned



about above who's bothered by whom and who doesn't do things exactly as they would; the Shadow Court, to them, seems like an unnecessary waste of time and energy, and one they most often leave to its own devices.

Others who conflate the Black Court and Shadow Court deny that the Black Court exists simply on the grounds that no one would allow Thallain to enter power. That the Unseelie are banding together to "destroy the ruling class?" Even other Unseelie changelings aren't surprised to hear it. But that they follow a group of living, breathing nightmares who want to plunge their world back into a lawless wasteland dominated by the embodiment of humanity's darkest impulses and desires? That's where the story loses believers. That anyone would be willing to work with someone in support of the Fomorians is ridiculous. Even those in House Balor can't be that devoted to their ancestry, and they're some of the closest changelings to them. The difference between dream and nightmare might be a thin line, but the line exists, with changelings on one side and Thallain on the other. Crossing that line, even just to reach over and shake hands, is a taboo of the highest order. Anyone tainted in such a way would surely be easy to spot, so the theory goes, and subsequently easy to ostracize or bring to justice.

Perhaps the strangest of sources of denial of the Black Court come from the Unseelie and Shadow Courts themselves. The leaders within them, and obviously the Heads of House that attend Parliament, don't deny that the Shadow Court exists; they instead present a separate face of the Court to those whom they must confront. Unseelie sympathizers insist the Shadow Court is merely an organized vessel for the change they wish to enact, if a radical one. As no one can yet confirm that the Shadow Court has done anything particularly violent or destructive, the leaders of the Unseelie see no need to attempt to quash the movement growing under their governance. With the Thallain unwilling to nakedly display their ambitions to the Parliament of Dreams, the chairholder isn't lying to the Parliament when they say they know nothing about their influence within the Court. The Black Court makes absolutely sure to keep it that way, for their part.

Insisting they want nothing more than to be a voice of the people amongst the leadership who may not understand the commoner's plight, those that support the Shadow Court paint it in the best light possible. Aiming to assuage Seelie suspicion and tickle the Unseelie's self-starting tendencies, they legitimize the Shadow Court by denying the fears and exaggerations of believers, highlighting the good it's done so far and its clear position of impartiality. While some still doubt the validity of the Court and question whether its intentions are as good as its adherents claim, they can't deny the facts as they presently appear. Though the Shadow

Court appears to have disproportionate power as the final arbiter of a locked Parliament, no one can claim they've abused it to further one Court's agenda over the other, and their decisions each time have delighted the common folk, even if they infuriated other leaders.

## SAMHAIN

If the Shadow Court celebrates anything, it's Samhain. Hosting opulent and grandiose affairs that can last for up to a week leading to the night itself, the Court and its adherents celebrate all things Unseelie, specifically aiming to flout the Seelie fae that refuse to relinquish their power in the "dark half" of the year. Over time, it has incorporated a number of traditions surrounding the day and the changing of seasons, but its most notable influence has been that of All Hallows' Eve. Whether a single evening of celebration, a three-day bender, or a week's devotion to all things Unseelie, anyone attending Samhain festivities is expected to follow the traditions that embody the Unseelie Code.

While members of the Shadow or Unseelie Courts host the celebrations surrounding Samhain, any and all fae-blooded folk and even some allied Prodigals are welcome to join the festivities. Embracing the tenets of the Unseelie Code allows unprecedented interaction between changelings of all Courts, Houses, and social stations. Even if most conversations take place behind layers of obfuscation, both magical and mundane, few feel they have more agency and freedom to speak their minds than they do during this holiday. Not much is taken seriously by the masses during Samhain, which allows the Shadow Court to set their plans in motion, propose ideas to see how changelings react to them before attempting to put them in place, and feel out prospective members. According to tradition, joining the Shadow Court is something that can only be started or finished at Samhain, with the year in between acting as a kind of second Saining in which the changeling learns more about the Court's goals, ways, and purpose.

The best or at least most polite way to describe the festivities around Samhain is "unrestrained." Few things are off-limits during the celebration, and fewer attendees turned away. However, while the social order is upside-down and Mists cover many indiscretions besides, certain serious offenses may still be met with social reprisal or formal punishment. As such, anyone wishing to make waves under the nominal protection of Samhain celebrations is wise to be careful about their actions and intentions. Taking measures to distance themselves from the outcome and ensuring they aren't fingered as part of the planning is paramount to the most skilled schemers, who enjoy setting others up to fail or fall in their place. If nothing else, hiding behind masks and offering plentiful Glamour incentives quiets a number of concerns.



## THE TRADITIONS

During Samhain, each tenet of the code has a specific tradition tied to it, each strictly enforced. The host of a particular party can decide what does and doesn't count as embracing said traditions; while hospitality rules generally apply to anyone attending, hosts can deny entrance to anyone not in the "proper spirit" to join in. It's considered far more rude to crash a gathering unprepared to join in than it is to turn away someone inadequately prepared.

### CHANGE IS GOOD (THE TRADITION OF CONVICTION)

There would be no progress if there was no change. While the Seelie Court rolls their eyes at this core belief of the Unseelie and view it as their excuse to buck the system, most Unseelie changelings hold to this belief on a very personal level. Whether formally or informally, as a group expressing their desires to each other or something to be decided privately, every year on Samhain, participating changelings make either a large change to themselves or a resolution to do so through the following year. Seemings shift often on or near Samhain; changelings create, claim or bestow titles and positions of power; motleys break apart or form anew. Much like a New Year's resolution, changelings aim to alter some part of their life.

A good host warns anyone attending for the first time that, with the energy and magic surrounding Samhain, there's chance that any declarations made or promises sworn, even just to oneself, could be solidified and backed by the Dreaming itself. Any and all punishment and backlash for failing to follow through with a sworn oath applies to promises cemented by the Dreaming, and so changes promised on Samhain aren't taken lightly. Often they're the quietest and most sober portion of the evening, a moment for some introspection and soul-searching uninterrupted by the chaos and din of a party in full swing. Anyone unsure of what they'd like to change about their life often finds out over the course of the evening, even if they have nothing to declare at the "appointed" time.

### GLAMOUR IS FREE (THE TRADITION OF EXCHANGE)

Few occasions bring out such decadent displays of wealth as Samhain. Draped in glittering, Glamour-infused voile and dross from head to toe, any changeling attending a Samhain soiree is expected to be aware that anything they arrive with should be something they are willing to leave without. While cursory efforts are generally made to ensure that no one leaves with a drastically less (or more) valuable ensemble than they arrived with, passing items around, swapping clothing and jewelry, and either lifting or gifting items around is expected

of all in attendance. Fashion shows frequently take place over the course of the festivities to display how one's ensemble has evolved. With such a collection of Glamour in one place, Samhain celebrations are often held within freeholds or other locations where the Near Dreaming is more closely tied to the autumn world, and revels around balefires are among the most common celebrations.

Of course, as beings of Glamour themselves, some changelings have no issue offering themselves in a kind of exchange. A specific form of flirting and courtship centers around this tradition, with a common way to express interest in spending as few hours with another individual alone involves obviously taking something of theirs as the principle implies. Should the thief's object of interest take their same item back, they've declined the invitation and should be left in peace; however, taking something that belongs to the other person in exchange is a sign of interest and a request pursue things further.

### HONOR IS A LIE (THE TRADITION OF MASKS)

In a combination of Halloween costume and elaborate masquerade, Unseelie celebrants don masks for the duration of their Samhain festivities. How detailed and intricate the masks and costumes are vary by station, personal preference, and overall style, but the point is the same: to conceal the changeling's true face and nature. Honor is a lie, and the word of someone you can't identify is meaningless. As such, anyone wearing a mask is free to make whatever sweeping statements, broad promises, or false commitments they desire, without having to follow up on them later. (Use of Sovereign or Contracts to tie someone to their word during Samhain would be considered the height of rudeness, if it wasn't also simultaneously so perfectly Unseelie. Still, it's rare for someone to attempt such a thing more than once.) Boasting competitions are common, wherein participants either claim to have ever more grandiose possessions and resources, or spin wilder and wilder tales of their accomplishments.

A number of more prominent Unseelie Court members — and even Seelie changelings — enjoy this tradition as a way to spend some time with commoners they may not always rub elbows with. Lords and ladies, knights and dames, and all other manner of nobles can don any kind of disguise they wish and indulge themselves in ways that would be considered scandalous any other time of the year. Some still go by their same name, "claiming" to be the lord of the fiefdom and taking in the disbelieving laughter, knowing the next person to speak will surely claim to be King David himself.

### PASSION BEFORE DUTY (THE TRADITION OF EPIPHANY)

For the duration of Samhain festivities, Courty matters are generally shelved. Rumors abound that the leaders of





the Shadow Court do some business during this time, when everyone else is distracted, but most nobles consider them less of an organized resistance and more of a chaotic nuisance, and don't give the gossip much thought. The focus of the holiday is to forgo the usual trappings and responsibilities of everyday life and instead indulge in your deepest, wildest desires. Samhain, and the weeks leading up to it, are a time of fantastic creativity, and all changelings celebrating throw themselves down the Paths to Epiphany with reckless abandon. Revelry abounds, while Rapture and Reverie often go hand in hand as changelings both work to inspire themselves and their Dreamers. Flush with frights and parties, Dreamers produce plenty of Glamour as changelings sow the seeds for creations to come to fruition later in the winter.

The culmination of many Samhain celebrations is one most Seelie changelings turn a blind eye to: the Wyld Hunt. Beginning at midnight as October ends and November begins, it is a night of Ravaging and terrorizing mortals in the spirit of the season. Participating changelings set out in a raucous group to pull tricks, play pranks, haunt houses, and otherwise pillage whatever Glamour they can from anyone still out late. Protected by their masks, anyone who wishes to participate is welcome, though most Seelie changelings make it a point to retire sometime before things go too far.

## The Wyld Hunt

Before the Wyld Hunt begins, a leader must be chosen. Methods vary – the Huntsman, Huntress, or simply Huntmaster can declare themselves to be the leader of the hunt, a tournament can be held, or there may be an election to lead the Hunt that year. However it's determined, the leader of the Wyld Hunt declares its beginning, sets the path, and decides when it ends. (Unofficially, they also control just how brutal the Hunt will be.) Traditionally lasting until sunrise on November first, it has been known on occasion to end earlier or later, as per the Huntress' declaration. The leader of the Hunt is declared well before the Hunt itself begins, giving the Hunter plenty of time to prepare.

For most, the Hunt begins with a rough ceremony centered on clearly marking the leader, both physically and chimerically. Some of the more established hosts even have special voiles for the occasion, most commonly fur cloaks and horned masks or headdresses designed to look like animal skulls. (Depending on the host, they may actually be antlered skulls, carefully cleaned and crafted into something wearable.) The other changelings participating in the Hunt decorate the Hunter as part of the preparation, dressing them in whatever costume is available and marking their skin with Glamour-infused paint.



## PREDATOR OR PREY

Once the Wyld Hunt begins, the world falls into two categories: predators and prey. Simply put, participants are predators, and anyone not participating — other changelings included — count as prey. Anyone in the pack recognizes other members as predators, and won't target them throughout the night. Anyone outside the pack runs the risk of being hunted, and most changelings know to be indoors before the clock strikes midnight. Freeholds not participating leave offerings to encourage the Hunt to pass them by, ranging from food and drink to dress to simple offerings of cash. The most common targets for the Ravaging perpetuated by the Hunt are mortals wandering home after parties, or young adults causing trouble after dark. By tradition, hunters usually leave anyone wearing sufficiently impressive or elaborate makeup or costuming alone, but woe to those who don't display sufficient Samhain spirit!

While the Mists do away with the precise details of their encounters, and the sluggish return of Ravaged creativity gets chalked up to a nasty hangover, there's no erasing the entirety of the Wyld Hunt from a victim's mind. Conflicting reports range from a band of hooligans out to have a last hurrah for the evening to an actual pack of wild animals sweeping through town, depending on who is leading the Hunt and the kiths of those participating. The anonymity provided by the requirement of a mask shields participants from having anyone recognize them directly; indeed, for all of Samhain, the Mists and the Dreaming seem to work together to allow a bit more magic into the world without upsetting the delicate balance in place.

## JOINING AND RESISTING THE HUNT

Before the Hunt is declared, a changeling must decide whether or not she wants to join. Once the Hunt is declared it becomes a magnetic thing, still easy enough to pull away from, but with its own tantalizing promise. While changelings outside of the Hunt have the potential to become prey, they may also join the Hunt rather than face its wrath. Ravaging while with the pack is often compulsory, a fact upheld by the Dreaming as one of the Hunt's traditions, so many actively choose not to participate despite the risk to themselves. Unseelie changelings have a harder time resisting the siren call of their Code, while Seelie fae have a bit of an easier time abstaining from the nonetheless present lure of the Hunt.

The Huntress leading the pack has access to a special cantrip for the duration of the Hunt. A modified version of Dictum (Sovereign ••••, **Changeling: the Dreaming** p. 224), she may instead cast Conscript on any changeling as if she had Fae •• (Lofty Noble, **Changeling: the Dreaming** p. 233). The given order never changes; it is always simply

“Join the Hunt.” The difficulty for Unseelie changelings to resist is 9; the difficulty for Seelie changelings is 7. Any Seelie changelings that join the Hunt, either willingly or via Conscript, immediately act according to their Unseelie Legacy. Whether they revert back to their Seelie nature when the hunt is over is up to the player.

When casting Conscript, the player uses either the minimum numbers for the Art and Realm (4 and 2 respectively) or her own ratings in these, whichever is higher. Conscript can only ever be modified by adding the Scene Realm if the caster wishes to target more than one changeling; its primary Realm is always Fae. If the caster wishes to use the Time Realm, the activation must be set before the Hunt ends. If she declares the Hunt over before its activation, the cantrip fades and does not take effect. Successfully resisting and spending Willpower both function as per the Dictum cantrip.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

While outwardly a chance for celebration and an opportunity to flout the rigid and at times oppressive ways of the Seelie Court, Samhain masks a deeper purpose. While most Kithain simply throw themselves into revels, members of the Shadow Court meet away from prying eyes. Nowadays, two separate factions within the court lay out their plans: the Black Court, led by Thallain usurpers and supported by enthralled or particularly anarchic changelings, continue their mission to dismantle changeling society as it stands and to restore the Fomorian Dream. The so-called “New Generation” Unseelie who were dissatisfied enough to have formed and continued the Court instead focus on events they know they can protest, rallies they wish to hold, and other ways to force the Seelie Court's hand toward equality instead of the outdated, quasi-feudal system in place.

As part of these proceedings, changelings with differing amounts of fame, power, and influence meet to discuss plans of action and share the results of a year's worth of efforts. Members of connected cells discuss how best to undermine or unseat problematic lords and knights, comparing notes and discussing successes and failures; heads of Houses strike bargains on the policies to which they're willing to turn a blind eye, or how many fugitives they're willing to harbor if a coup or protest turns ugly. Each member has their limit for how much they're willing to risk before exposing themselves and how many of their people they'll sacrifice to further the “greater good.”

Alongside changelings meeting to further their agendas, Thallain have some time to celebrate themselves as they truly are. A number of nightmarish happenings center on the days and weeks leading up to Samhain, especially if the celebration itself is stretched out. The Wyld Hunt is



particularly enticing for certain Thallain; many of the dark reflections of the changeling kiths have destructive desires, and the opportunity to flex impulses they often have to suppress is a welcome experience. Severtal, the dark sidhe, are particularly fond of Samhain, during which unawakened changelings are easier to spot. With their ability to warp a changeling's Chrysalis to welcome her to the ranks of the Thallain, they seek to bolster their numbers as much as possible when the opportunity arises.

## THE MORNING AFTER

The traditional 'end' to Samhain is sunrise on the first of November. The Mists go to work on mortals' minds, obfuscating the odd occurrences surrounding the celebration, especially the Wyld Hunt. Glamour hangs around a bit longer, reminding changelings of their wilder moments. The leaders of the Courts — particularly Thallain — slink back into the shadows to watch their machinations unfold. New initiates grapple with their roles and responsibilities, and for some, reflection on their court's opinions and actions leads them to switch sides. Contrary to popular belief, some Unseelie changelings embrace the Seelie ways after Samhain; despite the Shadow Court's best efforts, things have a way of keeping a rough equilibrium across the two sides.

## JOINING THE SHADOW COURT

While tradition states that officially joining the Shadow Court can only happen during a Samhain celebration, simply declaring your intentions on a holiday doesn't magically open the door to a secretive organization. Anyone wishing to join the Shadow Court usually ends up doing some legwork, sniffing around their public gatherings and protests, and showing their support for the causes they champion. For some, this casual support is enough, and allows them to make excuses should they be questioned by anyone who doesn't approve. For others, even the public events held by the Court have clues that will lead them further and further along the path to joining.

The organizer of a small-profile rally later attends a much larger protest; the leader of that protest is at the crux of an expansive whisper network outing eccentric or abusive leaders; the other major vector in that network uses it to find recruits, if they can find him first. The Shadow Court doesn't come to its members. Prospective members must seek it out. If they aren't comfortable digging through a few layers and working in the dark they aren't likely to be a good fit anyway. As such, Seelie members of the Shadow Court are relatively unusual. The closest thing one might find is the occasional Shadow Court member in deep cover, posing as best they can as one of

the Seelie. Instilling anyone posing as a Seelie changeling in a prominent position (anything denoted by the Title background) is all but impossible, as their true nature is difficult to hide.

Once a prospective member has proved himself adept enough to be a worthwhile addition to the Shadow Court, a current member "sponsors" the newcomer. Depending on how long the initiate has been following the path laid out by the Court for new members to follow, her induction on Samhain can have varying levels of formality, explanation, and expectation. Even those pursuing the trail for the better part of a year are treated the same after their induction. All new members pass through two separate welcomes to the Court. In the first, their sponsor declares their intent to take the changeling in, and agrees to teach her acolyte the ways of the Court. For the next year, the acolyte assists her sponsor in whatever ways they ask, learning along the way any codes, cants, and encoded messages the Court uses locally to communicate without being intercepted.

Once the year has passed and Samhain arrives again, the Court has a more elaborate ritual to welcome the new member into the fold. She joins the local leaders away from the rest of the festivities, where they bestow upon her whatever title they wish. In keeping with Samhain tradition, the title itself doesn't mean much beyond that she's a member of the Court. It's common practice every year to swap or change titles, to remind everyone of how fleeting and pointless such claims truly are. From that day on, the newcomer receives her own assignments much like the ones she assisted her sponsor with, and she can begin to enact any of her own plans she may have come up with during her year of training. As she builds connections and acclaim within the Court, she can call upon newer members to assist her, and can sponsor newcomers herself if she so chooses.

## BACKGROUNDS, MERITS, AND FLAWS

Joining the Shadow Court presents a number of unique opportunities to a changeling. It puts her in unprecedented contact with some of the darkest parts of the Dreaming, whether she realizes it or not. Sometimes such exposure changes her in ways she could never anticipate.

### DARK REPUTATION (SHADOW COURT BACKGROUND)

As a changeling's influence in the Shadow Court grows, she can use those newer to the organization to further her own schemes. While it doesn't have formal ranks, exactly, a member's reputation still carries weight. The more you've risked, suffered, and achieved for the cause, the more other members are likely to know your name, work to attach their names to your reputation, and follow your orders. Likewise,



the more influence someone has within the Court, the more powerful and useful fae who snap to attention when one calls. Though it may seem a fractured and fraught organization to an outsider, members of the Shadow Court will do nearly anything to help each other. The phrase “thick as thieves” has been used more than once to describe the group, in both complimentary and derogatory ways.

Note that while your reputation may allow you to take advantage of other Court members in the short term, abusing fellow members for your own amusement or misusing Court resources for personal gain will *definitely* catch up to you – and it’s not going to be pleasant when it does. Thus, influential members learn to exercise their authority carefully, saving it for when it’s necessary as opposed to lording it over their fellow revolutionaries every chance they get.

- **New Blood:** You’re a full member of the Court and have just started to make a name for yourself. Changelings seeking sponsors or in their year of sponsorship jump to help your cause.
- • **Veteran:** You’ve been around, and suffered some for the sake of the Court. New initiates seeking to gain experience are eager to help you.
- • • **Revolutionary:** Your name is starting to circulate beyond the regional level, and others often look to you for leadership if none is already established. Well-established members of the Shadow Court are willing to lend you a hand for some *quid pro quo*. The Black Court has noticed you, but is unlikely to have approached you yet unless you seem like you would a sympathetic ally – or useful pawn.
- • • • **Mastermind:** You’re a major player in a significant aspect of Court business, whether that means a specific geographic region or a certain type of activity (e.g., public relations or sabotage). Leaders of the Shadow Court are eager to hear what you come up with next and help you fuel your machinations. You probably know at least a bit about the Black Court at this level, though you may not know the full extent of their influence, and they definitely have designs on you (for better or worse).
- • • • • **Icon:** Only the newest and most clueless recruits don’t know your name, and you can set Court policy in motion just by showing up and saying a few words. Any member of the Shadow Court and many allied Unseelie fae are willing to do your bidding, up to and including dukes and duchesses, just to be in your good graces. It’s all but certain you know about the Black Court, which in turns means you’re either a partner to their agenda or their sworn foe within the Shadow Court – you’re too influential for them to simply let you stay on the sidelines.

## UNSEEN MASTERS (SHADOW COURT BACKGROUND)

You may not know precisely whom you serve, but you know they look out for you while you do their bidding. The major movers and shakers in the Shadow Court have a vested interest in keeping their charges safe and well-supplied to carry out their plans, and while they may test newer members of the Court, it’s never with malicious intent. Those who wield more authority look out for the ones with less, and will offer guidance or lend a hand if called upon. The more a changeling works with and for the Court, the more others are willing to help her out in return. Of course, nothing is without a price; the more favor a changeling gains with the Court, the more dangerous and incendiary her assignments become. This Background assumes that you have a relatively secure and definitely anonymous means by which your masters contact you to pass on information, instructions, and support. Whether you have a way of contacting them without them reaching out first, of course, is another story entirely.

While it’s technically possible that this Background doesn’t entail the involvement of the Black Court, realistically speaking given their extensive infiltration of the highest levels of the Shadow Court, any rating higher than 3 dots almost certainly means they are involved in some way. It’s simply difficult to find such powerful masters in the Shadow Court that aren’t involved with them, whether they know it or not. As ever, while you may offer suggestions, the Storyteller has the final say on who these masters are... and what they ultimately want from you.

- Someone on the inside is looking out for you. You receive advice and the occasional minor favor.
- • Someone has declared himself your mentor. You reliably receive minor aid and equipment.
- • • The head of a large network has taken you under their wing, and shares her knowledge with you.
- • • • A spy installed as the leader of a court favors you, and offers the resources of their kingdom.
- • • • • The Black Court are your peers; anything you wish to know is yours ... if you stay loyal.

## THALLAIN BLESSING (2 PT SUPERNATURAL MERIT)

Your dealings with the Shadow Court and exposure to the darker sides of Kithain legends have allowed you to tap into the nightmares commonly associated with your kith. You may replace one of your current Birthrights with one of the Endowments associated with your kith’s Thallain cousins. (Boggans can borrow from boggarts, eshu from aithu, etc.) You must be sworn to the Unseelie Court to benefit from this Merit; if the changeling aligns herself with the Seelie



Court, she reverts to her usual Birthrights and this Merit is refunded, even if she later returns to the Unseelie Court.

## THALLAIN CURSE (3 pt SUPERNATURAL FLAW)

Dealing with your darker cousins has its drawbacks. Too much time spent amongst nightmares means your personality begins to resonate with theirs. Changelings with this Flaw take on both their kith's Frailty and their Thallain Vulnerability. While this Flaw can only originally be acquired by an Unseelie changeling, it persists even if she changes Courts.

## SECRET SOCIETIES

The lives of the Kithain are rife with bonds of all varieties: kinship with one's own kith, the social ties of one's motley, the political connections of Court and kingdom. Secret societies are a naturally occurring outgrowth of that socially interconnected complexity, covering everything from genuinely secret cabals of spies and assassins to separatist political collectives to arts-and-science communes. Some such groups are genuinely secret, others operate quite openly, but each has a profound impact on Kithain culture.

## THE OATHBOUND

*"By sea and sky, by mountain and forest and plain, by the mighty rivers and great deserts, I give my honor and my life to the service of Concordian Dream, to the Oath that sustains it, to the throne that serves it. May the Dream itself forsake me should I foreswear or betray my vow and the silver flame of the Well consume all that I am or will be."*

The disappearance of the High King and his subsequent years-long absence taught his sister, Queen Regent Morwen, many harsh lessons. The cruelest one by far was that even those she believed most loyal to her brother's vision of a united Concordia failed him in his darkest hour. The alliances David spent his life forging crumbled without his leadership, and the realm descended into chaos and nearly civil war the instant his hand lifted from the reins. In the wake of David's return, it became her driving goal to secure the foundations of both the throne and of Concordia itself, especially once the mental and emotional scars became apparent in the High King's demeanor.

Morwen long suspected that her brother's disappearance resulted from the work of malefactors within King Meilge's court, and so she began the long process of building the resources necessary to investigate her suspicions. Poignantly aware of the need for subtlety, she called upon a childhood friend, Allanyn Seera ap Fiona, Duke of Westerlyn in the Kingdom of Northern Ice, to do what she, due to the high visibility and close scrutiny afforded to her as David's sister, could not.

With the additional assistance of Queen Faerylith, Duke Allanyn built Concordia's first official covert intelligence agency, and its first agents set about executing their duties, acting as diplomats and investigators where conflicts over resources and territory arise, hoping to contain small issues before they could grow larger. To date, the pattern they have uncovered in their investigations is deeply alarming. Underlying the expected internecine squabbles over access to resources, the organization has found evidence of deliberate efforts to inflame those conflicts, some instances even involving the poisoning or outright destruction of sources of Glamour. Many agents strive to root out the fundamental causes of these conflicts, working in pairs or trios to mend the fraying unity of Concordia.

Some agents even believe that the Dark-Kin are not just coming, they are *already here* to herald Fimbulwinter and distort the Dreaming into nightmares. They suspect the Shadow Court has betrayed the Dream itself in the pursuit of power, but have been unable to infiltrate any significant echelon of the Court. Their predominant mission is to find credible intelligence on the precise dimensions of the Adhene threat, the depth of their infiltration of Concordia, which of the Dreaming's many children support them, and to what extent.

## MEMBERSHIP

Members of the Oathbound hail from both the Seelie and Unseelie Courts, drawn from all kiths (though weighted somewhat more heavily towards commoners than sidhe). Agents most often work in teams of two to six to achieve concrete objectives, be they diplomatic, investigative, infiltrative, or aggressive.

- ☉ **Duke Allanyn Seera ap Fiona**, an Autumn Unseelie sidhe from the Kingdom of Northern Ice, and head of the organization. He is widely considered a charmingly useless and unambitious scoundrel without two concurrent politically savvy thoughts in his head. This mask has permitted him to function as a spy and agent provocateur for both Queen Laurel and Queen Morwen for years without raising suspicions.
- ☉ **Dame Moira Bloodaxe**, a Seelie redcap and experienced Adhene hunter on loan from the court of Count Gut Splicer.
- ☉ **Sir Scathan Valcour ap Ailil**, an Unseelie sidhe diplomat/politician, occasional spy, rumored assassin, and widely known and feared duelist, who may be the organization's best shot at infiltrating the Shadow Court.

## RITUALS AND RITES

The members of the Oathbound observe no particular rites or rituals. Their physical meetings are pragmatic events intended to ease the exchange of information otherwise





too sensitive to be entrusted to potentially insecure cellular phone networks or enchanted parchment. Individual task groups may develop their own rituals or participate in local observances as they wish.

## BOON

The nature of the Oathbound's mission — protecting the Concordian Dream against enemies foreign and domestic — grants them a certain... moral flexibility in the eyes of the Escheat. When a member of the Oathbound is forced to kill another changeling — be they Kithain, Gallain, Thallain, or even Adhene — during the faithful execution of their duties, they do not incur Banality.

## BAN

By way of contrast, the members of the Oathbound are also held to a high standard. Failure to act in the defense of a changeling in peril per the Right of Rescue or the Right of Safe Haven triggers Banality.

## RECRUITMENT

The Oathbound thoroughly vets all recruits well in advance of first contact. They select their candidates from individuals whose loyalty to Concordia is beyond reproach and who resolve to preserve the Dream by any means

necessary, including the sacrifice of their personal honor, reputation, or very lives.

**Mechanical Requirements:** The members of the Oathbound can possess any combination of Arts and Realms, tend to favor Social and Mental Attributes, and Skills and Knowledges above raw Talent. Broad Contact pools among individuals of social, political, and diplomatic import are an absolute must.

## THE CAT'S CRADLE

*"By the skeins of Danu that bind our fates together as one, by the blood in my veins and the breath in my lungs, I swear myself to the purpose and goals of the Cat's Cradle and to the service and safety of my sisters."*

The Cat's Cradle predates the establishment of Concordia. It began as a mutual aid and comfort organization in the aftermath of the Shattering for women thrust into the role of rulers in the wake of the sidhe's flight from Earth, and persisted for centuries afterwards. Members of the Cradle contracted sorcerers to repair and reconnect broken trod networks, sponsored expeditions to locate lost freeholds and reignite their balefires, and hired hunters to put down dangerous feral chimera, Dark-Kin, and the new threat of the Dauntain. They supported one another, protected each other's domains against the relentless tide



of Banality, forged strategic alliances with the Gallain, Thallain, and other Prodigal children of the Dreaming, struggled together, celebrated together, mourned together.

And then the Arcadian sidhe returned.

The Accordance War broke out, conflict swept the world, and the ancient ties of friendship and alliance that held the Cradle together frayed. When the fires died down again, it was clear to the Cradle's leadership that, in order to prevent such a conflict occurring again, women of the Arcadian sidhe would need to be offered a seat at the table. Young Queen Mab of the Kingdom of Apples and Lady Sierra, consort of the late and unlamented Daffyl, were approached by the Cradle's commoner leadership for inclusion, an offer which they both accepted. Within a decade, the ennobled commoners and Autumn sidhe found themselves marginalized inside their own organization, allocated to the task of maintaining extant alliances and necessary commoner outreach but otherwise disregarded as the Arcadian sidhe waxed ascendant.

The High King's return cooled the internal conflicts somewhat, but in many ways, the Cat's Cradle has not yet recovered. Recognizing her own culpability in the near-destruction of the organization, Queen Mab has withdrawn into an advisory role, still respected but no longer a leading voice in policy, her own biases laid entirely too bare in the eyes of her sisters. Countess Anne, still Unseelie but far more disciplined after a personal trial by fire, has stepped forward in her stead and insisted that commoner noblewomen have a greater role in setting goals, especially since their rule is the most endangered by resurgent Traditionalists attempting to strip them of their ranks and domains. A recruitment drive attempts to bring beleaguered commoners and Autumn sidhe into the Cradle, particularly in places where the proponents of the Beltaine Blade hold sway.

## MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Cat's Cradle is open to women only, including non-binary and female-identified individuals, and specifically noblewomen (including ennobled commoners) of both Courts, weighted slightly more heavily to the Seelie end of the spectrum. Prominent members of Cat's Cradle are, in general, more likely to be rumored than publicly known — they consider certain terms of the Escheat to be *guidelines* more than *laws* and are perfectly willing to transgress ones they consider onerous to the greater goal of preserving the safety and security of the Kithain as a whole. Suspected members include:

- ☞ **Countess Anne ni Eiluned**, a known troublemaker and, as she puts it, “a troll for social justice — except I'm not actually a troll.”

- ☞ **Countess Rhona McCready ni Scathach**, one of the few members of her House to hold an actual title, bestowed by Queen Laurel for her decades of service hunting dangers in the cold dark and now operating a salon to train others in doing the same.

- ☞ **Countess Annabelle Mendoza ni Fiona**, a boggan whose restaurants serve food enchanting in a variety of ways and whose political acumen is regularly underestimated but shouldn't be.

- ☞ **Baroness Talora Balliet ni Dougal**, a troll craftswoman renowned for her skills as a smith with a client list that includes half the nobility in Concordia and abroad.

## RITUALS AND RITES

The Cat's Cradle officially gathers twice a year, once during the summer solstice and once during the winter. All members in a given region gather to exchange news and gossip, fellowship, and good food. Business is inevitably and surreptitiously conducted during these celebrations, encouraging the growth of genuine friendships and political alliances alike.

## BOON

Members of the Cat's Cradle may call upon any other member, without notice or warning, to seek shelter and support for *any* reason — up to and including breaking clauses of the Escheat.

## BAN

The members of the Cat's Cradle may not yield the identities of their sisters to any temporal authority — doing so is a violation of their Oath in the eyes of the Dreaming.

## RECRUITMENT

The Cradle aggressively recruits ennobled commoners and Autumn sidhe targeted by efforts to delegitimize their rule, but any Kithain noblewomen of the requisite temperament and desire to protect their people are welcomed.

**Mechanical Requirements:** The members of the Cat's Cradle can have any combination of Arts and Realms. Though they do tend to recruit sorceresses (changelings who possess at least one Art at 5 and another at 4), this is not actually a requirement of membership. They favor Mental and Social Attributes, Skills, and Backgrounds, such as Contacts and Mentor, that enable the development of broad defensive political coalitions, but they do not scorn martial abilities in their members.



## Common Rights Society

*"To this cause do we pledge our lives and our honor: peace, safety, and equality for all the children of the Dreaming, self-governance under the boot of no king, justice under the Escheat."*

The Common Rights Society rose from the chaos and strife that befell Concordia after the disappearance of the High King. Discontent among the oppressed and newly disenfranchised took root and festered, revolutionary sentiment blossomed, and the heavy hand of authority – mostly sidhe authority – fell to quell it, harsh, fearsome, and frequently indiscriminate. By the time traditionalist forces within Kithain society began advocating a "temporary" rollback of all Concordian political reforms, including stripping ennobled commoners of their titles and all commoners of their freeholdings, the situation simmered on the edge of outright rebellion. The Duchy of Liberty's Heart, fed as it was by the Fire of Liberty's Dream, became a hotbed of revolutionary commoner activity.

The Common Rights Society coalesced out of the remains of several smaller organizations, disgusted by the nobility's focus on the retention and reclamation of titles, land, and power. What good were any of those things if the foundation they were built on was rotten from the start? Hereditary nobility, even commoner nobility, had clearly failed to govern competently, hoarding resources that should rightfully belong to the Kithain as a whole and enforcing the Escheat only as a bludgeon. What the Kithain need, the founders of the Society asserted, was not more advantage in the current hierarchy but to break the current hierarchy entirely and start over again with something better. A genuine meritocracy, a system of elected officials wherein leadership, not rulership, was apportioned to those who had proved themselves competent at the task and who could be replaced if they failed or relocated if their skills were needed elsewhere. Neither kith, nor Court, nor seeming should keep someone from being heard or having their natural rights upheld.

Dismissed as radicals by the majority of their compatriots at the Congress, the newly minted Common Rights Society nonetheless attracted both attention and adherents, particularly among the most shell-shocked, disenfranchised, and ferociously modernist. The duke himself found their arguments compelling and used his position to amplify them as a possible solution to a number of smaller-scale political impasses, to determine if the approach could work in a larger context. Hysterical denunciations from both traditionalists (who saw this as nothing more or less than asking the sidhe to accept the diminishment of their own Dream to the point of destruction, as well as the inevitable end of their own jealously guarded power) and embittered commoner revolutionaries (who objected to a titled sidhe

staking such an open "claim" to a commoner-developed political stance, even if they didn't agree with it) immediately followed. The duke's beleaguered security apparatus fended off no less than three visits from associates of the Beltaine Blade over the course of the next few months and the elected leadership of the Common Rights Society itself were forced to flee a similar quantity of attention, not always successfully.

It was this lack of success that led them, ironically, to one of their greatest achievements as an organization. During the course of their flight, their collective egalitarian goals and desperate wishes for safety opened an ancient trod that had slept for centuries, awaiting just such a confluence of needs. That trod carried them to the gates of the Court of All Seasons, an equally ancient freehold, where the Oath-Truce that ended the War of Seasons in the long years of the Sundering had been sworn and witnessed and many other vows besides.

Founded as a space of peace and safety between the Courts and their deadly politics, the oaths and dreams and magic that had sustained it proved strong as the Society's members crossed its borders and found their pursuers unable to follow, turned aside in some cases and struck down in others. Shocked, but safe and protected, the leaders of the society realized they had received a rare gift: acknowledgement from the Dreaming that their ideals had value and their goals held merit. They continue to make use of that gift to this day.

## MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Common Rights Society is open to any being of the Dreaming willing to declare support for their goals.

Known members of the Common Rights Society include:

- ⑤ **Ravindiran Kalluri**, an eshu scholar and historian, currently deeply engaged in investigating the Court of All Seasons and the tantalizing mysteries it contains.
- ⑤ **Red Sarah O'Roark**, a wandering clurichaun DJ and musician who makes use of the Kithain festival circuit to spread the Society's word.
- ⑤ **Jennet Toefting**, a boggan restaurateur whose test kitchen-slash-freehold serves as a secondary safehouse for Society members in need of shelter and a hot meal.
- ⑤ **Kimber Delivorias ni Dougal**, an Autumn sidhe horticulturist, landscape architect, and sorceress whose expertise is in considerable demand when it comes to the design and defense of freeholds, services she offers gratis to some and channels the proceeds from others to the support of the Society.



## RITUALS AND RITES

The Common Rights Society has an official policy of disdain for such exclusionary things as members-only rituals. Their meetings are open to any Kithain who wishes to attend and all are permitted a voice in the proceedings.

## BOON

The members of the Common Rights Society possess access to the Court of All Seasons, an ancient freehold in the form of a tower, surrounded by the crumbling remains of a faerie thorpe of old. No being of ill intent, unwilling to abide by the peacebond that keeps the Court free of worldly violence, may enter into it.

## BAN

In keeping with their acceptance by the Court of All Seasons, the members of the Common Rights Society are likewise peacebound: its members may do no violence to any other Kithain. Doing so causes them to be exiled from the Court until they have made restitution for their acts.

## RECRUITMENT

The Society recruits those who believe in absolute equality of all kiths, Seemings, and courts, and who wish to establish an egalitarian meritocratic society which does not restrict access to the Dreaming. This includes sidhe, civilized sorts of Thallain, and the Gallain. They draw the line, however, at admitting Adhene, as the Dark-Kin are unremittably hostile to the Tuathan Dream and its allies.

**Mechanical Requirements:** Society members have begun actively searching for Kithain with deep knowledge of the Arts of Contract and Chronos. They tend to favor Social and Mental Attributes and a broad variety of Skills, Knowledges, and Talents. They prefer not to encourage physical confrontation or violence but that doesn't mean they can't defend themselves if necessary.

## JEDAO'S HOUSE OF WONDERS

*"Swanning around the country in a broomstick skirt driving an ancient VW bus rescued from the scrapyard is all well and good, but here, we value and support the need for greater structure, swear our loyalty to one another and to the Dreaming, and give shelter to all who seek it within our walls."*

Concordia's premier commoner-owned and -operated house of chimerical design, Jedao's House of Wonders was founded in the mid-90s by Jedao Wintersmith. Newly graduated from the Chicago School of Art and Design and having freshly undergone the Chrysalis and emerged as a nocker, his House of Wonders was an answer to deficient

organized and institutional support for Kithain creatives. When posed the question of offering such support, Queen Mary Elizabeth of the Kingdom of Grass was sympathetic enough to assist in the establishment of the House of Wonders as its first (but not last) royal patron. Her support garnered Jedao a spark from Tara-Nar, giving life to the balefire of the new freehold, housed in an "abandoned" industrial building renovated to serve as living, working, and production spaces to all seeking its sanctuary.

The first residents of the House of Wonders came from the ranks of other fae designers and engineers suffering difficulties fitting in elsewhere, many of whose structural-rationalist creative processes and methods were derided as *too banal* by their more traditionally creative peers. In Jedao's House, their properly-nurtured intellectual and artistic visions flourished, and before long, the wonders the House of Wonders produced were in hot demand.

The House of Wonders rapidly became *the* source for personal-use, Kithain-flavored electronics, from old-school personal computers to modern smart devices, as well as the operating systems that ran them and the apps that ran on them. Designers specializing in voile scored a massive coup when they won the right to design the wedding trousseau for Queen Laurel of the Kingdom of Northern Ice. The surge of interest in chimerical *haute couture* that followed Laurel's wedding continues to echo throughout the Dreaming, fueling feverish creativity all over Concordia and beyond. A small but dedicated cadre of sorcerer-engineers specialize in advanced magical architectural principles, and diligently works to advance modern freehold design and maintenance, as well as working on the repair and revitalization of existing freeholds. The newest creative additions to the House are several dedicated video game designers, whose casual gaming releases have taken Concordia by storm as they work on their first significant project.

Traditional craftspersons are welcomed to the House of Wonders with the same enthusiasm as their more cutting-edge brethren. A thriving community of toymakers calls the organization home, specializing in cunning clockwork figures and fiercely protective stuffed animals, as well as designing toys that tend to develop into fully-fledged chimerical companions as they grow in complexity. Respected smiths design armors and weapons of outstanding quality and a small but elite school of fine artists produces beautiful, functional *objets d'art* that grace the homes of kings and commoners alike.

The House of Wonders stands as a bastion against both the tide of Banality and the cold brutality of Kithain political struggles, open to any who would share not only their dreams and visions but also their skills with the rest of the world.



## MEMBERSHIP

Members of the House of Wonders come from all over Concordia, drawn by the welcoming community, the security of royal patronage, and the temptation of fulfilling their own passions. By size and importance, the collective qualifies as a Barony at the very least, but the group has not elected to accept a noble title for any individual. They select their representative in Queen Mary Elizabeth's court by ballot: interested parties declare their candidacy, the body of membership votes, and the successful representative serves for two years. **Jedao** himself has only served as the royal representative twice, as he is generally too busy with his chimerical robotics projects to pay any attention to politics. **Jesse Redmane**, a Seelie redcap sculptor renowned for the visceral impact of her aesthetic, currently holds the position of representative and serves with uncommon distinction.

Other members of the collective include:

- ⑤ **Genevieve Revier ni Fiona**, a sidhe wilder who oversees the collective's weekly workshops on the principles of chimerical computing. A skilled game designer and coder, she also runs the collective's monthly gaming tourney, in which the residents field test their products in head-to-head competition.
- ⑤ **Amariya Saadauri**, an eshu grump and professional writer with a variety of pseudonyms. She hosts the collective's summer residency program for aspiring genre writers, generally held at a local campground with which they have a cooperative agreement.

## RITUALS AND RITES

As a general rule, the residents of the House of Wonders are not particularly inclined to ritual. They do, however, hold numerous open-to-the-public events throughout the calendar year.

- ⑤ **Fashion Week:** Twice-yearly at Beltaine and Samhain, designers showcase their seasonal trends for the dark and light halves of the year. These events are frequented by the glitterati of Concordia, which solidifies the House's reputation as trendsetters entirely worth the prices they charge (in dross and currency) for their original designs.
- ⑤ **Faery Festival:** The month-long Faery Festival occurring around Midsummer supports and showcases traditional crafts on specially-leased land. Each Festival features a purpose-built "faeryground," the design for which is a hotly contested honor competed for among the local freeholds.
- ⑤ **Kristkindlmarkt:** A Midwinter toy and gift show of unparalleled magnificence, Kristkindlmarkt features products crafted by fae from across the Midwest, food and drink worthy of a goblin market, and music by local Kithain musicians.

Additionally, individual members stage numerous smaller events, like gallery shows and open-air markets, and attend arts festivals and design conferences throughout the year.

## BOON

In addition to exclusive ownership of their freehold and workspace, members of the House of Wonders enjoy the royal favor and protection of Queen Mary Elizabeth and, to a lesser extent, House Dougal. Additionally, nobles from all over Concordia owe the collective a considerable number of personal favors as part of their payments for services rendered.

## BAN

Royal favor comes with a price: no member of the House of Wonders may refuse a contract from a member of Queen Mary Elizabeth's court, excepting instances where the contract may potentially lead to violations of the Escheat.

## RECRUITMENT

The House of Wonders recruits Kithain creatives of all kiths, seemings, and courts. It seeks out artists who require a more structured and supportive environment in which to create, who wish to live more or less full-time in such an environment, and who are willing to move to the Kingdom of Grass in order to obtain it.

**Mechanical Requirements:** House of Wonders members may possess any combination of Arts and Realms and any distribution of Attributes. They tend to possess high ratings in such Abilities as Empathy, Expression, Crafts, Performance, and any Knowledge. Members must possess at least a 4 and preferably a 5 in Hobby Talent, Professional Skill, or Expert Knowledge.

## THE CRYSTAL CIRCLE

*"For the Dream that sustains us, this we swear: to find what was lost, to make whole what was broken, to ward what remains, to stand against that which would unmake us. For nothing shall we abandon our duty: not King, not kith, not the coming of Endless Night and Winter. This we swear for the good of all who came before us and will come after us."*

The Crystal Circle is the foremost organization of Kithain scholars, sorcerers, and mystics of all varieties. Originally formed to function as investigators into the secrets and dangers of the Dreaming, the Crystal Circle remains an apolitical organization, devoted to scholarship and exploration with the occasional flashy do-gooder in the ranks to liven up their reputation among the Kithain at large. Much of the Circle's work revolves around exploring networks of ancient, half-broken trods that crisscross the Near Dreaming and attempting to repair or reroute them,





searching out lost or forgotten freeholds and restoring them to life, making contact with the many scattered kiths of the Gallain and Thallain, as well as the expected study of Glamour and its applications through the lens of the Arts. Its members serve as advisors to the crowned heads of the world, some even the formal “court sorcerers,” figures of romance that find their ways into popular novels and ballads, their mastery of obscure and difficult Arts the pivots around which plots and verses turn.

When King David disappeared, so did the shield of neutrality protecting the Circle. Publicly identified members found themselves fending off amoral and ambitious nobles of Concordia attempting to recruit them into their squabbles and plots. Many felt forced to flee into exile. The return of the High King, and the subsidence of outright hostilities, was a desperate relief to most of the Circle’s members.

Since then, the Circle has taken those lessons to heart. No longer trusting any individual monarch or patron to insure the sanctity of their neutrality, the Circle has established a redoubt of their own in the Near Dreaming, separate from the Geomantic Heart. They have also seriously reconsidered their prior stance with regard to the Court affiliation of their members, having found themselves pressured to contravene their own Oaths and ethics by just and virtuous Seelie rulers seeking political or personal advantage. A select handful of Unseelie sorcerers,

all of them colleagues who offered fugitive members of the Circle shelter and assistance, have been invited to join and the Circle currently debates the possibility of opening their ranks to more, mindful that they have deliberately blinded themselves to the wisdom to be found in the dark and the cold. Otherwise, they have turned their hands back to their former tasks, though they are now far more aware that their scholarship has a perilous edge. As a consequence, Circle members have become significantly less willing to share research outside their own ranks.

## MEMBERSHIP

The members of the Crystal Circle occupy a strange place in Kithain culture. On the one hand, they frequently turn up as either dashing heroes or wise advisors in ballads and popular serials, always ready with a witty quip, a magical gewgaw, or an appropriate spell for any occasion. On the other, reality tends to be significantly less glamorous, though they do have their share of oversized personalities in the ranks, along with the expected dusty conservative greybeards, harried research nerds with terrible time management skills, and deeply knowledgeable specialists in things no Kithain was meant to comprehend who haven’t slept soundly for years.

Known members of the Crystal Circle include:



- ⑤ **“Duke” Guile**, also known as the Scarlet Sorcerer, an unlanded sidhe nobleman and flashily romantic ne’er-do-wrong who has done as much to set the image of the Circle as any, which inclines his colleagues to ignore his many sexual peccadilloes and somewhat sloppy work ethic.
- ⑤ **Rhynn MacKenna ap Scathach**, a recent recruit, whose unexpected inheritance of a House Treasure unlocked a deep store of memory and insight stretching into the Time of Legends.
- ⑤ **Bella Luna**, the eldest and most eminent sorceress in the Circle, a sluagh oracle and dreamwalker possessed of incredible clarity of vision.
- ⑤ **Antiope Tzivas**, a magpie pooka sorceress and master of Naming.

## RITUALS AND RITES

The Crystal Circle meets annually on Beltaine for high ritual workings. Soothsayers assemble at Caer Astra in the Duchy of High Mountains, imbibe vision-enhancing substances, and gaze deeply into the Dreaming sky beyond the snow-capped peaks, seeking glimpses of the future. Visions that come swift and clear to multiple seers receive the greatest attention — the Circle still bitterly regrets not acting on visions of the High King’s disappearance, and blames itself for the chaos that followed.

Social or projects-oriented groups meet on a regular basis to exchange information, rumors and innuendo, and new techniques. Some formalize their schedules to sync with seasonal milestones and others meet when something can be arranged. In a genuine emergency, all of the members of the Circle possess a minor treasure enchanted to allow them to contact all of their fellows in the immediate area.

## BOON

The Crystal Circle enjoys an assurance of neutrality in all the domains under Kithain rule, enforced by the binding will of the Dreaming in the form of their Oath, free from worldly violence and interference in their affairs.

## BAN

Members of the Crystal Circle are forbidden to hold more than honorary noble titles or to involve themselves in the affairs of politics or governance, as these are a source of conflict and distract from the Circle’s focus on scholarship and the execution of their most important responsibilities.

## RECRUITMENT

The Crystal Circle recruits from all kiths and primarily from the Seelie Court, though they have recently invited a

select few Unseelie sorcerers whose character and probity are sufficiently trustworthy to join their ranks. If this experiment pans out, the intent is to be more open to the consideration of Unseelie members going forth, subject of course to the Circle’s entry requirements and said recruit’s willingness to swear the Circle’s Oaths of service to the Dreaming. Most of its members are wilders and grumps, due primarily to the degree of arcane mastery necessary to meet the requirements of entry, but the Circle is not inherently biased against the admission of childling prodigies — there have, after all, been a few in the past.

**Mechanical Requirements:** The Crystal Circle’s members each hold absolute mastery of at least one Art (•••••) and significant command of a second (••••). They tend to favor Mental Attributes and Knowledges, and many have at least a few dots in such Backgrounds as Remembrance and Treasure.

## THE BELTAIN BLADE

*“By the blood in our veins and the silver fire in our spirits, by the blades in our hands and the magic on our lips, we shall take back what is ours by the will of the Dreaming, and none shall stand against us.”*

The Beltaine Blade has always existed. Before the Sundering, mighty lords of the Fair Folk terrified humans and commoners alike into fearful worship. It is from these dreams the Blade draws its strength. In the Shattering, they led the retreat, closing the gates to fair Arcadia to keep out banal tides and desperate commoners alike. When they returned, they seized their rightful place above the rabble, taking by force what had once been theirs and what would be theirs again. The Accordance War was the peak of their glory, as they and their chosen champions set their boots on the necks of the arrogant commoners and reminded them, forcefully, of their place.

When Dyfell died and the Accordance War ended, they were forced to retreat to the shadows, licking their wounds. The so-called “High King” insisted on diluting his own power, and the Beltaine Blade took full advantage to forward their agenda. In the Parliament of Dreams, Beltaine partisans worked to weaken the monarchy and strengthen the nobility.

The Beltaine Blade released their knives in the dark of the David Ardry’s disappearance, claiming liberated freeholds for deserving but dispossessed sidhe. Their commoner subjects were reminded by force and Art and Oath who their true masters were, and the chaotic years that followed saw the wise and loyal among the commons yield their title and bow to their betters. Others rebelled, and the Blade shed blood again in their duty to ensure the ascendancy of the sidhe.



Despite the High King's return and the restoration of the Parliament of Dreams, the Beltaine Blade remains entrenched. The usurper returned wracked in mind and body, his authority propped up by his desperate wife and woeful sister. The Blade's provocateurs continue to pursue policies in the chambers and plots in the cloakrooms, knowing that in the world beyond the walls of Tara-Nar, they have already claimed many lesser thrones, and time shall deliver unto them the greatest. All that is required of them is patience.

## MEMBERSHIP

The Beltaine Blade consists entirely of sidhe of both Courts—though the majority are Seelie lords—who believe their kith alone possesses the right to rule, and any other system of governance risks the destruction of the Dreaming.

Known and suspected members of the Beltaine Blade include:

- ☉ **Duke Dray**, the public, mustache-twirling face of the Beltaine Blade, whose melodramatic social façade is carefully crafted to draw attention away from the subtler and more dangerous plots of his fellows and of his own higher goals.
- ☉ **Duke Edgar Vandermere ap Beaumayne**, a fearsome sorcerer whose prophetic dreams have led him to believe that the Beltaine Blade will have an important role to play in thwarting the schemes of the Adhene and the Elder Dark.
- ☉ **Sir Medran Armitage ap Daireann**, an unlanded knight and duelist of some renown in the Kingdom of Pacifica, whose tongue is almost as sharp as his blade and whose disdain for his undisciplined queen and her base-born lover he only barely troubles to conceal.
- ☉ **Count Arthaud Mellenys ap Dougal**, who subtly endeavors to recruit Queen Mary Elizabeth of the Kingdom of Grass to the Blade's cause.

## RITUALS AND RITES

As their name suggests, Beltaine is an important time for the members of the Blade. Every year, they gather at a hidden freehold in the Near Dreaming to induct new members into their ranks, report on its members' doings over the course of the previous year, and select new targets for the following year. Taking the form of an elaborate masque, it is often as much a social gathering as a political one, allowing members of the Beltaine Blade who must wear elaborate public personas in order to retain their positions to tear away those disguises and be their true selves, if only for a few nights.

## BOON

The Beltaine Blade is a far larger and more successfully secretive organization than most residents of Concordia either suspect or know, and they possess methods of identifying one another in moments of peril or crisis. Any member of the Blade can locate one of their fellows and call upon their assistance when in danger.

## BAN

No member of the Beltaine Blade may offer mercy or quarter to a fallen commoner enemy, upon pain of expulsion from the organization and the full wrath of the Dreaming.

## RECRUITMENT

The Beltaine Blade exclusively recruits sidhe, preferably Seelie, who know their rightful place and are willing to assert it by any means necessary, including force. Possessing a selection of useful commoner minions, followers, or expendable dupes is a definite benefit, but claiming a commoner as a friend immediately disqualifies the potential recruit.

Once a member identifies a potential recruit, a Blade member approaches them with an offer of sponsorship. Should the recruit accept, the sponsor extensively tests said recruit's resolve and competence. Successful recruits are then presented to the society at the next revel to be inducted into the ranks. If, at any point, a potential recruit displays signs of weakness or commoner sympathies, their sponsor is expected to dispose of them as expediently as possible to maintain the Blade's utmost secrecy.

**Mechanical Requirements:** Members of the Beltaine Blade may have any combination of Arts and Realms, though some hidebound, senior members of the organization look down on mastery of such "common" magics as Chicanery and Legerdemain. If a new recruit does not already possess knowledge of the Sovereign Art, their sponsor will correct that immediately, either themselves or by or a tutor the sponsor chooses for them. Blades tend to favor Social Attributes, to ease their serpentine manipulations, and Skills, particularly those that allow them to conceal their true natures and motives.

## THE AUTUMN VETERANS OF THE ACCORDANCE WAR

*"In the name of those who fell, broken. In the name of those who fell, lost. In the name of those who fell, never to rise again. We who remain shall bring justice to those who slew us, who stole from us, who sullied our honor and ground us beneath their heels. In the name of the Dreaming, this we vow."*

The Accordance War was not kind to anyone. Arcadian sidhe would have the world believe that the worst fell upon



them: freshly returned, only barely understanding with their new state, and thrust almost immediately into a war to reclaim both their Dreaming-granted rights and what they would need to survive, forced to fight and die not knowing what would become of their bright souls. The cruelties they were forced to commit scarred them deeply and were only condoned out of fear and desperation, never to be repeated.

Arcadian sidhe are *outstandingly* full of it, as the Autumn Veterans of the Accordance War are happy to testify, at length.

The AVAW is not a “secret” society: branches of it exist in every kingdom of Concordia, every barony and county and duchy, with deep roots that reach into every commoner-ruled domain and no few sidhe-ruled. It operates openly, in plain sight, a support organization for veterans who served on the “losing” side of the bitter conflict fought mere decades ago. Many of those veterans require genuine support for lingering wounds, physical and mental, that complicate their lives even today. The AVAW funds and operates veteran health clinics in most major duchies, tending to the needs of the body, soul, and mind, helping to supply injured veterans with magic and Treasures they need to maintain physical function, psychiatric counseling, and palliative memory magic to ease the scars left by abusive use of Sovereign. It helps homeless veterans find welcoming freeholds willing to provide shelter until they

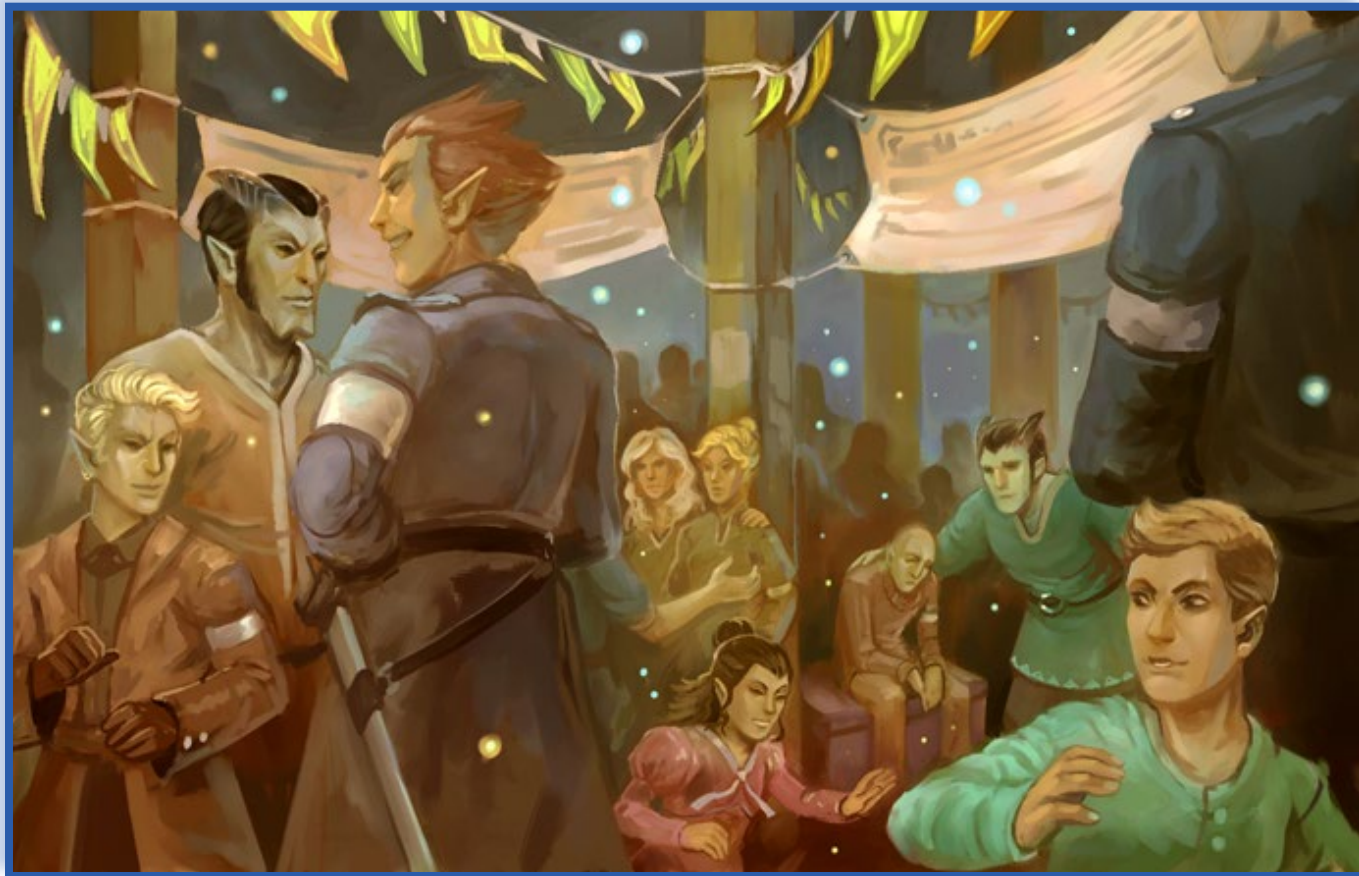
regain themselves, and provides financial and food support to veterans whose means are insufficient. It also serves veterans seeking employment retraining and job placement in both fae and Autumn worlds, empowering them to regain and maintain their independence.

For their compassionate efforts, the AVAW has been honored by High King David himself with royal commendation and a lantern of fire lit from Tara-Nar’s own hearth, used to birth the balefire of their freehold, an abandoned resort in the Pocono Mountains of the Duchy of Liberty’s Heart, gifted to them by Queen Mab. The freehold, Warrior’s Hearth, functions as an administrative headquarters for the organization, as well as a long-term shelter and hospital. Unbeknownst to some of its more compassionate members, however, Warrior’s Hearth also quietly serves as an as an armory and tactical nerve center for commoner resistance movements planning to take Concordia back from its despoilers.

Should the rift between the humanitarians and the malcontents become known, it would shake the association to the core.

## MEMBERSHIP

The Autumn Veterans of the Accordance War are exactly what they say on the tin: an organization made up entirely of Autumn Kithain who fought in the Accordance





War. They explicitly exclude the few Arcadian sidhe who fought on their side: despite their honorable behavior, they are still *Arcadian* and cannot be trusted. Many make a point of watching for the reincarnations of former motley-mates and comrades-in-arms, in order to recruit them into the cause from the start. Publicly, the AVAW is a humanitarian support organization with a reputation so sterling that even the stuffiest traditionalist can usually find nothing negative to say; consequently, its members tend to enjoy excellent status in Kithain society.

The public face of the AVAW is **General Dame Varda Grimmrmund** of the First Troll Commons (ret.), an old soldier of such relentless probity and unimpeachable honor, none of the society's own members suspect she anonymously directs the malcontents in coldly plotting the annihilation of the Arcadian usurpers. She is supported in her efforts by:

- **Doctor Ethaine Dhennin**, a sluagh psychotherapist and master of the Mists and their manipulation.
- **Black Maggie Dalziel**, the most recent reincarnation of a vicious redcap assassin whose crimes still send shudders down the spines of Arcadian sidhe across Concordia.
- **Valravn**, the organization's shadowy, shapeshifting Autumn sidhe spymaster.

## RITUALS AND RITES

The AVAW conducts an annual "reunion" at Warrior's Hearth during the summer months, drawing Accordance War veterans from all over Concordia to camp under the stars, relive past glories around the fires, and eat the produce of a dozen farmers' markets at the cookouts. Radicalized members also exchange sensitive information, receive new orders, and induct newly-reincarnated members into the fold.

## BOON

The AVAW enjoys an excellent reputation for its work bringing aid and comfort to the broken veterans of the Accordance War—consequently, its members tend to enjoy high status in their communities, which malcontents use as a shield against suspicion with regard to their less savory activities.

## BAN

Members of the AVAW have sworn to help their fellow veterans, no matter what. Even if they disagree, they will back up other members in need – an oath that will be sorely tested if and when the malcontents strike. The radical members of the AVAW go further, swearing blood oaths of secrecy and vengeance against the sidhe kith entire. They may not yield when fighting an Arcadian opponent or give quarter or mercy to a fallen Arcadian sidhe lest they break their Oath and tempt the justice of the Dreaming.

## RECRUITMENT

The AVAW is open only to current or reincarnated Autumn Kithain who fought in the Accordance War. Family members and oathmates are welcome at certain "open" events, such as casual cook-outs or the ever-popular league bowling nights, and there are even some carefully-curated mortal-friendly gatherings in communities where it can be arranged without undue suspicion. However, many other activities are strictly members-only.

Versed in concepts such as operational security and compartmentalized information, the malcontents within the organization recruit quietly and with *extreme* care, sounding out potential members for months or even years. They are well aware that even a single misstep or poorly chosen recruit could expose all of their plans and bring the wrath of the Arcadians down on them.

**Mechanical Requirements:** Members lean in the direction of martial Arts and, in particular, teach the fundamentals of the Dragon's Ire to all their members, young and old. They favor Physical and Mental Attributes, martial and deceptive Skills, Talents, and Knowledges.

## THE WALKERS OF THE WHITE ROAD

*"We are the Walkers of the White Road. We seek that which has been lost, that it may be returned. We seek that which has been broken, that it may be made whole. We seek those that would devour us, that their blood may be shed. For the Nunnehi Nation and the Dream that enfolds us, this is our task, this is our duty."*

The many tribes of the Nunnehi are severed from the Higher Hunting Grounds, their true home in the deepest heart of the Dreaming, but they are not denied the near realms that touch upon the Middle World, nor the paths that lead into deeper places. The Walkers of the White Roads are hardy souls who choose to take those paths, accepting the task of venturing into the Dreaming. In so doing, they seek to identify and reforge the ties between the Middle World and the Higher Hunting Grounds, recover Nunnehi artifacts and lodges lost in the convulsions of the Shattering, and give battle to the nightmarish creatures oozing through the cracks between the worlds.

The Walkers have existed since the aftershocks of the Shattering subsided, and the Nunnehi tribes learned the ability to draw Medicine from nature instead of from the minds and souls of their flesh-brothers. A convocation of tribes discussed how to repair the harms done, and the first Walkers were chosen from the representatives: spirit-talkers, healers, scouts, warriors and hunters, each gifted



with treasures, armor, weapons and spirit guides to assist their endeavors.

They travelled again and again into the Dreaming, rescuing lost travelers and recovering lodges broken free from their moorings, seeking always pathways back to the Higher Hunting Grounds. These proved to be elusive. Less elusive were the monstrous creatures who seemed called to broken pathways and isolated lodges, hideous things of nightmare the Walkers called *naayéé*, after the cannibal beasts of legend.

Many of those treasures have, over the centuries, been lost on ill-fated expeditions into the Dreaming. Some are still held, closely guarded relics handed out only to the most skilled and dedicated. New Walkers are chosen from among the tribes, as Walkers who fall and are reborn return to take up their task again. Recovering what the Nunnehi have lost is not the work of one lifetime alone, and warriors are always needed to give battle to *naayéé*, growing gradually more numerous, more vicious. Some whisper that time is finally running out but, until it does, the Walkers will continue to pursue their duties in the hope of restoring their people.

## Membership

Membership in the Walkers of the White Road is open only to Nunnehi. Some have argued in recent years that extending membership to those Kithain commoners and nobles sympathetically aligned to the Nunnehi or in active alliance with them might be desirable — Chief Greyhawk of House Gwydion comes up frequently in such discussions — but thus far, traditionalist sentiments carry the day.

Prominent members of the Walkers include:

- ⑤ **Yanaba Whitehawk**, one of the most senior active Walkers, a kachina warrior and leader known for her vast knowledge of the Dreaming's many dangers, as well as her connections to several Kithain warriors whom she has trained in monster-hunting techniques;
- ⑤ **Tsula Anderson**, an acclaimed scholar of the Walkers, an ethno-linguist and anthropologist at a small university in Oklahoma, whose efforts at preserving endangered native languages stand her high among the nanehi story-singers.
- ⑤ **Lupe Delgado**, a surem diplomat attached to the court of Chief Greyhawk, a leading proponent of greater engagement with the Kithain, especially given the troubling expansion of the *naayéé* into previously safe territory.
- ⑤ **Mahica**, an up-and-coming young war-leader among the rock giants, whose battle with a terrible monster and recovery of a lost treasure during the course of the encounter marked her as a reborn Walker.

## RITUALS AND RITES

The Walkers meet twice yearly at their lodge, Hidden Heart, located in the Black Hills, to exchange information, tell stories, enjoy fellowship, and induct new members into the group. These gatherings frequently feature traditional song and dance, feasting, and blessings laid upon the participants.

## BOON

All members of the Walkers possess a treasure that assists them in their endeavors: a weapon, a piece of armor, clothing, or jewelry, or other useful object of at least three dots. While they live, they cannot be parted from it for long, as it will always find its way back to their hand. This treasure can be hereditary, the possession of a prior incarnation, or new and purpose-made.

## BAN

The Walkers many not refuse a request to find something or someone that has been lost, to repair something that has been broken, or to fight a battle that must be fought. Doing so renders them Oathbroken in the eyes of the Dreaming until they can make restitution for their failure to act.

## RECRUITMENT

The Walkers are open to any Nunnehi willing to swear their oath and take on the dangers associated with their goals. Western Kithain are explicitly barred from holding membership in the organization, though individual Walkers are not forbidden from forming relationships with like-minded Kithain pursuing similar agendas. Many Walkers have served for more than one lifetime and are expected to continue to serve as their former Treasures seek them out and bring them back into the fold.

**Mechanical Requirements:** Walkers derive from any tribe or Camp and possess any combination of Arts and Realms. In terms of Backgrounds, they always possess at least Treasure 3 (or higher) and many also possess at least Vision 3 (or higher). They tend to favor Mental and Physical Attributes, Skills and Knowledges, particularly those related to combat, survival, and Dreaming lore.

## BUILDING A SECRET SOCIETY

Secret societies are, in many ways, the lifeblood of Kithain intrigue: an enormous, perpetually renewing source of drama and romance, tragedy, and comedy which plumb the depths of villainy and the heights of heroism. They are, in short, lots of fun to play from multiple directions. What offers a higher degree of tension than being in a situation where one must hide one's true loyalties from both friends and foes? What is more delicious than finally triumphing



over the conspiratorial schemes of one's enemies, only to peel them back and discover another layer of danger? What is better than fleeing from danger and finding safety at the side of a comrade, or the arms of an oathsworn companion — or, for that matter, betrayal when those you trust are compelled to turn upon you?

The possibilities are limitless, and the steps one takes to get there are defined here.

### STEP ONE: IDENTIFY YOUR MOTIVES AND IDEALS

Secret societies, one and all, exist for a reason. The first step in building a successful organization is deciding its purpose. Historically speaking, in both the Kithain and mortal worlds secret societies organize for a variety of reasons, sacred and secular, political and social, educational and occult. In the real world, organizations like the Freemasons, the Illuminati, and the Skull and Bones have cast a long shadow across the collective imagination of humankind, spawning wild theories about world-spanning conspiracies that undercut the governing institutions of whole continents, the direct and indirect control of every major economy, and secret plots to bring about the end of the world, the mass ascension of humanity to a higher state of being, and every degree of weirdness in between. Among the Kithain, the extremist radicals of the Beltaine Blade scheme to restore an uncontested noble oligarchy with themselves at the top of the heap, the Cat's Cradle endeavors to insure the safety of all Kithain through subtle political and social manipulations, dream-merchants gather in smoke-filled back rooms to corner markets, and innumerable social groups gather to promote their own needs and agendas.

Decide what drives your group. Write a one- or two-page summary of your goals, hopes, and aspirations, including immediate and future objectives.

### STEP TWO: THE NAME IS EVERYTHING

The Order of the Dragon. The Brotherhood of the Cruciform Sword. CONTROL and KAOS. The Dead Poets Society. The House of Flying Daggers. The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants. All of these names have something in common: they immediately catch at both the eye and the imagination, spark curiosity, and invite those who see or hear them to learn more.

Choosing an evocative name is an important part of the process, even if no one but the society's members ever actually use it. Ideally, the name of the society should have some connection to what the society is all about, spiced with humor, pomposity, intrigue or all three. The Beltaine Blade comes by its name because of the importance of Beltaine

as the beginning of the bright, "Seelie" half of the year and the blade because its members are willing to shed blood to achieve their goals. The fearsome guild of assassins known as the Monkey's Paw received their moniker from their association with the withered, desiccated item by which they sign their kills. Choosing a symbol by which your society may become known often happens at this step as well.

### STEP THREE: CREATE YOUR HISTORY

Some secret societies are older and more established than others. The Knights of the Red Branch date to the Age of Legends, justly famed for their courage, honor, and fighting prowess. They comprise the foremost warriors of the Kithain whose badge and probity are known the world over. The Oathbound, a far newer organization, prefers to remain hidden in plain sight, their name generic enough to be confusing to anyone not in the know when it comes to their existence, actions, and goals, but just as courageous and honorable in their intent. The Catacomb Club presents itself as an organization striving to better the place of all commoners in Kithain society, when their true goal is to regain the eminence previously enjoyed by its own members, ennobled commoners all who feel themselves diminished by the return of the sidhe.

Deciding the vintage of your society is an important part of seeding plots, complications, and interactions with other societies and the Kithain at large. An older society offers the richness of historical resonance, a link to myth and legend. A newer society offers dynamic connections to current political and social events, as well as fresh rivalries, enemies, and allies.

### STEP FOUR: RITES, RITUALS, OATHS

Most secret societies have at least one unique rite — often the initiation rite — and possibly a handful of other rituals to mark important milestones for society members. Initiation rites tend to be fraught affairs for a new inductee, consisting of anything from being blindfolded and carted off to parts unknown to face robed and masked senior society members, to proving they possess at least two thousand dross or a Treasure of equal value, to displaying one's bonafides on the field of honor with live steel and significantly more than chimerical death at stake. The nature of the initiation rite should mirror the nature of the society itself — a fusty organization of scholars wouldn't expect its newly recruited members to exemplify derring-do in order to achieve membership, nor would a social club of dashing duelists provide a prospective sword-mate with a twenty-page quiz involving a mandatory essay section.

Once the initiate has passed their rite, they then swear the society's oath of membership. Oaths, being binding



things, should always be as serious as a heart attack, even if the nature of the society itself is lighthearted. See the guidelines for constructing a proper Oath in **Changeling: The Dreaming** pp. 264-265 for more detail on this topic.

## Step Five: MEMBERSHIP AND STRUCTURE

Exclusivity is a feature of many societies. Only those who have displayed bravery, honor, and skill at arms are invited to join the Knights of the Red Branch. Only those who possess deep knowledge of the Arts are considered for membership in the Crystal Circle, regardless of their kith. The nature of the society will likewise determine the nature of its members: a commoner-run political action group might not be the best fit for an Arcadian sidhe, no matter how modernist their personal inclinations might be, nor would a traditionalist commoner find much to approve

of in a group of wild-eyed radicals intent on tearing down the monarchy. Also important is deciding if your society is invitation-only or if prospective members can openly apply for membership on their own recognizance.

Finally, it's time to determine the organization's leadership and decision-making systems. These can be a singular public figurehead, a governing council, popular vote by members, or run by lottery. What's more, are there hidden layers of leadership invisible to the general membership of the organization? Does the society have internal ranks of access or responsibility depending on seniority or other factors? How do members move up and down those ranks? Could a member theoretically ascend to a significant position of authority during the course of a chronicle, or could they start in such a position and lose it? Answering these questions will give your society shape and flavor and also give players goals to work toward.









# CHAPTER THREE: A WORLD OF DREAMS

*"Always, worlds within worlds."*

*– Clive Barker, Weaveworld*

This chapter takes a closer look at the Dreaming beyond Concordia and the British Isles, into Africa, South America, Australia, and the Middle East: the myths and legends to shape those continents and regions, their indigenous fae, and the stories troupes can craft there. Storytellers will find this chapter packed with settings ready to use, while players can draw ample inspiration for their character's background.

## OLD DREAMS AND NEW

Human history is rife with people supplanting each other. Western Europeans claimed parts of North America, South America, Africa, Australia, and New Zealand as their own, typically with little regard for the people already living there. They are not the only culprits: Singapore is predominantly filled with people of Chinese, Malaysian, and Indonesian descent, with nary

a trace of the indigenous Orang Laut. Whether by sword or coin, people often expand their territory at the detriment of others. The fae of a region often go the same way as the mortal population — as just one example, the Nunnehi fight to hold onto their own small parcels of land in the face of European hegemony. The Dreaming, however, gives changelings resources their mortal kin rarely have.

The Dreaming is a living entity. It is impossibly old, yet ever-changing. In South Africa, ancient mortal dreams from the Cradle of Life intermingle with the old tensions and new hopes after the end of apartheid. In Australia, the primordial Dreamtime continues to reach out to indigenous fae despite centuries of European-Australian oppression, speaking to them in a language that mixes Pama-Nyungan dialects with English. The relationship between Dreaming and Autumn world goes both ways, creating an ebb and flow: mortals embracing avocado toast *en masse* leads to avocado trees growing in the Dreaming where



## IF YOU CAN DREAM IT

While this chapter offers a variety of new kiths, the world holds more myths and legends than we can possibly capture on these pages. Troupes are encouraged to do their own regional research to dig up indigenous fairy tales and folklore this chapter missed or simply had no space to include. Using the separate Kithain and Gallain detailed in this chapter and the Kith Creation rules on pp. 114-119 of **Changeling: The Dreaming 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition**, these tales can – and should – be easily converted into rich new kith.

none were before, while fae dreams of disco lead to a revival of the genre in the Autumn world. By the same token, the changelings remain as long as any part of the Dreaming remembers them.

Though this chapter focuses on non-Western locations and indigenous fae, troupes need not cast their favored Kithain aside. British people visit South Africa as tourists, Americans take up jobs as engineers in Saudi Arabia, and Australia is still part of the Commonwealth. Changelings are no different. Asidhe ambassador from Concordia might visit the Mountain Kingdom and find it suits him, while an eshu seeks out the Nunnehi for new stories and returns with a far greater trove of wisdom. This allows the Storyteller to run a game set in one of the locations below, while giving players the choice of remaining with their favorite Kithain.

The other way around is also quite valid: the Storyteller runs a game of magical swords, political intrigue, and ladies in lakes, and any player can play a Gallain who currently happens to be in England – modern travel and communication has made the world imminently small. The troupe could also wholly and boldly embrace the new worlds detailed below. Let players be Menehune, bound to ancient customs by the kapu system and embark on a journey to the sunken world of Mu. They can explore the islands of Hawaii, which reach much further into the Dreaming still, and never even hear the name “High King David” uttered once. With all of them playing Menehune, be it regal ali’i or warrior kokua, they can delve into the rich and detailed history of both Hawaii and its Gallain.

Lastly, consider mortal ethnicity and Gallain. Very few, if any, Caucasian Americans are wholly descended from European immigrants. Even Europe itself isn’t nearly as homogenous as pop culture presents it – Moors and Persians have had a noticeable influence in the continent

## NOBILITY’S MANY NAMES

Although some of the rulers in this chapter are associated with the noble houses from the **Changeling** corebook, others are affiliated with locally named banner houses of the sort described in chapter one. Some have no affiliation at all, but have their right to rule affirmed by the Dreaming itself. If new houses prove difficult to keep straight, however, the Storyteller may simply declare only the “standard” houses are present and re-name things accordingly.

since medieval times, just to name two of many, many other influences. The world is a melting pot, and no one would suggest a biracial person cannot play a nocker or sidhe. If the requirement for being Gallain is having a fraction of indigenous DNA, the Storyteller should simply assume all characters do, no matter their outward ethnicity. If the requirement is acceptance by the Dreaming, follow the same practice—maybe their immigrant family has lived here long enough to be assimilated into the Dreaming, or a (grand)parent made a bargain that lets the character be born Gallain.

However, being Gallain *does* assume a buy-in into the culture, both from the player and the character. A Hsien shouldn’t thumb her nose at the thousand courts because she was raised British and acknowledges only one Queen. (She *can* thumb her nose at them, of course, if she is a Wu Hsien who finds country life far more important than the complex courts.) If they’re not already part of a particular culture or versed in its ways, it’s a good idea for players to do a bit of research so they can understand where their kith and character comes from and avoid accidentally playing up stereotypes and misconceptions. Not to mention that learning about a particular culture can bestow rich dividends in terms of backstory and character concept!

## A NOTE FROM YOUR GUIDES

Throughout this chapter, one thematic element remains more or less absent, and that’s an examination of real world horrors such as genocide, famine, religious warfare, and other atrocities. This was not an easy decision to make, but ultimately the creative team felt it was the right decision to avoid trivializing their real world roots and impact.

A major concern is the desire to avoid viewing these locations and cultures as defined solely by their worst events, which is unfortunately all too common a perspective for those who live outside the region and whose only exposure



to it is when some terrible happening crops up on the nightly news. Thanks to such media coverage, for example, it's not uncommon for many Americans to picture the entire Middle East as nothing more than a blasted desert war zone, and so be completely oblivious to the many wonders of the region as well as its diverse cultures and landscapes. Therefore, given **Changeling's** emphasis on sparking the imagination and juxtaposing the fantastical against everyday life, we judged it crucial to explore parts of these regions and cultures that may not be as commonly known or understood.

The core **Changeling** rulebook spends the most time detailing the lands of Concordia for a setting, and while it is not blind to the fact that the United States has problems, by and large it focuses more on the mythology, folklore, and cultural beliefs of America to inform its chimerical counterpart. However doing so is not intended and should not be construed as an implicit denial that horrors exist such as racism, mass shootings, institutional corruption, environmental disasters, and other very real problems. With that in mind, we endeavor to do the same here as much as possible, and focus more on the cultural mythologies, dreams, and traditions that create and shape the fae, rather than basing our survey of the region on its current events.

In compiling these guides to lands new to **Changeling** coverage, we hope players and Storytellers will find material that sparks their imaginations and opens them up to researching and exploring parts of the world they know less about – or, if they are part of these cultures already, using them as stepping stones to bring their experiences to the table in ways that weren't possible in previous editions. It's a great big Glamourous world, after all.

Time to see it through immortal eyes!

## LAND OF ANCIENT DREAMS

To experience the Dreaming in a continent with thousands of different cultures and ways of living is beyond what even most changelings can easily imagine. The places of Glamour in the African Dreaming are some of the brightest and most powerful in the entire world, supported by the millennia of dreams soaked into the soil as well as the vibrant hopes and fears of those currently still dreaming. From the most isolated tribes to the residents of the busiest cities, mortals celebrate these innumerable ways of living even as they constantly reinvent themselves and their traditions in long twilight of the Evanescence.

In cities from Cairo to Cape Town, the nightclubs, dancehalls, skyscrapers, and apartment complexes appear similar in the Near Dreaming ... but to changeling eyes strobe lights shine brighter and flare more intensely, music

sounds sweeter, drinks taste finer, and casino jackpots fly sky-high. Living in the city offers a chance to gather in larger numbers than many rural communities can sustain, giving the fae more of a social network and support structure as well as a ready source of human dreams, but also can give rise to politicking and rivalries sharper and quicker to explode than those in the suburbs and the wild. Some fae flee to those very suburbs to escape the faster pace, only to find the Banality of suburban life a threat in its own right.

Away from the cities, out past the suburbs, in places where the stars shine as clear and bright as the moon above, the Near Dreaming reflects the flavor of the cultural and religious celebrations of local native people. The sky above may take on a hallucinogenic tint, or the natural world might seem to breathe deeply and peacefully all around. Some witness explosions of sound or catch the scent of unnamed and unnamable flowers, while wanderers' pains, joys, and pleasures make their hearts beat exhilarating rhythms against their ribs. Old myths not only hold sway in many of these places, they hold court, with young chimera paying fealty to the legends of ages past.

This is not to say that the reassuring rhythms of modern life are not present – contrary to the way global media often depicts Africa, for many of its people life is much the same as it is anywhere else in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. People work and play, pray and curse, know love and loss, wake from nightmares and dream big dreams. They cherish their friends and family, post selfies and retweet cat videos, and hope the days ahead will always be brighter than the ones behind them. And where mortals live and dream, there are always changelings to foster that Glamour.

As one can imagine in a land so vast and varied, there is no “standard” way to experience the Dreaming. Because of its chimerical and reflective connection with the physical world, the Near Dreaming varies just as much as a suburban town would vary from tribal dwellings. Thanks to Africa's many trods and freeholds, it is fairly easy to enter the Near Dreaming, even for changelings living in remote places. However, since the trods are so long and winding, it is difficult to maintain them well. This makes it easy for even the most careful and experienced to lose their way.

## THE CROSSROADS OF THE DREAMING

Although the Land of Ancient Dreams holds many marvels – and more than a few terrors – one thing it is known for is the sheer abundance of trods. From the Empire of the Sphinx down to the Realm of Seasons and beyond, countless fae paths wind their way across the Land of Ancient Dreams, linking freeholds and glens as well as offering routes to distant lands or even the deepest depths of the Dreaming itself. Although some of these trods are cyclical



in nature, appearing according to arcane and sometimes as yet undiscovered calendars, most are stable, or at least as stable as the Dreaming gets.

The role all of these fae roads have played in the history of the Land of Ancient Dreams is a complex one, not the least due to many of them being a millennia old or more and thus have been subject to changing cultures and kingdoms in their time. It hasn't always been a peaceful history, of course – magical pathways that bypass sentries and borders can make even open-minded societies nervous, after all, and like the cultures that sustain them the fae kingdoms of this land have crossed blades with their neighbors many times throughout history.

Many trods have thus been hotly contested routes in the past, coveted for trade or military purposes, and sometimes even artificially sealed off by means of great and terrible magic. Not to mention that traveling hundreds or even thousands of miles would often find a changeling exiting a trod only to be immersed in an unfamiliar land full of unfamiliar people speaking unfamiliar languages, which tended to limit their utility a bit. Even if the eshu and the paro found it irresistible.

Another essential gift of the trods is that the Far and in some cases even the Deep Dreaming are more accessible here than almost anywhere else on earth. Just as humanity's oldest stories trace their roots to these lands, so too do the roads of the Dreaming go deeper more often here than anywhere else. Such far-reaching trods are not always found where one might ex-





## THE SUN'S RAYS GO EVERYWHERE

As the 21<sup>st</sup> century dawns, fae scholars and seers have noticed a pronounced “bloom” among the trods of the Land of Ancient Dreams. Not only are many old trods re-opening, but it appears that many of the long range intercontinental trods – most of which appeared to have closed between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries – are reappearing as well. Whether this is a last flare of Glamour during the Evanescence or a sign of a true fundamental resurgence is hard to say at this point, but as these old routes are found and mapped again it's not a stretch to say that they may very well change the balance of power not just in the Land of Ancient Dreams, but far beyond its borders as well. Deciphering this mystery has attracted changelings from all over the continent as well as trodwalkers and way-scholars from around the world – the race is on!

pect, either. While ancient structures and legendary vistas certainly can contain these gateways, quite a few hide in places that would scarcely merit a second glance. Obambo in particular enjoy ferreting out these lost gateways and figuring out why they might be attached to a specific place.

This is not to say all the fae of the Land of Ancient Dreams are expert trodwalkers or seasoned Dreaming explorers – like a lot of changelings, they tend to find balancing their mortal and fae lives challenge enough in this world, let alone adding strange other realities on top of it! Most simply make use of the so-called “Autumn trods” that link two or more mundane locations together, allowing them to step between freeholds in the blink of an eye or cross borders while remaining unseen by mortal eyes. Even in an age of high speed travel, this can be invaluable in terms of reaching more remote locations, or sometimes just saving some money on plane tickets.

## FOUR KINGDOMS

The following kingdoms are by no means the only four changeling territories in the Land of Ancient Dreams; rather, think of them as a cross-section to explore some of the changeling cultures that call the African Dreaming their home. Players and Storytellers are encouraged to use these kingdoms as starting points, as well as research real world locations and folklore to create more territories to explore. This is just a small sample of what the Land of Ancient Dreams has to offer!

## EMPIRE OF THE SPHINX

Rich in modern splendor and ancient ruins, blessed by the wealth of the Nile Delta, ruled by a mysterious empress who claims to be the last of an ancient kith, the Empire of the Sphinx considers itself the crown jewel of the Land of Ancient Dreams. However, beyond its own long and storied history it has also been under threat of mundane interference since the 1700s, ever since European explorers began investigating the ancient pyramids and more ancient buildings which stud the sands and create an air of reverence within the desert. The sands of the Empire are sacred, soaked with the magic of the Dreaming. The Empire has always been a seat of power, somewhere that anyone who was anybody knew was a place that held power to control the world.

The main seat of the Empire lies near the Great Pyramid of Giza, beneath the paws of the statue which gives its name to both the region and its ruler. Far beneath the sands – far beneath where you would ever suspect it would be safe to dig in a riverland – lies the mighty freehold known as the Court of the Sphinx. The entrance to the Court is down a flight of stairs lit by torches which burn blue. No matter how many steps you take, the bottom of the staircase is always in darkness, until you reach the end and you find yourself faced with a grand promenade in ancient style. It is lined with statues of royal consorts done in the style of the pharaohs, and at the foot of each statue sits a jar which it's said holds the heart of a beloved leader of the Empire.

The Empress herself has been alive for thousands of years, or so her subjects claim (and she does not deny); it's whispered said she knows the true form of the Spell of Life and cannot be killed. She has no name, or rather uses and discards mortal names so freely none truly matter, and is known simply as the Sphinx. A beautiful if severe woman in mortal guise, looking much like an Egyptian tomb painting come to life, in her fae mien the Sphinx has the head of a human, the body of a lion, the wings of a hawk and a tail which tapers into a viper's head. The Sphinx claims to be the last remaining member of her kith, though it isn't clear whether time, invasion, or the Sphinx herself was responsible for the demise of her kithmates.

There are, of course, chimera who take on her appearance within the Kingdom; the locals whisper that she can see and hear anything they do, though the truth of that is unconfirmed. Likewise, she claims affiliation to no noble house, but there is no question that the Dreaming recognizes her title. House Eiluned has tentatively tried to claim (distant) kinship in the past, citing similar beliefs and political strategies, but such proposals have been met with icy silence. She is her land, as she says, and that is enough –



## THE ANSWER TO THE RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX

The true nature of the Sphinx is deliberately left vague, so that troupes can decide on what works best for their stories. She could be a genuine undying ruler, possessed of a mystical secret that allows her survive with her sanity intact living in freeholds for thousands of years. She could be an “ordinary” fae possessed of singular will and memory, reincarnating over and over again to rule with the help of select nobles covering up each death and rebirth. She could be a “Dread Pirate Roberts” who merely passes the mantle of Empress to a successor every so often to maintain the illusion of continuity, aided by some powerful transformative magic. Or she could be something even stranger, such as a distant Lycian ancestor or the result of meddling with Prodigal powers beyond most fae understanding. All that is known for certain is that she is a changeling of tremendous power and wisdom who holds an exalted noble title. Beyond that, the best answers are those that suit the stories your group is telling together.

she has no need of petty things like houses or lists of titles. So far, it seems as though the Dreaming agrees.

The Sphinx leads the Empire with a strong paw. Over her many lifetimes she has taken a number of men and woman as her consorts, who act as her right hand and her voice in places she will not or cannot go, but there is never any question who rules her lands. The most important thing to understand is that the Sphinx does not trust outsiders, and there is a strict code in terms how any guests to the Empire will be received. Just because you’re a fellow changeling doesn’t mean that you aren’t regarded with suspicion. Most especially, take nothing from the Empire of the Sphinx unless it is a gift or it is given with explicit permission.

This code came into being because of the long history that the Empire has with intruders. The removal of the Rosetta Stone, many temples, and artifacts as well as the buried dead is a closely held hurt by the fae of the Nile Delta, and as a result strangers coming from anywhere outside of the Land of Ancient Dreams – or locals who might be acting as agents of such forces – are suspect. Any action which smacks of colonialism will be met with force. The Sphinx is neither xenophobic nor trying to bury her head

in the sand – she has simply seen far too much happen to her beloved land in her long lifetime, and as a result she is cautious about letting anyone in unless she feels she can first take the measure of their soul.

There is of course an exception to this policy: fae tourists. The tourism industry in the mundane world is such that changelings flock to see the Valley of Kings just like their mortal kin, and rather than try to hold off the world the Sphinx has granted a measure of grace for those fae who come to participate in *human* kinds of tourism. Stick to the approved locations, touch nothing mystical, activate no hieroglyphs, don’t rent a long term business apartment, and you’ll be fine. Of course, the Sphinx doesn’t expect anyone to self-regulate, so there are official Empire guides whose job is to maintain the boundaries for visitors. Those who don’t follow the rules will find themselves with a bevy of useful but ultimately very insistent guides who insist that your tour is over.

This code of ethics does not just extend to the living, but also to the dead. Disturbing the rest of a pharaoh or anyone else who has been entombed within the walls of a pyramid or a tomb is considered an act of war against the dead. Mummies and their places of burial are guarded by a society of changelings known as the Jackals, the warriors of Anubis. They are tasked with guarding the resting places of the dead, and according to rumor they have the ability to strip Glamour from a fae in order to judge your true worth. Regardless of whether the rumors are true, they are well-trained and highly organized, and so getting into a confrontation with them is extremely ill advised.

When foreign changelings arrive in the Empire of the Sphinx for the purpose of conducting business, performing academic research, or staying for a tourist visit longer than a week, they are expected to present themselves at the Court. Trained chimera and members of the Sphinx’s staff watch major ports of entry for this reason, with visiting changelings taken aside for “special screening” on arrival. Each individual must pass two trials to receive permission to stay for such visits. They must be able to walk past one of the Sphinx’s elite household guards without raising an alarm, and they must be able to answer a riddle given to them by the Sphinx herself. Exactly how difficult these tasks are made to be is directly proportional to the amount of time the changeling wishes to stay and/or how much of an impact their business may have on the Empire. Regardless, if the would-be cannot do both, they will be escorted to a departure point and cast out – if they’re lucky. Anyone who fails the tests and tries to sneak in is treated ... harshly.

Long-term immigrants seeking to resettle in the area also face tests posed by the Sphinx, but as they are forbidden by changeling oath to reveal the nature of these tests, no one knows exactly that they might entail. The haunted



## CROSSING THE DESERT

Since their reawakening following the Sixth Great Maelstrom, the mummies known as the Amenti have rapidly become more of a presence in the Empire of the Sphinx. While they are by no means numerous, the fact remains that these lands hold great power and significance to them, and thus they are found here in greater numbers than anywhere else in the world. The Sphinx has embraced them with uncharacteristic openness, and provided they mean no harm to her or her people all Amenti are welcomed and considered under her protection. It is rumored that the Sphinx has taken secret meetings with several of the Undying, and even that she might choose one as her next consort – most natives scoff, but then again, if the Sphinx is changing her practices, who knows what that might mean?

look such individuals get when the matter is mentioned, however, tells a tale of its own.

In addition to Giza and the Valley of Kings – both places where the veil between the Dreaming and the mundane world are extremely thin – there is Cairo. Modern Cairo was established in 960 CE, and has been a place where changelings, Prodigals, and humans have co-existed for longer than many other metropolitan cities. While the Sphinx discourages her subjects from getting too involved with Prodigals or their arcane and deadly politics, her desire for a united Empire standing against the world means that she has standing mutual defense and non-aggression agreements with quite a few Prodigal leaders in the region.

The 2011 revolution which began in Tahrir Square as a direct reaction to police brutality under the regime of President Mubarek in Cairo greatly affected the Empire of the Sphinx. While it is policy for the Courts to not involve themselves in mundane political affairs, it is another thing when the revolution is right on your doorstep. To the surprise – and quiet but lasting outrage – of many of her subjects, the Sphinx did not take a side during the revolution. Speculation as to why is publically forbidden but a popular pastime among the native fae, with theories ranging from a backroom power play of some kind to interference from Prodigal agents to even wilder notions. The closest the Empire came to getting involved was sponsoring safe havens for rebels fleeing from the city, as well as for families trying to remain while the revolution occurred. These were directed primarily at involved changelings and their

## THE DREAMING

The Empire glows. The air is weighted with golden magic that suffuses everything. There is dust in your shoes and a breeze off the Nile. Stalks of cat-tails and reeds rise impossibly high from the banks of the Nile, sheltering the crocodiles from view. Here, every step shifts the sands a little, sometimes dislodging a piece of history in your wake. Magic leaves imprints and those imprints will rise up at times. The impossibly bright, impossibly blue sky hosts hawks with human heads, and at sunset the sun is swallowed by Nut and she covers the world in her body of stars. The Empire of the Sphinx feels like a place where magic is ancient and can wrap around you like a mantle, or like armor.

families, but due to popular demand they were quickly opened to wider use.

Since then, at the urging of her subjects the Empire has kept a more protective eye upon the city of Cairo. The revolution also caused the Sphinx to suddenly offer a number of long term residential and diplomatic passes to changelings who had the skills to protect the interests of the fae on the ground in Cairo, whether that help was through official business and diplomatic channels or unofficially through smuggling and safe houses. The passes come with a requirement to operate as one of the Sphinx's operatives, loyalty being the most important quality. Changelings interested in maintaining democracy in Egypt, or in studying the history of the past would benefit from such access.

Despite its closed off reputation, the Empire of the Sphinx is politically and diplomatically connected to many territories outside the Land of Ancient Dreams, in no small part due to the volume of visitors that floods her borders every year. Though the Sphinx would prefer to cut off her domain from the world if she could, she recognizes this as a practical impossibility, and so maintains strong diplomatic communications with the rest of the kingdoms in Africa as well as the neighboring regions of the Middle East. These relationships are meant to give support in case outside kingdoms try to take advantage of native rights, even though the Empire otherwise maintains tightly controlled borders as with the rest of the world.

The only kingdom the Sphinx forbids any real contact with is the Kingdom of Albion. The last time a representative from said Kingdom arrived on the Sphinx's threshold, they attempted to emphasize how Albion supported the Empire during the 1920s. The Sphinx decreed, in response



to this gross misrepresentation of the relationship, that until certain sacred artifacts are returned, there will be no further discussion.

## KINGDOM OF NUBIA

More ancient than the pyramids, with roots that pierce the heart of the earth herself, there has always been life in Nubia. Even the most ancient chimera, who watched as life began to bloom across the globe, are hard pressed to remember a time before the dreams of Nubia first drew breath. The land and her people has forgotten more dreams than others will ever dream in their time, the very dirt heavy with old memories. If dreams and memories only truly die when no one is left alive to remember them, here would be the last refuge for many beliefs, and the final resting place for countless more. For every traveler who visits, a new thread is woven into the grand tapestry, to visit is to leave a shard of one's self behind, an indelible mark for all who would come after.

Once spanning from Aswan to Khartoum, the ancient kingdom of Nubia has shrunk considerably in the recent centuries, as mortals draw new borders and, with their dreams, shape the lands of the fae as well. Despite a relatively peaceful relationship with their northern neighbors, the Empire of the Sphinx, the occasional territory dispute has also shrunk their footprint, forcing them to withdraw into what would become modern Sudan and parts of Ethiopia. The seat of current-ruler King Biniam Desta, a freehold called the Eternal Story, lies to the south of Addis Ababa. For the changelings who call the kingdom home, taking things as they come is a necessary way of life, especially given the frequency with which new stories are introduced to this mercurial section of the Dreaming. To dream is to shape the very world around you, and in dreams we discover who we truly are. For the Kingdom of Nubia, these days those dreams are a heady mix of past glories, current uncertainty, and bold hopes for an invigorated land in the future.

The kingdom also has a long tradition of rebuking intruders both mortal and otherwise. Those who do not remember their history are forever doomed to repeat it, and the memory of Nubia is long indeed. A proud lineage of warrior queens has graced the throne of Nubia for much of its history, with queens considered the norm for the fae as opposed to more patriarchal lands. Indeed, King Desta's ascension to the throne marks one of the few kings to rule over this land, and his reign has proved a shift for the reserved kingdom. More than a few of his subjects are restless about the departure from tradition, especially given some of his unusual policy decisions, and the king has fended off no less than four challenges to his rule so far – all of them peaceful, at least to date, though rumors swirl about

thwarted assassins and deflected curses that were never entered into the royal record.

Let it also be said that while there may not be a warrior queen on the throne, the kingdom by no means lacks warrior women more than capable of demonstrating why it has been such a longstanding tradition.

For his part, King Desta has bet much of his rule on three things: a prophecy, a gamble, and an open hand. The first is undeniable, and still one of the reasons that even his most grudging subjects accord his rule the respect of legitimacy. For when King Desta first ascended the throne, he stopped mid-speech during his first address to his people and stood, apparently transfixed, for so long his guards feared he might have fallen prey to fell magic. No sooner had they reached him, however, than his eyes glowed gold and he spoke in a powerful, booming voice: "Soon the sun shall rise, and its rays shall go everywhere, and we shall walk them to glory." Not long after the meaning became clear as the trod "bloom" of the Land of Ancient Dreams began in earnest, including a number of long-forgotten paths in the Kingdom of Nubia. Whether the fae shall walk them to glory and what exactly that might mean remains unclear, but there's no question he spoke prophecy, and that does much to soothe some of his more restless subjects.

King Desta's second pillar of his rule is much less glamorous than the prophecy, but also much more tangible in practice. He has invested much energy into reversing the generally reserved and cautious politics of his predecessors in an effort to revitalize the kingdom with an infusion of new Dreamers and new fae subjects. The Eternal Story and nearby freeholds thus often feature not only many native changelings but a large and constantly fluctuating population of foreign fae, particularly pookas, satyrs, piskies, and eshu cousins from far-off lands. King Desta makes a particular point to welcome the sort of scholars, entrepreneurs, and travelers that often find it hard to gain access to the carefully guarded Empire of the Sphinx. He invites them to experience his kingdom and its majestic Dreaming, and on more than one occasion has named such individuals "official emissaries" to the Empire of the Sphinx, thus requiring his neighbors to the north to allow them entry and some freedom of operation within their lands after being previously denied access.


It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that relations between their land and the Empire of the Sphinx have notably cooled in recent years. This is not unprecedented, as the two lands share a long and complicated history that has more than once erupted into bloodshed despite long stretches of cooperation and harmony, but King Desta has expressed his reservations about the extent the Sphinx is getting involved with Prodigals. No fool sits a throne as long





## The Dreaming

The hot and dry climate of Nubia is reflected in the Dreaming. Hot air crackles with power, blistering breezes that emanate from nowhere. The entrance way appears as an ever-shifting house of stained glass, whose shape defies all attempts to define it, creating a kaleidoscope of brilliant color cast over all who enter. The closer they peer, the more colors and shapes surface from the chaotic shifting. Here, the story becomes a tangible many splendored thing, a hypnotic array that draws in even the most jaded heart. Every story to ever be told and every story that will be told lives here



as she has, of course, and ultimately he acknowledges that that they can ill afford another time of outright conflict with the Empire. However, he is not shy about expressing his opinion that she may have overestimated her ability to handle so many Prodigal alliances, and freely invites those put off by the elevated presence of such strange and often intimidating beings to find refuge in his kingdom – thus also ensuring a ready supply of intelligence about their activities to the north.

Of course, King Desta is not blind to the ongoing events in the mortal world that shares his kingdom. He counsels open hands over closed fists, and one of the reasons he has held onto his throne for as long as he has is that though he cannot find a way to stop the suffering and bloodshed, he has expended tremendous resources and more than once risked his own safety to offer shelter and aid to the lost and suffering. He has made some enemies abroad but earned considerable esteem at home for his firm stance against “empty alliances” with foreign powers, insisting that fae territories and businesses that want to maintain relations or operate in his domain also provide material and support for a carefully curated list of relief organizations doing the most good.

Unbeknownst to all but his closest advisors, King Desta is also investing heavily in research and exploration related to his famous prophecy. Although it might seem odd to keep such a thing secret, given his highly public connection to it, King Desta fears that there may be even more of a link than the public knows. Even before the prophecy he had dreams of blinding light and voices crying out in fear and anguish, and so while he maintains hope that the return of the trods will ultimately be a great thing for the fae, he worries that he has played a role in some imminent

disaster, that he is leading others into danger they cannot comprehend. And so he secretly recruits the finest seers, scholars, and trodwalkers he can find, hoping that if there is a danger on the way they can discern it before calamity strikes. Because the dreams have not let up, and he often wakes up blind for moments on end, as if he had stared into some terrible, powerful light yet could not look away ...

## Cradle of Empires

From the heat and sand of the Sahara in the north, to the riotous bounty of life by the great midland rivers, to the soaring wealth of the coastal cities, the fae of the kingdom known as the Cradle of Empires know one truth above all: the throne waits empty. And as the saying goes among them, an empty throne means a house full of strangers. For though some powerful fae own mines of real or chimerical gold, and a rare few own both, still none are nearly as wealthy as was the legendary Emperor Issa Traore of House Shango (banner allies to House Gwydion).

Though there have been many wise and powerful rulers, none united the many as did the late Emperor. This bounty reflects beyond the Dreaming – for mortals, opportunity cascades across the land. Trade in gold, precious metals, cacao, and oil flows from broad harbors. Seaport cities like Dakar in the north, and Accra and Lagos many miles south and east are growing by leaps and bounds to reflect this bounty. As mortals dream of a golden future, Glamour floods the near Dreaming. West Africa bursts with chimerical riches for its changeling citizens, over which no lone ruler now claims dominion.

For there is one eternal law in the Cradle of Empires: the land chooses its Emperor.

Oh, changelings may make a case for their ascension, or put forward the name of one they feel deserving, but in the end the Dreaming is the final judge of who is worthy of the throne. Earth and forest, jaguar and snake, delta and desert, all must agree with the tribal chimera and the echoing voices of ancestors. All shall unite to choose one fae, who alone must have the mind of a king, the heart of a lion, the strength of a warrior, and the soul of a poet. An impossible task to unite so many. Who could live the old ways so deeply? Who could earn the blessing of the ancestors, the love of the wild, and yet master modernity? Who will earn the bounty of the now and spread its prosperity wide for the many fae? And yet, the mantle always finds a worthy soul ... eventually.

It's been years now since Emperor Issa Traore passed, and still the Dreaming is silent. While such long stretches are not unheard of in the history of the Cradle of Empires, the widening gap is making the local fae nervous, as they wonder if it has more to do with the withering Glamour





of the Evanescence than the selection of worthy successor. Cooler heads urge patience, citing the fact that the Dreaming has yet to err in its choices of strong rulers over the many centuries, but some ambitious changelings don't want to wait for the land to speak, and scheme to take power ahead of schedule. Such attempts have been made before, of course, but that doesn't make them any less dangerous for the population, especially if an Emperor (or Empress) arises during their rule.

West Africa's people are young in the early 21st century. Most of its people are younger than 35, and many of those younger than 20. While the people are young, the land is ancient with spirits cherished and revered for generations. Ancestral care has nourished every acre of farm and forest. Youthful energy coupled with relative political stability has allowed the southern coastal cities to grow rapidly. Without domineering foreign presences the modern architecture, cuisine, and arts of these cities remains vibrantly African. West African fashion has lit New York, Paris, and Milan ablaze with rich modern styles that set trends the world over.

Through all of it, the fashion, the architecture, the modern opportunity for self-expression, Dreamers from the Cradle of Empires have unleashed a flood of Glamour. North and east from the costs in the rural farmlands, farmers and ranchers benefit from better trade deals negotiated by educated young entrepreneurs who have studied at the world's finest schools and returned home to make their fortunes.


Arrayed against the cold winds of the Evanescence, which drag so many fae into the Undoing, the familial and communal ties of tribal life between West African fae and their Kinain families are uniquely suited to help preserve precious Glamour and stave off Banality. These same ties insulate fae and human communities from the identity stripping homogeneity of global modernity. Particularly in tribal lands distant from the larger cities, ties of tribe and family remain unusually strong compared with much of the rest of the world. By their own choosing and in cooperation with their changeling relatives, many Kinain families remain enchanted and able to interact more fully with the Dreaming. It is not unusual to find mortal elders who are very up to date on gossip and "who's who" among fae kind.





## THE DREAMING

Unlike some neighboring kingdoms, whose chimerical reflections have one or two strong features, the landscape of the Near Dreaming in the Cradle of Empires is as diverse as the lands it encompasses. Rather, the distinctive feature is the prevalence of so-called “ancestor chimera,” populations of human-looking chimera that take shape based on especially beloved – or notorious – members of the community. It’s important to recognize that they are not ghosts, though sometimes they may believe they are, but chimerical beings created from the stories told about a person. Thus they are often larger than life figures, who “remember” their lives not as they were but as people tell them to be, and are only too eager to share their stories with anyone who’ll listen.



Whether or not an Emperor sits the throne, of course, the business of changeling politics and government must go on, with regional rulers and local nobles stepping up to settle disputes, discuss fae law, and otherwise keep society running smoothly. (And these days, keep an eye on each to see who has aspirations for the throne.) Such has been the case since the passing of the beloved Emperor Issa Traore years back, as the land awaits the elevation of a new ruler. Courtly life in the Cradle of Empires is defined by seasonal festivals where regional nobles, visiting dignitaries, commoners, and noble vassals meet and mingle. Most festivals are shared to one extent or another with the mortal community, and each reflects the ways of the local cultures.

For example, the enormous Fete du Masques occurs each year in Cote d’Ivoire; it is a vibrant event that attracts regional and international visitors. At the Fete du Masques in particular but at many other events as well, a community of tradition minded fae and mortal artists known as the Eternal Dancers appear. Originally founded by a motley of biloko and djedi, the Dancers maintain the old dances and the old festivals as a way of uniting the more modern minded fae across the region through shared culture. Now the group has grown into a large collective of changeling and mortal artists, and the Dancers appear at each festival to perform complex narrative and interpretive dances. These captivating movements enact the joy, the mourning, the rage, and the memory of the people. Their magic, woven through athleticism and expression, serves to unite

both the modern-minded and tradition-bound peoples in protection, memory, and inspiration.

The Cradle of Empires is also justly famous for its colorful and booming markets, both fae and mortal. Large regional markets also draw in fae from far and wide for the opportunity to trade, gather rumors and to perhaps locate forgotten artifacts of Glamour in among the stalls and tents. The famed market of Djenne in the shadows of the Great Mosque is a favored destination for many adventurous fae bargain hunters, local and international. When it’s time to do business sellers and seekers surge into Djenne-Djneo, swelling the population of Djenne to three times its normal numbers. Craftways that have been passed from master to apprentice for thousands of years are still practiced here, providing countless ebon wood statutes, blessed bricks for traditional building methods, and complex brass and copper relief casts rich with symbolic meaning and often more than a few hidden messages.

Many fae comb through the stalls of brass reliefs hoping that one will provide one of the fabled keys to the lost Emperor’s Way. Legend tells that the Emperor’s Way crosses the Sahara from somewhere near Timbuktu all the way to the Middle Eastern kingdoms. Unlike most trods, the Emperor’s Way does not move fae faster to their destination. Instead this trod is said to be a test from the land itself, and that the fae who can complete this trek will prove themselves worthy to rule. And while completing the journey is no guarantee of the throne, it is an accomplishment that many past rulers laid claim to before they were chosen, and so the ambitious and determined search for one of the elusive keys that will open the trod and put them on a literal path to greatness.

Another cultural element that binds much of the Cradle of Empires is the value placed on well-told tales. At least as far back as the Mali Empire, *griots* and *griottes* have been advisors to royalty: arbiters, ambassadors, praise singers, doom-sayers and most importantly, storytellers. In established and wealthy ancient cultures without widespread literacy, the *griots* wove the tales of morals, taboos, and cultural identity. Training to become a *griot* is an honor that carries with it a formidable obligation to commit centuries of wisdom to memory under the tutelage of an established Griot who takes on apprentices to pass on the lessons. Mortal *griots* still live and flourish today and can trace their training lineage back for generations, while some members of the eshu kith have been known to call the Cradle of Empires the birthplace of their kith. Close professional relationships and deep affinity with folklore and myth mean that with many mortal *griots* are at least passing aware of the fae nature of some of their counterparts, with changeling status being an “open secret” among the griot training lineages, and fae masters taking on mortal *griot* apprentices.



## The UNBLINKING Eye

In the high northwestern Sahara lies a geological marvel known as the Eye of the Sahara. Mortal geologists have not agreed upon any explanation for this 25 mile wide whirlwind pattern frozen forever in rock. Modern science still cannot agree if this is an upward explosion of magma, a meteor crater, or something else entirely. Despite the sparse population of locals, it is said by those who would know that strange travelers with deep and knowing eyes seek this place with increasing frequency, particularly as the trods re-open across the Land of Ancient Dreams. Intrepid fae who have explored this otherworldly yet earthly marvel describe leaving with an intense feeling that though they looked and looked, they never saw what was truly there. As though they were in the presence of Something that never unmasked itself.

More than 1600 miles north from the southern port of Accra, Timbuktu was an ancient center of learning built on the wealth of the ancient trans-Saharan trade. A small but dedicated community of changeling scholars of the written word still reside in the largely abandoned ancient desert city. They preserve the Nameless Library, a vast collection of works housed in the Near Dreaming and filled to the rafters with forgotten maps and lost knowledge. The scholars see themselves as the protectors of this lore, keeping it locked away from the erosion of Banality. They also task themselves with safeguarding the mortal world from dangerous knowledge, and from those foolish enough to seek it without due respect. The wise approach Timbuktu with trepidation. There are rumors that the scholars seek apprentices amongst those who love the beauty of the spoken word. A would-be scholar must prove themselves by speaking deep truths and wise insights using the fewest words possible. The more expressive and evocative the better, while remaining almost unbelievably brief. Such a seeker should also be a humble and grateful recipient of wisdom, showing a true appreciation for finely crafted sentences spoken by the testing scholar. Only then will they be granted a key to the great library.

Not that the Nameless Library is the only place that draws those with a love of the ancient, the dangerous, and the forbidden. Changeling adventurers quickly learn well of the dangers of travel in the more remote reaches of the Cradle of Empires. In addition to mundane hazards the wild places host predatory chimera acting on their deadly

instincts, while ancient cantrips await activation by the unwary. Near ruins or in places of deep tribal memory, ancient chimera guardians loyal to long dead Emperors seek to prevent anyone but their absent patron from seeking the throne. In the mortal world, the hot Harmattan winds blow from November to March, bringing the dry season when no crops grow. In the Dreaming, the Harmattan wind knows no season and nothing known to mortal or fae may predict the wild dance of its hunger. At the coasts, away from the eyes of the cities, great mangrove forests grow as living labyrinths with their own secret passages, hidden treasures, and secret sovereigns.

## REALM OF SEASONS

Not a single kingdom but a collection of many allied lands, each with its own ruler who bows to a chosen first among equals, the Realm of Seasons is a living history of migration. In the beginning, these were the lands of hunter-gatherers: tribes like the San, Khoisan, and Himba. These peoples saw the first season here, and it was a season of plenty. Game and wild fruit flourished abundant across the plains. Then the season changed, and brought a large and varied people group now referred to as the Bantu peoples, all speaking varied tongues, but possessing a common root language. The Bantu came from the north and brought agriculture and commerce, altering the lands forever with the imprint of man. With time and growing migration, some of the sister languages became unintelligible to each other, despite once-common roots. The Bantu speakers became many peoples, with tribe identities like Tswana, Methetwa, Chewa, Basotho and Zulu, each with their own ways and identities. The season changed and the Realm now knew many rulers.

Over time, the fae of the region followed their mortal relatives, establishing their own kingdoms and elevating the worthy among them to rule. And while their ways changed over the generations, each still held the notion of seasonal rule, though the metric for what counted as a season varied widely among the fae. In this realm of change, there are many crowns: some tied to regions, some to forces of nature, and some to the will of the people directly.

The rise of mortal rulers such as Shaka Zulu and the invasion of foreign powers further altered the political landscape as centuries slipped by, until the need for a single voice to steady the region became a driving goal for the native fae. And so the tradition of choosing the King or Queen of Seasons arose, which remains in effect to this day. Among the queens and kings of the greater Realm, one monarch is chosen to serve part or all of a Season as the first among equals and the arbiter of disputes. The choosing ceremony is a week-long festival, hosted by a rotating list of kingdoms, where the rulers confer while each delegation



attempts to outdo the others in friendly contests of dance, athletics, storytelling, and of course, cooking.

Once chosen, that ruler is respected by all as the highest fae authority of their shared lands, even as they must simultaneously navigate the needs, demands and egos of all other monarchs of the Realm of Seasons as well as see to the stewardship of their own subjects. They may issue declarations across kingdoms but most tread lightly to avoid the appearance of tyranny and usurpation, as well as any semblance of favoritism in treating with one kingdom over another. They are also the ultimate authority when treating with local Prodigals, and they are also responsible for handling serious breaches of the Mists and conducting any backchannel political maneuvering with mortal governments necessary to keep the fae of the Realm safe and prosperous.

It is, to put it mildly, not an easy job.

In theory, each high ruler reflects the current spirit of their subjects and the state of their lands. Of course, the selection process itself is a political event, with the rulers gathering for plenty of public feasts and speeches as well as all the deal-cutting, alliances, rivalries, and other attendant complications of such occasions. Short of bloodshed, not much is off-limits, but it is also worth noting that the process has tended to produce far more benevolent rulers than tyrants. Even the most grasping king or bloodthirsty queen realizes that while being first among equals over so much land is a tempting prize, it also places many more demands on them as well as focusing a great deal of attention on their every move. They are thus much more likely to vote for a more virtuous choice to draw attention and weather the endless demands of the position, the better to return to their shadowy dealings. Of course, they'll also see what they can get for their vote if they can ...

The last few years of this cool harvest season have been marked by the rule of one such benevolent ruler: High King Kutloano Mamello, otherwise known as the King of High Snows. When Kutloano was crowned, it snowed gently for a single day everywhere in the realm – even the Kalahari desert! The seers were justly pleased and the fae of the land rejoiced to see the Dreaming so obviously endorse their new high king. Ruling from the icy peaks of Lethoso, his cool and contemplative demeanor reflects the relative calm of the times. He knows better than anyone, however, that no season lasts forever – and with the withering Glamour of the Evanescence, it seems each season brings less than the one before it.

Privately the king worries that his rule will end before he can prepare his people for this harsh reality, and while he has a good heart, he has begun contemplating ways he might extend his rule if it appears it is coming to an end

before he feels ready to relinquish control. He has not crossed over into scheming and tyranny, and may not do so at all, but the temptation is definitely rising – in the name of doing the right thing for his people, of course. He's no villain, after all, just a king ready to break the rules for the greater good.

Of course, keeping the throne and thereby disrupting the tradition of handing over control at the end of a Season could potentially do far more damage to the local Dreaming, but High King Kutloano prefers not to dwell on such unpleasant truths.

For now however, as it has been since time immemorial, the lands of the Realm of Seasons still vibrantly reflect its name. While the majority of the vast miles experience the cyclical shifts of weather, there are bold reaches where the earth's cycles hold less sway. The highlands of Lesotho see winter temperatures of negative 19 degrees Fahrenheit. Many miles away, the Dead Vlei of Namibia boasts air so hot and dry that thousand year old husks of dead trees petrify upright under the sun, too dry to even decompose. The Skeleton Coast may be famed as the doom of all sailors, but this has made it a true haven for vast herd of seals, and a startlingly large population of local selkies and their kin. These beautiful seagoing fae are known to travel several hours inland to party in the big cities, and bask in the vibrant Namibian music scene. Inland lies the northerly, verdant wonder of the Okavango Delta. An atypical geological formation fosters the creation of a floodplain so vast that the regional animals have all adapted to life in and among the water. Cheetahs swim after their prey, and monkeys dive after each other as they migrate from tiny island to tiny island. Each small island and channel is an ecosystem, full of wonder, danger, and curiosity.

This vast collection of climates share a realm with the best preserved fossil record of human and early hominid life. The region the mortals call "the Cradle of Humankind" is the home of anthropological discoveries going back 10 million years. Fae scholars have argued that this eons-long presence of early humans joined with stark examples of climate extremes have contributed to a greater amount of Inanimae activity than is known of in other regions of the world. The expansive stretch from Namaqualand in the north all the way to Cape Town at the southernmost tip of the continent is home a miles-long flowering unlike any other in the world.

When spring comes to Namaqualand, the fields from horizon to horizon explode in a riotous burst of colorful, untamed wildflowers. The yearly palette of the flowers are dictated by the weather leading up the great bloom – each year seeing a very different and unpredictable map of color and flora. A unique species of seasonal flower Innanimae



## The Dreaming

Though the local kingdoms vary widely in the Realm of Seasons, as suits their extremely diverse nature, the embodiment of the current chosen high ruler's nature always shades the local Dreaming. With the King of High Snows on the throne, that means chill breezes blow even in the hottest parts of the year, and the icy peaks of Lesotho always seem to be visible on the horizon, no matter where you stand.

have lived here from the dawning times. They have a life span no longer than the spring that brought them forth. Each spring, one of these flora Inanimae (and only one) makes a prophecy that comes to pass before the next bloom.

At the southern terminus of this flower trail, shrouded in a permanent white blanket of mist, stands Table Mountain. Inanimae of rock, wind, and sea have joined power to hold this as a place of peace and neutrality for any and all to use. Fae and many of their shapeshifting Prodigal cousins may meet here beneath the protection of ancient and impartial glome guardians and the watchful eyes of paroseme observers.

Most recently, Table Mountain has been a meeting place for an uneasy alliance of conservation minded fae nobles, and the Realm's growing pride of Bastet shifters. The current Bastet Queen is a notoriously bloodthirsty lioness named "Greets with Fire," whose methods have strained the peaceful relations between her pride and the local fae. While all celebrate successful joint wildlife conservation efforts, the Bastet strain against some of the ownership-minded humans and the "help" they provide the wilds. Bastet reprisals against modern poachers are increasingly more common, and while they may be seen as laudable by many fae and mortal who cherish their animal-kin, the scenes they leave behind are the things of vindictive nightmare... the sort of gory excess that will eventually bring the attention of the mortal world.

## New Kiths

### Biloko

*"We do not need the hollow riches presented by modern man. We take what is gifted to us by the gods and the growing Earth, for it is rightfully ours."*

Although biloko (singular: eloko) are fiercely traditional and tend to be born into tight-knit communities, often those socially or physically isolated from other cultures, they are

actually a relatively young kith by the measure of the fae. Some changeling scholars argue that they were created in response to the fears of mortals who saw their communities devastated by war and disaster, and worried that the ways they knew would be lost to history, while others claim to track their origins to dread of assimilation and loss of cultural identity as colonization took hold across the continent.

Regardless of their origins, members of this kith take pride in keeping the ways of their people alive, and serve as living embodiments of the beliefs of their communities. They seek to keep old legends and traditions vital while guiding their people through the challenges of the modern age and into the future. Of course, with so many different cultures represented across the Land of Ancient Dreams, this makes the biloko an incredibly diverse kith, and more than a few changelings – not all of them foreign visitors! – have seen biloko drawn of different heritages and believed them to be members of entirely separate kiths. For their part, biloko view this diversity as a strength, the better to preserve the cultures they are born to embody.

Deeply attuned with nature as well as the communities who dreamt them into existence, biloko strive to preserve traditional bonds between communities and the world around them, whether that means honoring ancient hunting rites or ensuring that a sacred lake is not drained for the path of a new highway. Despite the fact that both kiths are relatively young – or perhaps because of it – biloko and kuino are notoriously at odds and tend to avoid each other when possible.

As most biloko belong in close-knit and often isolated populations, they follow the traditions and mores of their communities. They tend to be traditional and conservative by nature, preferring the ways of their ancestors, and enjoy learning local history and folktales. They are not averse to taking advantage of modern conveniences, however, especially in the digital age where their tribes have spread to distant corners of the world and so a cell phone can be lifeline to a cousin living far away. However, everything else being equal, an eloko will choose a tested and time-honored practice or lifestyle over a newer one every time. It is not that they hate the present or fear the future, after all, so much as they don't want to lose the past in the process.

Because many still live lifestyles dependent on their physical labor, biloko are generally shorter in height, slim, and muscular. They wear functional clothes and habitually adorn themselves symbols of their beliefs, and so depending on their culture may make use of masks, beaded necklaces, wooden amulets, feathery head-pieces, totems, or instruments. Depending on their origins, some also use facepaint, scarification, or body modification to obtain a desired traditional look. Seeing an eloko without some sort of tribal fashion or accessory is rare; they liken it to being caught naked.



## Glamour Ways

Biloko gather Glamour from things that remind them of their home culture. Such practices vary widely, as suits the diverse array of their origins, but it must be directly linked to the culture of their people. This makes it fairly easy for them to obtain Glamour in their communities, but more difficult if they range farther afield. When biloko Unleash their magic, those around them may hear sounds made by ceremonial drums and stomping feet, followed by songs sung in ancient tongues. They may smell a subtle scent of dust and fragrant ceremonial oils. Those who belong to an eloko's folk experience a sense of exaltation and wholeness, while outsiders and foreigners may sense – just for a moment – how cut off they have become from their own ancestral roots.

**Realm Affinity:** Nature.

**Ancestral Virtues:** Biloko are the living embodiment of the beliefs of their people. Given the diversity of their origins, this means many different things across the Land of Ancient Dreams, but all biloko excel at certain qualities and tasks beloved of their communities. Biloko add one to an Attribute especially valued by their culture, even if it takes it above five dots. Likewise, they must select one Ability their community is known for; they cannot botch rolls in that Ability. The Living Legend Merit cost is also reduced to 2 points for biloko.

**Natural Instinct:** After living for so long off of the land, the biloko have developed quick reflexes. Biloko always roll twice for initiative and keep the best result, and always go first on ties regarding initiative, and they cannot botch Survival rolls. Biloko are deeply attached to what they know and their usual surroundings.

**Familiar Ground:** Biloko feel uneasy in strange places, and rest fitfully. They must make a Willpower roll each night, difficulty 6, to recover Willpower points when resting in an unfamiliar place. A place does not count as familiar until an eloko has spent at least three lunar cycles there. This difficulty may be increased if the location is particularly strange or hostile, or reduced if a friendly community of fellow tribe members or language speakers exists there already.

**Guarded:** Biloko tend to make poor first impressions, and their direct manners can make for some uncomfortable social misfires. The first social roll involving an unfamiliar person suffers a +2 difficulty. A failed Etiquette roll is treated as a botch unless the eloko spends 1 Willpower point.

## OKUBILI

*“When presented with two opportunities, why not engage in both? Balance and harmony between old and new, tradition and progression are the best roads to fulfillment.”*

Some fae lead lives based on singular beliefs: honor, strength, art, or love. For the okubili, finding a golden

middle way between a myriad of values is the way to find balance and happiness. The road to fulfillment never ends. Okubili do not claim to have found optimal balance, though quite a few have joined the ranks of the Siocháin over time. Members of this kith believe that other fae do not place enough attention on the cycle of death and rebirth that is central to the existence of changeling, and encourage others to discover their past lives as a means of attaining enlightenment as well as sometimes atoning for past sins.

Okubili love to share their beliefs with other kiths and changelings, especially those of a single mind, and believe that although they have yet to completely understand the beauty of duality, pursuing this path makes them natural leaders. More often than not this kith will find themselves taking on roles as spiritual guides or gurus. What makes okubili unique is their strength of spirit and character. An okubili rarely doubts her own gut feeling or character and will almost always harbor a strong sense of meaning both in the Dreaming and the Autumn world.

Okubili are known for their versatility, as they can find meaning and balance in almost any location or way of living, as long as there is a presence of duality. They can be school teachers by summer and by winter act as shamans for the tribe. While they may not lead actual double lives, the practice is not unheard of among the Unseelie members of this kith, and even those who shy away from such duplicity often have distinct, separate worlds in their lives, often with friend and family groups that have no idea about the other parts of the changeling's life. For their part, the okubili do not see this as dishonest, but merely an expression of the duality and self-expression they revere.

Although their mortal seeming might change throughout the day because of their different lifestyles, their fae mien stays the same. Because of their warrior heritage, all are built strong, with lean muscles that suit them for running long distances and aid them in battle. Most okubili prefer neat, straightforward clothes. This kith's most unique feature are their eyes, which shift color depending on their mood and state of mind. Some eyes stay the same color throughout their bearer's entire existence, while other change several times a day. It is often said that an okubili with rapidly changing eye colors is out of balance.

## Glamour Ways

Okubili often harvest Glamor in meditation, though that may take the form of simple activity rather than introspective idleness. They also enjoy Revelry from teaching others when possible. An okubili Unleashing makes shadows darker and lights brighter, and brings feelings of either profound self-confidence for benevolent magic or crippling doubt for malicious cantrips.

**Realm Affinity:** Scene.



**Anger Management:** Because the okubili are so in line with their own emotions, they rarely lose their composure or make an outburst of any sort. Okubili may spend 1 Willpower to completely suppress strong displays of emotion as well as ignore any mundane attempts to provoke them to emotional outbursts for a full scene. Any such efforts simply fail. Magical attempts to manipulate the emotions of an okubili suffer a +3 difficulty penalty.

**Strength of the Cycle:** Okubili are attuned to their past lives, and have an innate knack for accessing them. An okubili receives two dots of the Remembrance Background for free at character creation, even if it takes them above five dots, and subtracts -1 from the difficulty of all rolls made with that Background. Okubili also cannot botch Enigmas or Leadership rolls.

**Immersive Mind:** Between past lives and dual lives and secret identities, okubili can find themselves overwhelmed and lose track of their current identity, causing embarrassing or even dangerous episodes where they start behaving as though they were living one of their other lives. Treat this

Frailty as the Flashbacks Flaw (Changeling p.182), except that the triggers relate to other identities they currently maintain as well as past lives they recall via Remembrance. The okubili does not receive extra points for this Flaw.

## DJEDI

*"There is nothing better than feeling the pulse of the city, the smell of asphalt, and the constant rush of cars going by on the main street! I am born of the city, I am its child."*

With their great love of unity, crowds, parties, and teamwork, the djedi are a kith born to thrive in the city life. Their quick wit and spontaneous nature make them masters of getting groups together, creating and executing events, and organizing communities. Like their legendary namesake, this kith's members are natural magicians and often display impressive facility with their Arts and Realms. Their ability to tap into ambient Glamour even lets them conjure some minor but diverting effects without the need for Arts at all, and djedi frequently use this in their social circles to delight and deceive. Mortals can easily be convinced they have witnessed some sleight of hand, clever illusion, special





effects, or well-positioned projector light, and thus, djedi have little trouble making themselves the life of the party.

Many of their fellow changelings look down upon their laissez faire approach to potentially dangerous magic, but the djedi do not care. The joy and sense of wonder that they bring to a gathering makes their approach well worth the danger of an occasional slip. However, djedi who've been around long enough also develop a keen sense of when it's time to cut their losses and hide out until the heat dies down, as their tendency to use simple tricks can attract unpleasant attention from Prodigals, mortal hunters, or worse enemies.

Members of this kith sometimes get into quarrels with other fae when the djedi disturb a meeting or a private event for the third time in a week, but their fellows also know the great set of social and magical skills this kith has makes them valuable assets as well, and so often grudgingly tolerate their eccentricities. The magical skills of the djedi are tied to ancient powers, and although some of this kith come off as jesters, those that put the time in can become some of the most powerful and dangerous cantrip wielders in the changeling community.

Djedi can look very different depending on their sense of style, although their looks are always either confusing, trendsetting, or avant-garde. While others see looks on fashion runways and understand them to be inspirational or aspirational – not meant to be worn as real clothing – djedi never draw that line. Most djedi hone onto a specific style – Afrofuturism, Harajuku girl, rockabilly, 1970s punk, Jackie O, etc. – and wear it to the extreme. In their fae mien, all djedi possess light blue tint to their skin and snow white hair, sport canine teeth with nearly three-inch fangs on either side, and normally do not top much over five feet tall. They spend long hours cultivating and maintaining their look, frequently coloring their hair every shade of the rainbow or even shaving odd patterns into their hair or beards in order to stand out.

### Glamour Ways

For Revelry, djedi flock to social gatherings and parties. Lucky members of this kith get to work in careers where they excel as event organizers, entertainers, performers, athletic coaches, community organizers, and even politicians. Some djedi are even butlers or stay-at-home parents, enjoying the life and unity of family. Many work in normal 9-5's, but whenever they get the chance, they head out to social events. When the djedi Unleash their magic, the results are best described as “cinematic” or simply “spectacular” – crackling nimbuses of power, swirling winds, phantom sounds, and other impressive displays are par for the course.

### Realm Affinity: Fae

**Magic In the Blood:** Djedi may spend 1 Glamour to create minor magical effects without the need for bunks or cantrip

rolls. These effects are roughly the equivalent of mortal magic tricks, simple special effects, or minor “wizard’s apprentice” spells. They are always flashy and obvious in some way, even if mortals believe they’re nothing more than sleight of hand. However, these tricks cannot recreate actual Arts and cannot have any direct mechanical effect in game terms – they’re purely for show, as it were, though they’re definitely fun to watch. Djedi cannot botch Gremayre rolls, and can spend 1 Glamour to reduce the difficulty of all cantrip rolls by 1 for the rest of the scene. Treat any botches on cantrip casting rolls as regular failures during this time as well. Up to three Glamour may be spent this way per scene.

**All Eyes on Me:** Love them or hate them, there’s just something about the djedi that draws people in. Djedi add one dot to their Charisma Attribute, even if it takes them above 5, and subtract -1 from the difficulty of their first social roll in a scene, provided they make a suitably flashy entrance.

**Unsubtle:** Djedi enjoy attention and tend to attract plenty of followers on social media, but that also makes them easy prey for those who seek them out for less benevolent reasons. Subtract 2 from the difficulty of all rolls to track down a djedi through social investigation, and once per story the Storyteller may declare that the djedi has attracted the obsessive attention of a potentially dangerous individual: a fanatical stalker, a witch hunter, or even an unfriendly Prodigal.

**The Crash:** Channeling raw power takes its toll. For the rest of the next scene after using their Magic In the Blood Birthright to reduce the difficulty of cantrip rolls, djedi are mentally drained and suffer +1 difficulty on all rolls for each point of Glamour they spent. So if a djedi spent two Glamour points on Magic In the Blood, the next scene she would increase the difficulty of all rolls by +2. Conjuring small magic tricks does not trigger this penalty.

## KUINO

*“Our lands are bountiful and their products unique, so why not take advantage?”*

As a vast and incredibly topographically and ecologically varied continent, Africa teems with all manner of natural resources and trade commodities, and where there are valuables there are fortunes to be made for those with a keen eye for bargains and a willingness to take risks. And that is precisely where the kuino feel most at home – these sharp-eyed fae are always on the lookout for a good deal, and so have spread across the continent to anywhere they feel they can reap the most rewards. Kuino have a reputation for avarice and materialism that isn’t quite fair – they are born from the dreams of better lives mortals have when they come across valuable goods or raw materials. Those dreams can be selfish and destructive, it’s true, but they can also lead to



## TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

The Company also provides some ground rules designed to maximize profit and success for its members, who might otherwise engage in endless destructive feuds: first, no kuino should physically harm another in pursuit of business; second, all deals between Company members must be honored (and are typically fae oaths); and finally, taking down Company rivals is fine ... unless in doing so you do greater harm to the Company as a whole. Oh, and above all else: Don't. Get. Caught.

better communities and a better world. As this kith is fond of saying, money is only as evil as its usage.

Although it's sometimes falsely reported that this kith only dates back to the early days of colonialism – their actual roots stretch back at least a millennia earlier, though that's still young by Dreaming standards – it is true that period changed them in significant ways. Most normally was the decision of the previously fractious kith to organize into a group that has been known by several names but most recently simply as the Company. It is not a single corporate entity, mind you, but a sort of organizational pyramid with the most famous and successful kith members at the top and all the others below them vying for position. There are all manner of branches dedicated to different industries and areas of interest, as well as corporate titles that are theoretically meaningless but nevertheless fiercely coveted.

Of all the indigenous kiths of the continent, the kuino have consistently been the most organized in their dealings with the Kithain and other foreign fae, even if they prefer to work through front companies and enchanted mortals until the last possible moment (to avoid tipping their hands). While some of their fellows have accused them of selling out, the kuino simply respond that they're beating the outsiders at their own game, and point to their ever-increasing holdings as proof.

Understanding the Company is key to understanding how most kuino live – even those rare members who reject a role in it are still at least partly defined by it. After joining fae society, kuino are expected to claim territory in a business field and prove their value to the kith as a whole, under the loose supervision of senior kith members in that field. Exactly what value means varies by industry – financial success is always a solid metric, of course, but even less tangible things like political or social influence can earn the respect of the Company. The Company holds two official meetings every

year, which members are expected to make every effort to attend, as well as numerous parties, networking events, and even award ceremonies.

In their private lives, kuino tend to maintain an extensive network of professional contacts, but few close friends; their tendency to base relationships on potential advantage and their willingness to break bonds to get ahead can make it hard to stay close to them in the long run. For their part, the kuino see their position as pragmatic – all relationships are about getting what you want from others, they're just honest about it up front. It's notable that some kuino actually find long-lasting friendships and even love affairs when someone who has no "value" to them proves willing to stick around and support them, and they are fiercely devoted to such unlikely partners.

Kuino are not always in business attire, despite rumors to the contrary, but even in casual moments tend to pick clothing and jewelry that subtly (or not so subtly) suggest power and authority. What really makes this kith stand out, however, isn't their wardrobe; it's the second set of eyes they possess in their fae seeming. While one set of eyes sits normally on their face as would a human's, their second set of eyes grow in above these, set in the forehead where a human's eyebrows might be. The iris and sclera of the second pair of eyes are completely black, giving them a distanced and emotionless look. The kuino also often sport either a snow-white skin tone or a mahogany black one. In rare instances, some are pigmented with half white and half black skin.

### Glamour Ways

In addition to drawing energy from dealmaking and wordplay, kuino are intensely curious and voracious learners, and find Revelry in immersing themselves in their chosen field of interest. A kuino who intends to go into agribusiness will get a degree in agriculture as well as business administration, for example, while another whose trade is copper will study geology and even work down the mines for a time before moving into management. When one of the kuino Unleashes her magic, the area tends to reflect her chosen field as well – for example, the copper expert might cause everything to take on a metallic sheen and feel the weight of a deep earth mine.

#### Realm Affinity: Prop.

Eyes for Detail: Kuino receive the Acute Sense (Vision) Merit for free during character creation, and cannot botch any Investigation or Alertness rolls where good vision is a potential benefit. Kuino cannot be surprised in combat if the threat is visible to their extra set of eyes – this includes while they sleep, as the second set of eyes never fully closes.

Bargainer's Gift: All kuino gain a dot in Manipulation, even if it takes them above 5. In addition, by spending 1 Glamour and touching a contract – or person involved in a



verbal agreement – the kuino can instinctively recognize any potential loopholes, fine print, or other areas of potential exploitation. (Whether they close these gaps or use them for their own benefit is their choice.) Lastly, kuino subtract -1 from the difficulty of all Contract Art cantrips.

**Sambio:** All kuino have a treasured possession that houses a portion of their fae spirit. The kuino need not carry this item with them, but they are justifiably quite paranoid about its safekeeping. Should someone else take possession of the item, the kuino cannot harm them, and must roll Willpower (difficulty 8) to resist following their commands. This item is all but cosmetically immune to normal damage, but cold iron, magic, and magical weapons can destroy it. It has 10 Health Levels, and only ever suffers one level of damage per attack. If it is destroyed, the kuino is immediately slain. If cold iron is used, the kuino's fae spirit dies as well. Kuino automatically sense if their item is damaged.

## OBAMBO

*"The eye is treacherous. For it is controlled by a mind which does not wish to see what stands before it."*

Nothing escapes the light fingers and clever wit of the obambo. If they find an object of interest, even if it is without value, they store it away in jars or pots for the day when it might come of use. Born from ghost stories and dreams of taking relics from forbidden places, obambo love delving into places which no one else dares explore. The obambo have an uncanny talent with mystical objects and are natural collectors, but unlike their distant cousins the sluagh, obambo vastly prefer fieldwork to haunting the stacks. They're well at home wading through deep swamps or crawling into narrow caves to find a specific artifact or inscription, and while they share a love of the occult with their whispering kin, the obambo greatly prefer practicing it than cataloging it. A sluagh who acquires a forbidden tome might peruse it before carefully placing it on a locked shelf; an obambo would be far more likely to crack it open, light some candles, and try it out to see what actually works. The fact that the sluagh population is higher than the obambo population is no doubt simply a coincidence.

Meetings of this kith often include complicated, detailed, sometimes day-long rituals. True to form, some of these practices will be genuine while others are entirely manufactured to obfuscate the truth from any prying eyes. Once the formalities are out of the way, a vigorous exchange of ideas begins, often accompanied by (dangerous) practical demonstrations and even some bartering for choice items and secrets. Being invited to share in such a gathering is a profound honor, and if that trust is abused, will seldom be offered again in this lifetime or the next.

Although the obambo are friendly enough on the surface, those that spend time with them know they are actually one

of the most secretive kiths of the Land of Ancient Dreams, capable of appearing friendly and talking a great deal without actually sharing much personal or sensitive information. They place their trust very slowly, and so the number of people who actually know them well is quite limited and cherished. Professionally they gravitate any work that lets them move around and preferably runs a lot of interesting items through their hands, though whether that means they become freelance museum appraisers, pawn shop owners, auction house acquisitions experts, or antiquities smugglers depends on the obambo in question.

Because they tend to get their hands dirty but don't particularly seek out glory, obambo often dress in plain, utilitarian clothing that's rugged and better still has lots of pockets. Obambo like to layer their outfits, and will often wear more than two jackets, a couple of shirts or even dresses, giving them a very unique look. What they lack in clothing style they often make up for with their accessories. Obambo deck themselves with all manner of trinkets, rings, amulets, necklaces, and other adornments, often homemade and blessed to ward off evil or offer special protection. Determining which ones are genuine and which ones are clever replicas is a good way to impress an obambo, too.

### Glamour Ways

Obambo find Revelry interacting with their collections, and often see their artifacts and trinkets as family members imbued with souls or energies as much as they themselves possess. They have a sometimes disconcerting habit of speaking to them and ascribing them personalities and traits. They also gain Glamour from discussing or presenting their collection to others, and become notably more animated in the company of other collectors and especially other obambo, often attempting to out-do each other with displays of knowledge or prized relics. An obambo's Unleashing fills the air with the stale air and musty scent of forgotten tombs and causes a feeling of dread to run down the spine, as if some great trap is about to snap shut.

### Realm Affinity: Prop

**Clever Hands:** An obambo instinctively knows if she enters a supernatural location; she can also tell if an item is magical if she touches it, though not necessarily what kind of magic it has or how to activate it. She subtracts -2 from the difficulty of any rolls to identify magical items by sight or to learn information about one in her possession, and does not need to research an item to make such rolls – simply touching it potentially offers the same information for her as another kith might get spending hours digging through a library. This insight does not apply to places or people, only objects. Obambo also cannot botch Kenning or Occult rolls.

**One False Move:** Should an obambo trigger a trap, set off an alarm, or activate a cursed item, she may immediately



spend 1 Glamour to take back her action, instead witnessing a brief flash of what would have happened if she acted. The danger is still there, and the obambo does not necessarily know where it comes from or how to disable it, only that one specific action definitely triggers it. She also only knows the immediate consequences – she might know that opening a window sets off an alarm, for example, but not who is on the other end of the alert. This talent cannot be used to take back the actions of others, which is one reason obambo tend to lead from the front when investigating dangerous areas.

**Vengeful Heart:** An obambo must succeed on a Willpower roll (difficulty 8) not to take immediate, vicious action against someone who hurts a person she cares about, or to resist an opportunity to retaliate against someone who betrayed her trust. This action need not be physical violence, though it certainly can be, but it is definitely cruel and designed to inflict maximum pain, damage, and/or humiliation..

## BELLATIERRA

Bellatierra, the beautiful land, where the roots of myth and legend run deep. Home to some of the oldest civilizations in the world, the dreams of her people go back to before the dawn of time itself, and the fae here have existed alongside their mortal counterparts from the very beginning. Many of the legends find themselves oft repeated across the continent, reflecting the commonality of human memory. But to call it a single land is disingenuous to the grand diversity that is Bellatierra. Comprised of over a dozen human countries, three large changeling kingdoms, and many smaller fae territories both allied and distinct, its people and cultures are as varied as their dreams.

The arrival of colonizers caused havoc for indigenous fae and human alike. Foreign boots crushed their dreams, and strange illnesses ravaged their bodies. But some things cannot be easily broken. Some fought with tricks and blades and will, but many of the fae fled to the wilderness, taking what shelter they could find from the storm and watching over their people as best they could. Centuries passed, with new wars cropping up across the land. As humanity spread across the globe, they ate away at the wilds, chewing up what they could and spitting out what was of no use to progress. Every year, the jungle loses acres, conflict rages across the continent, and more dreams blink out of existence.

But at the dawn of the twenty-first century, a change came. Mortals came to realize just how much they stood to lose if the last wilds were to be consumed, and they began to take measures to shore up the loss. Re-planting lost jungle and making changes to how they used the land were small steps, but enough to reawaken some dreams long-lost to a callous world. They stretched their tired bones and got to work rebuilding that which had been lost. The dense

jungles and jagged mountains still hide many secrets, and none know them as well as the ancients who make up the guardians of Bellatierra, some old enough to remember when mortals first arrived. Some of the oldest dreams outside the Cradle of Life itself reside there, so thoroughly interwoven into the soul and stories of South America's mortals they can never venture forth from the land.

Old habits die hard, and to this day, the fae native to Bellatierra tend to be reclusive and wary of outsiders, though as world culture becomes more globalized, some of the old suspicions are fading. Many younger denizens of Bellatierra are eager to meet with their cousins from far-off lands. After all, some dreams are the same no matter which language they're dreamed in; there will always be stories that ring true in every tongue.

## KINGDOM OF MOUNTAINS

In the time before history, when the world was flat and blank, a woman wandered the earth with her people. Struggling to survive on the flatlands with no trees to shelter them, they ate what little they could catch. Their mother saw their suffering and, heart aching for her children, swore to build them a place they could call their own. Her voice called the trees down from the heavens, rooting them into the ground, spreading their branches high over the land. From the depths of the earth, she coaxed stones, birthing them forth through the flesh of this new land. Her pain gave way to tears, carving lakes and rivers that fled into the sea.

From the womb of the earth sprang forth all manner of creatures, from the delicate vesper bat to the grand titanoboa, each gifted with its own domain and powers. The powerful jaguar, deadly warrior of the night. Docile guanacos, spending their lives peaceably high in the Andes. The rainbow of birds roosting in the arms of the new jungle, too many to name. The many creatures of water and mud, living their days just beneath the surface. But it was to her first children that she gave the greatest gift of all: the power to dream. And from these dreams sprang forth the fae.

The oldest fae in the land, Cuyania, is said to be not just one of the legendary Siocháin, but one of the first changelings, period. The mother mountain resides deep within the Andes range, and though few can claim to have met the mother mountain herself in many years, the stories still abound. She came to Bellatierra with the first people, across a land bridge that rose at her call. When the mountains first birthed through the earth, tearing wounds as they rose, her touch soothed their hurt. Taking the pain within herself, her tears fell heavy upon the land, leaving life in their wake. Plants sprang forth, providing her children with food and shelter. Watching over the harvest, she was a kind mother and made certain they wanted for naught.



All living creatures lived under her watchful gaze, from the smallest insect to the great river serpents.

The mortals knew her as La Madremonte or “The Mother Mountain,” calling upon her to bless the crops and make the weather fair. And so too did the fae come to hold her above all others. As the years passed, they spread across the land, and she lay to take her rest amongst the mighty mountains. Many centuries would pass before she woke again. When she finally did, it was to a very different world. Conflict had come to her land; it would be a long time before peace would once again reign. But so too had more dreams come into being while she slept, sprung forth from the hearts of the people, struggling to survive in an inhospitable world. Gathering them to her side, she created a home deep within the hills. From these humble beginnings, the oldest kingdom in Bellatierra took root: the Kingdom of Mountains.


Cuyania herself ruled over the fae there for many years, and eventually passed the throne to Queen Kiela, a young boraro, before she retired back to her cave. Fiercely devoted to reclaiming their land, the changelings here fight alongside humanity unseen, lending their Glamour to stemming the tide of destruction. Some are more involved than others,

but the soldiers of the mountains are many and it is largely through their actions that progress has been made against invaders, pollution, and deforestation. In the fifteenth century, colonizers brought more than weapons and disease; they brought their own dreams to this new land. The redcaps and gremlins of the conquistadors clashed against the native boraro and llorona, and the earth was stained red with blood. War raged on for decades, even after the mortal conflict had abated, as the fae struggled for dominance over Bellatierra. Many died outright, torn asunder by foreign magicks and strange weapons. Others succumbed to Banality, choosing a mortal life over continued conflict.

The Treaty of Sierra Madre, and the intricate wards and enchantments that followed, brought a long-awaited end to the fae conflict. Those dreams that were born on Bellatierra soil, birthed of her people, would remain in their land and not venture forth to other places. The invaders would return to their homes and trouble them no longer, never to return as long as the wards remained in place. For five hundred years the peace was kept, upheld by a group of ten changelings known simply as Os Guardiões. Drawn from each kingdom of Bellatierra, they maintained the warding magic and “gently” discouraged any fae who might







be tempted to cross the boundary. As the years passed and the ten mantles passed down from elder to child, the barrier remained. Once a century, representatives from the kingdoms met and cast a vote to maintain the boundary. In five centuries, all of the votes passed unanimously. Aside from very rare allowances, outsiders were not permitted in the Kingdom of Mountains.

But in the dawn of the twenty-first century, with the crowning of King Alvarez of the Mountain Kingdom, one voice spoke out in favor of lowering the barrier and allowing other fae into their land. The newly crowned king, an alicanto grump from southern Argentina, believed changelings were supposed to cross freely between all lands. Many balked, his flagrant breach of convention sitting poorly with the Seelie of Bellatierra. After weeks of debate and at least a few death threats, the conclave emerged with their verdict: a compromise.

For one month a year, the wards would be lowered and fae could travel freely between lands. Once the wards were raised, it would be an entire year before they could be lowered again, and any changelings trapped on the wrong side would have to wait or else find a way around the ancient barrier. Even with this new turn of events, some kingdoms are still hesitant to allow strangers into their midst, but the Kingdom of Mountains leads by example in many things. In preparation for the first month of the lowered barrier, they extended invitations to many of the kingdoms in Concordia, offering their considerable hospitality.

While many native changelings privately disagreed with their king's decision, they presented a welcoming face to the outsiders, and some were quite delighted to receive word from the outside world. The travelers were met by an assortment of kiths they had never before seen or even heard mention of, from the ethereal llorona to the delicately beautiful alicanto. Sachamamas, in particular, were excited to meet and gossip with strangers from the worlds they had yet to visit. Unsurprisingly, they were also some of the first to make the journey outside the borders, but most found the larger world difficult to navigate given their natural size and dietary needs. Those that stayed forged a kinship in the eshu and redcaps, trading meals and stories with their distant cousins.

Vanessa Novak, an eshu wilder, made her new home in the Andes after an overextended visit left her stranded on the southern side of the barrier. A novelist by trade, she was one of the very first to journey to Bellatierra when the wall lowered. Taken in by a freehold, she now spends most of her days immersing herself in the culture of the Kingdom of Mountains. Even when the wall was lowered again a year later, she only went home briefly to visit, finding herself drawn back to the world outside her homeland. She brought back with her tales of a people and a land under

siege. But while the people of her new home had closed off their borders and kept to themselves for generations, the rest of the world continued to grow a whole lot bigger.

Amongst the native fae, word spread of this strange being so far from her home, the likes of which had only been described in myth and legend. Visitors came from all around to visit with her, bringing tribute in the form of information and food. She missed the cities and streets of her youth, but she couldn't turn down such bounty. And so she stayed, learning what she could, sharing stories and gossip with anyone who would listen. Still tied deeply to her native kingdom, she wrote many letters back home, enough to fill a small library. Her works were compiled into novels which became renowned the world over, although of course viewed by mortals as fictional glimpses into a reclusive society. The best known of her works is a collection of short stories based around the legends of Mother Mountain.

Every kingdom in Bellatierra has tales of Cuyania and her hand in their creation, but only the Mountain Kingdom can claim their right as her home for most of her long life. The final resting place of Mother Mountain is believed to be deep within the central tract of the Andes, in a cave just below the summit of Aconcagua. Many have searched for it over the years but none have found it, and it is rumored to be heavily warded against intruders. Only Vanessa knew where to find it, wielding a charm blessed by the Mother herself, but the charm was supposedly fractured into shards and scattered to the four corners of the earth. The king, infuriated to be denied access to Cuyania, sent many hunters in search of the pieces, enlisting any who claimed to know anything about the lost key. Vanessa vanished shortly after the key went missing, believed by some to have kept the final shard to herself in order to protect it with her last breath.

Most of the freeholds in the Kingdom of Mountains are deep underground, miles below the mountain peaks. Having retreated deep underground during times of trouble, the fae have carved out ornate tunnel systems over the centuries, farther down than any mortal would dare dig. Life in the kingdom is largely communal, one household spilling over into the next, as one tunnel feeds into another. But these tunnels are not dark, damp things. Instead, they are high-arched and well-worn from centuries of use; artists have adorned the ceilings of some with murals of legends. Above all else, the denizens of the Kingdom of Mountains revere stories and those who tell them, holding an honored place for storytellers in their midst. It is common for them to spend late nights in one of the larger rooms, performing plays of heroics and tragedy. The grand tunnels grow smaller as they approach the surface, finally breaching the rock face high above the ground, entrances disguised from mortal eyes as dead-end caves or sheer cliffs.





## THE DREAMING

Those who enter the Dreaming in the Kingdom of Mountains often find themselves inside a cave of crystals. Gleaming quartz spears jut from the walls and ceiling, a rainbow of fantastical colors, each glowing with its own inner fire. No matter how hard one strikes the crystals, not even a chip can be shorn off, although legends abound of those who asked the Dreaming and were granted their wish – for a price.

## KINGDOM OF AMAZONIA

Deep in the jungles of the Amazon, atop the boughs of an ancient Gyranthera tree, the Kingdom of Amazonia holds court. Known for their dazzling parties and warm hospitality, these fae are more welcoming than their neighbors to the south. Travelers to Bellatierra often find themselves swept into the splendor of the court of Amazonia and its fair ruler, Queen Camellia. Her family has held the throne since a pod of encantado founded the kingdom nearly eight hundred years ago. The members of the court of Amazonia rarely engage in direct conflicts, preferring to keep their hands clear of blood. This is not to say all their subjects are pacifists – their ranks once boasted some of the fiercest warriors in Bellatierra – but they prefer only to fight when their homes are directly threatened.

However, some among them say that their own inaction has allowed predators to gain a strong foothold in the jungle, particularly those of the mortal variety. When logging companies and farmers began to chew away miles of jungle, forcing them into the ever-shrinking shadows, only then did the kingdom finally fight back. Slow to rally, they upheld the Treaty of Sierra Madre while it stood, but were first to drop their portion of the wards when the time came. Visitors are always welcome, and many trods wind their way through the grand kingdom. But underneath the gleaming welcome, a terrible rot pervades the underpinnings of the kingdom, weakening it year by year. A dark secret, waiting to strike, hides within.

The Santos pod rose to power right after the war and the raising of the wards. It seemed strange that the normally easygoing, pacifistic fae would make a play for the crown, but play they did, charming their way onto the throne after the old king passed away. Although the encantado rule in the public eye, behind closed doors, Mateo pulls the strings. This ancient sachamama uses his covert power to demand tribute in exchange for his continued protection

over the kingdom. Like most of his kind, his tribute comes primarily in the form of food, his tastes running towards the living and the young. Every few years, tribute must be delivered. The barrier kept those that feared or were outraged by him from being able to flee, so they acquiesced to his demands as long as it wasn't one of their own being served up. Children from neighboring kingdoms occasionally go missing, although never more than a few and not frequently enough to raise an alarm; after all, the jungle is a dangerous place to raise a child.

The court prefers to serve up visitors when possible, but is not above sacrificing some of their own to appease their grisly shadow king. Quite a few heroes have tried to kill the formidable Mateo over the years, determined to pry his grip from the throat of their kingdom, but none have succeeded. Their keen senses and great speed make taking down even a young sachamama a difficult prospect at best, and Mateo is a cunning veteran of many battles. And so they live in an uneasy truce with the great serpent, feeding him and begrudgingly accepting his protection. As a result, most of those who are able to live apart from the main court do so, making up smaller freeholds dotting the jungle.

Since the dissolution of the treaty, the occasional unsuspecting visitor from outside the curtain finds themselves hopelessly lost in the jungle, never to be seen again. While many trods cross through the Amazon, they are known to be treacherous and can easily spell doom for the unwary. Navigating them without a guide is a surefire way to end up dead, or worse. Chimerical game hunters, hearing tell of the creature that holds grand Amazonia captive in his coils, have flocked to the land to try their hand. Unprepared to face the most dangerous fae in all of Bellatierra, they are found wanting. Typically, the irate serpent consumes them whole.

Beyond the court walls, the fae of Amazonia live a free life, most of them forming up into small freeholds buried deep within the jungle. Some eschew their own kind all together, preferring to live alongside mortal communities far from civilization. While Portuguese has become the dominant language favored by changelings and mortals alike, and English has crept into areas more influenced by their distant neighbors in the United States, those in Amazonia also commonly speak Tupinambá, one of the many tribal dialects spoken in the region. The old ways still hold sway, for mortals as well as fae. Part of their reclusiveness comes from a fear of losing their way of life to the modern ways, the “better” ways. So they withdraw from the world, hiding in the depths of the wilderness. The world shrinks every day, drawing in tighter and tighter around them. But they cleave tight to tradition, to their tribes, and to their shared history.

As the years have turned, some believe the barrier being lowered puts them at even greater risk for losing that



connection to the past, as newcomers enter the country and some fae leave altogether. Life in Concordia and beyond is easier for some, or at least easier than living off the land. But many stay or even move back after spending years away, as so much of the world has become overrun with humanity and the Glamour wears thin from too much Banality. Holding onto the past might be a losing battle, but there are still those willing to stand and fight to protect it.

The royal family may be corrupt to its core, but the hearts of the kingdom and her people are true. They have found the best way to fight back is not with blades and with fire, the tools of the colonizers, but with knowledge and memories. Rather than fight away the invading cultures, they seek to share with them, and thus ensure their own survival. When the last person who remembers the old myths dies, so too will they fade from the world. Many changelings have turned to professions as teachers, historians, linguists, and even working with computers; thus, they ensure that their shared history is passed down and not forgotten. Harnessing new technology to save their old ways seems a contradiction, but they see it as a necessary evil to survive the coming storm.

Along the western limits of the kingdom, where the barrier meets the sea, the sixteenth guardian of Amazonia makes her home. The current guardian, Olivia Dias, has held the position for the last decade. A boraro grump, she has claimed that tract of land as her territory and defends it fiercely. It was under the previous guardian that the decision to lower the barrier was made, one that Olivia is publically against. But she obeys the will of the people, and every year takes part in the ritual to lower it once again. Her home is the ruins of an old fort overlooking the sea, giving her a perfect view of the barrier as it shimmers along the coastline. Guests aren't common so far out of the way, but she ran with a motley before becoming the new guardian and they drop in from time to time.

By their very nature, guardians only see each other once a century when it comes time to vote, so it isn't uncommon for entire generations of guardians to come and go without ever meeting each other. Some serve only for a few years, while others serve for centuries on end. Before Olivia's calling, the previous guardian had served Amazonia for three hundred years. He was a llorona, and he too had made his home in the abandoned fort by the sea. When finally he was free, he left it to his successor, enjoying his newfound freedom to journey far away from the land of his birth.

Unsurprisingly, given the breadth of the kingdom's reach, the local fae are characterized by their pluralism. Some within the kingdom eschew contemporary technologies, preferring to remain deep within the jungle. They aren't entirely distrustful of strangers, but are just largely

## THE DREAMING

Throughout the local Dreaming, one can find deep, still pools, with nary a ripple to disturb their surfaces, as though the entire kingdom was perched atop a massive pane of black glass. Ancient trees hang low overhead, branches lacing together into a ceiling through which no sunlight filters, casting the world into dim, perpetual twilight.

uninterested in associating with the wider world. Spending their days trading with mortal communities and other changeling freeholds, they hold tightly to the old ways. When pushed, they defend their territory with blade, spell, and flame. But of all the kingdoms, Amazonia suffers the most from encroaching humanity, and some believe the best way to stem the tide is from the inside. These fae integrate themselves into modern society in order to harness the tools of humanity to affect meaningful, lasting change. Each company that has stake in the Amazon has at least a few changelings in their midst, working to further their cause and undermine the company in any way they can.

## KINGDOM OF ALTIPLANO

Although members of the other kingdoms dispute the details of this account, the natives of Altiplano have their own origin story not just for their land but for the continent and its fae as a whole. Versions vary, but the most common telling goes something like this:

When the world was young and the mountains still fresh and soft, the spirits of darkness ruled over the land. Vile beings, they stalked the eternal nighttime that engulfed the world. Mortals hid from them, too afraid to fight back. The race of humanity was still young themselves; they had not yet learned the ways of war and violence. And so they hid, they slept, and they dreamed of a world lit by the sun, free from the terrors that stalked their waking hours. This was all there was, until the daughter of a village chief, Araverá, came before her people and told them she could push back the darkness, but she would have to leave them to do it.

For years, she wandered in the darkness, pursued by shadows, as a child grew in her belly. Fathered by a dream being, the god Colibri, her son was destined to be a great light for the world of his mother's people. But too soon, the shadows amassed against Araverá, closing in on her and her unborn child. From the dreams of mortals sprung protectors, vigilant guardians determined to bring an end






to the limitless night that ruled their world. They hid her away in the trunk of the great Toborochi tree as they desperately bought time, fighting and dying for those who had dreamed them into being. The world fell silent, filled only with her cries of pain. Inside the tree, after many long nights alone, Araverá brought her son Inti into the world.

As he drew his first breath, the darkness was sucked out of the air and light rushed in to fill the void. As his first scream rent the silence, the spirits of darkness were driven back, banished beneath the surface of the earth. Thereafter, for generations untold, humans lived in brilliant light; children were born and never knew the fear of the dark. It was a time of peace and prosperity for mortals and fae alike. Dreams grew bright and powerful, fed by the joy of the daylight. The darkness faded from memory into myths and legends. But Inti's life was coming to an end, as all things must, and so his mother made a deal with the Dreaming. Her son, for whom she had given everything, would be given to the sky. His light would shine for all to see, but when he laid down to sleep at night, the darkness would be given reign over the world.

This is how the world split: even now, the sun shines over the day, and the darkness claims dominion over the night. In her grief over her son, Araverá's heart broke, and she passed from the world. Colibri caught her soul as it left her body, cradling it in his hands; he gently seated her in the night sky. Her aged face and silver hair would watch over the world while her son slept, ensuring their people always had protection and the darkness could never gain too powerful a grip. It could roam once more, but its power would forever be limited to the night and the dark world beneath. The moon and the sun, mother and son, would chase it away. The fae took the place of Inti's birth, the ancient hollow Toborochi tree, and crafted it to be the doorway of their new home: Janaj, the first freehold of Altiplano.

The story does not end there, however. Beneath the earth, down further than the roots of the eldest trees, lies the realm of Ukhu Pacha. Tunnels and caves burrow deep, honeycombing the earth, filled with forgotten secrets. Before humanity, the creatures of Ukhu Pacha made their homes there, left to their own devices by the spirits of darkness who stalked the twilight world above. For eons, the two





worlds coexisted, divided by the earth. But when Araverá and her son banished the spirits down below to make way for the children of humanity, the muki were forced to share their underground world with their vile cousins. Araverá and her son promised the fae that they would watch over them, too, to minimize the spread of the darkness across the world, for as long as humanity kept to their realm of light and sunshine. Between the two worlds they built a doorway, using the birthplace of the sun itself. And humanity and fae kept peace with one another, for countless generations.

But then humans began to dig, to pull gleaming stones and metals from the ground. Toxins seeped from their mines, spreading into the water and the air. Animals choked on the ruined land the miners left in their wake. Ancient muki tunnels began to collapse under the weight of human miners digging in the wrong spots; these collapses destroyed natural pathways through the earth. Sinkholes formed, swallowing entire operations whole, hundreds of lives vanishing in the span of a single night. More humans came, their greed polluting the air with a foul stench, and with them came fae of a darker sort. Creatures of darkness and nightmares, not unlike the denizens of Ukhu Pacha. Thallain had come to Bellatierra, and it would be centuries before they would leave again.

During the last war, many fae gave their lives to push out the invaders, taking heavy losses. Altiplano would be the site of the last great engagement of the war, fought to a standstill over the course of eight weeks. Realizing they couldn't win a decisive victory, nearly all Thallain fled Bellatierra, abandoning the invading Kithain who had fought alongside them. Hopelessly outnumbered, the invaders surrendered, throwing their lives upon the mercy of Colibri and his armies. The terms were set down by the rulers of each kingdom, and would be upheld by a soldier from each army. Defeated, the northern Kithain largely left Bellatierra, bidding farewell to the lands they would never set foot on again. Although the Treaty of Sierra Madre was overseen by the Síocháin of the Mountains, Cuyania, it was signed on Altiplano soil and the original copy is stored in the gateway between worlds.

Sandwiched between the Andes to the south and the rainforest to the east sits a kingdom, smaller in population than either of its nearest neighbors. Younger than the mountains, the Kingdom of Altiplano is home to a large population of alicanto and encantado, alongside a robust mortal population lives in close proximity to the fae. In Altiplano, humanity never quite lost touch with their magic and myths; to them, these facts were as real as air. It gives them a unique tie to their changelings and other creatures of legend. Outsiders view them as simple folks, delusional in a wider world with no place for magic.



## The Dreaming

Upon entering the Dreaming, one finds oneself perpetually in the lowest part of a valley, knee-deep in billowing grass. Above stretches a brilliant blue sky, with nary a cloud in the sky. The sides of the valley reach up towards the heavens; if one were to climb up them, they could climb forever if they don't know the way out.



But these opinions don't hold sway with them, and they pass down the power of the old ways from one generation to the next. This refusal let the past die has a profound effect on how the Dreaming works here. Glamour is alive and well, pumping through the veins of every mortal and flowing through the earth itself. Magic runs wild and free, with chimerical creatures of every stripe filling the night with their voices, and the threat of Banality so far off as to be a unknown nightmare for the fae of Altiplano.

The Yatiri, shamans and wise people, thrive here. Providing guidance and healing to their people, they possess ancient, vast knowledge. Although they are mortal, some live well beyond the average span of years, either due to clean living or their close ties to the supernatural world. Even in day-to-day life, ritual holds sway over the most mundane details. It is common to leave daily offerings to the spirits in the form of burning leaves, dolls, or food. But the exact beliefs of the mortals of Altiplano vary wildly, as the kingdom encompasses some thirty six distinct human cultures and nearly as many languages. Innumerable stories, some only ever passed down in oral form, make up the vibrant tapestry of Altiplano. So too do the fae take on many forms, many only seen within this kingdom and nowhere else in the world. While some are simply regional variants on the kiths presented in the **Changeling** rulebook, there are those which are entirely unique in their existence.

The kingdom is landlocked. Although they have a vote in the centennial matter of the barrier, their kingdom does not include any portion of the wall itself, cut off from the sea as they are by the Mountain Kingdom. As one of the three kingdoms involved in the treaty, they do provide a guardian, but the position tends to be an honorary one as, like all other guardians, they're incapable of leaving their home kingdom. Q'enti, an alicanto grump, serves in that position of honor. His lair sits in the boughs of an ancient tree, its trunk said to be the ruins of Janaj itself. He has served since the moment the treaty was struck, and shows no sign of aging or giving up the position anytime soon,



having outlasted every other guardian and the many rulers of Bellatierra's kingdoms.

Changelings in Altiplano live in near-perfect harmony with their mortal neighbors. Glamour flows thick in the veins of all her people. Within the confines of its few cities, Altiplano's fae stick with their own kind, forming small freeholds away from mortals. But in many of the villages that dot the foothills, they live openly and indeed are welcome. They live simple lives out there, caring for any who come in kindness. Although life in Altiplano can be harsh, its residents welcome visitors with open arms. Hospitality is in their blood, and you will never find a better meal than in the kitchens of Altiplano.

## New Kiths

### ALICANTO

Silver and gold. From time immemorial, wars have been fought and populations decimated over their pursuit. From the days of Spanish Conquistadors to modern mining operations, the alicanto have fought against those that plunder the earth for her riches. Born from dreams of greed and gluttony, they can be a sign of luck or peril for those who manage to glimpse them. Legends say they are the reason for the city of El Dorado's demise, although the exact details are lost to time. Historians have found stories indicating that they may have descended on the city like a swarm of locusts and devoured it in the span of a night. Today, mines finally striking it big will find their rich veins depleted overnight thanks to the alicanto's voracious appetites. Those that do not shutter within the first few weeks of production are plagued by accidents and people going missing. For those who wish to strip the earth of its resources, they represent a great danger, often causing death and destruction to those who take more than their share.

If approached with respect and flattery, however, alicanto prove powerful allies. Able to sniff out most minerals and metals, they can even track stolen treasure over vast distances, stopping for nothing until they reclaim their prize. If alicanto can be convinced to share what they find in a fresh vein, they can be quite generous. Outside of their jungle home, they make exceptional thieves (although woe to the person caught stealing from them) or treasure hunters, although their motives are survival-based rather than motivated by greed; metal is their primary food group and they need it, particularly precious metals, to survive. Easily bribed, they are connoisseurs of life's finer things, even the ones they cannot eat, and enjoy surrounding themselves with beautiful objects. They have a natural affinity for art and those who create it; they themselves can produce stunning works. Besides treasure, the weakness of every alicanto is riddles

– they are powerless to resist a well-crafted puzzle. Puzzle boxes, ciphers, cryptograms: they will spend years crafting the perfect device.

Slender and tall, their facial features tend to be sharp and angular, bird-like in nature. Their coloration can differ wildly, depending on what type of metal the alicanto in question prefers, although metallic threads typically shoot through their hair. Their most notable feature is their eyes: always of a color that could almost be human, if not for a distinct gem-like or metallic sheen. Beautiful tattoos frequently cover their skin, from traditional line work to elaborate modern designs. Chimerically, they appear as bipedal, bird-like humanoids forged from precious metals, gleaming feathers sprouting from flightless wings and fire-filled eyes that spark in the nighttime. The wings are used for displays, especially among their fellow kithmates. Showcasing their talents at metallurgy, their metallic plumage features a rainbow of precious gemstones.

#### Glamour Ways

Alicanto find Revelry in shopping for fine things, or in showing off their fine fashions and prized possessions to others. They can also find great satisfaction in tending to precious things, such as polishing fine jewelry or carefully organizing their couture wardrobes. When the alicanto Unleash their magic, exotic bird calls fill the air, combined with the scent of earth from mines deep underground. Nearby metals shine as though brightly polished, while gems become a dazzling display.

#### Realm Affinity: Prop.

All That Glitters: All alicanto gain a dot of Perception, even if this takes them above 5. In addition, alicanto can track precious gems, valuable metals, and even magical items by scent with a Perception + Kenning roll. The difficulty of such rolls should be based on the quantity of material and how old the trail is. Alicanto cannot botch Kenning rolls.

Wonder Workers: Alicanto enjoy working with their hands and have a special knack for creating items of power. Thus, they are able to forge Treasures and Wonders with relative ease. They receive -2 on the difficulty of all rolls related to crafting magical items, and doing so takes half the time and only two-thirds of the materials it normally would. Alicanto cannot botch Crafts rolls.

Draconic Fever: Alicanto make deplorable houseguests, spiriting away shiny odds and ends if they feel they deserve them more than the current owner. Alicanto must succeed at a Willpower roll (difficulty 7) to refuse a better offer of payment, or to resist buying or simply taking a precious item they feel should be theirs. In addition, alicanto require a meal of metal at least once per week; the more valuable the metal, the less they need to eat. Failure to do so renders them unable to regain Willpower.



## BORARO

Long ago, humankind lived in harmony with nature, taking only what they needed to survive. Yet as the world grew smaller, mortals' appetite grew until it engulfed the world. Modern people do not live easily alongside the wilds of the world when consumption outpaces production and the places most often engaged in production are the ones least likely to benefit from it. The wild areas, strongest in Glamour and home to a host of creatures both mundane and chimerical, are constantly under threat by encroaching civilization. For as long as there have been threats to the wilderness and to native ways of life, there have been the boraro. Guardians of nature, they are fierce warriors, defenders of their people and of the places they call home.

The rise of colonization brought a renewed threat to their home. In response, a second wave of the fierce boraro sprung forth from the desperate nightmares of those suffering under the yoke of oppression. Native to Colombia and the jungles within the Kingdom of Amazonia, they long ago migrated across Bellatierra. These days, they can be found in any place in the world where nature is in danger of being snuffed out by industry. Old industrial cities, fallen into decay as factories shutter and jobs move elsewhere, soon find themselves host to a wave of boraro hell-bent on hastening the end along for these crumbling behemoths. Anywhere they can get a toehold and help nature overcome the march of man, they take hold like determined weeds struggling up through cracks in the pavement.

Dour and plain looking, boraro have the kind of face that would be easily overlooked in a crowd if not for a vague feeling of unease that passes over any person, mortal or changeling, that meets them. It's never obvious in their physical appearance, but there is something always... off about them, an unsettling feeling never quite shaken. Work-worn hands, dirt ground into the creases and nail beds no matter how much they scrub, these are people of the earth and their appearance reflects it. Their large pricked ears, fangs, and grotesque twisted visages are the reality of the boraro, and something that can never quite be hidden from mortals. People are more perceptive than even they would be willing to admit and always find the boraro off-putting, even in human guise.

### Glamour Ways

Boraro enjoy Revelry by spending time in nature, whether it's pristine wilderness or reclaimed spaces in more urban environments. They have also been known to experience it while tearing down particularly egregious or offensive elements of civilization. A boraro's primal use of Glamour is accompanied by the howls of predatory animals and the sudden feeling of being stalked by some dread creature just out of sight. Shadows lengthen, nature turns feral and

menacing, while technology and civilization seem pointless and hollow.

### Realm Affinity: Nature.

**Deep Roots:** Even in the biggest cities, there will always be pockets of life and greenery. These locations provide magical touchstones for any boraro to draw from, and they instinctively know how to find them. Boraro may spend 1 Glamour to subtract -1 from all difficulties for the rest of the scene, so long as they are standing on natural soil. From the first dream that breathed them into being, boraro have been soldiers, fighting against the march of progress in an ever-shrinking world.

**Warrior Heart:** Nature's strong right arms to the end, never has a boraro balked from battle. Even the youngest boraro is tempered from their trials and tribulations. Boraro are immune to surprise in combat, and add 1 success to all damage and soak rolls while in a natural environment or when they have real soil under their feet.

**Creeping Menace:** Although their terrifying aura can occasionally make their lives difficult, it helps to protect their homes and reclaimed pockets of land by ensuring that few, if any, stay overlong. They can spend 1 Willpower to suppress it for a single roll, but not even the boraro can control themselves for long. Boraro suffer a +2 difficulty to all Charisma-based rolls except those using Intimidation, or those that involve family members or long-time friends and allies.

## ENCANTADO

Called the enchanted ones, encantado share some similarities with their northern cousins, the selkie. Both are water-born fae, both spend their lives split between their two worlds, but that is where the similarities end. Where selkie originate in saltwater areas, encantado are bound to freshwater lakes, rivers, and streams. It is said that staring into their eyes can drive mortals mad and it is incredibly bad luck to kill one. At night, they shed their animal skin and take on the features of a mortal, seeking out companions on land for carnal pleasure. The child of such a union will often become encantado themselves and, if born on land, will be reclaimed by the encantado parent when they finally awaken. According to legend, it is possible for any mortal that has pledged their love to an encantado to become one if they wish, but the exact method of how this is achieved is a closely hidden secret of their kind.

Amongst the encantado, there is no difference given between those born that way or those who come to it later in life; all who are enchanted are equal and are family. Shying away from the coastlines, they have spread to any river deep enough for them to remain unseen, with rumored sightings as far north as Tara Nar. Rarely do they own the property



they reside on, preferring to use their considerable charm to schmooze their way into the owner's good graces, although this can quickly become a nuisance as inviting one in becomes an open invitation for others to join.

Beautiful and graceful, encantado have an unearthly appeal to them. Their skin is luminous, seeming to glow from the inside regardless of tone. Silken soft, almost slick to the touch, they never scar and it is a rare thing to see one mark their skin with tattoos. They have deep, dark eyes, like a still lake on a moonless night, which draw others into their depths with a look. Even in their mortal seeming their bodies are usually hairless, and what hair they have on their heads tends toward a silken fuzz, though they turn this to their advantage with a flair for hats, head scarves, or fashionably short haircuts.

### Glamour Ways

Encantado most often enjoy Revelry by hosting parties, though sometimes they delight in crashing someone else's and making it their own before vanishing. Long moonlight swims can be quite refreshing as well. During Unleashing Encantado gleam with otherworldly light as suddenly everything around them drifts and sways as though underwater, while cool currents and ethereal singing fill the air. Sound distorts, save for the encantado's voice, which is clear and perfect.

#### Realm Affinity: Actor.

Life of the Party: Parties hosted by the encantado are epic happenings, drawing people from all corners to rub elbows with one another. Not the most highbrow of affairs, they tend more towards beach parties and bonfires, with drinks poured strong. But encantado have a knack for getting along with most and the uncanny ability to avoid stepping on toes. Encantado cannot botch Empathy rolls, and subtract-2 from the difficulty of all non-aggressive social rolls while at a party or other festive gathering.

Hypnotic Gaze: The depths of their eyes seem to draw you in, sinking deeper and deeper. If an encantado speaks to a person for at least 1 minute and makes fairly consistent eye contact during that time, she gains two extra dots of Manipulation on all rolls with this person for the rest of the scene, even if this takes her above 5. This ability does not work on bondmates or other encantado.

Soul Bond: Despite their reputation for flirtation and carefree partying, encantado often bond for life with a mortal (or mortals). Encantado can spend 1 Glamour to feel their bondmate's general emotional state at any distance, and are automatically aware if a bondmate is injured. Bonds must be entered into willingly and can be broken at any time, though doing so immediately expends all of a character's Willpower due to the trauma of the experience. Bonds can even be formed between a mortal and multiple encantado. This bond does not have to be sexual or romantic in nature, but is always

an intensely intimate emotional bond. Encantado are tied to their water homes. Water-Born: Encantado must spend at least two daylight hours fully submerged in fresh water in order to heal or restore Glamour at a normal rate. If they spend twenty-eight hours without finding a place to swim, the encantado will not regain Glamour until they do. This body of water must be at least twice the size of a standard bathtub and unpolluted by chemicals such as chlorine.

Coward's Curse: Masters of the great party, lovers of all, encantado are never more at home than when surrounded by happy faces. Conflict has no place in the heart of these playful fae, and they avoid it whenever possible. If an encantado is forced into an aggressive situation, the player must succeed on a Willpower roll, with difficulty based on how badly the odds are stacked against them, to avoid backing down or fleeing. If forced to fight anyway, they must spend 1 Willpower or 1 Glamour point every round they wish to take any action other than to flee or beg for an end to the hostilities.

### LLORONA

The weeping woman, the banshee. Humans have given them many names over countless centuries and across every continent, but in Bellatierra, it is always La Llorona. They are said to appear at times of great grief, drawn inexorably to the suffering of others. Despite the angry words of mourners, these fae are not the cause of death nor even an agent of it, but a kith that feeds on the despair that only comes from the deepest loss. In their way, they have a symbiotic relationship with mortal mourners as they draw away their grief into themselves and grant the mortal a measure of relief from such an all-consuming feeling. In some communities, llorona are revered and a place is always set for them at funeral proceedings. Despite their name, they can be of any gender.

It is considered impolite to ask personal questions of a llorona, as they're believed to be unable to lie. In truth they can indeed lie, it just rarely occurs to them to do so. As connected to the threads of fate as they are, lying seems silly to the llorona; after all, everything is possible, yet every path ever conceived will end the same way. If they volunteer information, it is most assuredly the truth, although others may find it unhelpful or callous. A people of endless patience, they rarely move quickly without good reason. It is far better to position yourself in the perfect spot and wait than to dash about and miss the moment. The tapestry of life and death spreads itself out before them; if only they could reach out and grasp the threads, they could wrestle some measure of control over the fates themselves.

Aged before their time, all llorona carry themselves with wisdom far beyond their apparent years. Premature wrinkles, greying hair, grating voices: these are common amongst their kind. Their eyes forever retain the spark of power burning deep within their depths, a knowing beyond



any mortal ken. After reaching maturity, llorona look at least a decade older than their human age would suggest, although they age gracefully. They wear their hair long regardless of gender, often worn swept high atop the head. A llorona's eyes appear a blind white, pupils and iris melding into sclera, though their vision is normal. The flesh of their face seems no more than skin stretched tight over bone, granting them a skeletal visage.

### Glamour Ways

Llorona replenish their energies by attending funerals, joining memorial services, and haunting support groups for the grieving. They also wander cemeteries, collecting keepsakes left at the graves. When the llorona use Unleashing, time seems to drag to a halt, then explode with possibilities. Shadowy images flicker everywhere, carrying out multiple different probabilities. Mirrors show faces that might have been, or are yet to be, while the scent of old tombs and freshly turned grave earth fills the air.

### Realm Affinity: Actor

**Ties That Bind:** Their burden is to bear witness and, when they can, shoulder some of the pain that Death leaves in its wake. This close bond to death makes their connection to the living ever more important. Llorona may touch another and spend 1 Glamour to take their emotional pain, rage, or sorrow

into themselves, restoring 1 Willpower to the target as well as easing their emotional state. Being tied to death also means that llorona also instinctively sense when ghosts are nearby, and may spend 1 Glamour to see and speak with the Restless for a scene.

**Foreseen is Forewarned:** Once per chapter, the llorona can spend 1 Glamour to reroll any roll, but the new result must stand even if it's worse. They may use this on a roll by another character in their line of sight, but using it on a hostile or unwilling target requires succeeding at a Willpower roll (difficulty of the target's Willpower rating).

**Inevitable Truths:** While the common belief that llorona are incapable of lying is incorrect, it is true that this fatalistic kith often can't be bothered to even attempt telling falsehoods. All llorona suffer the Bard's Tongue Flaw (**Changeling** p.187) In addition, the llorona must succeed at a Willpower roll (difficulty 7) to avoid giving a totally honest assessment when asked for an opinion. They are not compelled to speak, but if they do, it is difficult to hold back what they see as the truth. This makes it hard for them to use white lies and other "socially acceptable" fabrications, which is part of what gives this kith their well-deserved reputation for bluntness. However, curiously this Frailty does not apply when speaking with mortal children, or anyone they used their Ties that Bind Birthright on during that scene.





## SACHAMAMA

Many tribes tell tales of giant snakes so large they change the very earth as they move across it. Some stick to the rivers, lurking beneath the muddy waters in wait for unsuspecting prey to wander past. Others prefer the trees, hanging in lazy loops indistinguishable from vines until the trap snaps shut. A sachamama enjoys spending its days slithering through the undergrowth, ready to chase down any creature it perceives as a potential meal. Massive and fast moving, the only way to outrun one is to never wander across its path. Thankfully, they only need to eat a few times a year. In between meals, they can be found sunning themselves in the deep jungle, draped across the highest branches. They like mortal occupations that allow them to spend long, slow times in the wild, like nature photographers, expedition guides, and so on. Despite their languid, carefree attitudes, little passes beneath them unnoticed.

In the cities, sachamama are stoop sitters without peer, and seemingly know the business of whole neighborhoods without moving off their steps. Rumor has it they can hear even through the concrete and brick and steel of their neighborhoods. If they can, they never admit to it; they just keep smiling those same lazy, amused grins. Never ones to shy away from gossip and politics, they love a good scandal and can always be counted upon to ferret out someone's secrets. If a sachamama doesn't know about it, it doesn't exist. That said, they're not above making up stories to entertain themselves or drag down an unsuspecting target, so their audience members are wise to beware and take all their stories with a grain of salt. They can't abide being made fools of, and will rage if they find out that someone has deliberately lied to them. Pointing out the problem with this logic isn't likely to win them over, either.

Despite their serpent heritage, sachamama tend towards stocky builds and often look as though they can crush the life from someone, even in mortal form. Their eyes are light in color, amber verging on yellow, with a vertical pupil betraying their serpentine nature. Although they remain bipedal most of the time out of convenience, a sachamama may fuse their legs into a long serpentine tail, though they can still balance upright on it. Small patches of scales erupt along the jawline and down their arms and legs; but they blend in well with the surrounding skin and can be difficult to spot unless someone is deliberately looking for them. Their laughter carries across great distances and is unmistakable over the chaotic noise of the jungle and the city. But their mouth carries more than just laughter: seated behind the first row of teeth is a second row of long, needle-like teeth.

### Glamour Ways

Sachamama often enjoy Revelry in the form of people watching, picking a great spot and soaking up details about

everyone who walks past, particularly if they can gossip with someone while they do it. Hunting in serpent form is quite satisfying as well, but it must be a real hunt – feeding on captive rats isn't good enough! When a sachamama taps into primal Glamour for Unleashing, a sibilant hissing fills the air, and the world seems to shimmer ... or slither with the movement of some tremendous serpent. Hot blood runs cold, while the scent and taste of freshly killed meat becomes nearly overpowering.

### Realm Affinity: Actor.

Snake Skinned: So long as they are touching their shed skin, which typically appears to be a large snakeskin jacket or the equivalent, sachamama can spend 1 Glamour to assume the form of a large snake. Constrictors are most common, though any large snake species is possible. While in this form, they retain their power of speech, albeit more sibilant than normal, and can use any skills or powers they can manage in serpent form. The shed skin cannot be lost and is extremely durable – while it does not serve as armor exactly, it cannot be permanently damaged with anything other than cold iron. Any other wear and tear mends itself over the course of a day or so. If the skin is destroyed with cold iron, a sachamama must make another by killing and consuming a large animal, then shedding their skin afterward.

Once per story, the sachamama may assume the form of a huge, fearsome snake, reaching lengths of up to fifty feet and possessed of tremendous supernatural strength. This form lasts for one scene, during which time they gain four additional dots of Strength and Stamina, and their jaws can distend to swallow an adult human whole. However, they cannot use any other powers during this time, and can communicate only in short phrases.

Keen Observers: Even though it often seems like they're not paying attention at all, sachamama are keenly aware of what's going on around them, and have fearsome recall for detail. They receive the Eidetic Memory Merit for free, and cannot botch Alertness or Kenning rolls. In addition, sachamama cannot be surprised unless their attackers are supernaturally concealed.

Gorging: Sachamama often eat at almost twice what someone their size typically eats in a day, and at least once per year they must devour roughly five hundred pounds of meat in just a day or two. Most retreat to the jungle for this time, hunting in serpent form, though some simply make impressive trips to nearby supermarkets and butcher shops... and a few unsavory members of this kith use it as an excuse to make sure local rivals and troublemakers go missing. Even ordinary meals leave this kith sluggish, however. Sachamama suffer +1 to the difficulty of all rolls for an hour after eating, and must succeed at a Willpower roll (difficulty 5) to pass up an easy chance to eat. Note that light snacking does not incur this penalty, and thus most sachamama do it constantly, but this kith cannot skirt this Frailty by just grazing – the



lure of a “real” meal is simply too strong for them and they must have at least a couple full meals daily.

## AUSTRALIA: INTO THE DREAMTIME

The Kithain tell stories of the Mythic Ages, when the Dreaming and the Autumn world were one. They remember it only a little; indeed, they are so far removed from the time when they were beings of pure fae, it's largely too alien a concept for the average changeling to understand. The Spirit Beings of Australia, on the other hand, do not distinguish between *then* and *now* because, to them, there is no difference. The Dreaming is an ancestral present, bringing its lessons and its Law to every soul that lives everwhen.

In the beginning, the land was flat and featureless. Then, the Ancestor Beings woke up and moved across the land, carving rivers and valleys and raising mountains in their wake. This was a time of creation, of naming things, of Law becoming set and dreaming tracks being carved out of the land. When the Ancestor Beings slept once more, the Spirit Beings remained, and for tens of thousands of years, they lived in balance with the land and the indigenous tribes.

The land changed around them, but the Spirit Beings thrived as their mortal kin did, inheriting the country and the responsibilities of those that had come before them in the endless cycle of life. The coastal oceans rose, the inland sea dried up, giant lizards and enormous snakes vanished from the land, but their importance was not forgotten, carefully preserved and passed down along thousands of generations, an unbroken chain of stewardship recognized as the oldest continuous culture on Earth.

Each Spirit Being served a specific role. Some taught of the dangers of incaution in a harsh land or provided allegorical lessons in proper behavior, while others reminded the people of their deep bonds to the land around them. Some waited for children to disobey their parents and wander out of camp, where they could be snatched. Others tended to the land by renewing fire-blasted scrub and making room for new growth. Some guarded sacred sites, keeping them safe from those who had no business being there. Many brought some form of punishment upon those who transgressed against Law and maintained places of spiritual power like songlines to prevent them from falling into decay.

Spirit Beings who dwelled amongst the tribes could also bridge the gap between *human* and *Dreamtime*, standing in as a representative for their Ancestral Being when necessary and often assisting men and women of their skin in their sacred rites. In the time before the First Fleet came, Spirit Beings were not believed to be fundamentally different from their human kin, as all spirits move between



## A NOTE ON THE DREAMING AND DREAMTIME

Aboriginal Dreamtime is an incredibly complex, intricate, and interconnected constellation of animistic behaviors, beliefs, and understanding of nature and the land, an oral history that spans more than 40,000 years of human development. “Dreamtime” is an Anglicized word attempting to distill into a single term a pan-Aboriginal structure that varies by country and kinship. It is not a fixed point in time, but is everwhen.

The truth is, no single word can possibly encompass the rich, varied, and deeply nuanced spiritual culture of Australia's First Peoples, which has guided their social, environmental, ethical, and artistic development since the Pleistocene, their history carefully preserved through generations of oral stewardship.

For this book, “Dreamtime” is used to distinguish it from the Dreaming of Kithain understanding and to save on space, with full acknowledgement of its woeful inadequacy at representing the full breadth of Aboriginal beliefs.



human, animal, land feature, and spiritual forms in the cycle of the Dreamtime.

Australia, bolstered and strengthened by the unique cultures that thrived in its harsh lands, survived the Shattering largely intact, isolated from the rest of the world. It might have survived another forty thousand years unsullied by Banality, if not for the far-ranging ships of European seafarers, who first pushed into Australian waters in the early 1600s, and also for Captain James Cook who claimed the eastern shores of Australia in 1770 for Britain and named it “New South Wales.”

## INVASION OF THE FIRST FLEET

When the First Fleet arrived in Botany Bay in 1788 to deposit their loads of colonizers and convicts onto the harsh new shores, the Kithain amongst their number found a land they did not recognize and a Dreaming they could not comprehend. Wild and strange, the Dreaming of this *Terra Australis* did not seem to have a clear boundary of separation from the Autumn world. To the terror and awe of the newly-arrived changelings, the Dreaming flowed in and out of the mundane realm, just as the oldest of faerie



legends said characterized the Mythic Ages. Though none of their mortal shipmates appeared to notice the strange chimera and land spirits moving amongst them, every person with even a hint of fae blood saw the Dreaming of their new homeland as clearly as they saw the humans and livestock in the Autumn world.

Not even the most adventurous of the Kithain felt particularly brave or daring in the first years of Port Jackson's development. Virtually every changeling clung to the safety and familiarity found in the dreams their fellow colonists, staying within the walls of the settlement and venturing into the wilderness only in the most dire of emergencies.

Over time, colonial encroachment on Aboriginal land expanded beyond the borders of the first settlements and brought the European Dreaming with it, displacing indigenous populations from country and forcing native Spirit Beings away from the lands that they had tended and nurtured for endless generations. Clashes between the populations were inevitable, and as the frontier was began, so too did a war of differing Dreams. Though a few communities found common cause and lived in peace with nearby indigenous tribes, many more came into conflict and devolved into outright slaughter. The mortal war spilled out into the Dreaming and into the Dreamtime as "civilized" Dream pushed into "primitive" Dream.

## The Wars of the Songlines

As their conquest continued, Kithain found networks of trods already in place and, curious, followed these pathways to discover where they led and who had laid them. Ignorant of their true nature and of the Law that governed the usage of these trods, the Kithain assumed they could freely travel along them as they did their own pathways. They quickly discovered how mistaken they were.

Enamoured with the idea of drawing the first maps of Australia's chimerical pathways, Sir William Edgerton ap Dougal petitioned the Duke of the Blue Mountains for funds and patronage to mount an expedition into Australia's Dreaming. His party, consisting of many kiths with a variety of specialties like engineering, camp management, hunting, anthropology, and cartography, departed from the freehold of New Albion on the morning following Imbolc, 1802, intent on crossing the Blue Mountains and from there into the unknown lands beyond.

Sir William Edgerton himself was neither seen nor heard from again, nor was most of his party. The only survivor of the doomed expedition was Tokunbo, an eshu who had served as the party's most experienced Dreaming guide, found several months after Edgerton was officially declared missing by the Duke. Tokunbo was near death from exposure and dehydration, seemed to be suffering some

sort of Dreaming-induced Bedlam, and mostly incoherent. His last words, as recorded by the boggan Homesteader whose threshold he had collapsed across that morning, were baffling and chilling: "*There is no Right of Passage in these cursed lands.*"

Disturbed by the implications, the Duke of New Albion became determined to tame what he saw as a Dreaming gone wild with no fae to tend it, and charged his vassals to force the unruly lands into quiescence. Incentivized by promises of noble Title, holdings, and mundane land, the Kithain under the Duke's rule moved in force to expand the boundaries of their new homeland. As the British colonial troops cleared land and built farms, the Kithain among them claimed Glades and constructed freeholds, raising the banners of Houses great and small over the new settlements.

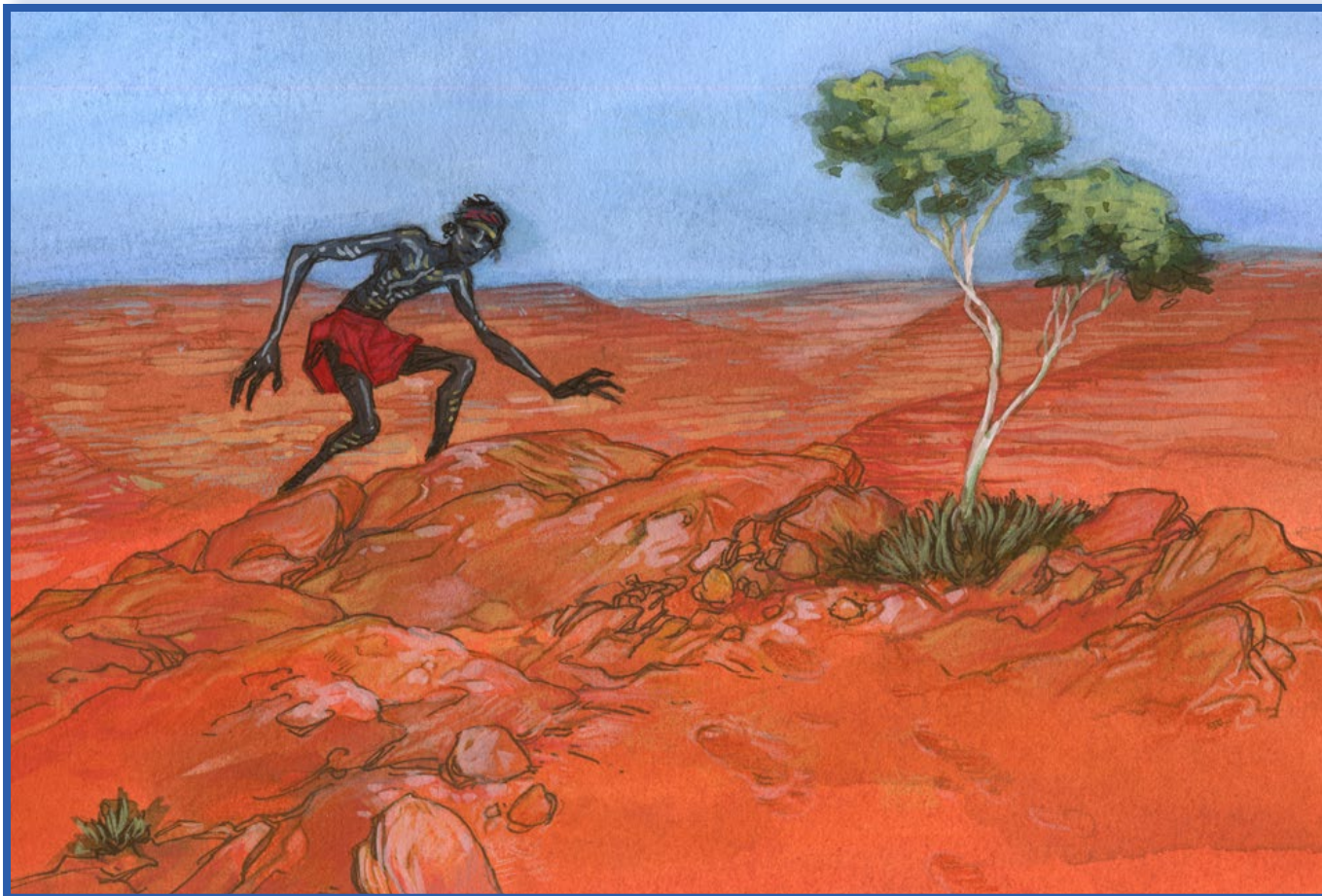
Encounters with Australia's native Spirit Beings had been so far brief affairs, rife with tension. They usually left the Kithain who met them shaken and afraid, but otherwise mostly unharmed. Once the Kithain began to aggressively push in claiming land and Dreaming, however, the Spirit Beings' retaliation was swift and merciless.

From the hills and mountains above the newly-constructed freeholds, a kind of fae creature no changeling had ever seen before poured into the valley with weapons and fury, and from the ephemeral Dreaming, straining against the Kithain's efforts to impose familiar archetypes upon it, came a horde of terrifying chimerical beasts to drive them back. The unprepared Kithain were forced to retreat back to the safety of already-established borders, leaving their dead and Undone behind them.

Enraged at the assault by savage fae and monstrous creatures, the Duke of New Albion issued a proclamation denouncing the Spirit Beings as Dark-Kin and declared them mortal enemies of the Tuathan Dream. Over the next fifty years, as colonial populations expanded along the coasts and into the interior of Australia, the Kithain engaged in battle with hostile Spirit Beings wherever they encountered them, seeking to claim the lands they occupied and the trods they guarded.

The wars of the songlines grew increasingly violent over time. The frontiers of the spreading Dreaming fluctuated constantly with the chaos these skirmishes caused, an instability that proved dangerous to any who wandered too near to the borders. Spirit Beings retaliated against incursions into their lands, even as the displaced were driven out of their homes and forced in turn to infringe upon the spaces of other Spirit Beings. The wars culminated in a series of massacres that left untold numbers of Spirit Beings displaced or dead, the land around unusable by either





Spirit Being or changeling. Finally, the straining Dreamtime itself pushed back.

The borders of the Kithain's comfortable Dreaming snapped back nearly to their original boundaries in a surge of powerful and primordial Glamour that left no known survivors in its wake. For decades thereafter, almost until the 1900s, no Kithain could safely travel more than a few kilometers outside of European-flavored settlement. Even within it, they slept uneasily, for the Dreamtime waited to punish those who had transgressed against its Law, and refused to be appeased.

## STOLEN DREAMS

As the Commonwealth of Australia was ratified and its first Federal officers were elected, the Tuathan Dream strengthened and emboldened the Kithain to continue spreading outward. Commoners settled new freeholds and expanded the borders of the Dreaming in tandem with mundane efforts to protect and preserve "White Australia" from non-white immigrants and native people alike. During this time, the Dreamtime finally became compressed to the wildest of Australia's regions.

Australia's active immigration programs after World War II further decimated the Dreamtime, following in the

wake of the permit system which restricted movement and work for Aboriginal peoples, and which foreshadowed the aggressive assimilation and cultural suppression models of the 1950s. The frequency with which Spirit Beings were seen in regions suffering heavy colonization and urbanization decreased until they were considered a myth in many respects. In other areas, as Aboriginal children were removed from their parents, Spirit Being populations, already disoriented and uneasy at being forced into strange country that did not belong to them, were further subjected to attempts to "civilize" them in accordance with Kithain frameworks.

The Resurgence of Arcadian sidhe in 1969 nearly destroyed the last fragments of the Dreamtime entirely. However, a surge of commoners' rights movements coupled with the growing mortal efforts to recognize and protect indigenous peoples' rights from 1972 onward ensured that the last areas of the Dreamtime remained untouched. It is from these areas that some of the Spirit Beings reappeared to bolster and reclaim the land and songlines the Kithain had damaged in their two centuries of expansion.

## KITHAIN OF AUSTRALIA

The Kithain of Australia are, by and large, well-established, and most kiths have found kinship with those of



the local legends. Clurichauns are, surprisingly, amongst the most populous of the Kithain, having been numerous amongst Irish convicts shipped out from Britain in the various waves of transportation, followed closely by pooka, boggans, and redcaps. Redcaps especially thrive in city neighbourhoods and in the untamed bush where legends of cannibalistic spirit beings are prevalent. Selkies and merfolk find the reefs, shores, and beaches to their liking, and trolls find the inhospitable stretches of Australia's interior perfect proving grounds for trying their hardiness and strength.

Autumn sidhe navigate Australia's cities and rural regions with greater ease than their Arcadian cousins, as Autumn sidhe have been in Australia since the late 1770s and often remember fragments of previous lives on Australian soil. Arcadian sidhe, on the other hand, are relative newcomers to Australia. For them, it's especially difficult to understand that the Escheat, as it stands, does not apply in many of Australia's Dream-realms or along its songlines. The discord between their expectations of the Rights of Hospitality and Passage and the inalienable authority of a Spirit Being in country can be quite jarring, even chimerically damaging, should the sidhe press the Dreamtime's tolerance too hard.

## Geography of Australia

Modern Australia follows Eurocentric naming conventions for its territories, being heavily influenced by successive waves of colonists. These are strictly Kithain divisions. The true names of these places, given to them by Spirit Beings, are far older, influenced by the nature and direction of the songlines, and claimed by different tribal groups.

### The Duchy of the Blue Mountains (New South Wales)

The oldest and of the Settled Lands, the Duchy of the Blue Mountains is named for the astonishingly beautiful, high mountain range whose foothills cradle the great freehold of New Albion, established when European Kithain arrived in Australia. Here, too, began the troubled history between the Spirit Beings and their cousins. Coming from regions where centuries of Banal repression and the rising tide of the Industrial Revolution had driven the Dreaming far from the mortal world, the European newcomers were astonished by the extent to which the native Dreamtime appeared to their senses as an inextricable part of the local reality, unblemished by disbelief, seethingly alive in ways none of them had ever experienced before. Even the wisest among them possessed only the faintest recollections

of the Time of Legends, of what their own homelands had been before the tide of Banality had risen high and washed over them, and so their first contact with this untouched and untainted Dream, isolated for thousands of years, was as much a thing of fear as it was of wonder — for who, or what, could have Dreamed such a world and held it fast with such strength, for so long?

The primary residents of the territory were rainmakers dwelling inland and seagoing yawkyawk clans along the coastlines who had little contact with one another and who made contact with the newcomers separately. Initial encounters were brief, fleeting affairs fraught with terror that led to far more aggressive clashes as both sides responded with gradually increasing hostility. The tensions peaked in a series of violent clashes that culminated in a horrific massacre of mimis in the shadow of the Three Sisters. The survivors — led by Lowanna, a respected elder who had barely escaped the violence — fled to the far reaches of their country and sent out messengers to warn others of what had happened and to tell them of the dangers awaiting them.

The Dreamtime rejected the invaders, and for decades, no European Kithain was safe for more than a mile or two outside their carefully maintained territories. This has changed since the Resurgence, which upset the balance of power among the commoners. Originally content to promulgate the myth of a bloodless, painless colonization in order to shore up their claims to freeholds, disgruntled commoners are now reaching out to their native cousins in a spirit of mutual dispossession — a fact some Spirit Beings find deeply, horribly amusing.

In the spirit of irony, it has also led some Spirit Beings to support the rule of Duke Edward McLaren, whose contrarian Fiona tendencies lead him to favor their demands for territorial restoration and led to a hopeful thaw in relations between the Kithain and Spirit Beings. Native and European fae came together for the first time on the grounds of New Albion, using its many sporting fields to settle differences peacefully and to begin genuine exchanges of knowledge and culture. These meetings have taken on a new urgency of late: a darkness like nothing the Spirit Beings have ever known is making itself known in the Dreamtime, a cold evil that tastes of the ancient Elder Dark to their European cousins.

### The Duchy of the Winding River (Queensland)

The Duchy of the Winding River came into existence when Queensland was partitioned from New South Wales, leading the aggressively expansionist European Kithain residents in that part of the colony to establish their own government. Its advent formally doomed any attempt by the



European Kithain to unite under a single ruler, a situation that persists into the present day.

The first Duke of the Winding River, James “Bonebiter” Callahan, was a redcap whose violently antisocial tendencies earned him a spot on a convict’s transport but ultimately stood him in good stead when it came time to make war on the Australian frontier. Vicious and utterly without conscience, he carved out a small empire of cattle stations, sheep ranches, and trading posts for himself that he ruled with iron-fisted cruelty, directed at both those unfortunate European Kithain who were unhappily forced to call themselves his subjects and most extravagantly at the Spirit Beings whose lands he claimed by force and kept by violence. His grotesque excesses were given aid and cover by the official policies of the colonial government, which waged a series of exterminatory wars against the aboriginal population and turned a blind eye to vigilante acts of violence – up to and including murder. Bonebiter’s extensive program of poisoning and defiling the sacred country of individual and entire clans of Spirit Beings and the brutal slaughter of any such Spirit Beings who fell into his grip attracted no special attention from the mortal authorities in the midst of the general bloodshed.

The Dreamtime itself recoiled violently from him, driven back by his acts, and a bleak and nightmarish Dreaming flooded in to replace it, haunted by hostile, feral chimera born of fear and agony that assailed native and European Kithain alike. Resistance to Bonebiter’s rule had been quietly growing for quite some time among his own people. In the wake of the metaphysical calamity overtaking the Dreaming, that resistance crystalized abruptly. Plots were hatched, plans were laid, and the European Kithain extended a daring overture of peace to the dispossessed Spirit Beings to secure their assistance in overthrowing the bloody-handed tyrant in their midst. The Spirit Being clans, torn to shreds by both Bonebiter’s violence and the convulsions gripping their dream country, were led by Kaiya, a dulklorrkellorrkeng warrior-sorcerer whose bondmate had perished in massacres and whose grief and rage knew no rest so long as his beloved’s last wish remained unanswered. Approached by the desperate Kithain, he agreed to lend the weight of his magic and his forces to theirs.

It was a joint force of native and European Kithain that infiltrated Bonebiter’s fortress-like freehold/cattle station and finally put an end to him in a single bloody night. When Bonebiter strode forth to meet them, it was clear to all the Kithain that some great dark power had claimed him, or he had claimed it: he crushed the life from a third of the force brought against him with his own mattock, axe, and bare hands before anyone could give him pause. The one who finally did so was Kaiya, whose spear was magicked with his doom and the just vengeance of all whom he had slain. It

was this weapon which finally pierced his black heart and unmade his dark soul. The war party doused the tainted flame of his hearth and leveled the physical structure of the freehold, carrying away the wood to be burned, battering the stone to fragments, beating the metal into different forms. Even so, the scars of Bonebiter’s atrocities can still be found in the Dreaming, swaths of nightmarish devastation that have reduced over time but have not entirely healed.

While the conflicts between the European settlers and the indigenous Australians would continue for decades yet, for the worst of the bloodshed between the Kithain and the Spirit Beings in the Duchy of the Winding River was over. Kaiya, though he had fulfilled his bondmate’s dying wish, was not permitted to fade by the Dream Time, for his strength and his wisdom were needed by the Spirit Being clans, who became his renewed protectorate. The newly elevated Duchess Ragnild MacLaren was one of the leaders of the rebellion, and was fundamentally sympathetic to the cause of the Spirit Beings who had suffered the most under Bonebiter’s reign of terror. Her efforts to mend broken ties of kinship became the work of her life and entire reign. These resulted in better relations than most between her successors and the Spirit Beings with whom they shared territory. The current ruler, Duke Lester Shaunnessy of House Daireann, continues this policy as a matter of common sense.

## The Duchy of Gold (VICTORIA)

The Duchy of Gold comes by its names honestly: Victoria, after the queen who ruled, and gold, after the precious metal that triggered a rush of settlers into the region and the eventual partition of the territory from New South Wales. It was, in fact, one of the largest gold rushes in history, surpassing even the pellmell westward rush to California. Over the course of a decade, the population of the colony exploded with immigrants pouring into its ports from all over the world to exploit its vast gold fields, which at their peak produced one third of the world’s entire output of refined gold.

The vast majority of miners did not become particularly wealthy as a result of their efforts. Australia’s shallow alluvial gold fields required backbreaking labor to separate the gold from the soil and clay in which it was encased and the yields of individual stakes were often small. Clashes arose among the various miners, who were prone to abandoning productive stakes for rumors of richer hauls elsewhere, and between the miners and the colonial government, whose imposition of wildly unpopular licensure fees led to outright armed rebellion.

The first Duchess of Gold rose from the ranks of the immigrant prospectors who arrived in Australia from Ireland at the beginnings of the rush in 1853. Maren Gilbride was



a girl of sixteen when she traveled alone to the gold fields in search of more than just her fortune. A nocker, an intellectual, and an engineer of uncommon skill even among her kith, she fled an arranged marriage to a man twice her age, disguising herself as a boy and carrying nothing but a knapsack and her plans for a number of revolutionary new mining devices. The shallow gold fields of Australia were an outstanding place to test them, but what she found upon arrival was a situation that required more than technological advancements.

The Spirit Beings and the European Kithain were at odds, the human miners were at odds with their government, the prospectors were at odds with each other over things as petty as the size of individual claims and the color of one another's skin. Things needed fixing, and Maren went about doing just that, venturing fearlessly into the new, fantastic Dreamtime to learn its ways and make contact with its peoples. Her questing intelligence and respectful ways earned her the favor of the local clans, who designated her their intermediary when speaking with the European Kithain. The settler Kithain, initially wary of investing such responsibility in a teenaged nocker, were eventually won over by her earnestness and diligence. Her efforts won peace between them and, eventually, her own ducal seat. In the Autumn world, many of the Kithain settlers participated in the rebellions that ultimately led to the democratization of government in Australia. Following suit, the Kithain governance of the Duchy of Gold was never a heritable position but an elected office — until the Resurgence and the return of the sidhe.

The scions of House Gwydion seized control of the Duchy of Gold, putting down confused and disorganized commoner resistance to their rule with ruthless, military efficiency and installing one of their own as the rightful ruler, reorganizing matters as they saw fit. Commoner residents were dispossessed of their freeholds unless they elected to swear their allegiance to House Gwydion, who also elected to ignore any territorial claims made by the Spirit Beings, whom they regarded as Gallain. The Arcadian sidhe summarily disregarded the pre-existing diplomatic relationships developed over centuries, dismissing them as poorly negotiated follies of commoner rule. Thus far, Duchess Sabrina Northrup has managed to keep the tensions occasioned by her House's high-handed behavior tamped down by free use of the Sovereign Art to enforce loyalty and a legitimate policy of encouraging the duchy's artistic and cultural resources. Although the commoners are forced to tolerate her autocratic rule, the Spirit Beings are not. She does not fear their resentment of her mistreatment of their friends and her disregard for their rights anywhere near as much as she should.

## The Duchy of the Swan (West Australia)

The last to be established, the Duchy of the Swan did not enjoy auspicious beginnings. Fearful that the French might lay territorial claim, the colonial government of New South Wales sent settlers to establish the Swan River Colony in 1829. The poor soil quality rendered the region largely unsuitable for agriculture beyond the Swan River valley, which hampered its growth and, fortuitously, slowed the rate of contact between the Kithain and Spirit Beings, notably freshwater yawkyawks who dwelled in the Swan River, rainmakers who gave their blessings to local Aboriginal tribes, and the occasional unbonded dulklorrkelorrkeng seeking their wish-mates.

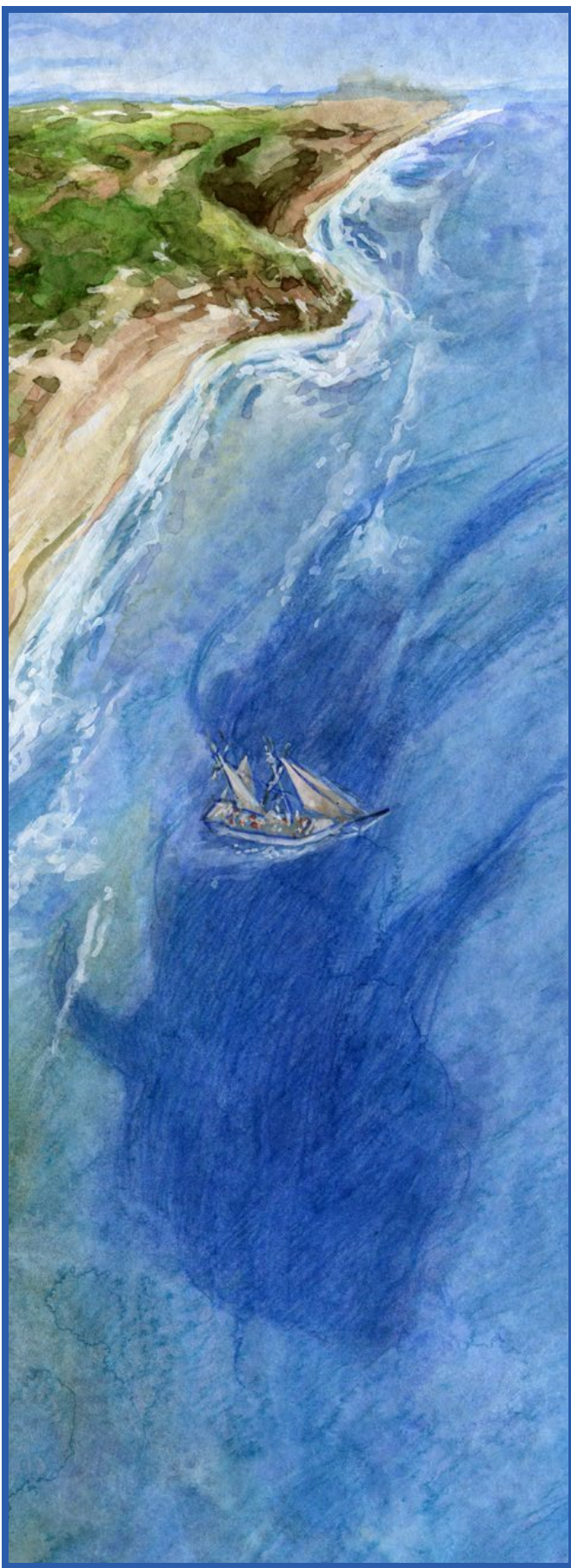
Wary and somewhat better informed as a result of missteps in the east, the Kithain made a point of prioritizing the fortification of their territories and treating respectfully with Spirit Beings they encountered. They also made no attempt to expand their holdings farther than survival dictated, and in return, the Spirit Beings made some concessions to their needs, guiding them to places where they could establish freeholds with minimal disruption to the Dreamtime and without risking its anger. It helped that the first, and many subsequent, Dukes of the Swan was a boggan, Ciaran Cormac Carolan, whose commonsensical approach to managing competing needs and resolving conflicts cooled hostilities.

Tough and independent, the Swan River social structures survived even the Resurgence intact. The Duchess of Swans, Leona Villiard, a descendant of the Carolan dynasty through her mothers, smiles kindly when asked about the armed Arcadian sidhe delegation who came to seize Black Swan Landing from her by force years ago. She points out, delicately, that the Dream of Swans does not tolerate fools or bullies and neither do its neighbors. If one is willing to keep the peace and behave like a decent being, the west county will be a welcoming home like no other. If not? The river is deep, and the desert is vast.

## Land of the Rainbow Serpent (Northern Territory & South Australia)

The Lands of the Rainbow Serpent comprise parts of Australia where, even today, few European fae dare to tread — and when they do, they rarely linger long. The stronghold of the Spirit Beings divides the continent in half along ragged territorial lines where the primordial Dreamtime bleeds into the Tuathan Dreaming, an uneasy and fractious borderland that closely mirrors the uneasy and fractious relationship between the native fae and their European cousins. Beyond that, the Sacred Country holds





its secrets from even the most intrepid Kithain, for such things are not for them to know and any attempt to do so has, for centuries, been repelled by force.

This is as Spirit Beings who call the Lands of the Rainbow Serpent home prefer it. Tied to their country in ways few westerners could understand, the native fae protect what is theirs, land and water, sea and sky, and their mortal kin, as well.

## TASMANIA

A fragment of the Dreamtime separated from the mainland Spirit Countries by the rising of the sea, Tasmania in many ways represents the worst possible impact of both human and Kithain colonialism on the local environment. Mismanaged from the start, the rapid expansion of European colonization on the island led them to regard the Aboriginal population as subhumans to be abused and slaughtered at whim.

The Black War, as it was called, led to the near-total extermination of Aboriginal Tasmanians, the destruction of Spirit Being countries and their traditional owners, and the Little Shattering, which broke the Tasmanian Dreamtime and turned much of the local Dreaming into a warped and traumatized shadow realm. Only a handful of Spirit Beings managed to preserve their country against it, and only a handful of Kithain managed to stave off the Nightmare that came for their freeholds.

Flushed with victory, it took time for the colonial Kithain to appreciate the horror of what they had wrought — but appreciate it they did, as *nocnitsa* and *nervosa* spawned to drive the reality home. For decades, only Kithain whose nature embraced something of nightmares could comfortably call Tasmania home, and no official Kithain government could be organized. Kithain who live there today must be made of sterner stuff, and most are part of reconciliation, restoration, and conservation efforts attempting to heal both the Dreamtime and the nightmare-haunted Dreaming.

The leaders of this effort are the rainmaker Ellin, who seeks to re-establish the broken Law of the Dreamtime around the Glade she has claimed as her traditional country, hoping to spread wholeness into the broken land, and Dame Lenah ni Beaumayn, an Autumn *sidhe* whose visions have called her to Tasmania.

## TORRES STRAIT

Widely geographically distributed and highly diverse in population, culture, and language, the Islands of the Torres Strait are also a place where the Spirit Beings hold strong sway over the land and the surrounding sea. A number of European Kithain have managed to carve out bits of territory here, but it is generally no more than a personal landholding.



## THE DREAMING

Most changelings are quite happy to dwell in what is informally, and often quite haughtily, referred to as “the settled lands,” where several centuries of European-influenced civilization have papered over and caged the wild Dreamtime, and shaped the local Dreaming in accordance with archetypes and standards to which European Kithain are accustomed. Though the Autumn world around it definitely exerts an influence, the Dreaming has a distinct boundary keeping it apart from the mundane, and the common and familiar sights of raths, trods, realms, and reflections comfort the Kithain who have long since adapted to this framework.

Few Kithain attempt to understand the ancient and primordial Dreamtime that still freely commingles with the Autumn world in the wilder parts of the Australian Dreaming. Fewer still manage to survive such attempts with their sanity or fae souls intact. Insulated against the Shattering by distance and culture, the Dreamtime reflects the oldest, most primeval form of the Dreaming, and few Kithain are equipped to survive in the modern remnants of the ancient world. The rare few who both attempt to comprehend the Dreamtime and are successful invariably have done so after years of guidance and tutelage by Spirit Beings willing to mentor them.

Even in the heart of Australia’s biggest cities, changelings can sense the power and raw potential moving beneath the surface of the Dreaming, swirling through the refined Glamour of their balefires. This, for many, raises serious and potentially disturbing philosophical questions, not the least of which whether they, children of the Dreaming and inheritors of the Autumn world, are perpetuating the spread of Banality.

In recent years of growing cultural sensitivity and awareness of environmental impacts, some Australian Kithain have begun to face the uncomfortable question of what their familiar and nurturing Dreaming is doing to the Dreamtime. It has not escaped their notice that they are, ironically, the very force upon the Dreamtime that human Banality once was to the Dreaming. Fearful of another, more localized, Shattering looming in their futures, many have begun to form societies and political blocs in the hopes of preventing such a calamity. Others reach out to local Spirit Beings, seeking advisors and teachers so that they may not only attempt to repair what damage they already did, but also learn how to take more respectful care of the land around them.

## THE DREAMTIME AND THE DAUNTAIN

When Kithain attempt to understand and navigate the primordial Dreamtime and *fail*, a number of things may happen. Some become Lost Ones, driven so deeply into Bedlam there is no return. Others disappear entirely, their fates forever unknown by those they left behind. Survivors, usually those who have had Spirit Being assistance prior to their attempts, enter brief periods of Bedlam from which they eventually emerge *changed* in some fundamental fashion: the carefree become thoughtful, the brash become introspective, the fearless become haunted by what they have experienced.

By far, the majority of *unwary* and *unprepared* changelings attempting to commune with their primordial roots find themselves rejecting or even rejected by the overwhelming nature of those roots. Such Kithain invariably become Dauntain, broken apart by their experience and most commonly bitter and vengeful against the Dreaming. For this reason, more Nihilists call Australia home than any other place in the world.

## SONGLINES

When Creator Beings walked the world, they left signs of their passing behind them. These songlines, or dreaming tracks, span the entire continent in a complex and intricate network of sacred pathways that transcend kinship, country, and even language barriers, mapped out by songs, stories, and dances that follow the curves and flats of the land in rhythm and melody, rather than verbal description. By adhering to the directions and instructions these story-maps provide, travelers can usually move between country, environment, Autumn world, Dreaming, and Dreamtime unmolested.

For the uninitiated to travel on songlines, however, presents immediate and imminent danger. Law prohibits certain kinds of travel at different times of the year, or only in certain directions. Without the guidance of the songs, a traveler may break the Law without even knowing it. Unfortunately for many changelings, especially tourists exploring the outback or on sightseeing trips, songlines are easily mistaken for trods, and the Dreamtime does not distinguish between foreign fae, Spirit Beings, or Aboriginal travelers when it punishes those who transgress against its Law.



# SPIRIT BEINGS OF THE DREAMTIME

Despite legends to the contrary, the Spirit Beings active in Australia today are neither gods nor Ancestor Beings nor even monsters or culture heroes, but their chimerical mien is influenced by the Dreamtime stories of those Ancestral Beings. Spirit Beings today serve the same general roles that Creator Beings did when the land was formed, and consider themselves of their Ancestor Being's skin.

For most of their history, Spirit Beings have been intricately tied to the tribes whose stories recalled their Ancestors, and bound inextricably into the laws and lessons they were tasked to teach. Though their kin may stretch across the whole of Australia, each camp of Spirit Beings is a unique expression of the Dreamtime, specific to kinship and country. Only with the coming of the Kithain and the Dreaming have they had opportunity or even *reason* to commingle with each other, and these meetings do not always go smoothly or civilly.

Spirit Beings seem to be as dual-natured as European changelings, with both mortal body and chimerical mien, but this has never actually been confirmed as fact. Spirit Beings are as easily mistaken for familiar kinds of fae as songlines are for trods – cannibal-like Spirit Beings for redcaps, immense Beings of stone for trolls – but the truth of their nature remains a sacred and closely-guarded secret. “Spirit Being business” is not for outsiders to know or understand.

Many Kithain classify Spirit Beings as their distant and slightly odd fae cousins, akin perhaps to Inanimae or other Gallain, and the Spirit Beings' propensity to use Arts and Realms in public as skillfully as any Kithain reinforces this common conception. Skeptics and pragmatists alike point out that, if the Dreamtime truly is the last remaining fragment of the ancient pre-Shattering Dreaming and the Spirit Beings are its caretakers, then their mastery of Kithain magic is likely as effortless as breathing, allowing them to keep their own no-doubt ancient rites and Arts safe from prying outside observation.

## TRAITS

All Spirit Beings, regardless of kith, share the following traits:

- ☉ They may use Arts and Realms as if they were Kithain.
- ☉ Spirit Beings count as having an Affinity for the Nature Realm while in their country (see below).
- ☉ They may not regain Glamour in Kithain freeholds or by the usual methods such as Musing and Ravaging,

instead regaining Glamour through proper songline travel, fulfilling their roles in the Dreamtime's stories, or by spending time in their country.

- ☉ Spirit Beings have distinct differences that reflect the particular people and country from which they hail. Outsiders are more likely to identify multiple kinds of tall, thin rock-dwelling Spirit Beings as mimis, for example, but nearly each individual put into that group by foreigners in fact has their own unique kith, which they call by its own name.

## ALTERED BACKGROUND: COUNTRY (GLADE) (🌀 TO 🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀)

The Spirit Being has inherited ownership of her traditional land, and acts as its steward like her ancestors have done before her. Country is mechanically identical to Glade, except the Dreamtime recognizes the inalienable rights of the Spirit Being to the land and enforces them firmly. Anyone who trespasses or transgresses against the Spirit Being in her country suffers the same penalties as breaking Law or the Escheat, at the Country's dot rating.

This Background is also available to European Kithain who were born to or have been adopted by an Aboriginal kinship.

## DULKORRKELORRKENG

They stalk the dark of the Dreamtime, and the night is their protectorate: the strange and terrifying sorcerers of the Spirit Beings, whose frightening shapes belie their fundamentally beneficent natures.

The dulkorrrkelorrrkeng take flight above desert, mountain, and forest on leathery wings, searching for the soul whose needs call to them. Once they find the one whose wishes only they may grant, that person becomes their companion for all their nights. Should the dulkorrrkelorrrkeng and their companion meet in sunlight, their bond is forever broken.

Once, when the kinship bonds between the dulkorrrkelorrrkeng and their mortal kin were stronger, each had a perfectly matched companion. Now, that is no longer the case. Many make a living as freelance wish-merchants among other Spirit Beings, who regard them with equal parts scorn and fear, or among the European Kithain, who see them as a possible means of making peace with their angry cousins. The dulkorrrkelorrrkeng find diplomacy soothes their need for a protectorate, and have taken to the position with zeal.

The dulkorrrkelorrrkeng more than live up to their fearsome reputation as terrifying night-flying sorcerers. They stand tall and lean, and sleek as a blade, bearing the long faces and patagial wings of flying foxes. Few display any indicators of physical gender in their natural form. Their shapeshifting skills are such that they can appear as either male or female, or some combination of the two, when interacting with





others. Frequently, they will take a shape pleasing to the unconscious desires of their companion, cleaving to their preferred aesthetics when granting their wishes.

### Glamour Ways

#### Realm Affinity: Actor.

**Nightflyer:** A dulklorrkelorrkeng may spend 1 Glamour to change between their humanoid form and the shape of an enormous flying fox. In flying fox form they may ride the winds to soar and glide long distances, and take no falling damage. Even in human form dulklorrkelorrkeng take half damage from all falls (rounded down). **Night's Children:** A dulklorrkelorrkeng suffers no impairment due to darkness and can see normally so long as there is at least some light, though they still suffer the normal penalties for total blindness, and supernatural darkness may still affect them. Dulklorrkelorrkeng cannot botch Alertness or Kenning rolls.

**Wishgranter:** Once per session, the dulklorrkelorrkeng may use their Arts without Glamour cost to answer one wish for their companion. This must be a genuine desire on the part of the other person, not simply a "wish" the dulklorrkelorrkeng prompts them to say in order to skirt the Glamour cost. The fae may also use Musing, Ravaging, and other Glamour gathering methods, but only regarding their companion. A dulklorrkelorrkeng may only have one companion at a time, and breaking the bond triggers Banality.

**Bound By Purpose:** In order to be fully complete as a being, the dulklorrkelorrkeng requires a companion, a

bondmate to act as their protectorate. If they do not or cannot find a single individual to fulfill this need, they may temporarily bond with a group or a cause as a stopgap measure. If, however, the singular bond remains unfulfilled, they eventually fade into forgetfulness of their true nature until infused again with Glamour. All Banality points gained are doubled while the dulklorrkelorrkeng is without any sort of companion; bonding to a group helps, but they still take an additional Banality point any time Banality is gained.

**Dayblind:** Dulklorrkelorrkeng dislike bright lights, and suffer a +2 difficulty penalty on all vision-related rolls while in daylight or areas of intense artificial light. This penalty may be reduced to +1 with heavy dark glasses.

### MIMIS

Originally from western Arnhem Land, mimis are among the most fae-like of Australia's numerous Spirit Beings. Gregarious and mischievous, mimis are caretakers of country, emerging at night to arrange and rearrange features like rocks and scrub to their liking. Some stories say that the mimis had human forms before the first people came to Australia, and others that they taught the first humans how to hunt, paint, and prepare kangaroo meat.

Mimis tend to have suffered the least in the mass displacements of Spirit Beings from country, and most can still be found in their rocky escarpments in the wilderness of northern Australia. Some, however, have chosen to leave



their traditional lands, concerned by the effects that the steady push of development into pristine territory and the historical losses of Aboriginal populations have had on the balance they've strived to maintain since time immemorial.

Mimis are very thin and tall, with elongated bodies that look frail and easily broken, or like they might blow away in a stiff wind. Despite this fragility, mimis are energetic and active people, and their extroverted natures ensure they are often found in the middle of social groups.

#### **Glamour Ways**

##### **Realm Affinity:** Scene.

Muse of the Land: Mimi instinctively know how to arrange the environments around them to maximize the flows of Glamour. They may freely make Musing rolls to regain Glamour when engaged in any kind of landscaping, natural conservation, or area cleanup efforts, and gain 1 additional Glamour point from successful Musing in such circumstances.

Happy Spirit: Mimis are friendly and cheerful by nature, and enjoy spending time with others. They add one to the Charisma Attribute, even if it takes them above 5, and benefit from a -1 difficulty to all rolls when engaging in genuinely positive social interactions. They cannot botch Empathy or Etiquette rolls.

Fragile Body: Though their slender build enables them to slip into impossibly narrow cracks to shelter themselves from danger or discovery, it comes at the cost of sturdiness and resilience. Mimis convert one level of bashing damage to lethal damage any time they receive more than one level of bashing damage. In addition, healing times for lethal and aggravated damage are increased by half. Healing times for bashing damage are unaffected.

#### **RAINMAKERS**

The first kind of Spirit Being to be seen following the Wars of the Songlines, rainmakers firmly decline to be called Rainbow Serpents, though they do say they are of the Serpent's skin. Rainmakers say that they have always been a part of the Dreamtime, and merely woke up when they were needed again, but choose not to share who or what woke them up, merely why.

Rainmakers are found all across Australia, wherever the ancient dreaming tracks lead, and protect the ancient Glades and songlines extant where the Dreamtime still survives. Many rainmakers choose to lead a solitary life, drawn by the stories of their Ancestor Beings to retrace the dreaming tracks and keep the Dreamtime alive. Others prefer to live amongst their mortal kin, while a rare few can be found amongst respectful Kithain communities. Most rainmakers tend to find leadership roles within the small groups they inevitably form around them.

No matter how they fit into their tribal society and the Dreamtime at large, rainmakers hold one thing dearer than any other thing: Law. Older than the Escheat and a powerful force for fae morality in Australia, rainmakers are tasked with upholding Law wherever they travel. Outside of their snake forms, rainmakers are not often overtly identifiable as Spirit Beings. While some still don the traditional garb of their peoples, others prefer to adopt Western-style clothing that conceals the patterns and colors reminiscent of snakeskin that sweep up their spines and spread along their backs and bellies.

#### **Glamour Ways**

##### **Realm Affinity:** Fae

Serpent's Shape: Rainmakers may spend 1 Glamour to reflexively shift between their human form and the form of an indigenous snake, gaining the qualities of that species. Many rainmakers adopt the forms of large pythons, becoming amphibious and gaining a powerful crushing attack against those wrapped in their coils. Others adopt the forms of taipans, and enjoy speed, camouflage, and a deadly venomous bite attack. A few even take the form of sea snakes, gaining both amphibious traits and an envenomed bite.

Watercaller: Once per session, a rainmaker may call water from the sky or the ground, no matter how clear the skies above or how parched the ground below. This water is always clean, cold, and of sufficient volume for the watercaller, or her camp's, needs. This Birthright costs one point of Glamour. Rainmakers may also use this Birthright to punish those who transgress against Law, cursing them with terrible thirst that is not slaked no matter how much they drink, reducing soak by 1 and imposing a +1 penalty on all difficulties for the rest of the scene.

Bound to Law: Should a rainmaker do the unthinkable and act against that which she is charged to uphold, she loses all temporary Willpower points and may not regain them by any means until she has properly atoned. She also may not use her Watercaller Birthright.

#### **Yawkyawuk**

The daughters born of the Rainbow Serpent, the yawkyawuks are the protectors of the waters and all that dwell within them. They can be found anywhere that water flows and pools: in rivers and streams that run whatever the season, within hidden water holes in the trackless Great Western Desert, and others even making homes in purpose-built wells. In those places, their wards are fishes and frogs, insects and plants, animals and people, whose spirits and dreams give life and shape to the Dreamtime, and the water itself, a precious resource, easily polluted and difficult to replace.



They can also be found wherever the sea finds the shore and in the open ocean alike. In those places, their protectorate is all that lives and thrives in the salt-spray: the creatures of the deep, the birds of the air, the people who make their living on the waves and currents. Their kindness saves the lives of lost sailors and their anger, slow to rouse but tempestuous as a typhoon, punishes those who defile the water. To befriend them is to never thirst on land or fear death beneath the waves. To make them an enemy is to know the dread of deep water and all that lurks beneath its waves in a nation cradled by the sea.

Although on land they walk on legs, when immersed in water yawkyawks shift to resemble mermaids: humanoid from the waist up and piscine from the waist down, with hair like seaweed. The tails of freshwater yawkyawks tend to be brightly colored and patterned, their hair closely resembling masses of freshwater vegetation. Seagoing yawkyawks swim with the sleek tails of marlin and sharks, glorious ribbons of green and golden kelp-hair streaming behind them. In any form, they possess a strange, compelling beauty, their skin shimmering with scales, their eyes large and magnetic, their long, webbed fingers tipped in claws.

### Glamour Ways

#### Realm Affinity: Prop.

Guardian Form: They may spend 1 Glamour to assume the form of a crocodile (freshwater or saltwater), a dragonfly, a small lizard, or a swordfish in order to blend into the world around them. They enjoy all the physical abilities of the creatures whose forms they take and retain the ability to use Arts while in those forms, though they cannot speak unless they use other powers to allow it. Yawkyawks cannot botch Animal Ken or Survival rolls.

Stormcaller: Once per session, a yawkyawk may spend 2 Glamour to call down a storm that lasts for a scene and inflicts the yawkyawk's Glamour rating in bashing damage per turn to the focus of its wrath. She may only target one individual per turn, but may change targets each turn. Mortal armor is only half as effective as normal in soaking this damage (round down), though supernatural protection works normally. While occasionally used to punish a transgressor of Law or an Oathbreaker, yawkyawks most commonly use this ability to destroy ships or injure people who despoil water sources and upset the balance of life.

Captive's Command: If a yawkyawk is taken by force from the waters she calls home – caught accidentally in a net or deliberately trapped – she is compelled to serve her captor with all the powers at her disposal. She regains her freedom completely when she re-enters her own country. Yawkyawks often find ways to trick their captors into releasing them into their waters..

## AL-HILAL AL-KHASEEB: The Fertile Crescent

During the Mythic Age, inhabitants of the Fertile Crescent worshipped and feared the Fomorians as gods. To appease their gods' cruel and capricious appetites, humankind constructed temples under threat of the lash and in the heat of the sun. Mortals labored, piling brick upon brick, until above them loomed the first ziggurats, angular palaces dedicated solely to the pleasure of the Elder Dark.

Even in sleep, mortals were not safe from tyranny, and their nightmares only strengthened the Fomorians' grasp on the Dreaming, known to them as Apsu. Fomorians guarded their power jealously, keeping humankind in poverty and ignorance. They culled the restless with plague and famine, punishing any progress that might threaten the status quo. But they could not control every dreamer, and some dared to fight back. They say it was a child, still young enough to hope, who first dreamed of the faerie Inanna.

According to legend, Inanna emerged from Apsu at twilight, just as the full moon's last light sank in the west and the Morning Star rose in the east, heralding the dawn. She called upon the great rivers, upon the barley fields, and upon the living clay, and each in turn stirred to answer her call. With the forces of nature at her side, Inanna journeyed to the seven-tiered palace of Ereshkigal, venerated by mortals as the goddess of Death, and Queen among the Fomorians. Ereshkigal feared that she was outnumbered, but knew that if she could not win by strength of arms, she would win by trickery. She invited Inanna inside her palace to negotiate a truce, but only if the young faerie would meet with her alone.

To pass through the gate to the first tier of Ereshkigal's ziggurat, Inanna left her army behind. To pass through the second, she left her bracers of copper. Through the third, she left her girdle of silver. Fourth, she left her breastplate of gold. Fifth, she laid down her shield. Sixth, her sword. At the seventh gate, she surrendered her helmet, crowned with lapis lazuli. In a throne room of bone, Ereshkigal surveyed Inanna, who was now unarmed and defenseless. As the Queen of Death prepared to strike Inanna dead, Inanna opened a door to Apsu, and sealed them both away.

When six months passed, Inanna emerged again from Apsu, this time carrying two tablets of shining bronze. The Tablets of Fate, as they came to be known, would turn the tide of battle. Inanna called a war council with the Rivers, the Barley, the Clay, and other members of the Inanimae, where she argued that it was time to share these secrets with humankind, for only with the help of mortal Dreamers would they become strong enough to drive back the Elder Dark. It is said that when Inanna gifted the Tablets of Fate





to humankind, she introduced written language to those who would grow to become the great Sumerian civilization. With increased communication, creativity, and progress, mortals rapidly altered the forces within Apsu, shaping the Dreaming in favor of Light.

In the aftermath of the Great Unleashing, the surviving Fomorians retreated to lick their wounds, replaced by new gods. The rivers flooded the land, and the barley nourished humankind back to strength. Inanna acted as a steward to civilizations, spending half the year worshipped as a goddess of many names, and cultivating Dreamers. The other half she spent in Apsu, ensuring peace and stability among the Fae.

Empires rose and fell. The Silk Road carried dreamers from all corners of the earth through the deserts to meet in the land between two rivers, and the Kithain – or Jinn, as they were called here – traveled with them. War and conquest may have been frequent, but so were art, creativity, and scientific advancement, so Jinn were never left hungry for Glamour.

The spread of Christianity and Islam ushered in a new era, at once shaking the foundations of the Dreaming and weaving together something stronger. As these new faiths spread like wildfire across the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe, Jinn took note of how hopeful, peaceful, and bright the Dreaming became in response – at least, early on. Of course, these faiths did not grow without conflict, and the region between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf served as stage for innumerable wars in the name of God. During the Crusades, Light and Dark Jinn began to further distrust one another, polarized by the political climate around them. The nobility among the Jinn tried their best to impose order, but their efforts rarely quelled the root of the disputes.

The Ottoman Empire's rise allowed for renewed stability across the trade routes that connected the East to the West. Creativity surged once again as dreamers' hopes expanded, and changelings reaped the benefit. This marked a period of fine art, poetry, and scientific exploration among mortal inhabitants of the Empire, and the Jinn did what they could to foster a favorable environment for such creativity,





## The JINN



In the Arabic-speaking world, changelings use the term Jinn primarily to refer to themselves, but also to other magic-touched creatures. Whereas the European Kithain refer to these non-fae as Prodigals, Middle Eastern changelings generally include Prodigals among Jinn, albeit recognizing them as extended family with magical and physiological distinctions. This can make things a bit confusing for outsiders, but as a rule of thumb, if it's capitalized it refers to changelings; if it's not, it refers to Prodigals.



namely through maintaining peace whenever possible. Some changelings became too comfortable, rejecting progress in favor of trying to prolong this period for as long as they could, and by whatever means necessary. Despite their efforts to maintain the status quo, these Jinn lived amidst advancements that changed the world for the better. But all empires must fall.

A rapidly industrializing Europe put pressure on the borders of the Ottoman Empire, and Jinn soon lamented their attachment to the existing state of affairs. As Ottoman rule among mortals receded, changelings formed three distinct territories. In the north, the changelings took refuge under the Empire of the Caucasus. In the south, the Sultanate of Hejaz formed. Along the eastern Mediterranean Sea, the Caliphate of Cedars rose. While they functioned as politically separate entities, they all shared a linguistic bond and cultural heritage, and collectively referred to their region as *Al-Hilal Al-Khaseeb*, or "The Fertile Crescent," in honor of the ancient lands that gave life to civilization.

Western Imperialism affected Jinn life as much as mortal life in the region during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Changelings from foreign lands had no qualms about offering leaders of *Al-Hilal Al-Khaseeb* promising alliances in one breath and threats of war in the next, all in hopes of gaining control over the region's resources. The Jinn were generally wary of these foreigners and tended to favor political leaders who kept foreign dignitaries at arm's length.

All the same, new trade brought new wealth to old cities, revitalizing dreamers and nourishing Jinn. Since they felt the most immediate benefit, Jinn in metropolitan regions were more likely to welcome foreign ideas than those in rural areas, who prioritized tradition. No matter where they come from, Jinn are proud of their rich heritage. In addition to common language and shared historical experience, most

Jinn still trace their lineage back to the legendary Inanna, to whom they refer as "Star of the Evening and the Morning," and "Keeper of the Word," among many other epithets. Like Inanna, they strive to illuminate the darkness, placing the highest value on education, and transmitting knowledge from one generation of changelings to the next.

## EMPIRE OF THE CAUCASUS

The vast Empire of the Caucasus extends from the mortal lands of westernmost Turkey, southeast through Iraq and Iran, and northeast through Kazakhstan, roughly following the footprint of the ancient Achaemenid Empire, excluding the Levant. The many Jinn cultures of this region united in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century under the rule of Padishah Karim Ibn Hassan Reza Mehran, an ifrit general and politician descended from nobility, who argued for the cultivation of Glamour through inspiring self-sufficiency and growth for the mortals of this region in the wake of mundane Imperialism. His eshu consort, the Shahbanu Anahid Ishtarzadeh, was once a commoner who rose through the ranks of Karim's court through her captivating songs and her skill with words. Theirs was a true love match, and it was no small scandal among the nobility when Karim chose Anahid over her more politically prudent rivals.

With Anahid's influence, poetry and song thrive at the court of Karim Ibn Hassan, where they seek to recreate the romance of the Thousand and One Nights. The court is located in the freehold known as Alzaqura (the Ziggurat), at a hideaway in Mosul, also called Old Nineveh. The courtiers who reside there prefer voile styled after the Ancient Babylonians, the Persians, and the Ottoman Turks.

Changelings of the Caucasus tend to keep to metropolitan areas such as Istanbul, Tehran, and Baghdad, where their oddities are harder for mortals to detect. Those Jinn who were born and raised in the region are accustomed to carefully disguising their fae activities in order to avoid alarming any potential onlookers. Subtlety is key, but if circumstances force a changeling to "go loud" in front of mortals, there are two options: wipe their memories, or make the encounter so terrifying and alien that no mortal would dare admit what they had witnessed... or be believed, if they did.

Shortly after the return of the Arcadian sidhe in Concordia, the ruling sidhe turned their eyes toward the Caucasus, with every intention of establishing dominance over the empire. Karim heard several proposals from different leaders of the Great Houses – some offering alliance, some demanding his unquestioning loyalty – but none were satisfactory. Karim hosted each diplomat for three days, and each night he discussed the pros and cons of their offers with Anahid. She advised him, each time, that he must do





## RUMOR HAS IT

Whispers claim that Anahid Ishtarzadeh is more than what she seems. Long before she became Shahbanu, she bore herself like a queen, and has proven herself wise in the methods of statecraft despite receiving no formal training. Her detractors believe that she somehow bewitched Karim with her dark, gold-flecked eyes and her siren songs, but no such enchantments have yet been uncovered. By all accounts, Anahid soothes the Padishah when he is angered, and prevents him from acting rashly.

what is best for his people and send the envoy away with friendly, empty hands.

Karim was not truly impressed by any ambassador until the day High King David Ardry himself came to negotiate on behalf of House Gwydion. Instead of the obsequious flattery or imperious saber-rattling of the typical envoy, King David addressed Karim as an equal, and took every care to be candid with the Padishah about his intentions. King David proposed that Karim join House Gwydion, but in the spirit of brotherhood, not vassalage. They formed an alliance that would allow Karim plenty of freedom to

continue ruling the Empire of the Caucasus as he saw fit. Karim admired David's forthright nature, which was a breath of fresh air compared to the other western Kithain he'd encountered. Anahid expressed her reservations to Karim in private, but ultimately agreed that King David's terms were the most reasonable.

Karim's critics insist that in agreeing to this alliance, Karim merely sold his people to the highest bidder, and warn that King David's other shoe will drop soon enough. Karim's supporters, on the other hand, point to the shared prosperity Jinn of the Caucasus have enjoyed in the decade since they established this alliance, even despite times of war between mortals. Other Jinn in the region, especially the commoners, are still recovering from these conflicts alongside their mortal neighbors. In general, Jinn of the Caucasus are hopeful for the future.

## CALIPHATE OF CEDARS

The Caliphate of Cedars extends from Syria and Lebanon to Jordan and Israel. It is sometimes referred to as the Levant, or "the Land where the Sun Rises." The ruling Caliph is Mahbub Ibn Iqbal Al-Ghazzawi ("Beloved Son of Fortune") an eccentric dove pooka who won his throne quite accidentally – Mahbub was never one to avoid doing small acts of kindness, and no good deed goes unpunished, after all. Caliph Mahbub prefers mischief to statecraft, and often abandons his administrative duties in favor of sharing lighthearted entertainment with his court in the freehold of Tel Yasmin, in the city of Damascus.

Taking his inspiration from the legendary eshu, Scheherazade, he encourages all visitors to tell him a story he hasn't heard before and he will always offer a tale in return. Armed with these dreams, Mahbub combats the encroachment of Banality and the Autumn world. He leaves most of the governing to Esther beth Berakha and Ibrahim ibn Idris, two qareen who have outlived three previous Caliphs. They come to him when documents need signing, but they expect little of him beyond that. While this estimation was accurate initially, Mahbub may yet surprise them in the long run, as he is slowly but steadily developing a talent for governance and especially diplomacy. Like many pooka, he plays the fool well, but underneath that simple exterior is a sharp wit and a good heart, and with time he may yet prove an inspiring leader.

Recent conflicts in the region have caused some Jinn to seek refuge in safer environs, but those who call this place home are often reluctant to abandon it. These changelings hold fast to dreams of peace and preserve stories that have been passed down through one hundred generations. Other changelings are drawn to the region precisely because of the turmoil and bloodshed, some with a mind to harvest

## INTO THE DREAMING

When a changeling enters the Near Dreaming in the Empire of the Caucasus, she will find a reflection of our world, but molded entirely of unfired clay. Ribbons of text, symbols from languages long dead, emerge and flow across the walls and disappear again. (More than one scholar has tried to make sense of these messages, and it is said that none of them survived their own curiosity.) As she travels into the Far Dreaming, she will eventually find herself before a ziggurat towering higher than the eye can see, seeming to touch the clouds. The walls seem to extend past the horizon to the east and the west. The farther she ascends, the stranger the steps become, until the staircase folds back upon itself. Without a guide or a method of navigation, she may fall victim to tricks of perspective, and find herself traversing the same staircase in an infinite loop.



## SMALL ACTS OF KINDNESS

It is said that the previous Caliph, Amos ben Eliyahu, knew that he was steadily succumbing to Banality, and despite Esther and Ibrahim's efforts, they could find no way to reverse it. With no heir apparent, Amos developed a test that would help them determine the next Caliph. For six days, Amos disguised himself as a beggar, sitting by the Citadel of Damascus. A young street performer stood nearby, playing a hand-me-down kanoon and telling jokes. Esther and Ibrahim confirmed that this kanoon player's mortal form would soon enter chrysalis, but that he was not yet aware of his potential. With what he had earned from the tourists' pockets, the kanoon-player would buy a meal and offer half his food to the beggar each day, exchanging humorous stories. When Amos asked the boy's name, he introduced himself as Mahbub Ibn Iqbal, from Gaza. Mahbub was a beloved son of fortune indeed – for his kindness sealed his destiny as heir to the Caliphate.

Glamour from the conflict, or perhaps to take up the cause in hopes of ending the violence.

Indeed, the Jinn of the Caliphate often find themselves living precarious double lives, even by changeling standards. While mortal politics and identities certainly factor into their outlook, the simple fact is that being Jinn is a powerful shared experience that often inspires changelings to transcend cultural biases. However, it's not as though one can simply explain that the reason you are meeting with a member of a rival faction or sect is because you are both supernatural beings, and so many Jinn must maintain a façade of upholding typical mortal views in public while crossing those same lines in private with their fellow changelings.

## SULTANATE OF HEJAZ

The Arabian Peninsula is home to many changelings who were originally brought to life by the dreams of the Bedouins in the Arabian deserts. Within the last century, the economic success of urban areas along the gulf coast has allowed these changelings more access to wealth and resources, and has brought them greater influence in the Kithain political sphere. Like all changelings, the Jinn of this region each lead a dual life, but perhaps in greater

## INTO THE DREAMING

The Levant has survived too many conflicts for the Dreaming to remain unscathed. In the Caliphate of Cedars, the Dreaming manifests as city of ruins partially suspended in mid-air. Aramean reliefs, Greek statuary, Roman arcades, and Abbasid stucco float, hovering just where they ought to be, if only they weren't shattered, crumbling, and missing pieces. As a changeling ventures along the trods farther into this corner of the Dreaming, she may notice the cobble stone paths are no longer on solid ground – instead, they wind a few feet over a clear, tranquil sea of indeterminate depth. Columns of salt rise above the surface which, if disturbed, may dissolve into the waters – perchance to wake that which should remain asleep.

extremes, ever careful not to offend mortal sensibilities or to raise suspicions.

When Talitha bint Ameen ibn Rashid al-Hajr ventures into the capital of Riyadh, she always keeps her face concealed and walks with a male companion, posing as his wife or mother. He speaks for her, drives for her, and facilitates all business transactions that she might otherwise be barred from completing on her own. When Talitha returns to her freehold of Al-Ahlam Alealiqa ("The Oasis of Lingering Dreams"), she is the revered Sultana of Hejaz, queen in her own right, and proud vassal of House Leanhaun. She is a great patroness of the arts, and Muse to the mortals who create them. All are welcome at Talitha's Court, be they Seelie or Unseelie, rich or poor, believers or nonbelievers. Talitha herself was raised as a Sunni Muslim by her mortal family, and continued to practice Islam after she emerged from Chrysalis as a lilin, free-spirited fae who have an appetite for hedonism.

Some visitors to her court wonder that between her faith and her nature, she must be full of contradiction. High Lord Eleanor of House Leanhaun was surprised when Talitha asked to join her house, knowing all lilinot's reputation for disloyalty, but Talitha quickly showed how well she fit in, dazzling Eleanor's retinue with a series of mortal dancers and musicians that impressed even the most jaded among them. Talitha felt that House Leanhaun was the only house that would allow her to remain true to her nature, and thus her fealty was a small price to pay.



## INTO THE DREAMING

In Hejaz, the doorways between the Autumn world and the Dreaming have a tendency to shift with the sands. Ever since the Shattering, trods have become harder to locate consistently, so only the most experienced travel here. What's more, the boundaries between one world and the other are not always apparent – perhaps the Sands shine a little brighter gold in daylight, a little more silver in moonlight. The stars that a changeling might use to navigate through this sea of sand do not match any modern charts; instead, they sparkle in the exact positions they held seven thousand years ago. The Dreaming here holds secrets that the Sands are not ready to tell.

## JINN OF AL-HILAL AL-KHASEEB

### IFRIT

*The fire consumes the kindling, but it gives light and warmth in return. I may leave ash in my wake, but at least I destroy with a purpose.*

Forged in flame and battle hardened, an ifrit (pl. afareet) has little patience for weakness. They value strength, honor, and shrewd leadership. The afareet are known for being formidable in battle, not only thanks to their physical prowess but also their strategy. They never shy away from a fight, as long it is for a cause they consider righteous, and they are known to be capable generals in times of battle. They can be provoked easily when their skill or their honor is called into question. An ifrit will answer any slight with a sharp tongue – or a sharp blade.

The dreams that shaped afareet may not have been nightmares, but they were not entirely pleasant either, often providing solace to dreamers in times of war, destruction, and bloodshed. The afareet were formed from the righteous anger and raw power necessary to survive that violence. Afareet often take on leadership roles within their communities, becoming the person that Jinn depend on in times of conflict. They may be warriors or mercenaries, soldiers or officers, executives or politicians.

Among changelings, afareet are most likely to join whichever group or great house shows them appreciation for their talents, especially if they are given opportunities to

## BISHA'A

When afareet fall in love, their passion exceeds reason and consumes all that stands in their way. It is said that an ifrit once volunteered to undergo a trial by fire (known as Bisha'a in Arabic) to prove the innocence of his beloved, and when he emerged from the flames unaffected, the Bedouins assembled to witness the ordeal were convinced that he was imbued with divine powers. On the ifrit's word, his lover was promptly released, and the accuser was burned instead.

lead. If they are told that they lack experience, they will go out of their way to gain it – a determination which sometimes results in disaster. More than a few afareet have ridden into battle set on defeating their lord's enemy singlehandedly, and fewer have returned. With time, though, afareet who survive their own quick tempers learn that choosing when to swing your sword is just as important as how well you swing it.

Afareet have a commanding presence. In human form, they often grow to be the tallest member of their immediate family; an ifrit's fae mien is larger still, rough skin the color of stone or sand, always hot to the touch. Fire dances in their eyes. An ifrit may emerge from Chrysalis carrying flaming blades, or wearing glowing molten armor. They adore jewelry and wear it in large amounts in both mortal and fae seemings – earrings, necklaces, bracelets, and rings – each of which may be augmented chimerically, and often carries personal meaning. Their clothing is vibrantly colored and loose fitting to allow for ease of movement.

Afareet thrive in warmer climates, often choosing cities over rural areas. In the mortal sphere, patriotic afareet may decide to join the military for its structure and for opportunities to work off their aggressive tendencies. Others may opt to become bodyguards or bouncers for Jinn nobility, in order to make good use of their intimidating stature. Even afareet who don't go into a physical profession tend to keep themselves fit. Ultimately, an ifrit will find work that rewards him with a strong sense of purpose and/or with status as a leader. Afareet seemings can neatly be summed up with three words: battle (childlings), tactics (wilders), and strategy (grumps) – this kith loves to fight, literally or metaphorically. It's just the scale of the battle and their role in it that changes.

### Glamour Ways

Afareet regain Glamour when fighting for a cause they see as righteous, when pitting themselves against serious opponents, and when they take the lead in times of crisis. It's a common misconception that they are bloodthirsty. The



real appeal to them is not in doing harm, but in proving one's mettle against worthy opposition. Though winning, of course, is still sweetest. Even by Jinn standards, there is little subtle about an ifrit Unleashing her magic – cinders and motes of ash swirl around her body, a smoky haze descends on the area, the temperature spikes to a sweltering pitch, and harmless but vivid chimerical flames spring up around both caster and target.

**Realm Affinity:** Nature.

**Flame Forged:** Extreme heat and smoke inhalation do not bother them, and they do not take damage from ordinary fire. An ifrit may also spend 1 Glamour to ignore damage from a source of magical fire for a scene.

**Warrior's Might:** Afareet are even stronger than they appear – which is often saying something. Add one dot to an ifrit's Strength Attribute, even if that increases it above 5. Afareet cannot botch Athletics or Intimidation rolls.

**Hot Headed:** If an ifrit feels that she has been slighted, she will insist that the other party make amends or, failing that, challenge them to combat or some form of direct competition. An ifrit must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 8) to avoid immediately and directly answering an insult, and letting an insult stand unanswered triggers Banality. Note that only fairly serious insults provoke this response – being called a jerk by a passing stranger who bumps into the ifrit on the street will not force the ifrit to challenge him to a duel in order to avoid triggering Banality, though it will likely still provoke the ifrit's quick temper!

## LILIN

*I bow to no one, but I will stand with you. I follow no one, but I will walk with you.*

Headstrong and alluring, a lilin (pl. lilinot) knows what she wants and how to get it. Most of the Kithain see the lilinot as volatile vixens, incapable of loyalty and eager to solve every problem with seduction. Like some of the Prodigals who call themselves vampires, the lilinot claim descent from Lilith, a demon who rebelled against her creator and refused to submit to the man she'd been forced to marry. Lilith then fled a would-be-paradise to make her own way in the desert, becoming mother to many creatures that hid from the light of the sun. The lilinot may or may not be her direct descendants, but in claiming her name, they invoke her rebellious spirit. Others say lilinot were born from the fever dreams of desert folk who craved release from the oppressive heat of the summer sun, and from social mores that demonized pleasure. They are the jasmine-scented evening breeze that caresses a shepherd's cheek, the darkness of the storm on the horizon, and the torrential downpour that brings life to barren lands.

## GENDER, IDENTITY, AND THE LILINOT

While lilinot typically present feminine traits, not all lilinot are assigned female at birth. Like any Jinn, a lilin may identify as masculine, feminine, both, or neither – and they insist upon being treated with respect to their gender identity. If freedom is sacred to a lilin, then so is their ability to express their identity however they choose. Lilinot generally accept that gender identity is fluid, and that changeling souls are not bound by human bodies.

A lilin is hesitant at best to pledge fealty to any lord, unless the benefits clearly outweigh the cost of the obligation. Though they are often criticized for being self-centered, lilinot maintain that they merely know their own worth. More than a few lilinot have become famed courtesans and mistresses throughout the centuries, seeking patrons who admire their spirit and don't try to tie them down. But woe betide the benefactor who takes a lilin for granted or tries to lord his generosity over her.

Lilinot have long hair that seems to never tangle, regardless of its texture or how it is styled. Their human form tends toward the athletic, with accentuated curves and prominent musculature. They move with serpentine grace and prefer fitted clothing that leaves just enough to the imagination. They will proudly display gifts of jewelry from their patrons. In a lilin's fae mien, soft wings spring from their shoulder blades, and patches of their skin may shimmer with scales. They favor chimerical companions such as owls and snakes.

Lilinot prefer the nocturnal lifestyle, and all the pleasures that come with it. For a lilin, hedonism comes naturally as breathing, and opulence is never to be rejected. That said, although she appreciates luxury, she will never depend on it. The moment her freedom is threatened, she will leave her silks and precious stones behind without looking back. When she isn't fleeing perceived captivity, she's pursuing a change of pace, whether it takes the form of a new lover or a new adventure. She is unlikely to live her entire life in the same city.

As childlings, lilinot are exhilarated by their abilities, and they seek opportunities to exercise them. They thrive in nightclubs, bars, or any place teeming with warm bodies ripe with desire. They are likely to throw themselves into a series of new relationships, but then quickly become discontented



when each partner develops feelings of attachment. They flit from one lover to the next, rarely looking back when one has displeased them.

The wilder lilinot are more discerning in their pursuits, focusing more on the quality of their quarries than the quantity. These are the more politically minded lilinot, the ones who seek powerful patrons, who eagerly participate in diplomacy, and who desire to leave a mark on the social and political landscape. They are not above using lilinot wiles to get what they want.

In the grump stage of life, lilinot have seen it all, and grown wiser for it. They no longer see lovers as means to acquiring Glamour or power (for they have likely gained their fair share of each), and instead keep a few loyal partners in rotation. They caution younger lilinot to appreciate each encounter while it lasts, and to be fair to those they leave behind. Lilin grumps are level-headed, and turn their attention to caring for the community at hand, keeping a watchful eye for injustice, and stepping in to defend the freedom of those they care about.

### Glamour Ways

To a lilin, physical pleasure is paramount when it comes to regaining Glamour, whether she is experiencing it herself or administering it for others. Her methods of revelry are not limited to the pleasures of the bedroom, though those are among the most potent delights. Physical contact between the lilin and at least one other person, mortal or Jinn, is necessary for her to harvest Glamour. Cantrips cast by lilinot may be accompanied by faint rumblings of a thunderstorm, an unexpected gust of wind, and jasmine-scented raindrops.

### Realm Affinity: Fae.

**Breaking Bonds:** Provided they don't do so out of spite or desire to cause harm, the Dreaming shields them from legal and financial repercussions for breaking a mundane deal or contract. Events simply conspire to see to it that they go unpunished, at least with regard to laws and money – agreements get lost, courts drop cases, and the like. Lilinot may even invalidate a fae oath or other supernaturally binding pact without suffering the magical consequences such actions would normally entail, provided they can make





a reasonable case that it is imbalanced or unjust. (In her guise as the Dreaming, the Storyteller is the final arbiter of what counts as reasonable.) For example, an oath broken by a lilin will not trigger Banality. Lilinot may shield others from the consequences of mundane contracts or broken oaths at a cost of 1 Glamour for each person. She may not release others from magical oaths, however, only herself.

**Endless Charms:** Add one dot to Charisma, Manipulation, or Appearance even if that brings the trait above 5. Lilin may spend 1 Glamour to negate a botch on any roll involving that Attribute, turning it into an ordinary failure. Lilin wings are decorative by default, but the cost of the Winged Merit is reduced to 2. **Wilting Nightbloom:** While sunlight will not destroy them, it weakens them significantly. While standing in direct sunlight, lilinot suffer +1 to the difficulty to all rolls, including cantrips. Moving into shade or shelter ends this disadvantage. Lilinot also do not like being tied down, and have a hard time putting the needs of others above their own desires.

**Free Spirit:** Choosing to honor a solid commitment – such as one made to an employer, romantic partner, or other stable relationship – instead of doing something the lilin wants will trigger Banality. For example, if a lilin wants to hunt a chimerical beast but promised her girlfriend she'd go on a date that night, Banality triggers if she chooses the lady over the tiger.

## QAREEN

*I was there. I remember everything. The lighthouse, the scholars fleeing with precious scrolls tucked into their robes, the bloodshed... and the flames. Centuries of information, of progress... turned to ash.*

The qareen (pl. qurana') is the quintessential academic. Qurana' have the gift and curse of eidetic memory, and other Jinn refer to them as "walking libraries." Like all changelings, they can only recall pieces of their past lives, but what they remember they can describe as accurately as yesterday's lunch. They are rational thinkers, preferring logic above passion, and discourse over argument. Qurana' are well aware that there is more than one side to any story, and they crave to understand every tale in its entirety. Qurana' are paradoxically considered both trustworthy and treacherous, because they are unable to speak falsely. They can omit details or remain silent if they choose, but they will never lie. However, almost any secret told to one of the qurana' might as well be a matter of public record, as they seldom withhold information they feel is relevant, even if it was shared in confidence.

Qurana' thrive in roles as administrators, lawyers, accountants, historians, teachers, reporters, or town gossips. Any task that requires mental precision and vast networks of knowledge is best handled by a qareen. Qurana' form deep

bonds with a select few people, and these relationships can heavily influence their moral alignment. When a qareen falls in love, they are loyal to a fault, and do not always notice that their love has affected their perception.

Qurana' are modest by fae standards, and tend to prefer comfortable and simple clothing. In their fae mien, even young qurana' soon appear quite frail or elderly, complete with gray hair and deep wrinkles, their skin seeming thin as parchment or cracked like dried clay. It's said that the best way to judge a qareen's actual age is to look into their eyes, which tend to give the clearest impression of their lifespan so far. Their chimerical attire is often simply draped natural fabric in muted, neutral colors, with minimal adornment.

Sedentary life suits the qareen, but companionship will call her away from her ivory tower. Even when they are studying, qurana' are averse to solitude, and prefer the knowledge that comes from experiencing life with other people to what can be learned from a book. Qurana' view the seemings not as phases of life but as different outlooks on knowledge: learning (childling), understanding (wilder), and teaching (grump).

### Glamour Ways

They love listening to stories, and although qurana' prefer the plausible over the fantastical, every walking library needs a fiction section. They have difficulty crafting their own tales, however, and whenever repeating a story they have heard, they unfailingly cite its source. In addition to learning, qurana' love to pass on the truths they have learned. Teaching others what they have witnessed gives them a sense of purpose. In the wake of a qareen's Unleashing, there may be a faint scent of papyrus in candlelight, old books, and a residue of fine, swirling sand on the ground. A feeling of the turning of ages and the weight of history is also common.

### Realm Affinity: Time.

**Timeless:** They receive the Faerie Eternity and Eidetic Memory Merits for free during character creation. In addition, thanks to their natural scholarly bent, they cannot botch Academics or Gremayre rolls.

**Bear Witness:** Like falling into the past, qurana' can relive any memory they have experienced with perfect clarity. Sometimes, however, words cannot accurately express the truth, so by spending 1 Glamour a qareen can telepathically share their memory with a single target. With a target's consent, and by spending 1 Glamour, a qareen can also enter another person's mind to observe their memories. "Visiting," as they call it, carries with it certain risks, because most non-qareen memories are imperfect, often fuzzy around the edges, and reflect a subjective experience. For this reason, inexperienced qurana' find Visiting to be a thoroughly disorienting experience. The Storyteller may require the



## Ghûls

The Jinn of Al-Hilal al-Khaseeb claim that Thallain are not the recent evil their Kithain cousins believe, and point to stories both ancient and modern of ghûls as proof. Gaunt, corpse-like, forever ravenous, and possessed of ferocious predatory cunning, these vile eaters of both the living and the dead have plagued the region since before recorded history. Already dangerous as solitary hunters, like their distant redcap cousins ghûls also have an unnerving tendency to form nests of a half-dozen or more, whose shocking brutality and hunger formed the basis of many legends of cursed locations from which no explorer returned.

In game terms, ghûls are Thallain and treated as ghaists (see *Changeling: The Dreaming* p. 375), with the following modifications. Rather than Natural Surgeon, they have an Endowment called Cold Flesh that converts all damage to bashing damage, excluding damage inflicted by cold iron. Malevolent Mists is materially unchanged, though, rather than a total blank, victims are typically rendered incoherent by a mind-numbing fear they cannot describe. Silence of the Flesh is as written, except that in addition to feeding on changelings and Dreamers the ghûl can also sate their hunger by devouring an entire human corpse. The corpse must have at least some flesh left – while many ghûls keep bones around as snacks, only flesh truly satisfies.

expenditure of Willpower points to visit particularly old, damaged, incomplete, or traumatic memories.

**Burden of Truth:** They can choose not to answer a direct question, and they can attempt to lie by omission if they do answer, but they are completely unable to actively say something untrue. A qareen's silence is often as damning as another's accusation, and even the idea of misleading others makes this kith uncomfortable. Qurana' suffer a +1 to the difficulty of all rolls related to tricking or deceiving others through speech. What's more, qurana' are so dedicated to truth above all else that they must roll Willpower (difficulty 6) to willingly withhold important relevant information in a crucial moment, even if sharing it would embarrass them or put them at a disadvantage. (They are not obligated to speak if doing so would break a fae oath, or directly cause someone's death.) Alternately, they may forego the roll and

keep their silence at the cost of triggering Banality instead. They must make this decision before rolling.

## SHAYTAN

*But my friend, we had a deal? You knew the risks, and you wanted the reward. Hush, don't worry, I don't mind if you have to back out. After all, one way or another, I always get what I'm due.*

Dealmaker, trickster, temptress, charlatan – these are the labels fixed to a shaytan (pl. shayateen). One would be hard pressed to find a shaytan who chose to join the Light court, as they tend to scoff at things like honor and duty. Shayateen are born from the anxious dreams of those who feel trapped by society, unable to live according to who they are inside without committing what their community sees as grievous sins. Most shayateen are happy to provide an outlet for these secret desires, then feed off of the resulting guilt and secrecy. They are considered descendants of Iblis, who according to Islamic tradition, tempts humans away from righteousness with their own selfishness.

Although the shayateen are overwhelmingly drawn to the Unseelie Court, most of them aren't half the villains that popular stories make them out to be. (And they are not Thallain, though sometimes it doesn't seem there's much of a distinction.) Like all Jinn, the shayateen have free will to make their own way in the world, and while the dreams that gave them form may give them certain inclinations, it is up to them to decide how they will act on those feelings. That said, Seelie fae are almost unheard of in this kith, and suffer mistrust from all sides – their fellow Seelie are wary of a trick or a scam, the Unseelie see them as denying their true nature, and even their fellow kithmates tend to view them as holier-than-thou and avoid them.

Where their cousins, the afareet, are formed from the fire, the shayateen are born of smoke. In their fae seemings, shayateen have ashen skin in varying shades of grey. There is always some unsettling about their appearance in their human seemings, and their fae miens are strikingly fearsome, with horns sprouting from their brow, gnarled fangs lining their gums, and long spiked tails. Shayateen often inhabit seedy casinos and back-alleys, race tracks and sporting events – anywhere they are likely to find a mortal down on his luck and desperate for a break. Whether they're there to help such poor souls or drag them down further depends, of course, on the shayateen in question.

Shayateen childlings are always poking their noses where they don't belong – eavesdropping on conversations, rifling through closets and purses, and so on. Wilders are the quintessential bad influences parents warn their children about, while grumps tend to eschew fleeting pleasures in favor of long cons and complicated schemes. All shayateen feel the call of the forbidden – and the delight of sharing such



pleasures with others – and seek out work that rewards such understanding, typically landing in professions that are at best morally grey and often outright criminal. However, some members of this kith channel their talents for reading and understanding forbidden desires into more socially acceptable careers, becoming anything from addiction counselors to romance novelists to undercover police officers.

### Glamour Ways

Any time a shaytan successfully leads a mortal or another Jinn down a path towards self-destruction, they gain Glamour. Many forms of sin will do, but gambling, carousing, cheating, and lying are the shayateen's bread and butter. It is the potential for regret or guilt that nourishes the shaytan. Nobler shayateen can get a similar fix from hearing stories of bad behavior, but privately admit it's not quite the same. When shayateen cast cantrips, lights dim as noxious fumes and dark smoke surround them. The scent might be that of sulfur, burning hair, or cheap cigarettes, but it's never pleasant.

**Realm Affinity:** Actor.

**Trust Me:** Add one dot to Manipulation, even if it brings it above 5. They also cannot botch Streetwise or Larceny rolls.

**Pick Your Poison:** Everyone has a vice or two, and shayateen are masters at figuring out a person's weak spot at a glance. By spending 1 Glamour and rolling Perception + Streetwise against a difficulty of the target's Willpower, a shaytan can learn an individual's preferred vice or dark desire. They do not learn other details about this behavior, such as where the target indulges in it or with whom (or even if they have ever actually acted on it), just what it is and that it exists. Even the noblest shayateen are still born of dark desires, and this ugly truth is written on their flesh.

**As Within, So Without:** People are quick to believe the worst of them, even when they aren't actually up to anything. Shayateen suffer a +2 difficulty on all rolls to convince others of their innocence, caring, or good intentions, and their unsettling looks make others deeply uneasy. Shayateen may not have an Appearance rating higher than 3, and treat any failures on rolls involving the Appearance Attribute or Empathy Ability as botches instead.









# CHAPTER FOUR: DEEPER MYSTERIES

*"It doesn't stop being magic just because you know how it works."*

*—Terry Pratchett*

## The Immortals

The Changeling Way allows the Kithain to survive. Through the magic of this ancient rite, faerie cleverness flouts the cruelties of time and, in new contexts, stories bloom perennial. Yet for all its power, the Way is not without its cost. Glimmering but fragile, a changeling is a dream too bright to last. Bedlam and Banality wear away the soul and, sooner or later, almost every changeling is Undone.

*Almost every changeling.*

There are those who strive beyond, who shun the cycle of rebirth in favor of a pristine immortality. These daring few wager their very selves to chase the dream impossible. From sacrifice to sacrifice, they work to become a living expression of the Dreaming, an eternal narrative icon, and a symbol of harmony between worlds. To succeed, they must learn to bring their mortal and fae selves into perfect balance. Those who reach the summit at journey's end earn a Mantle: a blessing from

the world of stories signifying their new role as Siocháin, one of the changeling immortals.

Rare and shrouded in rumors, the Siocháin are living legends. The stories that swirl around these accomplished Kithain have only a few common traits. The Siocháin are ageless, called to serve the Dreaming for all time. The Siocháin step outside the normal cycle of the Changeling Way, transforming into a new type of faerie creature. Most mysteriously, the Siocháin sometimes gather in secret councils to help shape the story of Kithain. Some believe that such a council originally devised the Changeling Way to share with the world, gifting others with a form of the immortality they'd earned themselves.

An aspirant to this legendary status discovers that all these things and more are true.

Most changelings believe that the Siocháin are a comforting legend, if they've heard of them at all. But some have turned to tales of the Siocháin for hope in the face of the Autumn world's wilting Glamour. Despite the new surge of interest in their



dealings, the Siocháin themselves remain resistant as ever to inquiry. Though some mingle with their fellow Kithain, even those remain elusive on the particulars of their status, and most Siocháin communicate only through cryptic messages when they discuss the truth of their transcendence.

Ultimately, even immortality does not provide safety against the encroaching forces of fathomless shadow and despair. But that is not its purpose, truth be told. The Changeling Way gives a fae soul a mortal mask to use as a security blanket, keeping their tragic heart warm amidst the deepening Winter. The Siocháin path, aspirants learn, transforms this safety net into a magnifying lens, making the changeling's fae soul more vulnerable. The secret lies not in protecting the self from grim Banality or wailing Bedlam, but in welcoming each in turn.

The Siocháin represent important anchors for the Dreaming. They volunteer to bring true, archetypal Story into the world by the means of their Mantles. Though it earns them rare and special gifts, their sacrifice is ultimately selfless. They gain a lifetime without end, but that life must be spent in constant service to their kind. Fae immortals invest the time they earn, finding every possible way to help the power of narrative flow back into the Autumn world.

To do so, they must not only master the alien tropes of the Dreaming, but embrace the calm, predictable mundane. Siocháin are the champions of the fantastic ordinary and the whimsical quotidian. They can find a treasure map in a bus route or a spreadsheet in a sigil. The Dreaming charges its immortals to cherish and celebrate both of their twinned selves, granting endless tomorrows only to those who keep their disparate aspects in perfect balance. Striving to achieve and maintain that balance defines every Siocháin.

## BECOMING SIOCHÁIN

Any changeling may strive to become an icon and claim immortality, and indeed many motivations might drive a Kithain toward the path. Some desire a closer relationship to the Dreaming and a chance to understand its secrets. Others feel drawn to the perilous road by destiny. A few are students of existing Siocháin, by accident or design, as immortals sometimes seek to pass on their gift and return to life as ordinary changelings. Most simply hear the legend of the Siocháin and elect to dedicate themselves to the service of the Dreaming. Becoming one of the Siocháin is a spiritual transformation, more like a sharpening of focus than corporeal transcendence.

Siocháin are very much still changelings, after all; they just exist with a slightly different perspective.

No matter how a changeling takes up the quest, the first step is always the same. A revelation occurs, calling the Kithain to wager their soul in glorious adventure.

This revelation takes on characteristics from the more neglected side of the changeling's twin selves. If the seeker has embraced their fae side more, the message will be an inter-office memo or a mobile phone alert, a jagged bolt of normalcy interrupting a dream. If they are more comfortable in their mortal life, the revelation will be a watercolor streak of deceptively meaningful nonsense woven through their daily routine.

The revelation leads the aspirant to the first stop on their journey: choosing a Mantle.

## THE MANTLE

A Mantle is an iconic identity, a story role that persists across traditions. Most Mantles crystallize one specific aspect of a kith's theme. The boggan Mantle of the Reluctant Hero is never quiet, coaxing the cozy and well-rested toward danger. Among the sluagh, the Mantle of the Boogeyman falls onto the sloping shoulders of a seeker adept at silent foreboding. These Mantles demand that their holders explore the eternal truths of their kiths. Not every Mantle belongs to only one kith. Both boggans and nockers have claimed the Mantle of the Generous Crafter, made famous in fairy tales of kindly shoemakers and brave tailors.

Other, more ancient Mantles have no kith affiliation, waiting for any changeling of sufficient nerve to claim them. The Immortal Bard may be from any kith, any station, and any circumstance, so long as they speak truth when it's most needed – and when it's least convenient. Scholars recently confirmed the existence of a Mantle known as the Fellowship of Heroes, a title that has been dormant for untold centuries and awaits a worthy motley.

A Mantle is the core of each Siocháin. Some are heroic, while others compel their owners to act in sinister or villainous ways. Mantles sustain their owners eternally: the owner of a Mantle has a job to do, or perhaps more accurately, a purpose to fulfill. At the same time, claiming a Mantle imposes the limitations and duties that make life as a Siocháin its own beautiful struggle. New powers go hand in hand with new obligations. The Siocháin who claims the Mantle of the True Champion might win the power of peerless swordplay, just in time for a Black Knight to appear with a challenge. For the privilege of an ageless life, intertwined with wonder, the Siocháin pays in action. The Dreaming calls a Siocháin to demonstrate the story for which they stand again and again – and they must answer every time, no matter the cost. The Monstrous Tyrant must have tribute, wrung from the multitudes with charm and ferocity, to continue to hold the Mantle.

Though most aspirants seek a Mantle already established in the canon of the Dreaming, some will build their own Mantles from scratch. The Dreaming includes most archetypal characters and tropes among its society of immortals,





but sometimes the faerie world takes time to catch up to modern imaginings. As such, with creativity and dedication, an aspirant to immortality can invent their own Mantle.

Regardless of whether their Story is old or new, Mantle selection is not truly complete and mystically binding until the changeling undergoes a rite called the Tribute in Mirrors.

## TRIBUTE IN MIRRORS

The Tribute is a ritual offering. During the ceremony, the aspirant stands before a reflective surface to focus their resolve. This initial test ensures the aspiring Siocháin has the drive and confidence to continue on the path. The first and fiercest enemy of any Siocháin is self-doubt: to succeed in the Tribute, a seeker must proclaim that they are worthy, beneath the judgment of their reflection and surrounded by an expectant Dreaming. As they struggle to believe, their psyche crashes against itself, and they join a revolving melee of memories and ideas played out in their reflection. Some who have experienced the Tribute in Mirrors have returned with stories of dream quests, phantasmal duels, or desperate searches through painful recollections.

The mental battle lasts until the seeker triumphs over their doubts and is deemed worthy, or fails and returns to the precipice of their voyage. They may try again on some later day, when their will has had a chance to armor over

its weak points. Many do not hazard a second attempt, however, as failing the Tribute is a truly shattering, difficult experience.

If they succeed, they receive the blessing of the Dreaming to begin their journey. To commemorate this achievement, the seeker surrenders a piece of their own true name into the Dreaming by handing it to their reflection. Tradition leads most changelings who reach this stage to sacrifice any noble titles or house ties during the Tribute. A Siocháin exists outside the parameters of changeling politics – even those whose Mantles contain titles, such as the King to Be, are not nobles in the sense that ordinary changelings recognize.

In return for this offering, they receive a piece of their intended Mantle as a new piece of their name. The seeker who dreams of eternal life as the True Champion may give up their surname and find the Dreaming has dubbed them “Bloodsworn.” An aspirant to the Mantle of the Swamp Witch might find that the Dreaming now knows them as “the Hexen.”

The new name remains a part of the aspirant no matter how their journey ends. Some who do not achieve balance carry this first taste of immortality as a shameful scar, while others learn to take pride in the effort rather than the result. Whether emboldened or daunted by the



Dreaming's gift, changelings who pass the Tribute enter a new stage of their quest.

The Dreaming gathers close around them, witness to their dawning saga. Serendipity turns into a clever and exacting tutor in their lives, as twists and challenges spring from ordinary circumstance. An aspiring True Champion becomes the perfect target for any barroom tough. A future Swamp Witch discovers fearsome portents in the windshield remnants of insects. For a seeker, these are bright omens indeed: opposition is ever the mark of unfolding destiny.

In time, a moment of singular drama will pierce the clamor. Any path to immortality has its stepping stones: the definitive scenes that shape the way forward. In a Siocháin journey, these scenes are called Verses, and they carry with them specific challenges and opportunities for the aspirant.

## VERSES

A Mantle presents each contender to the title with their own unique Verses. Even a Mantle that has passed among multiple changeling seekers will offer every new challenger a different path. A Siocháin journey can have any number of Verses, though seven increasingly demanding stops on the quest seems to be the most common arrangement.

Each Verse also features a Guide, an important figure in the fledgling myth that surrounds the Siocháin aspirant. Depending on what's most challenging for their seeker, the Guide might be a powerful chimera sent from the Dreaming to offer faerie wisdom, a mortal selected by the Mantle's magic to offer their mundane perspective, or anyone in between. Mantle seekers active in changeling motleys usually find that their close friends act in the service of the Dreaming as Guides for Verses, and sometimes even create Verses themselves. Who better to help a seeker discover their heroic potential than those who know them best?

Each Verse is usually one self-contained scene with its own name indicating storyline focus. A quester who dreams of life as the True Champion may have a string of bouts ahead: the Battle of Twelve Locks could be one Verse; the Showdown at Wit's End could be another. Sometimes a Guide may even take the form of a rival or antagonist, possibly one who cannot be truly defeated until the final Verse.

For some seekers, Verses can be resolved in a matter of moments. A changeling striving to become the iconic Kindly Stranger receives a test from the Dreaming as they pass a plague-stricken urchin. Do they intervene, risking infection, or keep themselves safe and turn away? In the span of their single decision, they pass through the Choice of Poison Tears Verse.

Other seekers contend with Verses that can stretch on for days, months, even years. To prove their martyrdom, the

aspiring Loyal Sentry must keep their post at a threshold for seven days, never moving, never even dreaming of relief. This is the Verse that Siocháin scholars call the Half-Awake Vigil, and few have come through it successfully.

While all Siocháin journeys are bespoke, there are some general truths about Verses:

- ⑤ Verses blend and contrast the enchanted and the everyday. Sometimes, this is a literal collision of the two worlds, in which the seeker must duel their tax forms or survive a job interview with a magical beast. Other Verses single out one side of the changeling's self and lock out the other. The oldest stories feature Verses that apply the logic of one world to the tropes of another. The path of an ancient hero sometimes includes cleaning stables for the gods; the story of a fairytale heroine often sees straw become gold on a commonplace spinning wheel. The epic chore and the humdrum wonder help an aspirant learn the tricky double nature of Siocháin life.
  - ⑤ Verses aren't always pass/fail. Some Verses are lessons, introducing a key aspect of the seeker's potential Siocháin identity. These experiences serve as initial glimpses of the everlasting future and give the seeker a chance to try on pieces of the Mantle. For an aspirant to the Mantle of the Boogeyman, a Verse might be a night spent haunting closets, learning how to open the door just so for the perfect cinematic creak.
  - ⑤ Verses hit the seeker where it hurts. No one learns to endure Banality and defy the passage of time without reckoning with their own shortcomings. The Dreaming tailors Verses to guide a Siocháin aspirant in exploring their character, both to help them transition into their Mantle *and* to illuminate what they stand to lose by accepting the burden.
  - ⑤ Verses create space for others to join the quest. Motley-mates, friends, and companions often find opportunities to step into the story. Sometimes, a Verse allows them to assist as supportive allies. At other times, the Verse may require them to serve as adversaries, or may change their form or role entirely to better suit the scene. It's also possible for companions to crash through into the scene no matter what the Verse demands and insist on the place they belong – at their friend's side.
- Even though Guides may help with steering, seekers must find the path from Verse to Verse themselves. The gaps in between offer a chance to reflect on lessons learned and build skills toward the next challenge. Often, significant time passes from one stop on the journey to the next. Months or even years can separate the trials, and more than one Siocháin has reached the end of their endeavors at the fraying end of their normal changeling lifespan.



Verses can be elusive, even fickle, demanding vigilance from their seekers. Omens from the Dreaming about the next test can be cryptic and vague, often revealing only the name of the Verse at first, before leading the seeker there much later on. Some Mantles wait at the end of Verses arranged into a sensible narrative arc: a hero's journey with rising action, a climactic confrontation, and a resolution. Others require their seekers to stumble forward through a chain of mismatched scenes, driving home the contradictions at the heart of immortal life.

The pattern of Verses and Guides lets players customize the Siocháin journey to foreground the experiences they find most compelling. The Storyteller usually takes responsibility for creating and running the Verses in a journey, collaborating with the seeker's player so that each can highlight a key aspect of the seeker character. Even so, many troupe members jump at the chance to spotlight and celebrate their fellow players ~ and some might find a touch of wicked glee at setting up obstacles for the seeker to face. With Storyteller sanction, other players can contribute their ideas or even take the lead on Verse scenes.

Though Verses differ from saga to saga, in each there is a final test. For the Siocháin, this is the Promise Bittersweet, a last and most solemn oath to mark the journey's end.

## The Promise Bittersweet

The Promise Bittersweet is the final stage of the Siocháin journey. This daunting pact binds the Siocháin to the fundamental paradox of immortality. From the moment they swear the Promise, Siocháin must undertake any quest and bear any hardship for their Mantle. New Siocháin discover that their challenges have not ended, only changed focus: savor the mundane, embrace the surreal, and elevate both worlds by passing on the Dreaming's gifts.

A Siocháin acts as a steward of narrative, the common rhythm that binds everyday life and fantasy stories. Siocháin are the avatars of a special balance – a symmetry of opposites that brightens and elevates both sides of their lives. They are agents of poetic justice, working without end to counteract the senseless ennui of the present day.

The Promise is aptly named. A Siocháin's journey through the Verses is the last story they will complete before embracing eternity. Once they complete their transformation, they give up some of their potential as a protagonist in the Dreaming's eyes. While they may still pursue their own personal stories, their overall narrative changes shape. No more will they enjoy a cycle of exciting origins and tidy endings as they pass through multiple changeling lives. Instead, they will have to build their own meaning and chart their own course through their endless days. The Dreaming asks much of the Siocháin and provides relatively little in return: as a result, the Promise appeals only to those who

would give everything so that no one has to make do with nothing.

## Siocháin Mechanics

When a character becomes Siocháin, they experience both physical and supernatural changes. Some are mostly narrative benefits, like their inclusion in the Councils and their agelessness. Others are mechanical changes, detailed below.

### Their Seeming changes to Siocháin.

Siocháin exist outside the normal cycle of changeling life, and do not progress along the normal track from childling to grump. Instead, their nature becomes fixed, a fusion of experience and vulnerability. A Siocháin's new Seeming helps them endure against the twin threats of Bedlam and Banality, so a new Siocháin receives an additional dot in both Glamour and Willpower to reflect their supernatural resilience.

### They are immortal, but not undying.

Siocháin do not age, in either mortal or fae terms. They can get sick, but so long as they retain their Mantle they will not die from mundane illness, disease, or other natural causes. Magical illnesses can harm or even kill them, however. Siocháin are as susceptible to injury as anyone else, and have no special immunity or resistance to damage.

### One of their Legacies changes to the name of their Mantle.

Every changeling embodies certain archetypes, represented by their Legacies. Siocháin affirm their commitment to the Dreaming by exchanging one of their personal Legacies (their choice) for the name of their Mantle. This change signifies the Siocháin's willing surrender of their leading role in reality. From the moment they swear the Promise, Siocháin serve a story that is no longer their privilege to own, but rather their responsibility to share. A Siocháin regains Willpower when they embody their Mantle for the benefit of others or the betterment of the Autumn world and Dreaming alike.

### They count as Fae 5.

A Siocháin is a piece of the Dreaming incarnate. The transformation suffuses their soul with raw Glamour and changes them into a fae primordial. From then on, while carrying their Mantle, they may be affected only by cantrips of those who have mastered the Fae Realm.

### They resist both Banality and Bedlam.

Having mastered their dual natures, Siocháin are highly resistant to the excesses of both worlds. They may spend Glamour points to remove their own Banality points on a one-for-one basis, or sacrifice a permanent dot of Glamour



to remove a permanent dot of Banality. They may never reduce their Banality rating below the level they had when they became Siocháin, however. Likewise, they are totally immune to Bedlam while they retain their Mantle.

### **They may receive Merits and Flaws for their Mantle.**

Some Mantles come with common quirks, in the form of existing Merits and Flaws; others have unique traits that Storytellers can invent. A Mantle may also remove existing Merits and Flaws that are not consistent with the changeling's story. The Storyteller has the final word on such changes, and is free to space them out over time if necessary to avoid feelings of resentment and unfairness from the other players in the group. It can take some time to adjust to a new state and discover its full potential, after all!

### **Playing with Siocháin**

A Siocháin character has achieved an epic goal, but that doesn't have to be the end of their story from a player's perspective. Siocháin have hopes, plans, and troubles like any other Kithain. Many immortals maintain membership in their motleys. Some go so far as to seek out beloved changeling companions each time these friends are reborn, attending Chrysalis after Chrysalis. Siocháin find that nurturing relationships with Kithain and mortals alike helps to balance out the world-shaking demands of a Mantle. Stay busy, stay blessed, as they say – the Dreaming has little use for idle hands.

In group play, a Siocháin character can continue as normal with the other player characters. While they have some potent advantages, those gifts come at a steep cost in terms of obligations to the Dreaming. Though gifted with unusual perspective, most Siocháin still care about the things that mattered most to them before they took up their Mantles. In fact, in many cases they care more: accepting a Mantle often unlocks a flood of intense, unpredictable, and overwhelming emotions. The ship of a Siocháin's destiny is all wind and no wheel. They go where the story goes, and gladly.

As a player, you can use the pursuit of that purpose, and the powers and obligations of the Mantle, to enrich your group's experience at the table. Siocháin don't often claim the spotlight; rather, they use their Mantles to add to other storylines. The more they can share the unique magic of their Mantles, the stronger their dreams become.

If another character draws the attention of a powerful enemy, a Siocháin holding the True Champion Mantle is much more likely to help their ally train and prepare than square up to the conqueror themselves. To live the story themselves and face the foe would only repeat what they had already achieved – but to shepherd the story along in

a new form, with a new protagonist, is to add new, brilliant pages to the saga.

One of the best ways to develop new Verses is to look back at previous ones established during the Siocháin journey. Each Verse showcases the Mantle bearer at a different moment, highlighting a specific beat in their story. When a Siocháin character engages with a scene, a plotline, or another player character at the table, their player can choose one of the Verses and play from that specific point in the story. A Forsworn Knight in the depths of their despair approaches situations very differently from the same Knight as they near redemption, or at the very start of their descent into tragedy.

When Siocháin do become the focus of stories, they tend to foreground the essential humanity of the immortal fae. Like any changeling, Siocháin often find their way into epic deeds, tragic romances, and legendary sagas, but stories specific to the immortals usually emphasize more mundane themes. Concentrating on emotional storytelling, personal relationships, and relatable themes can allow a troupe to highlight a Siocháin character without making them seem too special or superior to the others.

A Siocháin Mantle is also a fantastic gateway for personal plots: each makes its own unique demands on the bearer, and often these orders can come as a surprise. Some tricky Mantles test their bearers constantly, pressing them toward situations that put tension on their narrative ideals. Others hang passive over every interaction. A Storyteller can use a Mantle to great effect when working to engage and motivate a player whose character is Siocháin: each Mantle is like an inner voice whose only purpose is to point the bearer toward interesting plot.

## **LOSING A MANTLE**

Once a Siocháin has transformed, there are only a few ways they might lose their Mantle, and thus their immortality. The first is by injury or other foul play: while Siocháin are ageless, they are not immune to violence, mundane or magical. Killing their mortal body frees the Mantle as they go on to their next incarnation, though rumors claim that death by cold iron kills not just the fae soul but the Mantle as well, retroactively wiping such stories from existence.

Of course there's no proof of this, but then again, if it's true, there wouldn't be.

Sometimes, if another worthy soul is present at such a Siocháin's death the Mantle might jump to them then and there – though they must quest as would a new aspirant for the Promise Bittersweet in order to keep it. The Mantle rarely, if ever, jumps to an assailant: murdering a Siocháin to usurp their Mantle almost never works, unless it's thematic for the Mantle in question to be won by treachery.



Síocháin may also give up their Mantle voluntarily. If they do so, they rejoin the normal cycle of changeling life wherever they left off, and experience Undoing and rebirth as other Kithain do. This practice is most common when a Síocháin identifies a successor and wishes to pass on their Mantle, but any reason can potentially suffice. Once they surrender their Mantle, however, the changeling may never become Síocháin again in this lifetime.

In very rare cases, the Dreaming may revoke a Mantle from a Síocháin who has refused the responsibilities of their station. Like those who give their Mantles up, Síocháin ousted by the Dreaming can never again hold the position they lost, and being forcibly stripped of their state can even render them Dauntain. Indeed, many become vicious and bitter foes of the Síocháin, bringing low the mighty to satiate their bottomless envy.

## Síocháin Society

Society is a rare pleasure for the Síocháin. While many immortals enjoy the company of other changelings, Síocháin sometimes find it uncomfortable to spend too much time with others of their kind. Each immortal's story, expressed by the Mantle, is unique. This makes for some unusual social climates when Síocháin gather. Not every genre gets along: it's easy for a Síocháin to feel their Mantle has weakened in the presence of an incongruous immortal. The Boogeyman just isn't the same when across the table from the Talking Animal Friend.

Still, with determined effort, Síocháin can overcome the natural tension between their stories. When they focus on the underlying truths that connect them – their reverence for the Dreaming, their commitment to the Autumn world, and their willingness to sacrifice their own time in the sun to light the way for others – they can create enduring, powerful communities. Most Síocháin groups exist on a small scale, with only those immortals found in certain local area. (Note that due to the rarity of these immortals, “local” often encompasses a fairly large geographic area or major city.) Such groups are Small Councils.

### Small Councils

A Small Council is simply a gathering of a region's Síocháin. Most of the immortals in any area will know each other, or at least know of one another's presence. A Síocháin leaves a characteristic trace wherever they go, though only other Síocháin may perceive and identify it. It might be a musical cue, like the Boogeyman's tense theme music, or a specific scent, like the Kindly Craftsperson's signature smell of sawdust and strong tea. When a Síocháin enters a city where one of their number already resides, one of their senses will detect the telltale signal.

Of course, simply knowing another Síocháin is present does not automatically start a conversation or a friendship. In most cases, it does the opposite: what does a changeling who has seen a dozen centuries pass use as their icebreaker? Faerie immortals can be as awkward as they are powerful. Still, at times, destiny demands collaboration among the Síocháin. Calling a Small Council erases the uncertainty that hangs over Síocháin society, and gives everyone a reason to meet.

Any Síocháin can call a Small Council for almost any reason. A Small Council can be called for a geographic region, or even along a specific theme or duty, such as calling warrior Mantles together. Attendance at such an event is not mandatory, but most immortals consider it a virtuous act of hospitality to host a gathering and a neighborly kindness to attend. A Small Council is a chance to vent, strategize, or socialize – an essential opportunity for immortals to help each other through the trials of everlasting life.

### Grand Councils

The Grand Council of Síocháin involves every immortal throughout the Autumn world. When the Grand Council convenes, every Síocháin receives an invitation, and the Dreaming will bend and break reality as needed to allow them to attend. Therefore, if a member is not present, they are potentially making a powerful statement by abstaining... or else, facing truly dire peril.

The Grand Council only meets to discuss matters of import for the entire changeling population and its way of life. The Dreaming relies on the Síocháin to be big-picture thinkers: one of the only aspects that unites the manifold immortals is an emphasis on the long term. Only threats to the Dream itself spur the ancients to gather in great numbers: one nightmare is a foe for a lone hero, and a swarm is a fitting enemy for a freehold, but a reign of nightmares without end requires a more dedicated effort. Still, even with the power of every immortal heart in attendance, miracles are hard work: a Grand Council is a jumble of perspectives as brilliant and jagged as stained glass. Only clever diplomacy and fierce empathy can pry the right solution from the swirling brainstorm.

Despite its esteemed membership, the Grand Council of Síocháin doesn't presume to dictate to others directly, mortal or fae. In fact, the Grand Council – almost an entity unto itself, propped up by thousands of years of tradition – stands as a monument to humility. Historically, Grand Councils have taken place in the most meager, innocuous accommodations available. A modern gathering would be much more likely to meet at a motel convention room off the highway than a stately manor. It's also traditional for Grand Council locations to include some amount of mortal foot traffic. No Síocháin should have even a chance



to forget that their decisions impact the world's Dreamers, without whom no stories could be told.

Grand Council decisions do not mandate or forbid actions on the part of other changelings, nor do they supersede the decrees of rightful changeling rulers at any level. Instead, the Grand Council convenes only to devise and help to implement extraordinary solutions. In fact, legend tells that the last time the Grand Council met in full, the Siocháin dedicated themselves to researching, teaching, and preserving a new practice known as the Changeling Way. In the centuries since then only a handful of attempts have been made to call this august body, and none of those were fully attended.

If the Grand Council does meet, its decisions will set the worlds ablaze with new opportunities. In this time of unprecedented peril for changelings, only daring creativity can scatter the shadows, so the Grand Council is eager to welcome new voices. Any changeling might find themselves chosen by a Siocháin mentor to take on a long-dormant Mantle, as the avatars of imagination step up their recruitment.

## EXAMPLE MANTLES

### The Knight-Errant

The Knight-Errant is a Mantle of rootless chivalry, earned by questers who roam eternal in search of wrongs to right. A seeker proves their worth to claim the Mantle of the Knight-Errant through Verses that challenge their morality and measure their courage. Many who have won the Mantle have survived terrible battles with the forces of tyranny and endured punishing quandaries to take up the sword of justice.

- ☞ The Knight-Errant may never be frightened away from the pursuit of a righteous task.
- ☞ The Knight-Errant must always offer mercy to a defeated foe.
- ☞ The Knight-Errant must never refuse a call for help.
- ☞ The Knight-Errant may never harvest Glamour from sleeping at the same balefire twice.
- ☞ The Knight-Errant gains the Loyal Heart Merit.

### The Wolf

The Wolf is a Mantle that reminds the civilized world to beware nature's temper. Aspirants to the Mantle of the Wolf must prove in their Verses that they are willing to destroy any trapping of civilization that makes humankind complacent. Only the uncertainty of the frontier can galvanize the human spirit into excellence.

- ☞ The Wolf may never sleep in a building they didn't construct, use a tool or item they couldn't build, or eat a meal they didn't help to forage or prepare.
- ☞ The Wolf gains the Blood of the Wolf Merit. Animals will not attack them and they can track a target unerringly in the wilderness, provided it's not supernaturally concealed.
- ☞ The Wolf gains the Brawl Specialty Splintering Wrath, which applies when the Wolf attempts to smash and break manmade objects.

## NIGHTMARE & BEDLAM

Undoing isn't inevitable in a changeling's life, though some other fates make it almost appealing by comparison. On the other end of the scale sits Bedlam: the loss of all humanity and mundanity, as a changeling's fae nature supersedes the mortal one. While it isn't as common as Undoing, it's just as tragic. Nightmare and Imbalance accumulate slowly over time, much like Banality, but thankfully, there are ways to combat them before it becomes too much to bear. Of course, the more in tune a changeling is with her fae half, the harder it is to hide. While mortals with more vivid imaginations may be willing to accept that someone has inexplicable, magical qualities, those that insist such things can't exist are more likely to mistrust anyone displaying signs of their true nature.

While a changeling dangerously close to Undoing may need an infusion of Glamour to bring them back from the edge, it's significantly harder to bring someone back from the cusp of Bedlam. A few tools and methods are rumored to exist, but even the hushed whispers about them are deeply unpleasant, if not unthinkable.

## NIGHTMARE

Nightmare is as much a part of a changeling's being as the fae nature that powers her magic. The only way to avoid accumulating it is by denying her magic entirely, which tends to spell the certain death of her fae self. While Nightmare isn't actively harmful to her, it clues others into her true nature. Observers may not recognize precisely what she is, but they can tell there's something off about her. Though the Mists erase the specifics of any unusual encounters, enough exposure to magic — particularly from the same changeling — can make even the most Banal and unbelieving mortal wary and suspicious.



## INEVITABILITY

Taking on Nightmare is inevitable for a changeling. Despite its name, Nightmare isn't necessarily harmful, or even particularly serious if carefully monitored. It can boost a changeling's abilities in a tense moment, but tapping into Nightmare — part of the mythical origin of a changeling's fae soul — has a tendency to perpetuate itself. The more a changeling expands her knowledge and uses her powers of magic, the more Nightmare she accumulates, and the more apparent her unearthly nature becomes to casual observers.

Because of Nightmare's intrinsic tie to a changeling's abilities and the way it proliferates the more she uses them, all changelings learn fairly quickly what its effects are and develop their own codes for if and when they're willing to risk taking on more. Some embrace it, eager to take shovel on more while they manage the Imbalance it brings along, while others are more reserved in delving into their legacies. Nonetheless, every changeling experiences Nightmare at one time or another, and how they react to it says a great deal about how they view their new lives.

## SUBTLETY

In terms of the first signs of a changeling's drift toward their supernatural state, Nightmare doesn't draw much attention to itself. It rears its head only when the changeling is doing something obviously inhuman: affecting the Autumn world around her, pulling the Dreaming forward, making a show of the fact she can do things beyond what most can comprehend. If she's slid too far into Banality, using her abilities to remind herself of her life as a changeling can do wonders to aide her recovery. Cantrips don't do quite as much on their own, but they do offer the opportunity for a changeling to reach within herself, bringing her fae self to the forefront again to empower her casting.

Regaining access to her fae self this way is risky, but sometimes a necessary measure. It's a little easier to pull someone from the brink of Undoing than it is to retrieve them from Bedlam. So long as she doesn't make a habit of spiking herself into Nightmare, it's a good way to explore her own history and remind herself not only of who she is, but how her kith informs herself. Even before she awakens and after she's Undone, a changeling's mortal self has a way of resembling her fae half, and the lens of the Dreaming, filtered through Nightmare, can be a useful learning tool.

## PERSISTENCE

Nightmare alone isn't enough to reveal a changeling's nature to others; unless she's Unleashing or casting Wyrld cantrips, high Nightmare isn't so obvious that the Mists need to cover it up. All changelings learn to live with their Nightmare waxing and waning as they tap into their powers

and feel their heritage surge, only to ebb again when all is said and done. While mortals may not notice a marked difference in a changeling as their Nightmare peaks and falls, other changelings can usually gauge where one of their own falls at most points in time.

Changelings see each other's chimerical selves more vividly when their Nightmare is elevated, while those unable to perceive the Dreaming chalk the odd feeling they get from that individual up to a foul mood or an off day. Depending on how eager a changeling is to explore her own story and how in tune she already is with whatever she's accomplished in her previous fae lives, she may learn more about herself as her Nightmare builds. While some dive in to discover more about their pasts, most caution against such reckless practices. A hasty descent quickly turns into a slippery slope that's difficult to recover from.

## IMBALANCE

The further a changeling moves in pursuit of her magical self, the less humanity and mortal ties mean to her, and the more she's consumed by the myths and trappings of her condition. Most make an effort to maintain balance, sacrificing a harvest of Glamour now and then in favor of retaining their humanity. The math is simple: the more a changeling lets his humanity slide, the more other mortals distrust him. Whether they assume it's due to a mental illness, poor upbringing, or something else, mortals in particular can sense that there is something not quite the same about their companion. Other changelings can recognize the condition for what it is, and often do their best to bring their friends back into balance before things can go too far.

However, not all changelings want to stay in the middle of the road. The prospect of being Undone is a terrifying one, as it represents a sort of living death — the body goes on, but without everything that made it magical and wonderful. This alone can scare some Kithain into embracing an excess of Glamour. The way they see it, the choice between returning to a mundane world or living forever somewhere magical is no choice at all. Sadly, the truth is not nearly so simple, or so kind.

## TOING THE LINE

Short of never casting a cantrip, there isn't much a changeling can do to prevent her Nightmare from rising. By comparison, keeping her Imbalance in check is something easier to manage. A sacrifice of Glamour here for a bit of the mundane world there is all it takes. Most changelings find a line where they're comfortable with their Imbalance. For some, that means ridding herself of it the moment her Nightmare rolls over; others are willing to let it get so far



as halfway or even most of the way to Bedlam before they attempt to beat back its effects.

## The Tipping Point

Once more than half a changeling's Willpower is Imbalanced, he's crossed the line into the beginnings of Bedlam. While he can step away from the precipice by reducing his Imbalance as normal, every point past the halfway mark draws him closer and closer to the point of no return. Though technically it isn't any harder than usual to take that backward step than it was when he started, doing so gets further and further from his mind the more he recedes inward. The Dreaming calls to him more clearly than ever, a siren song to a world-weary soul and an enticing promise to a troubled heart. He begins to lose interest in his mortal attachments, finding less meaning in family gatherings and friendly get-togethers, instead chasing after the mystical promises laid out by Glamour.

As the Imbalance deepens, he spends more time in freeholds, or chases ever more demanding paths to Epiphany, seeking to discover something he hasn't felt before. He's begun to unravel mysteries he never knew existed, and their appeal grows stronger the more he studies them; the myths and dreams that built his own existence whisper to him from afar, begging him to learn their secrets and speak truths that

haven't been uttered in ages. What he doesn't see, of course, is that he's giving up his own essence to pursue these truths. Or worse yet, he sees, but doesn't care anymore.

## UNEASY AURA

While Nightmare alone isn't enough to tip mortals off, Imbalance starts to clue them in that something is decidedly wrong. Once a changeling is past the halfway point, mortals start to see him as decidedly something *other*. Whether or not he's to the point of being effectively locked in his own head, he's begun to pull the Dreaming into clearer focus for changelings and mortals alike. Though the Mists guard mortals from remembering supernatural events, any mortal that looks at a changeling getting too close to Bedlam immediately knows there is something dangerous about them. They get the distinct feeling that whatever they're looking at isn't human, a thought that's unshakeable no matter how illogical it seems. Even other changelings are uneasy in the presence of one of their own too close to the edge.

## BEDLAM

Falling all the way into Bedlam isn't exactly easy, especially as there are ways to mediate the Imbalance that paves the way. It takes either dire circumstances to prevent





a changeling from centering herself, or a single-minded effort to drive herself there to accomplish a complete descent into Bedlam. Some newer changelings, especially those who haven't yet found a supportive community, attempt such a dive. Usually they're discovered by those who can help before it gets too far, but sometimes all the help in the world can't stop a stubborn and particularly hopeless individual.

Such cases are tragedies in changeling courts and communities; not only does it mean that someone was so miserable in their mortal life that they welcomed such an escape so wholly they'd be willing to give up everything they'd known, but that even a new community and friendlier circumstances weren't enough to keep them with one foot on the ground.

## FORCED MARCH

One of the rare occasions where Bedlam isn't exactly a choice, a changeling sometimes slides to her inevitable end if Glamour is too scarce and she's pressed to use magic. Whether there's a war between struggling commoners and distant leaders, an influx of Thallain threatening the order of a changeling community, or simply a lack of Dreamers in an area, Glamour shortages make balance difficult. While some won't be able to stave off the Banality, others will cling to every scrap of Glamour they can find. Unable to spare anything on keeping her Imbalance in check, she's forced to fend for herself using the limited resources around her. Her priorities aren't focused on keeping herself on in the middle of the road between Bedlam and Undoing; they're split between keeping herself alive and unharmed, making sure she's able to defend herself or protect others, and still prevent herself from incurring too much Banality. Every scrap of Glamour she can harvest from any of the five Paths or available dross goes toward preserving everyone around her for just another week, or day, or hour. Seelie or Unseelie, Ravaging becomes an attractive option. There will be more Dreamers, and there's honor in protecting your own. Isn't there?

## SLOW DECLINE

Sometimes a changeling's path to Bedlam is the product of an attempt to hold on just a little longer, simply losing track of how long she's been in a freehold, or failing to consider the long-term effects of casting large amounts of magic in a short period of time. In cases like these, a changeling's path to Bedlam isn't as rapid as others, which allows the Mists to safely insulate mortals from her, and for other changelings to get used to the incremental change. When such a changeling spends her time in a freehold, the shift may be more rapid and pronounced, but if she seats herself as its protector, getting her out is likely to be

difficult, and getting her to pass on the mantle is likely to be even more so.

As a changeling becomes more and more prone to Banality triggers, her temporary nature makes it easy to forget to be careful about when and how she exercises her will. Only in the deepest throes of Imbalance will it become clear just how far gone this changeling is, and by that point she's unlikely to listen to anyone telling her she needs to pull back. The Dreaming is so close, and so, so inviting.

## WILLFUL ABANDON

Sometimes there isn't anything in the mortal world that can keep someone attached. Changelings in desperate situations see the Dreaming as a means of escape, a reality far better than the one they live in every day. Whether they haven't found a changeling community to join or feel like an outsider in any ones they can find, they feel out of place enough that spending time straddling the space between mortal and fae isn't comfortable. If they're isolated, throwing themselves headlong into Glamour and its effects earns them the label of disturbed or unwell, often landing them in psychiatric wards or leaving them homeless. Those that escape into the Dreaming are sometimes considered the lucky ones, as they don't have to struggle with mortal powers attempting to sedate them or cope with life on the street with the Dreaming pouring in from all sides. On the other hand, notions of an idyllic escape mask the fact that the Dreaming has dangers of its own, especially for desperate and inexperienced changelings.

Those that have — or maybe had — a place in changeling society are more tragic figures, more likely to vanish off the Silver Path or beyond the borders of a freehold, never to be heard from again. Their friends, changeling and mortal alike, mourn their disappearance; most painfully, those who know what happened can't relay it to the mortals questioning their loved one's sudden change in temperament and subsequent disappearance.

## LOST ONES

Occasionally, other changelings can stumble upon Bedlamites, especially ones who have locked themselves in freeholds for too long. These individuals pose a significant threat to other changelings. Lost in their own minds, unable to see the world right in front of them for all the splendor of the Dreaming that gets in the way, they'll do anything to keep going. Capable of appearing alarmingly lucid, at least when dealing with changelings and Prodigals, most don't realize how dangerous these unhinged beings are until the trap is already sprung. Whether they seek to imprison another to secure their own freedom, to ensnare someone to act as their servant,



or to aim to pursue an agenda unknowable to anyone but themselves, they can wreak untold havoc and are extremely dangerous.

*He hadn't meant to promise to help the thing that crawled from the shadows to beg. She'd asked him over and over again, until he'd finally said yes. Her haggard appearance and failing mind were all deception, he discovered, as the strings of Sovereign snapped into place when he agreed.*

## THE HARDEST PART

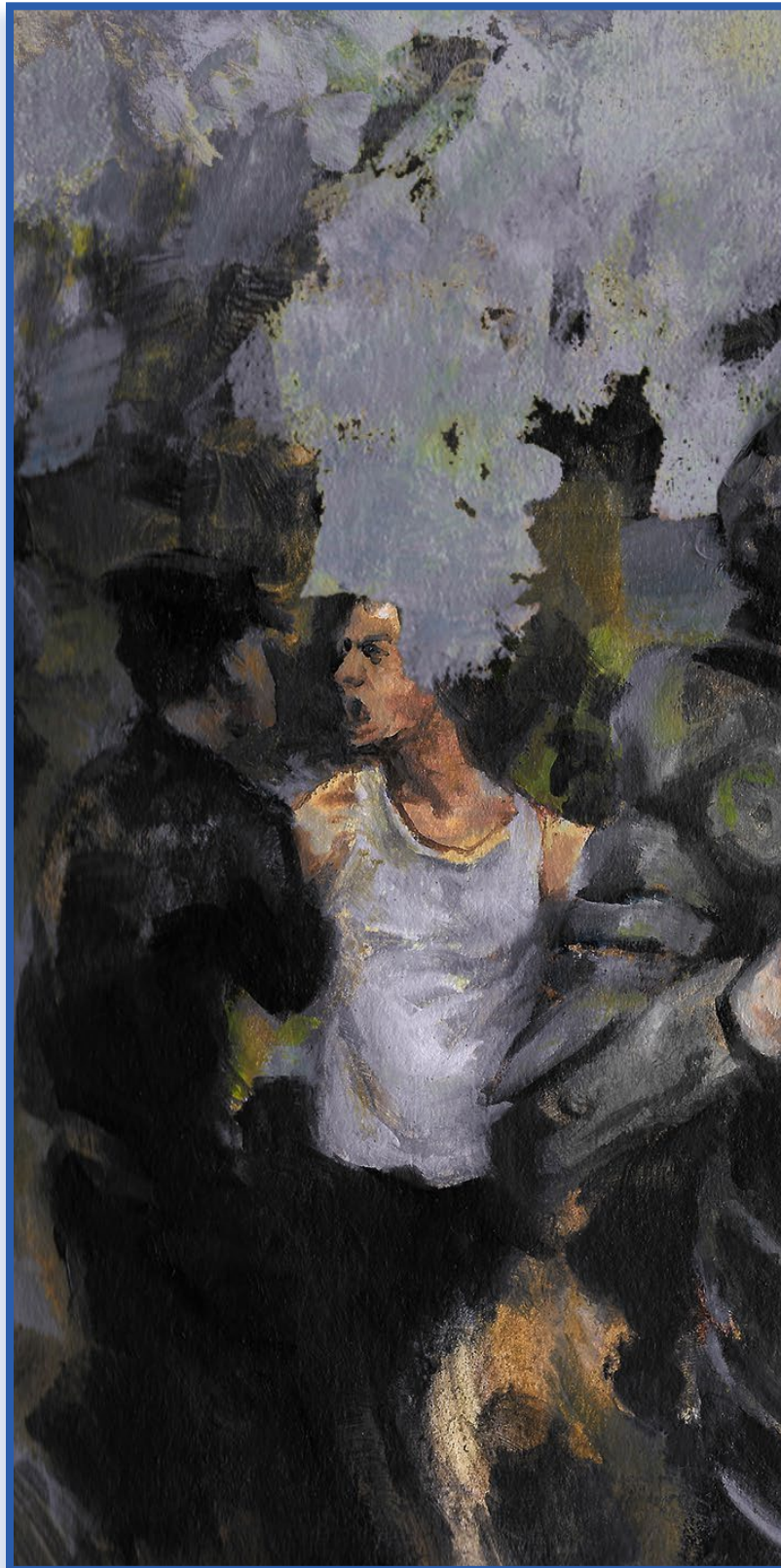
Fewer things are more difficult than confronting a changeling already lost to Bedlam. The world around them changes, drawing more of the Dreaming into focus, preventing changelings from easily blending in with the Autumn world and spooking mortals who prefer to keep their eyes firmly shut to such things. It's hard to say which is worse for friends of lost changelings: saying goodbye, or trying to bring them back.

Changelings lost to Bedlam forever can't remain in the Autumn world. They attract too much attention, they disturb the lives of everyone around them, mortal and changeling alike, and they grow increasingly upset when they catch flashes of the Autumn world behind the Dreaming. Most do their best to remain in freeholds or close to other sources of Glamour, but sometimes even that isn't enough, especially if other, more grounded changelings are present. Most find a thread of the Silver Path and, halfway to where they want to be, turn away from it. They spend the rest of their days wandering the Dreaming, leaving their old life behind and vanishing without a trace... or worse, returning as something alien to their old selves.

Attempting to bring a lost changeling back is almost worse than saying goodbye. The only methods rumored to have some degree of effectiveness rely on exposing a changeling to some of the banes of the fae, surpassing the wellspring of Glamour around them and shocking their mortal mind back to the surface. Anyone practicing these procedures – some of the most delicate ever theorized – accepts that either they will succeed and bring their friend back, or, more likely, be responsible for their fae death and shoulder all the stigma this invites upon them. All the good intentions in the world can't reduce the risks inherent to such actions. Nevertheless, there's always someone foolish or doggedly determined enough to try.

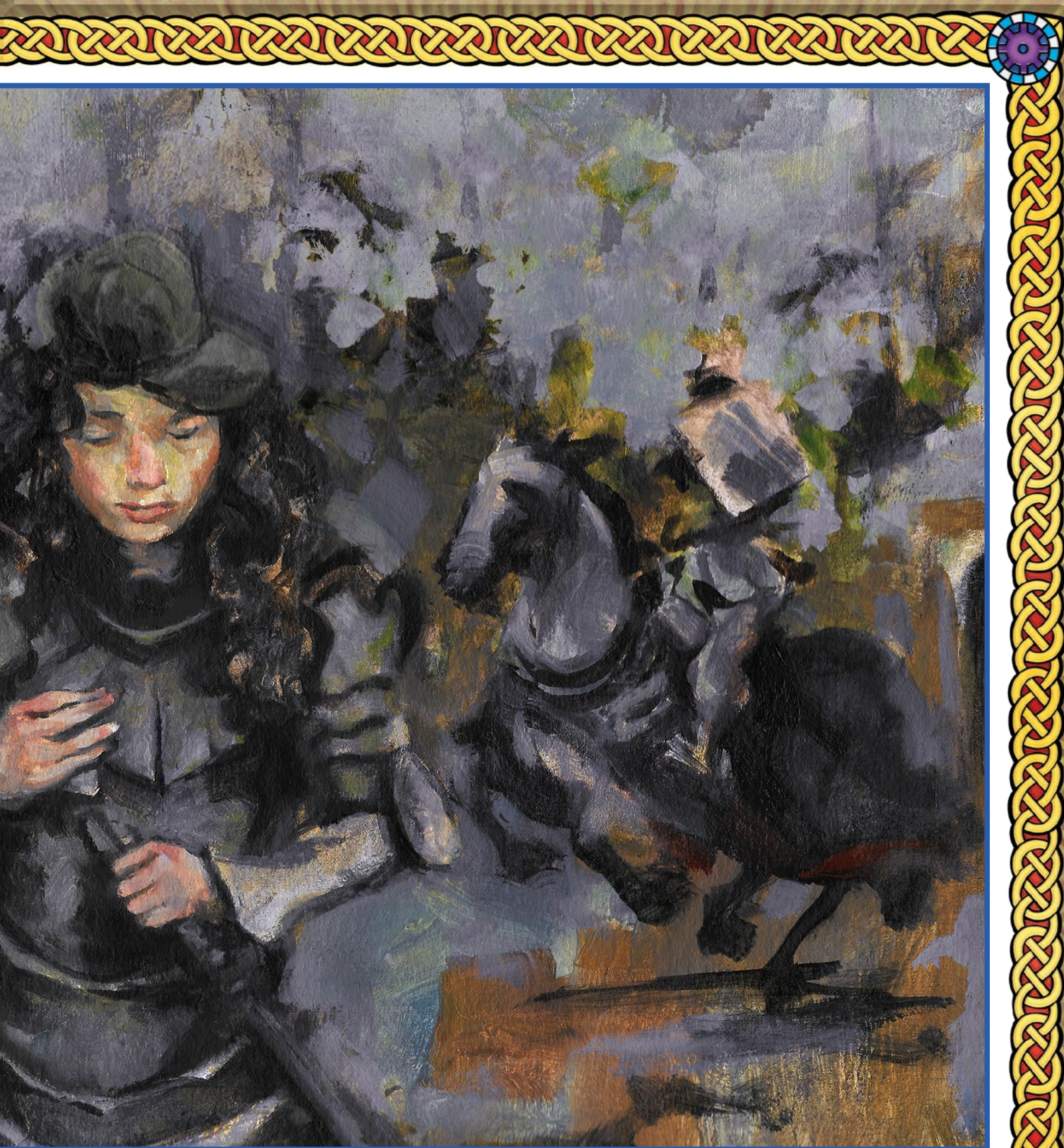
## COLD IRON CLEANSING

Some say that the only way to burn off enough of the Dreaming's hold on a Bedlamite is with the bane of Glamour and all fae kind: cold iron. Simply using a weapon made of it on a changeling doesn't work to bring them back; whomever is attempting to save their friend has to



attempt magic in its presence, blocking the Dreaming from infiltrating the Autumn world where the Bedlamite invites it. Spinning the essence of the iron into a kind of magical Faraday cage, the caster blocks off the influence of magic.





Once the changeling is isolated from the Dreaming entirely, the real challenge begins: calling his mortal self back.

Most attempt this with individuals or items from the Bedlamite's past, anything that might be meaningful. Some-

times this isn't an option — either any such sentimental figures are unreachable, or their loss of meaning led to the descent into Bedlam in the first place — and the changeling performing the cleansing has to improvise. Some attempt to connect empathetically, trying to call out to any scraps



of mortality that might remain, but without a meaningful connection established before the Bedlamite's descent, the patient is unlikely to listen. What follows is a grueling ordeal for both parties, as the Bedlamite faces the agony of cold iron while her friends and loved ones try to call her back to end her suffering.

## AUTUMNAL MEDITATION

Much less dangerous than a cold iron cleansing, a group of changelings – usually the Bedlamite's motley – can work together to invoke the Autumn world around their lost friend in an attempt to insulate them from the Dreaming long enough to bring them back. Unfortunately, this is also most likely to simply drive the Bedlamite into a state of distress, as they can still see the Dreaming they've become accustomed to, but can't interact with it in any meaningful way. This doesn't disconnect them from the Glamour they attract; it merely holds back anything they attempt to do. Therefore, this sort of attempt is likely to provoke a Bedlamite to anger. The influx of Banality that follows invoking the Autumn world clashes violently with the Glamour surrounding the Bedlamite.

Properly containing and targeting this Banality can bring the patient back to their senses, but the amount of skill and magical prowess necessary makes doing so a dangerous prospect. If even one participant fails to harness the Banality properly, the entire group risks chimerical death. If enough of the group can't control the influx of Banality, they will all be Undone. The Bedlamite, meanwhile, has an equal chance of being unaffected or becoming Undone. Occasionally, a group's failure can result in the changeling returning from Bedlam to find himself surrounded by dazed, confused mortals who look like his old friends, but such occurrences are rarer still than the ritual succeeding without a hitch.

## BEDLAM THRESHOLDS

Unique to the situation that triggers them, Bedlam Thresholds should reflect the changeling's mindset at the time. More Thresholds are listed on p. 294 of **Changeling: The Dreaming 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition**.

## MISGUIDED MUSE

The very presence of a changeling caught up in their Imbalance exudes the Dreaming. Everyone in the immediate area finds Rapture, Reverie, and Revelry to be much easier; any and all attempts to determine a source of inspiration succeed instantly, with one exception. Anyone who botches an inspiration roll either inspires or succumbs to Rhapsody, depending on if they are targeting themselves or a Dreamer. Changelings caught up in Rhapsody lose contact with their fae selves for a number of days equal

to their Banality ratings when their masterpiece is done; mortals suffer the same end as usual. Anyone inspired as a result of the Threshold reacts as though Ravaged when the process is complete. For changelings, they cannot attempt any path again for a number of days equal to their Glamour rating.

## OLD LEGENDS

All changelings know the baleful touch of cold iron and the way it cuts them to the quick. However, it isn't the only "old truth" about the fae, nor the only way to hurt or bind them. The closer a changeling slides toward Bedlam, the more the potency of those old legends returns to affect her as it affected her ancestors.

Essentially, a changeling on the brink of Bedlam acquires the Echoes Flaw (**Changeling: The Dreaming 20<sup>th</sup>**, p.188) for the duration of her time spent on the threshold. Salt, certain herbs, and specific flowers (most notably primroses and Saint John's wort) burn these changelings on contact, dealing a point of aggravated damage per round of contact. Other effects may bind these changelings as well – thrice-sworn statements are backed by the Dreaming as strongly as any oath, they find themselves unable to tell a direct lie, or they are drawn to certain fixtures and locations: offerings, or fae sites of old. While at first only one of these effects takes hold, and will only ever last as long as the Threshold, this particular Threshold can be activated multiple times, and its afflictions are cumulative.

## PAST LIFE

A changeling's present existence is not only informed by his kith and kin – it is also informed by his past lives. When the Dreaming presses at the forefront of a changeling's mind, he relives his past fae lives and can lose touch with his current reality in the rush. Unable to tell the past from the present, the changelings calls friends by other names, loses his ability to recall current powerful figures (in mortal or changeling society), and exhibits odd or outdated mannerisms. All attempts at Wits rolls increase in difficulty by 1 for each point of Imbalance the changeling has. For Arcadian sidhe, this Threshold may not manifest as past lives, but as memories from the bodies they acquired during the Resurgence or, if they are from more recent times, from the distant days of Arcadia.

## UNCANNY VALLEY

Although changelings inhabit human forms, mortals nevertheless retain the ability to pick out when things just aren't right with them. The closer a changeling is to losing herself to her fae nature, the more the mortals around her notice that something is off. A redcap's grin may appear too wide and too hungry; a piskie's face may become



unrecognizable, even to her closest friends; a sluagh's soft voice weaves nightmares with the kindest words. People feel afraid, unnerved, or suspicious and have a hard time trusting the changeling affected by this Threshold. All Social rolls increase in difficulty by 1 for each point of Imbalance the changeling acquires.

## Unleashed Echoes

Whether she's Unleashed an Art recently or not, the presence of a changeling affected by this Threshold calls to the legend of her kith. She's surrounded by the sights, scents, and sounds that normally accompany Unleashing. For the duration of the Threshold, all of her cantrips are Wyrd. She can direct them with a Realm as normal, and does not have to pay the extra Glamour cost for Wyrd cantrips; however, every Realm she pairs with her Art raises the difficulty of the cantrip by 1, as using her magic precisely becomes a greater challenge under such circumstances.

## Musing the Darkness

Although helping someone achieve their dreams often entails accompanying them on a beautiful and inspiring journey, a number of mortals have interests that plumb the darker parts of the mind and focus on more troubling topics. Contrary to common belief, Musing for these topics can be done safely, without harm to either the muse or the Dreamer. Although this sort of work typically aligns with the Unseelie, who have more of a taste for rebellious ideas, Seelie fae occasionally delve into an unsettling topic if they find it resonates with them, or if one of their Dreamers is enduring a hardship that might be overcome by expressing their emotions creatively.

Fear, doubt, anger, dread, inadequacy, and resentment all have their place in creativity, and can generate gripping, if unsettling, works of art. Provided it's the culmination of inspiration, no matter how dark or unpleasant the subject matter, Glamour still springs from unnerving or frightening works of art.

## Reverie

Inspiration takes many forms. While most changelings in the Seelie Court favor the carrot to tickle their Dreamer's fancies, Unseelie changelings, or anyone in a tight enough spot, can use the stick instead. Taking negativity and turning it into creativity, changelings can inspire Reverie in the darkest of times and places. Their means and methods can be seen as cruel, and often have some significant drawbacks as well. The rewards, however, are sweeter than what they might have otherwise attained by squeezing more Glamour

out of a single piece or by making it easier for them to relate to the Dreamer by sharing an experience.

The products of this dark inspiration are often tortured pieces, expressions of anger, hatred, grief, futility, or frustration. The abstract expressionist movement in art is rumored to have been inspired by such means, with the particularly bleak outlooks of its major contributors and its focus on eliciting emotion from non-representative forms; the dada movement is similarly considered to have been inspired by such Reverie, with its mocking, irreverent overtones and habit of pushing the boundaries of the public's perception of art.

While certain paths of darker Reverie can be reliably used again and again, some either alienate the Dreamer or push them to their limits, causing them to burn out. Even when the muse and her Dreamer have a continued connection, it's less likely to be a close friendship or intimate relationship. These muses tend to develop relationships with the Dreamer as a strict tutor, an ex who won't leave the picture, or a clueless friend. While these relationships can be special, they're often irksome in some way. Although they do push the Dreamers to greatness, it's not without an abrasive touch. It's likely for Dreamers give bitter thanks to their muses when all is said and done, but being directly under their influence may not have such a sunny experience.

While the Mists remove any evidence in Dreamers' minds of anything obviously magical about the interactions they have with their muses, they cannot remove truly cruel or unfair treatment. Thus, some Dreamers may resent their muses long after their interactions are finished. Depending on how far an individual changeling has slid toward Bedlam or how close they are to becoming Undone, they may not even care very much for what their Dreamers think of them.

## Musing Thresholds

While it's common for most changelings to utilize a number of more positive techniques, Unseelie changelings looking for a quicker path to Reverie sometimes opt to employ harsh or punishing methods of inspiration. Whether they pit a Dreamer against a rival or set obstacles for them to overcome, these darker Thresholds draw from negative drives, using conflict as fuel for inspiration. While players roll for Reverie as normal, using certain Thresholds may affect the difficulty or outcome of the roll.

- ⑤ **Apply Pressure:** Many Dreamers do their best work under pressure from looming deadlines. Knowing this, they leave their work incomplete until the last minute to generate inspiration through the desperate, frenzied rush to meet the deadline. But why leave such conditions open when you can manufacture them yourself? You're all too happy to impress that urgency upon your Dream-



ers, and see what they come up with in such a difficult position. When using this Threshold, the amount of time it take to connect with a Dreamer is halved, to a minimum of an hour; however, the Glamour gained from this endeavor is also halved, to a minimum of one point.

- ⑤ **Critique:** No one improves without a critical eye to size up their strengths and weaknesses. While your words might seem harsh, you only want your Dreamers to improve and to continue to practice their craft. Each connective, successful attempt to inspire your Dreamer adds an extra point of Glamour to the outcome to a maximum of +5. However, changelings who use this Threshold walk a fine line between inspiring someone to be better and causing them to give up their craft; a failed attempt resets the extra Glamour gained to zero, and a botch means your Dreamer gives up creating.
- ⑤ **Embrace Tradition:** There are tried and true methods to creating masterpieces, techniques that have worked for ages and styles that are widely accepted. Why reinvent the wheel when it already serves perfectly well? The difficulty to discover what inspires a Dreamer is reduced by 1, but the difficulty to gain Glamour from her creations is increased by 1, as this forceful encouragement towards one “best” way suppresses the Dreamer’s personal style.
- ⑤ **Inspire Spite:** Some people feel motivated and inspired when someone tells them that they can’t or won’t achieve their goal. Another delicate Threshold to use, the muse usually appears as an adversarial figure in their Dreamer’s life. By comparing the Dreamer’s work to that of another or expressing doubt in her abilities, the muse wields doubt, derision, and disregard with a surgeon’s precision. When the player rolls to determine how much Glamour is gained from the Dreamer’s creation, successes impart two points of Glamour, but failures subtract one point each from the total gained. While a muse may not end up gaining any Glamour at all, she never loses Glamour from negative results.
- ⑤ **Overcome Adversity:** Hardship works to inspire some of the most creative and influential works of art known to humanity. Some changelings find Dreamers stuck in terrible positions, crushed by demanding jobs or oppressed by their surroundings. With these muses’ encouragement, they can push through the difficulty and create something wonderful. The Dreamer suffers no ill effects from a botched Glamour roll, but with five successes or more, they create a masterpiece they can never duplicate. In the latter case, the changeling gains a dot of Glamour, but also loses their Dreamer forever somehow.

## RAPTURE

Inspiring oneself is a difficult enough task on its own, but doing so while plumbing the depths of misery or anger doesn’t make the task any easier. When dealing with more negative emotions, it’s easy for changelings to slip from self-inspiration to self-flagellation. Therefore, it’s in her best interest to carefully record her process and emotions as she creates her masterpiece, especially if the process is more drawn out. While a changeling can usually seek out inspiration from a more pleasant source when she puts her mind to it, darker forms of Rapture are often reactionary. A changeling’s mentor becomes Undone, and she spends months writing a beautiful biography to honor him, pouring her grief onto the page; when their lover abandons them, they channel their rage into the most incendiary, electric song they’ve ever written; or the day that he realizes that one day he will die and be forgotten, his fear propels him to create sculptural masterpieces of bronze and copper that will last far longer than he will.

Throughout her preparatory period, the changeling hones in on the emotion that’s pushing her toward creating, discerns what exactly in her life is causing her to feel that way, and decides what she wants to do about it. Does she preserve the emotion as it is, creating something that will evoke it in those that experience her creation? Or does she subvert it, using her Rapture to move past her troubles and bring something warm and reassuring to light? While it might seem odd to pursue a comforting end in the face of negativity, the creation always carries a hint of the emotion that brought it into being. The teddy bear lovingly crafted in a fit of productivity is there to ward off night terrors, but its expression is fierce and determined instead of friendly. The sultry, revealing gown that clings to every curve and leaves nothing to the imagination is the product of insecurity and uncertainty, months of patterning and re-styling, adding and removing elements until its creator is satisfied.

While using negative emotions to seek Rapture can fuel a changeling into an agitated state, sending him spiraling into a deep depression or a jaded, cynical emotional state, careful planning and consideration can instead give him the courage and confidence to move on. If the player succeeds on five or more dice, their character gains a point of Glamour and loses a point of Banality; if they botch, the character takes a -2 penalty to all Charisma rolls for the week it takes him to center himself before trying again.

## RAVAGING

While Reverie works to build up bonds between the changeling and her Dreamer in order to more sustainably produce Glamour, the culmination of Ravaging is to tear down the hopes of the Dreamer and harvest the



Glamour left behind. It's hardly a pleasant experience for the Dreamer, who's forced to experience their dreams and aspirations being mocked at least, if not ripped out from under them. Occasionally, the Ravaging is accomplished through a misguided attempt at comfort, or as a way to set right the perceived order of things. For example, lying to someone to make them feel better can instead cause them to feel worse or even doubt themselves when the lie is ultimately exposed.

Dark Ravaging with these Thresholds is a more insidious form of the practice, often masquerading as encouragement, but designed to instead make the target feel doubtful, insecure, or ashamed. A parent who buys their child stylish clothing a size too small to "motivate" them, a pickup artist offering backhanded compliments to the women he is trying to impress, or a teacher giving an overachieving student a less-than-perfect grade with the comment "not your best" may each be a changeling seeking to Ravage their Dreamers.

On the surface, their actions and words may seem to push their Dreamer towards greatness and offer a stepping stone to a higher level of achievement, but really, they're carefully chosen and phrased to best pick at someone's insecurities and tear them down instead. The brief flash of pride, hope, or joy brought on at first blush is the Glamour the Ravager seeks, made available to them as the crushing letdown of their words' true meaning sinks in.

## RAVAGING THRESHOLDS

Ravaging relies primarily on building someone up just to tear them down. While the Seelie Court usually condemns Ravaging, a number of them are guilty of it. Some may not even think of it as Ravaging, but simply asserting a natural order or setting things as they should be. Nevertheless, stifling others to empower yourself is only fulfilling for one of you.

- ⑤ **Comforting Lie:** Sometimes the best thing you can do to reassure or comfort someone is to lie straight to their face. Of course, when these lies are easy to see through, they usually leave the other feeling hollow and worse than before. Even if it takes a moment, when the truth hits, it pains the heart in a way few other things can. Because of the apparent nature of most Comforting Lies, using this Ravaging Threshold will only imbue Banality on a botch, but only ever provides one point of Glamour, no matter how many successes the player rolls.
- ⑤ **Dash Hope:** Practicality is at the heart of your being, and you refuse to entertain unlikely odds. Whenever someone expresses interest in a difficult prospect or proposes an unlikely answer to an obvious question, you assert the transparent truth of the matter and refuse to entertain other options, cowing the Dreamer to the "right" way of things. While the dribs of Glamour from their sug-

gestions make it lucrative, lowering the difficulty of harvesting it by 1, squashing more imaginative ideas can be punishing; Banality penalties for failure are doubled.

- ⑤ **Impose Order:** You cannot stand chaos or submit to someone overstepping their bounds, and you revel in the ability to put someone in their place. Whether silencing a room with a barked command or establishing dominance with a withering glare, you cement yourself as the authority in the room and leave no room for anyone else. The difficulty to harvest the Glamour itself is increased by 2 as you let your Dreamer entertain their fantasy of authority or power, but each success yields two points of Glamour.
- ⑤ **Silence Dissent:** Dashing hope is about watching the light drain from someone's eyes; silencing dissent is watching them lose faith in their own ideals. Whether you've built up something together only to turn around and condemn your creation and co-creator, or joined into an existing movement waiting for your moment to twist their aims to your purpose, you'll entertain no other opinions once you've revealed your true thoughts, and will beat down anyone who disagrees until they begin to question their own conviction. The player rolls (10 - Banality) dice at difficulty 6, but any dice that fail subtract from the amount of Glamour gained from successes. A negative result results in the character gaining a point of Banality.
- ⑤ **Sow Guilt:** You aren't mad, you're just disappointed. You poured your time and energy into the Dreamer, expecting them to create or do something wonderful. They've finally delivered after months or weeks of work, and the result is... average. It's not that it isn't lovely. It's just that you thought they could do better. Sowing guilt in your target is among the most lucrative forms of Ravaging, but as it depends on having a finished product, rolling five or more successes burns the Dreamer out. They are drained of all their creative energy, and produce no more Glamour. Fewer than five successes earns one point of Glamour per success, but also renders the Dreamer unable to produce Glamour for a like amount of weeks.

## REVELRY

Feeding into the crueler half of a kith's legacy is the heart of dark Revelry. For most changelings, this means indulging much as they normally would, while either giving in to their Frailties or otherwise aiming to sow chaos and discord. Most often, dark Revelry involves mortals, and usually exposes them to the Dreaming; a number of conflicting stories crop up once things have settled again, as the Mists correct the memories of those involved.



Dark Revelry is particularly frowned upon in Seelie circles as it explicitly involves revealing the changeling's true nature to outsiders, but banning the practice outright is a difficult law to enact, as the Unseelie Court rail against the possibility of denying a changeling the opportunity to connect so wholly to their heritage.

## Rhapsody

While it's possible to explore negative emotions safely on other Paths to Epiphany, Rhapsody never gets easier. While changelings may occasionally detour down the Path of Destruction, pushing mortals too far into their harmful impulses sets them instead on the Path of Demise. As if Rhapsody was not cruel enough, dark Rhapsody does more than remove the Dreamer's connection their craft and prevent them from ever creating again; anyone driven to Rhapsody with the intent of drawing out darker, tormented dreams is inevitably driven to madness and death. Even if the Rhapsody fails, the target is unable to shake the sense of failure they feel whenever they think about or look at their futile attempt to create a masterpiece. If the Rhapsody succeeds, the loss of their inspiration drives them to ever darker places seeking it again.

It must be clearly stated: the unavoidable end of Dreamers once inspired by dark Rhapsody makes inspiring them in such a way a capital crime just about everywhere in Concordia and most lands beyond. Any and all parties caught attempting this or carrying it out are explicitly responsible for murder. Rumors abound that any who are willing to cause such destruction in the pursuit of Glamour return as Dauntain, condemned to forever destroy for their transgression.

The works inspired by dark Rhapsody are dark, monstrous things, displays that will never inspire joy, hope, introspection, or self-discovery. The tortured results of dark Rhapsody only drive those who look upon them to violent extremes. Considered cursed by mortals, the pieces make them uncomfortable, even if they can't place why. Changelings that find the products of such forced misery instantly recognize them for what they are. While they can't tell who inspired such cruelty, the players can make a Wits + Kenning (difficulty 9) roll to determine who the unfortunate creator was and honor their sacrifice properly.

Should a changeling do the unthinkable and destroy an item created by dark Rhapsody, she gains a point of Imbalance for every point of Glamour released. She simply cannot hold on to her humanity knowing she's drawing sustenance from a power that ended another's life. Even





the most callous changeling cannot walk away untouched from such a dark act.

Thallain that lay their hands on pieces created by dark Rhapsody benefit from the destruction housed within. They gain Glamour in the same way a changeling would, and Willpower equal to the number of successes rolled. Rumors of Thallain collectors who specialize in acquiring such goods or even Thallain markets devoted to this gruesome fare are, of course, no more than lurid speculation.

## UNLEASHING

Unleashing isn't subtle. Chaotic energy whirls from the Dreaming, temporarily reversing the Changeling Way Ritual by hiding the mortal façade. Magical constrictions on cantrips erode, and directing currents with the necessary precision requires courage, willpower, and determination.

Three features determine the in-game representation of your character's Unleashing: Art, kith, and Legacies.

- ⑤ **Art:** Changeling Art descriptions provide information about what the Art affects and how it appears during an Unleashing.
- ⑤ **Kith:** As embodiments of specific dream variations, characters' kiths influence Glamour during an Unleashing. See kith descriptions for further information.
- ⑤ **Legacies (New):** Legacies define a changeling's personality and guides players in character exploration and development. Furthermore, performing an Unleashing brings the nature of the caster into the forefront and creates an *Imprint* affecting both the changeling and the world.

## IMPRINT CATEGORIES

Creating an Imprint requires an overview of the complete character, positioning this as the final step in the creation process. Due to multifaceted views of what Legacies entail, there's no definitive list of bonuses or penalties an Imprint generates. However, this section guides you and your Storyteller through the Imprint creation process.

**Changeling: The Dreaming 20th Anniversary Edition**, pp. 196-197, determines narrative responsibility depending on dice roll outcome. In turn, the result also defines which of the three Imprint categories take effect.

- ⑤ **Principal Imprint:** Players rolling fewer successes than the Art's rating limit indicates that their character retains full control. As such, the character's primary Legacy acts as foundation for the Imprint. In addition to this, the player narrates the scene.

- ⑤ **Subordinate Imprint:** Garnering too many successes leave characters overwhelmed by chaotic Glamour, causing the character's secondary Legacy to surface while the Storyteller describes the scene.

- ⑤ **Adverse Imprint:** Although Banality shreds the brief connection to the Dreaming, the character established contact. The Imprint shatters, reversing effects into an adverse version of the primary Legacy which Storytellers narrate.

In turn, four subsections make up each of the Imprint categories. Unless stated otherwise, an Imprint lasts a full scene.

**Format:** *Principal Imprint/Subordinate Imprint/Adverse Imprint*

- ⑤ **Unveiled/Uncovered/Inverted Legacy:** The effects on the character Unleashing magic reveal part of her true nature and act as the focal point of attention based on the Legacy interpretation. It adds +2 dice to one Attribute and two Abilities, while others suffer +1 difficulty on types based on the interpretation. While active, the character cannot act on the secondary IL, effects are never positive for *anyone* affected.

- ⑤ **Bonfire of the Soul/Embers of Banality:** In addition to significant effects on the Unleashing character, an Imprint affects everyone within 30 yards. Regular mortals and animals cannot withstand its effects, but supernaturally enhanced individuals can resist effects by succeeding on a Willpower roll, with a difficulty equal to the Unleashing character's Glamour + successes rolled.

Everyone under this influence gains the same Ability adjustments as the caster as well as the +1 difficulty to a type of roll based on the interpretation of the Imprint. However, it's possible to assign a different type than the Unleashing character gained depending on the Imprint's foundation. Also, in accordance with being affected by an aura, the Legacy interpretation seeps into the minds of anyone affected by the power and guides or nudges how they think and act (even in those lacking Legacies).

- ⑤ **Soul Extension/Dispersion:** An Imprint's power wears thin the further out it spreads from the character emanating it, until it finally dissipates after the character's Glamour dots x 20 yards. Because of this, the effects have no game mechanics and purely affect the setting based on Legacy interpretations. Examples include crowds marching peacefully only to break out in riots, or a community coming together to take a stand against a threat to their neighborhood. These effects last 12 hours and Storytellers may opt to Enchant those under its influ-



## UNCOMFORTABLE NARRATORS

Detailing all Imprint effects beforehand is extremely important if you're a player who prefers to leave narration to your Storyteller. Imprints represent your character's core nature and are part of her legend, so make sure to take part in their creation.

ence (though *Soul Dispersion* only discerns creatures touched by the Elder Dark).

- ⑤ **Vestiges/Malice of the Hold:** This section is only relevant if the character holds a *Covenant of the Flame* (see **Book of Freeholds**, p. 35). For 12 hours, the freehold increases its Archetype bonus by 1, and adds a sensation based on the Legacy interpretation to the atmosphere. Malice of the Hold cancels Archetype bonuses for a number of hours equal to the Unleashing character's permanent Glamour-Sanctuary rating.

## IMPRINT CREATION

Using the guidelines provided above, it's time to delve into the actual creation of a character's Imprint as well as exploring the non-mechanical factors involved in establishing effects.

## LEGACY INTERPRETATIONS

Due to the multifaceted interpretations of what Legacies entail for characters, it's essential to read through the descriptions on pp. 156-160 of **Changeling: The Dreaming 20th Anniversary Edition**. Each Imprint is unique and will never encompass the full breadth of Legacy descriptions. Instead, focus on a part of it that is at your character's core. Make it simple by keeping your Legacy interpretation between one and three sentences.

**Example:** *In cooperation with fellow players and the Storyteller, Richard sets out on creating his character Grace's detailed Imprint. While discussing Crafter, her primary Legacy, Richard envisions Grace as an individual working with others to uncover and help with emotional trauma and social difficulties while nurturing a perceived seed of unbridled possibility that lies within all. After considering the discussion, Richard defines his Legacy interpretation as: "She sees through the facades others put up to hide their hardships, while she truly believes that she's an instrument for changing the world for the better."*

## INVOKING THE WYRD

Players wanting their Imprints to play a larger role may discuss with the Storyteller about using their effects when Invoking the Wyrd on its own. In these cases, the roll against Banality determines the outcome, but with no chance of a Subordinate Imprint.

Based on this, Richard defines her Adverse Legacy Imprint to be: *"Exploit others to enhance pain and bring the world towards its inevitable end."*

Finally, they focus on Grace's secondary Legacy. Richard opted for Pandora, knowing she carries secrets to help others through her style. He decides to make his interpretation more liberating: *"Secrets and untold knowledge inflict harm over time. It's better to disclose everything than to live with festering trepidation."*

Richard applies his legacy interpretation to each category and subcategory to finalize the Imprint.

### PRINCIPAL IMPRINT

**Unveiled Legacy:** Grace adjusts her dice pools by increasing Charisma, Presence, and Empathy rolls by 2. At the same time, she radiates an aura of hope and salvation, therefore increasing difficulty on all rolls to hide emotional pain and trauma by 1.

**Bonfire of the Soul:** Richard defined that those affected by Grace's aura act as an extension of her nature. Instincts to heal instead of harming, in addition to aiding those in need, surface in those affected by her aura. This increasing the difficulty for them to inflict harm on others by 1 (causing combatants to show mercy *regardless* of previous intention). Characters also increase their Presence and Empathy dice pools by 2.

**Soul Extension:** *"Everyone around you is in tremendous pain, but you see their potential for good. Stranger or not, approach them with the intent of aiding them. There's joy in helping others overcome their pain, weaknesses, and flaws."*

**Vestiges of the Hold:** Grace's Covenant of Flame transfers a sensation of hope and tranquility to the freehold's atmosphere and enhances its Archetype bonus by 1.

### SUBORDINATE IMPRINT

**Uncovered Legacy:** To reveal hidden knowledge to the world, Grace must first ferret secrets out of others. Therefore, this aura enhances aspects needed to perform these actions, knowing that once she makes her discovery,



## QINI-FAQ

### What happens if Unleashing effect and Imprint implications conflict?

If someone with a Legacy that produces happiness and cheerfulness Unleashes Autumn to instill sadness and despair in an area or target, the Imprint cannot take hold in them (or the location). It still affects the player character and anyone outside of the designated target.

### What happens if several characters Unleash their magic during the same scene?

Once someone accepts effects of one Imprint, further auras don't stack. Instead, they trigger a reflexive Willpower roll, difficulty 8, on the part of the character with the active aura. If the roll fails, the new Imprint supersedes the previous one, adding to the unpredictable nature of unchained chaos. However, an Unleashing character must always abandon previous Imprints and accept the outcome of her own actions.

### What happens if an Unleashing cause a scene switch?

Certain Arts, such as Wayfare, might force a scene change. In such cases, the Imprint's effects on the caster, freehold, and everyone in the Bonfire/Ember-range takes hold after the change. Soul Extension and Dispersion happens in the previous location and automatically becomes a Storyteller device.

she must announce it for all to hear. Richard adjusts her stats by increasing her Manipulation by 2, Subterfuge and Empathy by 2, and notes that all attempts (magical or otherwise) to hide information from her incur a +1 difficulty.

**Bonfire of the Soul:** Those affected find that they cannot help but spill secrets to each other regardless of consequences, but preferably to Grace as it might garner a favor. In turn, it's easier for those affected to uncover information withheld by others, as the difficulty of any non-magical attempts to hide information increase by 1. In addition, adjust the dice pool of Subterfuge and Empathy by 2.

**Soul Extension:** *"Secrets have a way of getting out no matter how thoroughly you try to bury them. It's time to unburden yourself of every speck of dirt as publicly as possible to prevent it from continuing to hang over your head, or from becoming someone else's leverage over you."*

**Vestiges of the Hold:** In addition to adding +1 to the Archetype bonus, the atmosphere in the freehold encourages the sharing of secrets and knowledge.

## ADVERSE IMPRINT

**Inverted Legacy:** Grace adjusts her dice pools by decreasing Charisma, Presence, and Empathy rolls by 2. Her aura shifts from hope and salvation to despair and melancholy, and attempts at elevating her mood incur a +1 difficulty.

**Ember of Banality:** The overriding Legacy effects focus on harming others and opening old wounds regardless of whom it regards. Enemies and friends start fighting among each other and won't cease. Adjust Presence and Empathy dice rolls by -2, and the difficulty to calm them down increases by 1.

**Soul Dispersion:** *"Your weaknesses are tools to display the true nature of this world! You'll go down in despair if I get my way."*

**Malice of the Hold:** The freehold's atmosphere gains a tone of spite and hostility while also cancelling out the Archetype bonus.







# CHAPTER FIVE: CHIMERA

*"Your work isn't real. Let's just get in the car. Let me take you home."*

*"You're not listening to me! Another giant is coming!"*

*– Mrs. Mollé and Barbara Thorson, "I Kill Giants"*

For as long as the fae have walked the Earth, chimera have walked beside them, serving as tools, friends, servants, allies, and antagonists. Their existence is fleeting, so most in the Autumn world form life-long bonds with a changeling out of a sense of self-preservation and genuine love. Recently, a new kind of chimera has emerged from the Dreaming. Changelings call them Lycians. These aren't the purely ephemeral chimera Kithain are familiar with — they're born from inspirational, mundane objects. Lycians have Guises to protect them from Banality, just as changelings have their mortal seemings.

This chapter provides characters with new options for their chimerical companions and gives players the opportunity to create Lycian chimera as playable characters.

## LYCIANS

Chimera have coexisted with the Kithain since time immemorial. Lycian chimera, however, are a recent phenomenon. For as long as the fae can remember, chimera have been pure ephemera, always composed entirely of dream-stuff, vulnerable to the antithetical touch of the mundane. The Resurgence upended those notions. Suddenly, Glamour held enough sway in the Autumn world that ordinary objects could become imbued with chimerical qualities. Some manifested naturally through the power of human imagination, while others were built by fae artisans.

Still, no sentient animate chimera with a mundane counterpart was ever observed — until the Evanescence. For all the horrors unleashed on the world, new children of the Dreaming were born. For the first time, chimera awakened from everyday objects. The Kithain named them



Lycians in honor of the Chimera's homeland according to Greek myth. While the original Lycian people are no more, the area of present day Turkey where they once lived is full of their statues and monuments, the building blocks of Lycian chimera.

## BORN OF AUTUMN

Lycian chimera awaken at the intersection of dreams, nightmares, and Banality. They are objects brought to life by mortal hopes, dreams, and inspiration: the raggedy old sock puppet that brought endless laughter to children, the albino deer at the center of a local legend, the video game cartridge that internet message boards swear is haunted. When enough Glamour permeates them, they gain a chimerical quality that grants them both consciousness and mobility. This normally happens through the natural accumulation of Glamour in meaningful objects, but occasionally, fae crafters accidentally create one through a perfect storm of circumstances.

Lycians are the item at the core of their being, though they may take a form that roughly resembles a human, animal, or mythical creature. Their item, or what it represents, colors their outlook and shapes their personality. A teddy bear Lycian loves small children and bravely stands against the monsters under the bed. A hot rod Lycian wants to always be in motion — the faster, the better! A weeping willow Lycian is the picture of lithe grace but prone to bouts of melancholy. It is from the seed of a Lycian's Thesis that all her characteristics grow. While Lycians are just as diverse as any other chimerical creature, they can be grouped into broad categories based on their Shapes and Guises.

## LURKING NIGHTMARES

All who dream know that dreams can turn into nightmares without warning. Lycians are no exception. As children of the Dreaming, they too have Nightmare versions of themselves waiting just below the surface. Changelings have long known that chimera can be twisted into nightmares either through despair or exposure to dark Glamour, and most Kithain eventually deal with a feral, nervosa, nocnitsa, or urban legend chimera. Those same forces call to Lycians. Their Nightmare Legacy is a temptation. In times of stress or desperation, it provides the illusion of an easy way out. Once taken, however, it is hard to leave the dark road.

## IN A STRANGE LAND

Lycians are the first new phenomena from the Dreaming since the Shattering. They're a cause for celebration for some changelings, while others are wary, recognizing how easily they can turn into nightmares. Lycians themselves are still trying to figure out their own meaning, since the

oldest of their number isn't even twenty. They don't have a formal society and they're still learning the intricacies of ancient Kithain conflicts, but they bring fresh perspectives to problems that have plagued the Dreaming for centuries. Other chimera might be content to simply follow the changelings' lead, but Lycians are willing to blaze their own trail and try new approaches the Kithain don't think of, or reexamine older ideas that changelings dismissed lifetimes ago. Lycians have the whole world in front of them, and they're excited to embrace the challenges of exploring it.

## OUTSIDERS' PERSPECTIVES

### KITHAIN

The Kithain approach Lycians with a mixture of curiosity and wariness. Seelie changelings point out that they first appeared at the same time the Thallain re-emerged on Earth in large numbers. They advise caution in dealing with Lycians, preferring the bonds they've already established with other chimera. Unseelie find the shakeup Lycians cause to be refreshing. Change is good, and Lycians represent a *major* change. Unseelie see them as a sign that the Dreaming might be healing.

Rank and file Shadow Court tend to view them as agents of change and impending upheaval, while the Thallain and the Black Court are eager to see if these newcomers can be persuaded to help tear down the old order and replace it with something far less human. Nockers and other changeling crafters of all persuasions want nothing more than to figure out how Lycians work, and perhaps improve them: if they can figure out the process, they might be able to remove the Nightmare.

### INANIMAE

Inanimae regard the Lycians with simultaneous kinship and trepidation. Inanimae are among the oldest of the fae races. They witnessed the rise and fall of the Fomorians and their children, the Thallain. They saw the ascension of the Tuatha de Danaan, and their departure to leave the world in the care of the Kithain. They know the signs of a new fae race and believe the Lycians have the potential to eventually become fully fae. It's a difficult realization for the Inanimae to face, though. They are so similar to the Lycians in fundamental ways; does this mean their own time is coming to an end?

The Inanimae have set themselves to the task of learning all they can about Lycians. Through trial and error, the Inanimae found that objects awakened as Lycians can't be used as Anchors. Gladelings find much in common with Bucolic Lycians. Likewise, Krofted Inanimae feel an affinity for the Oppidans. Maieutic and Quixotic Lycians seem alien to most Inanimae of either court. The mannikins of



the Empire of Flickers, however, are able to find common ground with both Guises.

Inanimae will often take on Lycians of the appropriate Guise as chimerical companions, believing they can find a way to merge the nascent Lycian dream with the Inanimae dream. However, if the Inanimae are truly destined to be usurped by the Lycians someday, at least they have an opportunity to impart the lessons they have learned directly upon those who will inherit their legacy.

## Thallain

Thallain gleefully recognize the appearance of the Lycians as an unprecedented opportunity that they don't intend to pass up. Lycians only emerged during the Evanescence; therefore, the Thallain reason, Lycians must be more closely related to them than to the Kithain. In some ways, the Thallain are right: Lycians are purer creatures of Nightmare than Kithain. At their core, they're unfeeling objects, free of the curse of humanity that burdens even Thallain. It takes a little persuasion to get a Lycian to embrace his inner nightmare, but it's well worth the extra effort. Lycians can easily infiltrate mortal institutions and destabilize them from within without anyone being the wiser. Who would suspect a red stapler of being the saboteur that burned down the building? Goblins especially are eager to augment Lycians into living instruments of destruction.

## Shapes

Lycian Shapes are roughly analogous to a changeling's Seemings. Instead of being a state of mind, a Lycian's Shape is the physical form she takes as a chimera. Her Shape may shield her from the glare of mundanity, or it might better attune her to the ways of the Dreaming.

## Humanoid

Humanoid Lycians are more closely affiliated with the Autumn world than other chimera. They appear roughly human, with two arms, two legs, a torso, and a head. They might be a plastic action figure, a dryad of leaves and branches, or a clay golem. Their Shape makes it easier for the Mists to cover their actions, shielding them from Banality in the presence of mortals.

## Animal

Animal Lycians stand between the Autumn world and the Dreaming. Their Shape is that of a mundane animal, a wild creature unencumbered by mortal Banality. They may appear as a dire wolf stalking the underbrush, a bronze bull driving the markets, or a diesel-powered horse racing along the highway. Their Shape allows them to touch Nightmare on occasion without being consumed by it.

## Mythic

Mythic Lycians have the strongest affinity for the Dreaming. They appear as any kind of mythical creature, completely detached from the Autumn world. Their Shape may be that of a stony sphynx lounging on a hillside, a clockwork unicorn hiding among back alleys, or a techno dragon with laser wings. Mythic Lycians find Glamour slightly easier to gather than those of other Shapes.

## Guises

Lycian Guises parallel the kiths of the Fae. Instead of being formed by an archetypal dream, Guises are the type of object that gives a Lycian life. They allow Lycians to blend in with the mundane and offer the chimera protection from Banality, which affords them a longer lifespan than most chimera in the Autumn world. A Lycian's personality and Thesis are rooted in her Guise.

Types of Guises include:

- ⑤ **Bucolic:** Nature Lycians are born from naturally occurring objects such as a tree, stone, shell, creek, or clearing in the woods. They have striking insight into the natural world, but feel lost when dealing with people.
- ⑤ **Maieutic:** Concept Lycians are born from specific human ideas. Objects representing true love, manifest destiny, colonialism, socialism, and other such concepts may create a Maieutic. They're especially vulnerable to a concept that runs counter to their own.
- ⑤ **Oppidan:** Urban Lycians are born from man-made objects such as cars, toys, signs, houses, or a storied stretch of road. They have an innate understanding of humanity's creations, but feel untethered when they venture too far from civilization.
- ⑤ **Quixotic:** Intangible Lycians are born from abstract objects such as stories, memories, events, video games, or websites. Their nature makes them almost impossible to restrain, but their curiosity often gets the better of them.



# BUCOLIC

*"They call their city civilization, but out here is where things truly live."*

Bucolic Lycians are born from naturally-occurring objects and consider the unspoiled wilderness their home. Plants and animals are their brothers and sisters, and rocky outcroppings and babbling brooks are among their closest friends. They love open spaces far away from the glare of city lights, where they can feel the sun on their backs and see the entire Milky Way stretch across the night sky. While their personalities vary greatly — thorny rosebushes have completely different temperaments than stalwart boulders — Bucolics tend to be the most introspective of the Guises and the most likely to awaken still rooted in place.

Though many eventually learn the Two Places at Once Rede, they still enjoy the quiet contemplation that accompanies stillness. Bucolics

born in urban environments tend to be incredibly lonely, understanding the whispers of the wind and the language of a mycelial network far more easily than the gossip of the fae and the languages of people.

**Lifestyles:** Bucolics take central roles in their local ecosystem, helping keep balance. They remove blockages to keep the creek water flowing and call forth winds to ensure pollen spreads as needed. They even do their best to keep invasive species, real and chimerical, contained or help them integrate safely with the ecosystem. Most importantly, they act as the protectors of wild spaces by making sure hunters who kill for amusement never use a weapon again, by permanent means if necessary. They also rise up in rebellion against chronic polluters. These events are often interpreted by the uninitiated as natural disasters or storms of the century.





**Humanoid:** Humanoids are the most social of the Bucolics. Feeling a certain affinity for beings who share their Shape, they're willing to help people who are lost or stranded in the wilderness. They forge relationships with park rangers, ecologists, and environmentalists — anyone who respects their homes and accepts nature on its own terms, who doesn't try to force its inhabitants to be something they're not. They're also the most likely to involve themselves in changeling affairs, usually when changelings need help reaching people or assistance interacting directly in Autumn affairs.

**Animal:** Animals are the keepers of their own — other Bucolics and the inhabitants of the wilds. They have a philosophy of "family first," and deal with outsiders only when necessary. They have little patience for humanity since destruction often follows in its wake. They protect animals from hunters, trees from loggers, and minerals from miners. Even still, some form bonds with humans. Occasionally an animal Bucolic will awaken in the heart of civilization, usually a beloved family pet or persevering landmark in a city park. These Lycians love their mortal family as their own and form unbreakable bonds with changelings who prove themselves trustworthy.

**Mythic:** Mythics tend to lead the most solitary lives of the Bucolic Lycians. They keep to themselves, far away from prying mortal eyes. They maintain the natural founts of Glamour deep in the wilds which are inaccessible to most changelings. They also drive away those who would despoil such Glades. Because of this, they have little contact with changelings. Their most cordial relationships are with the Inanimae, Nunnehi, and Menehune. Changelings they do have contact with often assume mythics lead lonely lives. Nothing could be further from the truth. Tree roots run deep. Mineral veins spread far and wide. Whale songs reverberate across the globe. Very little of note happens in the world that mythic Bucolics don't hear about.

**Example Guises:** A stony dragon keeps watch high atop a mountain, born from a rock outcropping known to be impassible for even most experienced climbers. Local legends say a ghost-white deer attacks anyone who dares hunt in its forest. A beautiful seashell appears as a young woman with shimmering, iridescent skin. A race horse owned by a sidhe gained sapience and assists the local nobility in their games. An infamous eddy in a whitewater course loves to scare riders on its waters.



## STEREOTYPES



Koakai, the white capped waves of Pe'ahi, shares:

**On Maieutic** — They mean well, but their constant efforts to spread are a little too close to an invasive species.

**On Oppidan** — Of all our brothers and sisters, they're the most difficult to comprehend.

**On Quixotic** — Their Guises are strange, but like us, they perceive what others do not.

**On Kithain** — They destroy Glades without a second thought. I don't trust them.

**On Inanimae** — We understand each other better than so many others. The Gladelings among them are dear friends.

**On Thallain** — They talk about following the laws of the wild, but all they really seem to care about is wanton destruction.



## BLESSINGS

**Animal Intuition** — Bucolic Lycians have an innate understanding of animal thought processes and how they relate to each other. They gain an additional 2 dots of Animal Ken, even if this takes them above 5. Additionally, they can't botch Animal Ken rolls.

**Language of the Wilds** — Everyone has a story to tell; the listener only needs to understand the language. Rocks, trees, and other naturally occurring items are no different. Changelings can interpret bits and phrases with their cantrip Willow Whisper, but Bucolic Lycians are native speakers. By spending a point of Glamour, they may speak to any naturally occurring object for a scene: a river, the wind, a mountain face, a jellyfish. Anything that may awaken as a Bucolic falls under their purview.

## BANE

**From Different Worlds** — Although they are completely at home in the wilderness, Bucolic Lycians find humanity and most changelings absolutely inscrutable. They suffer a +2 difficulty to all social rolls involving mortals and changelings bound to a human body.





# MAIEUTIC

*"We can hit the highway and keep going. Freedom is just ahead of us."*

Maieutic Lycians are born from objects that represent uniquely human concepts: essentially, living memes. Changelings see them as the most competitive of the Lycians, voracious learners who collect any facts or trivia they can find, especially if they can use the knowledge to further the idea they represent. Maieutics love debate and championing their own concepts, taking any opportunity to put the theory they represent into practice, mainly to prove their own idea is superior. They can come off as overbearing, but it's only because of their enthusiasm for what they are. They want to share it with anyone and everyone they come across.

Maieutics who awaken as an unsavory concept find themselves in quite a bind. Their instinct is to spread themselves, but they generally come to realize the hurt they would cause if they did so. Compassionate Maieutics use themselves as teaching opportunities, demonstrating what's wrong with their idea and challenging people to be better. Maieutics with fewer scruples double down on their concept, promoting themselves no matter how many people get hurt in the process. After all, if they weren't worthy to exist and spread, wouldn't some other idea have displaced them by now?

**Lifestyles:** All Maieutics live to be utilized. The more people involved with their Guise, the more confirmation they have of their own self-worth. Major, far-





reaching concepts are often found in mortal institutions that promote their adoption. They provide examples of why the work is important and inspire people to keep marketing the idea. More individual philosophies tend to engage people one-on-one. Often unseen companions on the journey to self-transformation or self-improvement, they're personal keepsakes or mementos that remind people to aspire to higher goals.

**Humanoid:** Humanoid Maieutics work with mortals and changelings hand-in-hand as equals. They take direct action as teachers, helping people learn about the concept their Guise represents. They'll happily be someone's companion on a pilgrimage of self-discovery and offer insight into their philosophy. They even tag along for a short-term ride as someone indulges in their theory. They're not picky; they just want to witness the joy and fulfillment their concept brings. They especially value changelings who are willing to help them spread their message. While they can interact individually with mortals more directly than animals or mythics, they still have difficulty interacting with the Autumn world broadly.

**Animal:** Animal Maieutics lead by their actions. They do their best to exemplify their Guise in all their deeds, believing that showing is far more instructive than telling. They demonstrate how it's possible to live by their ideals—a beacon for others to follow. Animals are loyal companions to anyone who champions their Guise. These Lycians watch out for mortals and endeavor to remove any obstacles from their path so they can live by their ideals. For changelings, animal Maieutics fiercely protect their faerie patrons by any means necessary.

**Mythic:** Mythic Maieutics promote their Guises from afar. They're the unseen benefactors keeping the magic and mystery of their concept alive. Their enigma draws people in with a burning curiosity to learn more. They tantalize with the promise that every question has an answer, but always leave their students wanting more. Dissatisfied philosophers come back hoping to finally figure out the puzzle. While they shun direct contact with mortals, they're more sociable with changelings. Mythics enjoy teaming up with them to play with mortals, setting up the mystery while the changeling feeds people clues. When all goes well, both end up with Glamour from the partnership.

**Example Guises:** The first dollar bill earned by a wealthy business tycoon appears as a giant, encouraging others to work hard in order to reap the rewards of Capitalism. A vintage Mustang calls her owner to experience the freedom of the open road with her. A French statue fights tirelessly for liberty, equality, and fraternity. An old railroad spike awoken by the idea of manifest destiny promotes tourism throughout the United States. A wedding ring that joined two people in true love takes the form of a diamond cat who orchestrates situations that encourage people to confess their feelings for each other.

## STEREOTYPES

Misty, the freedom of the open road, explains:

**On Bucolic** — We appreciate a beautiful vista as much as they do, but they're not interested in discussing its deeper meaning.

**On Oppidan** — We both owe our existence to humanity, but I'd rather live than serve.

**On Quixotic** — So close, but they miss the proverbial trees for the forest.

**On Kithain** — Some are boors, but others enjoy a good debate.

**On Inanimae** — They say we're related dreams, but I just don't see it.

**On Thallain** — We embody everything they want to destroy.

## BLESSINGS

**Know Thyself** — No one knows the concept a Maieutic represents better than the Maieutic himself. Therefore, Maieutics gain a specialization in Academics based on their own Guise. They also gain 2 additional dots in Academics, even if this brings their total above 5. Finally, they cannot botch Academics rolls related to their specialization.

**Spread the Meme** — As a living meme, Maieutics have an innate need to spread their concepts. While they prefer to do so in long term, sustainable ways, they can temporarily compel anyone to follow their ideals. If they touch someone and spend a Glamour point, that person becomes a true believer in the Lycian's concept for a scene. Changelings and other supernatural creatures may oppose this with a Willpower roll, difficulty 7.

## BANE

**Sore Losers** — Maieutic Lycians can't stand to lose a battle of ideas, doubly so if it's their own concept being shut down by a rival. Defeat shakes them badly, degrading their ability to focus on anything until they regain their confidence. If a rival concept is chosen over the Maieutic, she suffers a +2 difficult to all of her rolls until she defeats the concept that shut her down, or performs an action that affirms the value of her own Guise — convincing someone to choose her, or bringing someone understanding. She may spend a Willpower point to focus and ignore the penalty for a turn.



# OPPIDAN

*"Looks like you could use a hand with those Nightmares. Good thing I'm here!"*

Oppidan Lycians are born from artificial objects created by humanity. They have an innate creativity that never fails to impress changelings, finding new angles to problems and hidden solutions to puzzles. There's no physical dilemma they can't work out a way to overcome given enough time. They're the artists and inventors of the Lycians, but while their original works are universally impressive, they love to tinker with and improve things created by humans. They take things apart and put them back together just to see how they work. Oppidans have favorite mediums to work in that vary from Guise to Guise. Stuffed animals tend to work in fabrics and are renowned needle workers, while mechanical Oppidans usually deal in diesel or clockwork contraptions, and those born of woodwork are customarily skilled carpenters.

Of all Lycians, Oppidans tend to have the closest personal relationships with mortals. They're born of the things humans love the most — favorite toys, prized possessions, creations imbued with the pride of their creators. Oppidans are doted upon by their mortal owners, who are rarely aware the object of their affection is actually alive. These Lycians, in turn, love their humans as a child loves a parent.

**Lifestyles:** Oppidans love to be in the thick of things. Wherever mortals gather, at least one of these chimera can be found. They involve themselves in human affairs, making sure things turn up at just the right time or running interference to defuse a conflict. They're incredibly loyal and will do what they can to make sure things run smoothly for people who have earned their trust. They fight with every ounce of strength to protect their human from Nightmares. For their changeling friends, Oppidans are invaluable allies, using their skills to keep equipment in working order and helping changelings overcome whatever obstacles present themselves.

**Humanoid:** Humanoid Oppidans act directly on their human's behalf. They love playing with small children and keeping babies from accidental harm. They patch holes or





mend tears before their person has any idea something is wrong. They even keep household appliances working well past their standard obsolescence. Humanoids are protective of those they care about. Monsters lurking under the bed or hiding in the closet don't stand a chance with an Oppidan on guard duty. They keep anyone who means harm at bay. Mortal intruders are in for a shock when the entire house itself fights back against them.

**Animal:** Animal Oppidans are most in tune with mortals' mental and emotional state. If they like a person, they will be there for her whenever she needs support. They help things run a little more smoothly by placing lost items where she'll find them and keep hallways clear so she doesn't trip. If she's sad, they make sure her favorite mug and the hot chocolate mix are in easy reach. Animals who have been spurned by a person get their revenge in subtle ways. Keys are never where she put them, and clutter always manages to obstruct her path.

**Mythic:** Mythic Oppidans care just as much about the mortals who give them life as other Oppidan Shapes, but they focus more on safeguarding their people from the clutches of Banality and dangerous creatures of the Dreaming. They build elaborate defenses to ward off nightmares and keep hostile changelings away. They create and leave unexplained mysteries and happy coincidences around for their chosen humans' speculation. If they notice their person getting stuck in a rut, they kick him out of it. Mythics might engineer a dead car battery to force their human to use a shared ride service and meet people he wouldn't otherwise. They might cause a power failure to his computer to get him to go outside — whatever it takes to shake up the status quo.

**Example Guises:** A teddy bear ensures her child has nothing but pleasant dreams. An old Vespa saved from the junk store takes the form of a spirited mechanical pony and ensures his rider arrives on time. As long as the handyman uses his favorite tool, an old beat up wrench awakened as an industrious rusty spider, he can fix anything. A wooden phoenix, born from a homemade coffee table built from reclaimed wood, tirelessly keeps the room looking fabulous. The wolf in the wall of a home that's sheltered four generations keeps watch over its family.

## BLESSINGS

**People Person** — Of all the Lycians, Oppidans are most directly born from humanity's dreams and creations, giving

## STEREOTYPES

Ruby, a one-eyed doll, weighs in:

**On Bucolic** — We rarely see eye to eye, but they're able to thrive in places we can't. I can respect that.

**On Maieutic** — They try so hard to control people, but humans have much more potential with a lighter touch.

**On Quixotic** — For a price, they'll be our eyes where we can't see.

**On Kithain** — They can be incredibly helpful. They might also try to use you as a component in something.

**On Inanimae** — I haven't met many, but the ones who call themselves Krofted are a joy.

**On Thallain** — Be careful. They're only interested in using us as weapons.

them unparalleled insight into people. Oppidans receive 2 additional dots of Empathy, even if this raises their Empathy above 5. Additionally, they cannot botch Empathy rolls when reading humans, changelings, or chimera bound to a human.

**Ghost in the Machine** — As humanity's creations, Oppidans have an innate understanding of anything built by human ingenuity. By spending a point of Glamour and touching an object, they fully understand how it works and what, if anything, is malfunctioning. The difficulty of any roll involving the object is reduced by 1. This ability lasts for a scene.

## BANE

**Separation Anxiety** — Oppidans feel lost without people or their creations around. Each day that passes without seeing a person or one of their creations (besides themselves) reduces the Oppidan's Willpower by a point. When her Willpower is reduced to 0, overwhelming panic sets in. All rolls suffer a +2 difficulty until she sets eyes on a person or object, which steadies her again.





# IXO-

age in this city, even those obs  
 ould you like me to show you?"

Would you like me to show you?"

incorporeal being may travel.

so too does the Quixotic.

renewing the registration





on their website. Whatever the cost, both parties come away from the deal satisfied.

**Humanoid:** Humanoid Quixotics love gossip and secrets. They're information hunters lying in wait for their prey to start talking. Humanoid Quixotics blend better into a room than a fly on the wall. It takes a keen mind and careful attention to detail to realize a Quixotic is hiding nearby. The insubstantial permeates every aspect of modern society, so they have nearly limitless places to hide. Backroom deals, clandestine trysts — nothing escapes their sight. They love joining boggan gossip sessions around the balefire, and certain humanoid Quixotics are even invited to High Tea with prominent sluagh. Less sociable humanoids might prefer to sell their knowledge to the highest bidder.

**Animal:** Animal Quixotics are exuberant explorers, searching out all the nooks and crannies in their cities. Secret places can't stay hidden long with these chimera on the prowl. No one knows the local Near Dreaming as well as an animal Quixotic who's spent a little time there, and they're the first to volunteer as guides for changeling expeditions into the Dreaming. Their ability to vanish comes in handy on their adventures: few beings enjoy having their hideouts uncovered and their secrets exposed, so animal Quixotics often need to make a quick and daring escape.

**Mythic:** Mythic Quixotics explore the greater mysteries of the world. How do people create Glamour? What is the origin of Banality? Where do the Mists come from? Is there a way to reconnect Arcadia and Earth? Mythics follow every rumor, explore every lead, and tirelessly hunt down any scrap of lore they can find relating to the riddle they're attempting to solve. So far, few have solved their primary question. As a result, they pursue answers to other, less interesting questions along the way toward the ultimate prize they seek. Their efforts in conjunction with those of faerie scholars have upended old assumptions and forced changelings to re-examine their own history with critical eyes.

**Example Guises:** An electric dragon born from one of the last independent radio broadcasts soars over the city, promoting up-and-coming local musicians. An annual science fiction and fantasy convention awakened as a daring explorer and now brings its unique flavor of heroism to the dreams of local children. A niche website delves into the digital realms as a binary fox. A story passed among friends and never written down is a local gossip, always with some new, ever more outlandish tale to tell. The memory of a girl's grandmother still watches out for her.

## BLESSINGS

**Secrets Can't Hide** — Quixotic Lycians don't need much information to solve a riddle or figure out a mystery

## STEREOTYPES

Romana, the GPS coordinates of Rome, divulges:

**On Bucolic** — What you see is what you get.

**On Maieutic** — Their singlemindedness is both incredibly helpful and incredibly obnoxious.

**On Oppidan** — With their penchant for creation, we could do so much together.

**On Kithain** — I haven't been here long, but I already know more than they do about the role they'll soon play.

**On Inanimae** — They seem nice, but there's something they're not telling us.

**On Thallain** — They're the key to something important. I just don't know what yet.



that's right in front of them. They have an affinity for the unseen which leads them to the correct conclusion. Quixotics gain an additional 2 dots of Enigmas even if this raises their Enigmas rating above 5. Additionally, they can't botch Enigmas rolls.

**Hiding in Thin Air** — Quixotic Lycians are born of intangible objects, but are as solid as any other chimera. Under the right circumstances, they may become truly intangible themselves. By spending a point of Glamour and a point of Willpower they may enter something nearby that contains their particular Guise — a story, a video game, a memory, etc. While in the object, they can't affect the tangible world, but nothing tangible can physically interact with them, either. They become a part of the intangible object as unobtrusively as possible. For example, they can enter a video game as a new character, but they can't alter the gameplay or storyline. This effect lasts for one scene.

## BANE

**Fade Away** — Quixotic Guises offer more protection from Banality than most chimera have, but it isn't as much as most Lycians receive. Not only are Quixotic Guises insubstantial, they're also less permanent than other Guises. Quixotics just don't have the same life expectancy of other Lycians. Whenever they suffer a Banality trigger, the roll to resist gains a +2 difficulty.



# CHARACTER CREATION

Lycians, despite being self-aware, intelligent, and capable of self-determination, are not fully fae. Where the Kithain and the Gallain are keepers and guardians of the Dreaming, chimera are manifestations of specific dreams born of it. They are more constrained by the choices they're able to make. Unlike changelings, chimera are ruled by their dream. Chimerical existence is fleeting, quickly erased by Banality outside the Dreaming. Lycians are harder than the average chimera, but they're still chimera. The Lycian condition is fundamentally different from that of changelings. Their Traits are modified to reflect their experience.

Creating a Lycian character largely follows the same process as laid out in **Changeling: The Dreaming 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition**, pg. 140. The differences are detailed below.

Trait	Cost
Abilities	2 points per dot
Attributes	5 points per dot
Backgrounds	1 point per dot
Glamour	3 points per dot
Merits	Merit rating in points
Redes	Chimera points x 2
Willpower	2 points per dot

Trait	Cost
Attribute	Current rating x4
Ability	Current rating x 2
New Ability	3
Rede	Chimera points x 5
Willpower	Current rating x 2
Glamour	Current rating x 3

## SHAPE AND GUISE

Lycians don't have Seemings or kiths. Instead, they choose Shapes and Guises respectively. Shapes are described on p. 149. Their systems are as follows:

- ⑤ **Humanoid:** Humanoid Lycians begin with +1 Willpower at character creation. They do not suffer a Banality trigger from a mortal witnessing their Guise doing something impossible.

- ⑤ **Animal:** Animal Lycians may begin with either +1 Willpower or +1 Glamour. They may use their Nightmare Legacy to ignore the Ban on their primary Legacy without gaining a point of Nightmare.

- ⑤ **Mythic:** Mythic Lycians begin with +1 Glamour at character creation. They gain an additional point of Glamour when gaining Glamour through their Legacies.

Lycian Guises are described on p. 149. Characters receive the Blessings and Bane that correspond to their Guise.

## THESIS

A Lycian's Thesis, along with her Shape and Guise, is the core of her being. Where her Guise is the object she is born from and her Shape is the form she takes, the Thesis is the defining dream which gave her life. It is the core of her personality from which her Legacies are derived. A Lycian's Thesis should be a one to two sentence statement that embodies her calling. It should be concise and clear. It will determine the situations she may safely participate in and those which she should avoid, or at least enter into knowing that they're dangerous for her. Examples include:

- ⑤ *Provider of love and security from that which lurks in the dark.*
- ⑤ *A being of mystery protecting wildlife.*
- ⑤ *A shelter from the storm.*
- ⑤ *Exhilaration and freedom that only the open skies may bring.*
- ⑤ *Specialized information provided freely to all who know how to find it.*

## LEGACIES

Just like changelings, a Lycian's Legacies determine the archetype he plays in the story of his life and allow him to regain Willpower. Also like changelings, all Lycians have two Legacies — a primary and a secondary. Both Legacies are rooted in the Lycian's Thesis. The primary Legacy is always a standard Seelie or Unseelie Legacy. This one should complement the Thesis. The secondary Legacy, however, is a Nightmare Legacy. This one somehow twists or is a mockery of the Thesis. His primary Legacy guides him, while his secondary Legacy constantly tempts him.

Unlike changelings, a Lycian's secondary Legacy is not a moderating factor. It haunts him, always whispering how liberating it would be or how much easier life would get if he just let go and embraced the Nightmare. Lycians are able to regain Willpower through either their primary or secondary Legacy at any time. Gaining Willpower through the Nightmare Legacy comes at a cost, though, as detailed below. Wise Lycians put those thoughts out of their mind,



although animal Lycians are able to touch their Nightmare side without it controlling them.

## NIGHTMARE

Lycians have a Nightmare rating just like changelings, though Lycian Nightmare doesn't track their descent into madness as they don't have a human half susceptible to Bedlam. Instead, Nightmare is their path to becoming nightmare chimera. Nightmare lurks beneath the surface of all Lycians, and the danger of becoming twisted mockeries of themselves is equally great no matter their Guise. Bucolics turn into feral chimera. Maieutics descend into nocnitsa. Oppidans warp into nervosa. And fallen Quixotics become urban legends. Once a Lycian fully turns into a nightmare, it's almost impossible to traverse road back. The only known Lycians to regain their sense of self have had help from changelings. Lycians gain Nightmare points by:

- ⑤ Using their Nightmare Legacy to ignore the Ban on their Primary Legacy (except animal Lycians).
- ⑤ Gaining Willpower through their Nightmare Legacy.
- ⑤ Gaining Glamour through their Nightmare Legacy.
- ⑤ Accepting Glamour from a Thallain or an Adhene under the influence of its Nightmare Legacy.
- ⑤ Spending a Glamour point from an Imbalanced Glamour dot.
- ⑤ Gaining Glamour from a Thallain freehold.
- ⑤ Consuming a nightmare chimera for Glamour.
- ⑤ Spending extended time in a Nightmare Realm of the Dreaming.

Once a Lycian gains 10 Nightmare points, all the points are erased, and they gain an Imbalance. Unlike changelings, the Imbalance is applied to the Lycian's Glamour, not Willpower. Any Glamour dots that are Imbalanced may only hold Glamour points gained by way of Nightmare — through the Nightmare Legacy, from a Thallain gift or a Thallain freehold, etc. Glamour gained through Nightmare generates even more Nightmare, pushing the Lycian further downward on the spiral to becoming a nightmare chimera. Once all of a Lycian's Glamour dots become Imbalanced, she turns into a Nightmare herself. Her Legacies switch places, and her Thesis is rewritten to befit a creature of Nightmare. At this point, the Lycian is best suited to be an NPC than a player's character.

Removing Nightmare points is difficult, but worthwhile for Lycians who wish to avoid gaining an Imbalance. When they gain Glamour through their primary Legacy, they may choose to erase a Nightmare point for each point of Glamour they would have gained. They may not spend

Glamour points to erase Nightmare after the Glamour has entered their Glamour pool.

Removing an Imbalance is even more costly for a Lycian. If a Lycian is suffering from Imbalance, though, it's the only way to avoid becoming a nightmare. Doing so requires a sacrifice and an extreme act of will on the Lycian's part. She may choose to erase a Willpower dot in order to remove an Imbalance. Only one Imbalance may be removed for each Willpower dot spent.

## GLAMOUR

Lycians need Glamour to survive the same way changelings do, but they utilize it differently. Lycians don't have cantrips to cast and they can't innately enchant mortals or invoke the Wyrd. Instead, they must either learn the appropriate Redes or convince a changeling to do it for them. Lycians primarily use Glamour to activate their Redes and power their Blessings.

As chimera, Lycians' options for gathering Glamour are more limited as well. They can't follow the paths to epiphany open to changelings, although certain Redes may approximate the process. Redes may even allow for methods of gathering Glamour inaccessible to changelings, but first the Lycian must learn the Rede. Ignoring Redes, the options available to Lycians for acquiring Glamour are:

- ⑤ Finding dross.
- ⑤ Spending time in a glade or freehold.

## REAPING

Lycians have another option for gaining Glamour. It's a terrible method rumored to be accessible only to Thallain and Adhene. The rumors are true, but Lycians can participate as well thanks to their Nightmare Legacy. Thallain call it "Reaping," and it is a process of gathering Glamour by killing mortals.

Simple murder isn't enough to draw the Glamour out. The victim must either be scared to death or driven to suicide. As the person is dying, the Reaper rolls her Glamour rating, difficulty 5. Success fills the character's Glamour pool as she devours the mortal's potential. Botching results in an automatic Banality trigger.

A Lycian who indulges in Reaping gains an Imbalance for each Reaping, even if she gains no Glamour in the attempt. Additionally, she suffers a Banality trigger as normal if her victim is a Dreamer.





- ⑤ Being gifted Glamour by a changeling.
- ⑤ Consuming a chimera for Glamour.
- ⑤ Gaining Glamour through a Legacy.

Lycians are all inspirational objects. The Glamour they accumulated over their existence is what brought them to life. Awakened, they can continue to inspire people and gain Glamour from doing so. To generate Glamour through inspiration, a Lycian uses his Legacy. He must convince a person to fulfill the Quest or Urge of one of the Lycian's Legacies. If the chimera's actions result in the mortal succeeding, that mortal gains Willpower as though she fulfilled the Quest of her own Legacy thanks to being inspired. The Lycian gains Glamour points from the person's inspiration equal to the number of Willpower points she received.

## BANALITY

Lycians are vulnerable to all Banality triggers that affect changelings, and Banality operates virtually the same for Lycians as it does changelings, as their Guises offer them more protection against the icy touch of Banality than their vulnerable, ephemeral chimeric siblings.

Lycians do not have an Antithesis to counter their Thesis, but gain two additional Banality triggers instead:

- ☾ Taking an action that is impossible for their Guise to accomplish in front of an unenchanted mortal (except humanoid Lycians).
- ☾ Contradicting their Thesis.

If a Lycian takes any action or involves herself in any situation that goes against her Thesis, she suffers a Banality trigger. For instance, if a Lycian has the Thesis "protector of children," any action of hers that results in a child being harmed earns her a Banality trigger. Additionally, standing idly by as someone else's actions have an adverse effect on a child also results in her receiving a Banality trigger. Even leaving the scene when she suspects someone is about to harm a child results in a Banality trigger. Those actions, including inaction, clearly contradict her Thesis.

Thanks to their Guise, Lycians may Invoke the



Autumn just like changelings. The system for doing so is located in **Changeling: The Dreaming 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition**, pg. 271. For the duration that Autumn is invoked, the Lycian retreats into her Guise and is limited to only the actions her Guise is capable of performing.

Lycians shed Banality points the same way changelings do. When they receive a Glamour point, they may immediately spend it to remove a Banality point. Glamour points already in a Lycian's Glamour pool cannot be spent in such a manner. Banality points may only be removed at the moment a Lycian gains Glamour points. Removing permanent Banality is a much more arduous and painful process for Lycians. Lycians can't quest to remove Banality like changelings. The only way for them to remove Banality that infects their soul is to cut out the infection. They may sacrifice a Glamour dot to remove one Banality dot. Once Banality digs its icy claws into a Lycian's heart, the only way to be free of it is to excise the tainted portion of herself.

## Health

Lycian health levels operate the same way as changeling health levels. Their Guises are inanimate objects, though, which allows them soak lethal damage from Autumn sources. If they are killed by chimerical damage, they retreat into their Guise for a duration determined by the Mists Chart in **Changeling: The Dreaming 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition**, pg. 269. If a Lycian's Guise is destroyed by mundane means, then the Lycian is killed permanently. A Lycian and his Guise are one and the same, so they share the same health track.

As a chimerical being, a Lycian can't exist without Glamour. If his Glamour dots are ever reduced to 0, the Lycian dissipates into nothingness, permanently killed. Likewise, a Lycian who gains 10 dots of Banality has his Glamour destroyed and is also killed permanently. Lycians cannot soak damage from cold iron.

## Backgrounds

Not all changeling Backgrounds are appropriate for Lycian characters. The Dreaming forbids chimera from owning freeholds, so they may not take the Holdings Background. Likewise, faeries are lords of the Dreaming, so chimera, including Lycians, may not have dots in Title. Finally, Lycians only have one life to live, so they are ineligible for the Remembrance Background. Lycians do, however, have access to certain new Backgrounds.

### Allies

When she's caught between a rock and a hard place, a character can always count on her Allies to lend a hand. They may be family, friends, lovers, or even an entire organization the character is on good terms with. Allies are people the character trusts and who also trusts her. When

she is in need they will do their best to provide assistance, but they are not infallible. Sometimes the best they can do is point her to someone else the Allies know. Occasionally, they may run into troubles of their own and call on her for help. They are friends, after all.

Allies may be taken by changelings as well as Lycians and pooled among the characters.

- You have one ally of moderate influence.
- You know two allies of moderate power.
- You can call upon three allies, one of whom is quite influential.
- You are friends with four allies, one of whom is very powerful.
- Five allies have your back, at least one of whom is extremely influential.

### Changeling Companion

The Lycian has a changeling friend he trusts completely. His Companion might be a Kithain or one of the Gallain. Either way, they're seldom far from one another. The chimera trusts the changeling to watch his back, help him gather Glamour, and even lend a hand with the upkeep of his Guise. The changeling relies on the Lycian for the occasional odd job, usually things where the changeling doesn't want to arouse the suspicion of mortals. The Lycian is happy to help. They're close friends, and the assistance the changeling provides the character is invaluable.

- You're friends with a weak changeling who only rarely has Glamour to spare.
- Your changeling is moderately powerful and can provide Glamour occasionally.
- You know a strong changeling who gives you a steady supply of Glamour.
- Your friend is influential and lets you use her freehold whenever you need.
- Your changeling friend is extremely powerful with an almost limitless supply of Glamour.

## Merits and Flaws

Lycians have access to any Merits and Flaws that make sense for the character. For instance, a Merit like Ambidextrous would be fine for a humanoid Lycian, but it would be of little use to an animal Lycian with no hands. Lycians also have access to their own unique Merits and Flaws. Any Merits or Flaws are subject to the Storyteller's approval.

### Clever Guise (5 pt. Merit)

Normally, the Mists prevent a Lycian from interacting with the Autumn realm while in the presence of high Banality (8+). Your Guise is such that your actions can easily be rationalized away by even the most Banal people. You may continue to act normally, even with a high Banality



witness. However, any actions taken with an unenchanted witness that would be blatantly impossible for your Guise to accomplish are subject to a Banality trigger as normal.

### Stuck in Place (3 pt. Flaw)

Some Guises have an easier time moving around than others. Certain Guises, such as a timber oak tree, a house, or a city park, are impossible to move. These Lycians are stuck where they awakened, unable to do much more than survey their surroundings or interact with things in their immediate vicinity. You have the unfortunate luck of having such a Guise. Lycians developed Two Places at Once to get around this limitation, but until you learn it, you can't venture away from your place of birth.

## LYCIAN REDES

Lycians don't have access to the flexibility of changeling Arts and Realms or the raw power of Unleashing. They must use Redes for their magic like any other chimera. Still, Lycians have certain concerns that don't affect traditional chimera. To address these concerns, they developed a few of their own, unique Redes.

Instead of Arts or Realms, beginning Lycian characters receive 5 chimera points to spend on Redes. They may choose from any Redes found in **Changeling: The Dreaming 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition** (pg. 321), this book, or **Dreams and Nightmares** (pg. 122). If a Rede in **Dreams and Nightmares** has been reprinted, the newer version supersedes it.

### Two Places at Once

The Lycian's Shape may act independently of her Guise. While her Shape is off doing things, the Guise appears as it would without a chimerical quality. Only through Kenning can anyone tell the Guise is something special. If the Lycian releases the invested Glamour point that fuels the Rede, her Shape immediately snaps back to wherever her Guise is currently located.

**Chimera Point Cost:** 2

**Use Cost:** 1 Glamour point invested

### Healthy

Some Lycians are just built tougher than others. His Guise might be made of an exceptionally hard material, or it might be incredibly large and therefore able to withstand more punishment. In any case, a Healthy Lycian has more health levels than most beings. Each purchase of Healthy provides an additional health level. The kind of health level determines the chimera point cost. A -5 health level costs 1, a -2 health level costs 2, a -1 health level costs 3, and a Bruised health level costs 4.

**Chimera Point Cost:** Varies

**Use Cost:** None

## Revelry

These Lycians have discovered the secret to Kithain Revelry. They are able to embody their dream so fully that they gain Glamour directly from the Dreaming. First, they must spend a Willpower point to establish a connection to the Dreaming. Then they must perform some course of action that exemplifies their Thesis. If they succeed in their task, they gain enough Glamour to fill their Glamour pool. This Rede may only be used once per story. Players should work with their Storyteller to determine the kind of action that would work as a Revelry for their character.

**Chimera Point Cost:** 5

**Use Cost:** 1 Willpower point

## LYCIANS OF NOTE

Lycians have existed for less than twenty years. In that short time, they've already made an impact on chimerical and changeling society. Some travel with changelings, while others prefer independence. All are poised to transform the world around them.

## KOAKAI

The waves of Pe'ahi beach attract surfers from all over the world. They're not for the novice or the faint of heart, but for those who are experienced and know what they're doing, there's nothing else like it. Their thrill brought Koakai to life. He loves the surfers who ride his waves, but he'll never go easy on anyone just because they're new. It's not in his nature. Besides, he knows the danger is what attracts so many people to him. If he settled down, people would no longer seek him out. He has been known to occasionally assist surfers in trouble back to shore, but does so discreetly, leaving mortals none the wiser. Only other children of dream are aware of his helping hand.

Since his awakening, local Menehune have invited him to participate in their society. They see him and other Bucolic Lycians on the Hawaiian Islands as a sign their dreams are regaining ground. Koakai joins them for their festivals and politely attends their rites. He saw the huaka'i po march recently, and the dread he felt makes him wonder if he should be more involved with the Menehune despite sometimes feeling lost around them. Still, his first love is crashing into Maui's shore and the sense of wonder it brings in those who experience it.

**Guise:** Bucolic (the white capped waves of Pe'ahi, Maui)

**Shape:** Mythic (Kupua)

**Thesis:** The exhilaration and danger of nature's awesome force.



**Legacies:** Peacock/Alpha

**Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3, Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

**Abilities:** Alertness 2, Athletics 4, Brawl 3, Intimidation 4, Kenning 1, Leadership 1, Animal Ken 5, Etiquette 2, Performance 1, Survival 3, Enigmas 2, Gremayre 2, Investigation 1

**Backgrounds:** Dreamers (Surfers) 4, Allies (Menehune) 2

**Glamour:** 5

**Willpower:** 4

**Banality:** 3

**Redes:** Ensnare, Healthy, Two Places at Once

**Flaws:** Recruitment Target (Thallain)

**Health Levels:** OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

## Misty

Misty's current owner is the only one she's known while she's been alive. He learned to drive with her. He took her on all of his high school adventures. When he left for university, she brought him out there and got him home safe again. She was a basket case back then – rusty floorboards, holes in the roof, and brakes that constantly leaked. But he kept her running, and she looked out for him. If he had a date Misty didn't approve of, she would refuse to start. Sometimes, she wouldn't even let the door close until they gave up. Once when he was in trouble, she started up before he even got the key in the ignition.

Eventually, he took her apart and totally restored her from the ground up. It took a few years, and there were times she was afraid she'd never be on the road again. When he was finished, she felt as young as the day she left the factory. She couldn't wait for the new adventures they'd have! They went on a few, but then the baby arrived. Now her owner only takes her to the occasional car show. She used to feel so superior to the trailer queens. She actually got driven! Now, she sits while rust starts to encroach again, wishing to once more feel her tires hugging the road with a friend behind her wheel.

**Guise:** Maieutic (a vintage Mustang symbolizing freedom of the open road)

**Shape:** Humanoid

**Thesis:** To get people where they're going and have fun doing it.

**Legacies:** Wayfarer/Parasite

**Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4, Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

**Abilities:** Alertness 1, Athletics 3, Expression 4, Streetwise 3, Crafts 3, Drive 5, Etiquette 2, Performance 3, Academics 4, Law 1, Technology 2

**Backgrounds:** Dreamers (Owner) 2, Contacts 3

**Glamour:** 4

**Willpower:** 5

**Banality:** 3

**Redes:** Revelry, Scuttle

**Health Levels:** OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

## ROMANA

All roads lead to Rome, and Romana is the signpost pointing the way. Just as the original she-wolf of Rome did thousands of years ago, she faithfully nurtures the people of her city. Tourists, residents, freight, and airlines all rely on her. She knows every thoroughfare, side street, and back alley in the city. She's constantly on the prowl, looking for new places that spring up or locations she might have missed. She can't be everywhere at once, so occasionally she misses things. Still, no one else on Earth or in the Dreaming has as complete a picture of what exists in Rome.

The changelings of her city took notice of her after the Evanescence. She knows all the safest routes around Rome in the Autumn world or the Near Dreaming. Wise fae seek her out as a guide when they're about to go into unfamiliar territory. Though she refuses to accept payment for her help, Seelie and Unseelie alike leave offerings and tribute to her in thanks. She gratefully accepts their donations of Glamour, which enable her to spend less time pursuing sustenance and more time exploring.

**Guise:** Quixotic (the GPS coordinates of Rome)

**Shape:** Animal (wolf)

**Thesis:** A guiding light to show the way.

**Legacies:** Sage/Gatekeeper

**Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

**Abilities:** Alertness 3, Kenning 1, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 2, Stealth 3, Survival 2, Academics 2, Enigmas 5, Gremayre 3, Investigation 3, Law 1, Science 1

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 3, Resources 2

**Glamour:** 5

**Willpower:** 4

**Banality:** 3

**Redes:** Befuddle, Sense Banality, Traverse Dreaming

**Health Levels:** OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated



## Companions

Humans have an amazing ability to bond with animals and even objects. An adopted mutt becomes a beloved member of the family, a sleepy, fat pony the trusted confidante of a quiet child. Someone might even have a favorite teacup, a printer that clearly hates her and refuses to print at critical times, or a blanket that helps with emotional healing. If she's a changeling, that teacup she loves just might love her back, talking to her — "*Oooh is that jasmine? I love jasmine tea!*" — or appearing at her side when she feels disheartened, her favorite blends perfectly brewed to her taste.

A changeling often meets her first chimera shortly before her Chrysalis. Her fae nature, though still dormant, lets her see that the cat resting on the tin roof is really a lion, and her neighbor's toy sword is a magnificent gem-studded scimitar. Seeing is not necessarily *believing*, however. A changeling still awaiting her Dream Dance might tell herself it's all in her head, despite her instinctual desire to accept them as truth. Despite this often disorienting first introduction to chimera, changelings usually come to appreciate and rely on their company. The changeling and her companion share a unique position together: one foot in the Autumn world, the other in the Dreaming.

Most importantly, a changeling's bonded chimerical companion is always there for her. Her motley may be close to her heart, but they remain individuals with their own goals and agendas which may not coincide with her own. In contrast, her companion sticks with her through thick and thin, their lives tied together in a relationship reinforced by the Dreaming itself. This bond is layered and complex, containing a vast well of loyalty and support: a partnership where both parties are invested in the other's dreams. Her enemies can take her talking sword and ward her prison to keep them apart, but once she escapes, she's sure to find it nearby.

The companion frequently works towards the changeling's goals instead of their own, but this does not mean the chimera is a servant, or the changeling its master. If a chimera feels abused, neglected, or unduly exploited by its bond partner, it may choose to sever the bond. Tales have also been recorded of chimeras acting against their changeling's express orders, but in her best interest: a famous legend details the owl chimera Iseult, who betrayed her knight Tristan's motley in order to save him — Tristan alone lived, even if he hasn't acknowledged Iseult since.

Changelings keep chimera nearby to alleviate loneliness, serve as an extra pair of paws, or give them guidance. Being mortal once — excepting the Arcadian sidhe — their motives are much the same as humans who keep pets, animals of labor, and cherished tools. The motivation of the chimera is more nebulous. Few ever discuss it — either they have no way to put their loyalty into words, or they simply don't feel like talking about it. Most commonly, however, they seem to feel more *real* in the presence of a changeling. A nutcracker soldier sprung from a child's imagination might feel itself fading as the boy grows up, until one day the changeling *sees* him and now he's good as new! A bored winged faerie finds that guiding the changeling through the Deep Dreaming to Neverland is the most interesting thing she's done in year, and their growing bond fills her with renewed passion. A chimera certainly can exist without a changeling in its life, but it's simply better with one of them around.

Often, a changeling forges her own companion, creating it from the powerful dreamstuff of her Chrysalis, flavored with her fears and hopes, and influenced by the environment of the nearby Dreaming — a horse if she went through her Dream Dance staying at her grandparents' farm, or an otter if she did so at the local zoo. Sometimes, she subconsciously calls an existing chimera from the nearby or far Dreaming. No matter how companions meet their partners, they are equally loyal and invested in her wellbeing.





## Chrysalis Guides

Many changelings see chimera in the days or weeks leading up their Chrysalis, and these persistent creatures often get nascent changelings in trouble. Uneducated in navigating the divide between the Autumn and chimerical worlds, the changeling has no way to interpret what she's seeing. She senses, *knows*, it's real, but where does that leave her?

Can everyone see it? If she is clever, she decides not to tell anyone about the chimera. If she





## FERAL CHIMERA

Abandoned companions face a number of fates. Many go feral, becoming hostile to changelings and intent on their own survival. A few go dormant, sleeping away centuries unless someone or something disturbs their slumber. Some simply stop existing. And rumor has it that some even become Lycians, due to the strength of their need to find their way and their place in the world.

The lucky ones find a new friend to bond with. These are often the most complex relationships, fraught with tension as the chimera acts how its former owner taught it to: it prefers direct attacks, when its new friend prefers it be stealthy. If the pair sticks together long enough, their bond is likely to become one of the most rewarding relationships either of them will ever forge.

is young enough, her parents might believe her tale little more than a harmless imaginary friend. Older Kithain must think fast to explain why they're talking to creatures only they can see, and even children potentially face additional scrutiny from worried adults.

Stories of Chrysalis guides abound in both Kithain lore and human literature. Two of the more famous of these are the White Rabbit and Cheshire Cat depicted in *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*. They work to facilitate a changeling's Dream Dance, whether or not the changeling wants its assistance. Some of these guides are belligerent at best, or antagonistic at worst. One such chimera, captured by an angry nocker immediately after his Chrysalis, claimed it was sent to help him through the Dream Dance, though the creature refused to elaborate on why or by whom.

## BONDING: GAME MECHANICS

The bond between changeling and chimera is represented mechanically by investing dots in the Chimera Background. This doesn't mean a player can simply purchase the rating, apply it to the hippogriff defending the mountain pass and have his character demand the chimera let them pass. Rather, the character cleverly negotiates with or persuades the hippogriff to grant them passage. Intrigued by his cleverness, the hippogriff follows the changeling and becomes increasingly impressed by his deeds — and eventually, it begins to help out. At this point, the player

may choose to purchase Background dots, representing the new bond with the hippogriff.

Likewise, if the hippogriff abandons the character because he forcibly sacrificed its wings to the Fomori, the Chimera Background is lost and the points returned (or suspended while the character makes amends). It's also perfectly fine for a player to declare at character creation that they have a chimerical companion and purchase the dots then, but the narrative of their relationship must match the Background. A villain might find ways to force a chimera into servitude, with binding spells or by holding its offspring hostage, but this is considered beyond the pale for even many of the Unseelie courts — chimera are part of the Dreaming, and should be treated with respect.

Once a player has invested the dots, he gets to decide what the chimera is like and how the relationship between their character and the companion works. The Storyteller can and should build on this, but any decisions ultimately belong to the player. It's also up to him to decide if he wants to play the chimera, effectively making the creature an extension of the changeling, or if the Storyteller should take charge of the companion to reinforce the chimera as a more separate entity.

A player who deliberately wants to relinquish control because he wants to see how the narrative unfolds, or a Storyteller looking to add a quick Companion Background, can use the following lists to create a chimera companion.

## ORIGINS

*"Ye're asking where Snowball McPaws and I met? Well, lemme tell ya..."*

- ☉ **Chrysalis:** The changeling dreamed a new chimera or called an existing one (player's choice) during his Chrysalis
- ☉ **Chaperone:** The chimera decided to watch over the changeling, who gets no say in this. Perhaps a mysterious benefactor assigned it this task.
- ☉ **Crafted:** The chimera was specifically crafted for or by the changeling. This is a mark of great prestige.
- ☉ **Hired:** The changeling encountered the chimera on a journey and pays it (in goods, services, Glamour, or money) for its assistance.
- ☉ **Stolen:** The changeling liberated the chimera from its previous owner. While the chimera much prefers its current companion, it has lingering emotions (either the last vestiges of loyalty, or a desire for revenge) for the previous one.
- ☉ **Tamed:** The changeling tamed a previously feral chimera. This is a mark of skill and dedication, and is often seen as an omen that the changeling will heal part of the Dreaming.



## ATTITUDE

*"You want me to ask the dragon to back off? I don't care if it claims to be mine – it's gonna eat me!"*

- ⑤ • **Curmudgeon:** The chimera might ultimately do as it's told, but it gripes and complains all the way.
- ⑤ • **Chatty:** The chimera loves to talk, to anyone. In fact, there was this one time when it met the Duke of Neheran, and he gave it a tasty treat, and then it accidentally spilled the beans on the situation with the Freehold, and then....
- ⑤ • **Jealous:** This chimera adores the changeling but is fiercely jealous of his relationship to the motley and any other changelings he meets.
- ⑤ • **Patronizing:** *Of course* the chimera will do as asked, but has the changeling considered that it's really older and wiser than he is, and therefore it simply knows better?
- ⑤ • **Protective:** This chimera was born to be a bodyguard, whether the changeling wants to be protected or not.
- ⑤ • **Whisperer:** This counselor doesn't necessarily speak in a whisper, but it does always dispense advice – some of it good, some of it bad.

## COMPLICATION

*"So, here's a thing about Brum that you probably need to know...."*

- ⑤ • **Divided Loyalty:** The chimera is bonded to two changelings. The second changeling is not hostile to the character (though she may be to the rest of the motley) but does have her own agenda. The two changelings must work out a custodial arrangement between them.
- ⑤ • **Enemy:** The chimera has an ancient enemy (or if newly dreamed during the Chrysalis, is about to make one) who seeks its destruction, and the changeling must defeat or otherwise placate this hostile force.
- ⑤ • **Fading:** The chimera is slowly disappearing, perhaps because its original Dreamer is dying or because someone cast draining magic on it. The changeling must find the cause and heal the chimera. If the player agrees to it, this is represented mechanically by suspending a few more of the Chimera's traits at a time, as time passes. Without the player's consent, however, the fade remains purely narrative.
- ⑤ • **Half-Formed:** The chimera is missing parts of itself, and the changeling must go on a quest to make it whole. This may be represented mechanically, if the player chooses to do so, by purchasing and spending additional Chimera Background dots at the end of the quest.

- ⑤ • **Treasure:** The chimera was sworn to protect a treasure, which it either carries with it or has hidden somewhere. This treasure does not belong to the changeling (though the narrative could allow the player to purchase it with the Treasure Background later) and attracts thieves or other trouble.

- ⑤ • **Twin:** The chimera has an identical twin. Each always knows where the other is, and they occasionally switch bodies. The player chooses if the twin belongs to a friend, lover, or enemy of his character, or to another as-of-yet unknown NPC.

## NEW REDES

The chimera and their powers come in endless variations. This section offers several new Redes to use in a game.

### BARGAINER'S BOND

The chimera strikes a deal as it normally would, using Expression, Intimidation, or any other means the Storyteller allows. The chimera may not tell an outright lie in the making of this bargain, however, nor may it use supernal powers of persuasion or coercion. Once the bargain is made, the chimera and its partner 'shake on it' – this can be an actual handshake, a kiss, the exchange of a token, or any symbolic act of sealing the deal. Neither may renege on the deal, and each temporarily loses a dot of Glamour at nightfall on days one did not take steps towards fulfilling his, her, or its end of the deal. This Rede cannot be ended prematurely, but lost Glamour returns once the bargain is completed.

**Chimera Point Cost:** 7

**Use Cost:** 1 Willpower (invested until the bargain is done), plus 1 Glamour per bargainer.

### BREATH

The chimera makes a ranged attack to envelop its victims in a breath weapon. The victims must make a successful Stamina roll (difficulty 8) or suffer debilitating effects, such as paralysis (one minute per point of Glamour used), pain (one minute of wound penalties a category higher than the victim's current health track per point of Glamour invested), and auditory or visual hallucinations (one minute per point of Glamour invested). *Alternately*, the breath weapon may add direct damage to the initial attack in the form of a toxic cloud, arched lighting, or fire (1 health level per point of Glamour spent in addition to any spent for debilitating effects).

The chimera can envelop *up to* its Glamour rating of enemies in its breath, but must pay the Glamour cost for each target separately.



**Chimera Point Cost:** 3 for Breath that inflicts a debilitating effect, 5 for Breath that inflicts aggravated damage. Each must be purchased separately.

**Use Cost:** varies (see description)

## CROWN OF GLORY

The chimera's presence adds an air of gravitas to one changeling of its choice. The chimera could be a grand lion standing at the changeling's side, a jeweled crown, or a snake draped around her neck and repeating her words in honey-tongued whispers. For the remainder of the scene, the changeling cannot make an accidental faux-pas (she cannot botch social rolls to impress people) and adds the chimera's Glamour rating to rolls to appear regal, such as Etiquette while affecting the air of a queen (though not of a mere courtier), Oration, or Leadership.

**Chimera Point Cost:** 3

**Use Cost:** 1 Willpower + 1 Glamour per scene.

## DREAMWEAVING

The chimera can enter the dreams of a sleeping target by rolling Manipulation + Crafts with a specialization in Dreams against a difficulty of the target's Willpower. Dreamweaving becomes increasingly easy against the same target, and the difficulty drops by -1 for each successful Dreamweaving the chimera performs against her.

For the remainder of the dream scene, the chimera can shape and direct its target's dream. It can make them nightmares, in which case the dreamer gains no benefit, such as regaining Willpower, from sleeping and begins to suffer fatigue. Pleasant dreams, however, grant an extra +1 Willpower upon waking and can soothe mental damage and fatigue as per the Storyteller's discretion.

To use this Rede, the chimera must be in the Dreaming while its target's body is in the Autumn world.

**Chimera Point Cost:** 5

**Use Cost:** 3 Glamour

## HUNTER'S BOON

The chimera takes in the essence of its target, be it physically (for example, through a garment she wore) or symbolically (such as by hearing her true name). It then makes a tracking roll (Perception + Survival in the wilderness, or Perception + Investigation in the city) against a difficulty of the target's Glamour rating. On a success, the chimera can perfectly track its target even if she has crossed a river, traversed in and out of the Dreaming, and so forth. This Rede lasts as long as the chimera maintains it, though the target may force a re-roll at dawn if she knows she's being followed.

**Chimera Point Cost:** 3

**Use Cost:** 1 Willpower (invested), plus 1 Glamour at dawn.

## IMAGINARY FRIEND

The chimera creates a connection with a mortal it is currently touching, or with whom it has eye contact. The chimera interacts with the mortal as though she is enchanted, and further gains a point of Glamour, up to their maximum, if it is in physical contact with the mortal while she dreams. The mortal may attempt to break the connection by rolling Wits + Kenning against a difficulty of the chimera's Willpower rating. If she succeeds, the chimera gains a dot of Banality. If the mortal fails, she may not attempt again until the next new moon.

**Chimera Point Cost:** 5

**Use Cost:** 1 Willpower (invested), plus 1 Glamour

## KISS OF ENMITY

The chimera claims one person it can see, be they changeling or mortal, as its enemy. This declaration is clear and obvious to all witnesses, though it need not be vocal – the chimera may flick its feathers at the target, swear an elaborate oath of enmity, or simply make a rude gesture. For the remainder of the scene, it may add its Glamour rating to attack rolls against this enemy. The chimera may enact the Rede again, against a new target, if its first enemy is dead. It may also, at the end of the scene, invest a Willpower to maintain the Rede until it meets its enemy again. Otherwise, the Rede ends when the scene does.

**Chimera Point Cost:** 3

**Use Cost:** 1 Glamour per attack, plus possibly 1 Willpower (invested)

## LEAPS AND BOUNDS

The chimera adds its Glamour rating to Strength + Athletics for purposes of jumping, and treats the difficulty as 2 regardless of mundane circumstances. Only supernatural circumstances specifically targeting the chimera (e.g., a supernatural gust of wind aimed to throw it off balance, but not a Glamoured storm that always rages in the area) can affect its jump.

**Chimera Point Cost:** 3

**Use Cost:** 2 Glamour

## LOYAL GUARDIAN

The chimera designates one person, be they changeling or mortal, as its ward. Any mundane attacks against its ward are instead directed towards the guardian, who seems to be everywhere at once. These attacks are further resolved normally. Supernatural attacks, including those delivered with magical weapons or enhanced with magic, are similarly redirected though their intent to harm remains: the chimera



takes half damage (rounded up) from these attacks, and the ward the remaining half.

**Chimera Point Cost:** 5 to protect against physical attacks, 7 to protect against *either* social or mental attacks. A chimera can possess only one version of this Rede.

**Use Cost:** 1 Glamour per attack, plus 1 Willpower per scene redirecting social or mental attacks.

## RIADSTRADH

The chimera enters a battle-frenzy. It ignores all wound penalties and adds +2 Stamina per Glamour spent. The chimera must continue to attack while Riadstradh is active, turning on bystanders and allies (but not its bonded changeling) if it runs out of enemies. The chimera may roll Willpower at a difficulty of 6 to end Riadstradh prematurely; otherwise, it lasts for the duration of the scene. Wounded health levels disappear first when Riadstradh ends, though any additional wounds remain normally. The chimera cannot use Riadstradh again until it has rested, by either sleeping or engaging in non-strenuous leisure activity for at least 6 hours.

**Chimera Point Cost:** 3

**Use Cost:** 1 Glamour / +2 Stamina

## THE FIERCE AND THE FAITHFUL

Below you'll find several sample chimera, along with descriptions of both the creature and the type of changeling it may bond to. You can use these ready-to-play, or make tweaks to further customize them.

### ARACHNIA: QUEEN OF SPIDERS (COMPANION 🕷️🕷️🕷️🕷️)

Arachnia is a hunting spider the size of a man's hand. Her legs are long, her body is hairy, and her carapace a muddy shade of brown. Arachnia considers herself to be the Queen of Spiders, and justly so — she always knows where to find her kin, both mundane and chimerical, and can entice them to spill their secrets. Through her network of spiders, Arachnia knows everything that goes on around her, from the Duke's bedchamber secrets to his nocker smith's classified project and his boggan chef's secret cake recipe. She lacks the political finesse to know which secrets matter and which don't, so she passes all of them on to her changeling companion to sort.

Arachnia matches well with an owner who collects secrets, such as a spy master, or one who thrives on gossip. She grows bored and resentful if there are no secrets to be uncovered. Arachnia does not like being touched, as she sheds her hair at even an accidental brush and her bare bum grows ever so cold. Her bite is not venomous,

which she considers a personal embarrassment — she never discusses it, save with her owner in planning to somehow make her venomous.

Unenchanted mortals, if they can even spot her, see Arachnia much as she appears to changelings: a large, hairy brown spider. Few appreciate her presence.

**Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2, Charisma 0, Manipulation 5, Appearance 0, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

**Abilities:** Alertness 3, Animal Ken (Spiders) 5, Enigmas (Secrets) 4, Stealth (Ambush) 5, Subterfuge (Gossip) 5, Survival 2

**Health Levels:** OK, -1, -2, Incapacitated

**Redes:** Befuddle 3, Hide (self) 5, Leaps and Bounds 3

**Glamour:** 4

**Willpower:** 2

**Armor Rating:** 0

**Attack:** Bite 4 dice, +1 lethal

### DRAAK, CLOCKWORK DRAGON (COMPANION 🐉🐉🐉)

Draak is a good friend to have — not too bright, perhaps, but funny and fiercely loyal. The size of a large horse, Draak is a riding mount, but she lends fang and talon to the changeling's aid if need be. Her clockwork body, all whirring copper gears and cogs, needs regular oil baths and Draak gets anxious if none are available in time — her greatest fear is rusting in place. Little else scares Draak though, and she seems to be in a perpetual good mood. She loves cracking jokes, and makes sure always to punch up with her humor. She looks down on changelings who make jokes about those weaker or subservient to them, considering it a sign of both cruelty and cowardice.

Draak craves a companion with a creative and scientific mind, who knows how to maintain her hydraulic clockwork body. She greatly prefers the company of commoners over nobles, expressing both a socialist bend and a profound belief that no one has the right to lord over others. The same attitude manifests in Draak's relationship with her companion, which quickly grows sour should he order her around or belittle her.

To unenchanted eyes, Draak appears to be a small dragon statuette expertly crafted from copper wire

**Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 3, Perception 1, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

**Abilities:** Athletics (Fly) 5, Brawl 3, Empathy 2, Intimidation 2



**Health Levels:** OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

**Redes:** Armor 2, Breath (Slippery Oil), Flight

**Glamour:** 4

**Willpower:** 1

**Armor Rating:** 2

**Attack:** Bite/Talon Swipe 6 dice, +1 lethal

### DREAM THIEF (COMPANION)

The Dream Master was born of the nightmares of mortals and changelings alike, a terrible creature forged of urban legends who entered dreams to scare its victims to death. In 1991, a motley of commoners confronted the monster on its own turf, finally defeating it at terrible losses. The last standing motley member was left with a seed, holding the promise of both a new nightmare and a kinder dream. She took the seed and nurtured it until the Dream Thief was born.

The Dream Thief still manipulates dreams, though so far it resists any urge to turn them to nightmares. It instinctively continues to harvest Glamour, and has built a modest cache of Glamour-infused tokens. The Dream Thief would be happy to share the stolen Glamour with a new companion. The chimera retains the potential of nightmares though, and any owner must actively nurture its good side, lest the terror begins anew.

The Dream Thief appears as an androgynous figure, and even its new form is scarred from the battle all those decades ago. To unenchanted eyes, the chimera looks like a tattered paperback, "Dream Thief" in elegant lettering on the cover. Its 333 page story details stolen dreams and nightmares, and persistent rumor claims it holds the Dream Thief's origin story even if no changeling has read it.

**Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 1, Stamina 2, Charisma 2, Manipulation 5, Appearance 1, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

**Abilities:** Crafts (Dreams) 5, Empathy (Lingering Dreams) 4, Expression 3, Gremayre 2, Intimidation (Nightmares) 4, Kenning 3, Subterfuge 3

**Health Levels:** OK, OK, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

**Redes:** Dreamweaving, Glamour Pact, Steal Glamour

**Glamour:** 4

**Willpower:** 2

**Armor Rating:** 0

**Attack:** -

### HARALD THE WAYWARD GUIDE (COMPANION)

Harald was crafted in ages past to lead changelings through the Dreaming to Arcadia. He fell dormant after the Shattering, and reawakened during the Resurgence. Now, Harald seeks a new purpose and a new companion. Much of his knowledge is outdated, the Dreaming having changed so much, but his skill in finding and navigating trods remains legendary. Originally created by Lady Riri of House Fiona, Harald appears as a dapper gentleman with excellent manners.

Harald has no preference for a specific Kith as a companion, or a commoner over a noble owner, as long as she travels the Dreaming. The Guide can open gates from the Dreaming to the Autumn world, but he cannot cross himself – instead, he remains in the Dreaming and simply reappears at his companion's side when she returns. While this is, and always has been, part of his function, Harald now becomes increasingly nervous waiting so. What if he is forgotten again? The urge to lead his companion into the Deep Dreaming where she may never leave him is strong, but so far, Harald has resisted.

**Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 1, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 1, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

**Abilities:** Alertness 2, Etiquette 3, Gremayre 4, Kenning 4, Survival (Dreaming) 5

**Health Levels:** OK, OK, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

**Redes:** Dreamform, Sense Banality, Traverse Dreaming

**Glamour:** 4

**Willpower:** 2

**Armor Rating:** 0

**Attack:** Punch 1 die, +1 bashing

### IYE, REGALIA OF FEATHERS (COMPANION)

Iye is a magnificent dress made for royalty, an over-the-top garment for those of any gender who wish to stand out above the crowd. The feathers of Iye change depending on the circumstances; from white dove to represent purity, to ostentatious peacock in blues and greens, to raven midnight blue. The cut of the dress also changes to accommodate the wearer, enhancing the features of all genders, though the dress is never less than stunning with a high collar and cascading trail of feathers. The real value of Iye though, and what places it solidly in the realm of sentient chimera rather than voiles, lies in the advice it dispenses. Iye knows exactly when a rising noble needs to appear distinguished and regal, or when a presentation of 'people's princess' would further her standing.



The Regalia of Feathers prefers to work with a noble who has the potential to become a great and powerful ruler, but who stands at the beginning of his path. It doesn't think much of commoners, though it realizes that having the love of the people is a valuable asset and counsels accordingly. Iye might work with someone who is royalty in the non-feudal sense, such as pop stars and famous dancers.

Unenchanted mortals perceive Iye as an expensive dress or suit from a luxury brand.

**Attributes:** Strength 0, Dexterity 0, Stamina 0, Charisma 2, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4, Perception 4, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

**Abilities:** Empathy 3, Etiquette (Perfection) 5, Gremayre 2, Politics (Non-Committed Agreement) 5, Subterfuge 3

**Health Levels:** -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

**Redes:** Armor 2, Crown of Glory, Shapeshift (Cosmetic)

**Glamour:** 3

**Willpower:** 2

**Armor Rating:** 2

**Attack:** -

**Notes:** Iye's armor rating of 1 also applies to the wearer.

## Jewel the Fighting Bear (Companion)

Jewel is an imposingly large bear, thick fur shining with deep shades of mahogany and brown. A scar runs down the right side of his face, clipping part of his ear and leav-

ing him with a patch over an empty eye socket. He wears filigree silver armor, which can take many more blows than the finery suggests. Communicating in grunts and body language, Jewel can be hard to understand to anyone who doesn't know him well.

Jewel is best paired with a companion who is at the forefront of battle, fighting alongside her, or serving as bodyguard for one who isn't combat-primed at all. Jewel is happy to serve as a riding mount to his companion, but balks at the indignity of carrying additional riders. When not in battle, he enjoys getting his luscious fur brushed and accessorized with small bows and clips.

To unenchanted eyes, Jewel appears to be a one-eyed, mangy old teddy bear.

**Attributes:** Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5, Charisma 1, Manipulation 0, Appearance 3, Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 1

**Abilities:** Athletics 2, Brawl (Guardian) 5, Intimidation 2

**Health Levels:** OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

**Redes:** Armor 3, Loyal Guardian (Physical), Riadstradh, Weaponry (Claws), Wyrd

**Glamour:** 4

**Willpower:** 1

**Armor Rating:** 3

**Attack:** Claws 10, +2 lethal









# CHAPTER SIX: A TREASURY OF MAGIC

*"And they buried torques in the barrow, and jewels  
and a trove of such things as trespassing men  
had once dared to drag from the hoard.  
They let the ground keep that ancestral treasure,  
gold under gravel, gone to earth,  
as useless to men now as it ever was."*

*– Beowulf*

Many are the wonders the Kithain have created for themselves throughout the ages, and many are the wonders they give form to even today. Find herein both a selection of the finest and the means to go about creating even more.

## SHAPING DREAMSTUFF

The creation of chimerical items is no small task, even for fae fundamentally defined by powerful imaginations. Creation is a task – in many ways, a *quest* – requiring well-honed skills, animating passion, and unflagging energy, even when

faced with trials, setbacks, or delays. Ultimately, the daunting nature of the process defeats many would-be artisans, but for those who would persist, the challenge may yield fruitful rewards.

Before a would-be crafter can begin to make a chimerical object, they must first ask themselves a series of questions in order to define their goals and the nature of the process they must follow. This is less about rules and more story – think of this section as ways to inspire and expand on the narrative behind the basic mechanics of chimera crafting found on pp. 316-318 of **Changeling**. Or to put it another way, how to tell stories that make forging chimerical items more fun and interesting than just some dice rolls and point expenditures.



## What Are You Making, and Why?

The answer to these questions defines all of what comes after. A chimerical vase might be made for the purpose of holding flowers that will never wilt or dry or die, no matter how long ago they were cut, a useful item for a Kithain florist or decorator. A rug might be woven for the purpose of betraying the footsteps of those who walk across it, good for a paranoid or canny noble with many enemies. A perfume may be blended to turn back the eyes of a wandering lover, or a lipstick to pique the interest of a desperately-desired heart. A sword may be forged to remind a forlorn knight of the honor she fears she has lost, or a shield to hang at the foot of a child's bed to defend them against the nightmares that well up from beneath it.

## What Do I Need, and Where Can I Find It?

Many Kithain pride themselves on their creativity and their mastery of practical artistic skills. The crafting of a chimerical item does not often come as naturally as breathing, or as painting, or as writing, or as conducting any other creative activity. Chimerical creation is an act with an inherent amount of pragmatism baked into its very nature, as the maker infuses the Glamour woven by their own powerful needs or desires into the physical object in question. Frequently, the would-be crafter requires an object that they do not already know how to make. Therein lies the first step in the process: acquiring knowledge.

Craftmasters are among the most valuable friends a young changeling can have, the source of a wealth of practical experience and assistance—and instruction. Oftentimes, the process of *learning something new* is one of the demands the Dreaming itself makes of a would-be crafter before it yields up the inspiration and power necessary to accomplish the desired task. Even more often, this is the means by which techniques and methods that would otherwise be lost are passed between the generations. Finding a mentor yields long-lasting dividends that can persist for centuries after the creative passions of the moment are temporarily exhausted.

Once the would-be craftsperson acquires knowledge of the techniques and methods they will need, the next step – and the one which is by far the most important – is to acquire materials.

Chimerical items cannot be constructed out of any base substance – the occasional dab of craft glue notwithstanding. Frequently, the process of obtaining the necessary materials is a quest in and of itself, requiring multiple trips into the Dreaming on gathering expeditions. Crafters often seek out the owners of rare substances or tools and carry out whatever tasks they demand for access to those things. If all else fails, crafters can sometimes purchase materials with labor, dross, or money from goblin markets and dream merchants.

The Near Dreaming is the source of most commonplace chimerical crafting materials: wood and stone, clay and metal, and materials required to make *other* materials, such as dreamsand, which can be melted down to create the dreamglass needed for exquisite stained-glass windows or the tempered blades of daggers that cut more than flesh. Herbs, fruits, and flowers that grow in the Near Dreaming are likewise often harvested for their useful distillates, to create dyestuff and pigments, essential oils infused with properties beyond their pleasing aroma, or the basis for teas and tisanes that become vehicles for both healing and baneful Glamour.

The Far Dreaming is a more challenging place to harvest craftables, but the dangers risked are often worth the price. Crafters journey to these distant reaches to find rare materials that elevate their creations from magical to miraculous. Creatures dwell here whose scales, eyes, bones, and blood, and hair can imbue crafted items with fantastical properties; trees and flowers that can survive nowhere else and whose bark and sap and leaves are potent poisons or anodynes grow here; elements that bear only a nodding relationship to their terrestrial cousins flourish. Gathering here is a chancy endeavor, at best, for many things have means of defending themselves and may be aware enough to resent having bits of their essence peeled away. It is often best to go prepared to make deals and offer propitiation or payment in return for what one desires to collect.

The Deep Dreaming is the place where only the most dedicated and focused of crafters dare to tread, for it is there that they will either find the fulfillment of their goals or their ruination. The deepest heart of the Dream *can* give the crafter access to those things they desire most, be it an imperishable heart of purest ruby to bring an automaton companion to both love and life, or the poisoned bones of a eldritch behemoth to forge into five thousand swords for a conquering legion, but that desire must be held firm and never waver. To doubt one's purpose is to court death and madness so far inside the Dream Realms. Many who venture down the trods leading there either never return or come back changed in ways they did not anticipate when they set forth.

If the would-be crafter cannot afford the expenditure of time and effort necessary to acquire the materials themselves, they can always hire others to do it for them. This carries practical consequences that many inexperienced crafters do not consider. Even binding Oaths and Dream-enforced Contracts can only insure so much loyalty and competence of hirelings, who may or may not possess the skill and knowledge needed to identify and collect the desired material. Should the material returned be incorrectly or should it be of inferior quality, the crafter's dreams may be ruined before they could begin to be realized.



## Been There, Gathered That, Now What?

Now the real fun begins: the actual process of creation!

Here is where the difference between experienced crafters and neophytes shows most clearly. Master craftspeople sometimes might be able to “wing it” and work on instinct and experience alone, but a newly trained crafter with limited and irreplaceable precious materials would do well to plan ahead. Often, this means drafting an actual plan: blueprints for mechanical chimera, simple or complex; extensive floorplans for building projects; prototypes made to scale for items and objects of all kinds; designs for decorative flourishes and color palettes for a client to choose from if one is creating on behalf of another. This process is a key part of solidifying the crafter’s mental image of the item they wish to make and eases the process of bringing that vision to reality.

Once preparations are complete, the crafter is ready to begin actual creation. Access to a dedicated and specialized crafting space, while not strictly required for simple items, is necessary for more complex creations such as chimerical machinery, forging weapons or armor, fine stone, wood-, or metalwork, or weaving large or complicated types of cloth. Likewise, the craftsperson requires the tools necessary for the project: a potter’s wheel and kiln for firing ceramics; a hammer, tongs, and anvil for forging; the machinery required to create even more machine components; alembics for distilling delicate substances such as oils or pigments from raw materials; and spinning wheels, looms, and needles for sewing and embroidery.

In many ways, the process of creation is analogous to the process of giving birth: some creations emerge into the world with astonishing ease. Others fight against their creators every step of the way, requiring hours of agonizing, unproductive labor before finally yielding to the inevitability of their own existence. Craftspeople are torn between which is best, experiencing each over the course of their careers. In the end, most agree that it is by far better, a more spiritually, intellectually, and physically enriching experience to make something of one’s own inspiration and blood, sweat, and tears.

## Voile

Voile is one of the most commonly crafted chimerical items and, as a result, enjoys a broad spectrum of form and composition. All Kithain create some form of voile during their Chrysalis, the Dream Dance shaping their appearance in accord with their innermost nature in a wild expression of creativity and Glamour. This is often the first indicator of a newborn changeling’s future destiny (or deeds from previous lives): nobles both Autumn and Arcadian sport

house colors or distinctive sigils; warriors are clad in leather and steel; sorcerers find ideogrammatic languages of old hidden within the stitching of their robes; crafters manifest sturdy clothes – and lots of pockets!

While voile can be – and most often is – purely ornamental and capable of only aesthetic flourishes, with no accompanying game mechanics or advantages, players can elect to invest in their character’s raiments via the Chimera Background. The more useful pieces typically come in one of three categories.

## ACCESSORIES

Smaller pieces like jewelry, shoes, belts, or hair fixtures, accessories tie together a changeling’s ensemble. These subtle, bespoke touches appear most often upon the personage of craftsmen and nobility, and range from the practical effects of a nocker’s beloved apron to the silken lace fan hiding a sluagh’s thin smile.

### SEAFOAM SHAWL

(Unique Item • • •)

A frothy sheet of soft white bubbles, the shawl gives off the scent of ocean air and, occasionally, the roar of the waves breaking against the shore. A favorite of water-loving kiths, particularly selkies, it keeps its wearer comfortably cool and adds the perfect beach wave to their hair.

**Mechanics:** While wearing the shawl, the difficulty of any cantrip that invokes water is reduced by 1. In addition, by spending a point of Glamour, the wearer can amplify the sound of the crashing waves enough to drown out any other nearby sound. This effect lasts one minute per point of Glamour spent.

### WHISPERSILK FAN

(Unique Item • • • •)

While there is an entire language dictated by the grip and position of a lady’s fan, it’s far easier to be understood by speaking plainly. Whispersilk conveys a message to another within eyesight, as clearly as if it were spoken directly into their ear. No matter the level of noise in the area, the message is heard only by whom it’s intended for, and cannot be intercepted.

**Mechanics:** Messages can be conveyed one of two ways: to address a single person, the changeling must hold the fan open in front of their face and spend a point of Willpower. If addressing a group, they instead spend a point of Glamour and hold the fan, closed, to their mouth. While the contents of its message cannot be determined, if someone suspects the use of magic, a successful Gremayre or Kenning roll will point out the sender and recipients of the message.



## STARSHINE TIARA

(Unique Item •••••)

A twinkling collection of lights often arranged in a constellation, the Starshine Tiara is a breathtaking piece that adds a little extra wonder to even the most extravagant courtly attire. Common designs include zodiac constellations and house emblems, but any pattern is possible; most often, it will change its arrangement two or three times in a single event.

**Mechanics:** Anyone wearing the Starshine Tiara can spend a point of Willpower to learn another changeling's Legacies, and thus, their associated Quests and Bans. While she can't discern which of her target's Legacies is dominant, she can often figure out which Court her target favors by their behavior or associations.

## DRAGONSCALE BROOCH

(Unique Item • to •••••)

Glimmering faintly, this brooch — functional or decorative — comes in any color of the rainbow, and a number of metallic shades as well. Warm to the touch and often decorated with exquisitely detailed carvings, it adds a regal touch to any outfit.

**Mechanics:** Attuned to the powers of the family of chimera that donated them, the Dragonscale Brooch effectively powers cantrips cast using the Dragon's Ire Art. With the Brooch, the wearer may cast a number of cantrips equal to the item's rating within the Dragon's Ire Art without paying a Glamour cost, no matter how many Realms she uses or if the cantrip is chimerical or Wyrld. It may be recharged by paying twice the cost of the cantrips used.

## FIREDRAKE HIDE APRON

(Unique Item • to ••••)

Glowing faintly about the edges as if smoldering gently, the firedrake apron is one of the most useful items in a crafter's workshop. Even the most disorganized and chaotic of individuals can maintain their most important tools with the help of this apron. Any broken tool or unsharpened blade placed within its pockets returns to perfect condition, and anything lost or dropped around the craftsman's workplace can be found in it later.

**Mechanics:** For each dot in the apron's rating, a tool or weapon can be attuned to it. Should the item go missing or be broken, it can be found again in perfect working order in the apron's pocket in 5 - (the item's rating) days.

## OUTFITS

While bits and pieces that tie an outfit together hold some magic, voile can also be woven out of whole cloth, as it were. Roguish types often have larger pieces or entire

outfits tailor-made to enhance their skills, while socialites also tend to favor stunning ensembles that inspire any who lay eyes on them. A sidhe's courtly attire often has some magical enhancement, as do a piskie's traveling clothes.

## MOONBEAM GOWN

(Unique Item ••)

Woven from the light of the full moon, this gown clings to its wearer and flows effortlessly with their every movement. A swirling confection of dappled light, anyone wearing such a piece is sure to command the attention of everyone who lays eyes upon them, inspiring both their awe and their deepest desires.

**Mechanics:** The wearer of this garment may spend 1 Glamour to turn a botch on a Social roll into a regular failure.

## SHADOW WOOL OVERCOAT

(Unique Item ••••)

A traveler's overcoat, this slowly shifting piece doesn't end so much as it seems to fade out into its surroundings. Its color ebbs and flows through murky shades of blue, brown, or black, to better meld seamlessly into dark surroundings. While bulky, it's comfortable to wear in any weather, with a high collar that can conceal the lower half of the face.

**Mechanics:** The wearer gains a +3 bonus to all Stealth rolls made at night or in shadowy areas. If the collar is fastened up, the wearer can also spend a point of Willpower to prevent anyone from recognizing him or remembering his face.

## THUNDERWOVEN SUIT

(Unique Item •••••)

A handsome and expertly tailored three-piece suit, this piece works well for those who don't mind wearing their hearts on their sleeves. Soft as a cloud, it also carries the volatile potential of a storm. It reacts to the emotions and intentions of the wearer, enhancing their presence and furthering their impact on a group or a room. It might glow with the soft colors of sunrise or rumble with lightning, depending on its wearer's emotional state or focus of attention.

**Mechanics:** As the suit reacts to its wearer's intentions, it adds an extra die to any Intimidation, Empathy, or Performance rolls. By spending a Willpower point, the wearer may add an automatic success instead.

## HEARTSPUN SUNDRESS

(Unique Item •••••)

One of the rarer materials, even for dreamed voile, a heartspun garment radiates the warmth and bliss of true love. While it can come in any color, it's often pastel, and



it carries a sweet, pleasant fragrance, slightly different to each person who catches a whiff of it. Whomever wears it is the epitome of composure and peace. The unspoken promise of the garment calls to anyone who sees it, lulling them into a calm, suggestible state.

**Mechanics:** While wearing the sundress, the changeling gains +2 to Manipulation and +1 to Appearance. Additionally, the wearer cannot be goaded or tricked into losing their temper.

### Ashcloth Shirt

(Unique Item • to • • • • •)

Warm to the touch and impossibly fine, the ashcloth shirt is made from the remains of a blacksmith's fire. Much like a mark a crafter uses to sign his work, the shirt can mark its owner's possessions and ensure they are never far from his grasp.

**Mechanics:** For every dot in the shirt's rating, it can mark an item. With a successful Gremayre roll (difficulty 6), the wearer can locate any lost item that has been marked by the ash of the shirt. By spending a point of Glamour, she can also determine how it was lost. If the item was stolen, an additional point of Glamour tells her by whom.

### Snow Owl Mantle

(Unique Item • • •)

A layered, hooded cloak made of crystalline feathers of ice, the mantle acts as a shield against any magical or natural forms of fire, and it boosts magic drawing on water or ice. While its ability to shield against fire is formidable, it offers no protection from weapon strikes or other forms of magic.

**Mechanics:** When soaking damage from fire, physical or chimerical, this mantle adds an automatic success to the roll. When casting a cantrip using ice or water, the wearer of the cloak can reduce the difficulty by one.

### Armor

Sometimes a changeling's life necessitates a wardrobe made of stronger stuff. Whether traditional attire for a longstanding House affiliation or simply a reflection of a rough-and-tumble lifestyle, having a piece or suit or armor that's reinforced with a little something extra gives anyone an ace up their sleeve to rely on in a fight. Trolls carefully imbue their impressive armor with extra defenses, and redcaps carry coats or vests designed to give them the upper hand, even with underhanded tactics.

### Copper Crow Pauldrons

(Unique Item • • • • •)

Made of feathers donated by a friendly flock of animate clockwork corvids, these burnished copper pieces shift in

the breeze as if they were natural feathers. Hammered pieces sit together in an accompanying gorget. Despite being made of metal, the armor is as light and flexible as soft leather.

**Armor Rating:** 1

**Dexterity Penalty:** 0

**Mechanics:** The clockwork accuracy of the feather's original owners is passed on to the wearer, reducing the difficulty of all targeted attacks by 1.

### MeteorGlow Breastplate

(Unique Item •)

The wearer of this breastplate is a beacon on the battlefield, offering themselves as a target to either enable ambushes, protect non-combatants, or draw enemies away from less capable fighters. When empowered with Glamour, the breastplate glows a brilliant white, demanding the attention of any foe.

**Armor Rating:** 3

**Dexterity Penalty:** -2

**Mechanics:** When active, enemies are drawn to the wearer. They must succeed on a Willpower roll (difficulty 7) to take any hostile action besides moving toward or attacking the wearer. This effect lasts one turn per point of Glamour spent, and can be started, renewed, or stopped as an instant action.

### Widow's Helm of Lament

(Unique Item • • •)

Tempered in the tears shed for a lost love, this helmet aids its wearer and ensures they never enter a battle feeling alone. Imbued with the yearning to save or protect another, it heightens the wearer's senses in the field, especially in an unfair fight. Wearing the helm offers an advantage in a battle stacked against its owner, making it easier to adapt and improvise.

**Armor Rating:** 1

**Dexterity Penalty:** 0

**Mechanics:** When facing multiple opponents, the difficulty for aborting an action is reduced by 2.

### Spidersteel Corset

(Unique Item • • • or • • • • •)

Woven from the webs of spiders who produce silk stronger than metal, this corset fits close to the wearer and is highly resistant to rips, tears, and punctures. While it restricts motion, it provides extra support to the wearer, and temporarily masks the severity of damage taken.

**Armor Rating:** 3

**Dexterity Penalty:** -2



**Mechanics:** Any lethal damage is reduced to bashing damage. Additionally, while wearing the corset, the changeling takes no wound penalties at the Hurt, Injured, or Wounded levels. Nevertheless, the wearer still suffers penalties if they are Mauled, Crippled, or Incapacitated. If the corset is removed before they heal, they suffer all wound penalties as normal. For three dots, this protection is effective against chimerical damage; at five, it applies to physical damage as well.

## MANDRAKE LEATHER JACKET

(Unique Item ••)

Made of well-oiled, old leather, this jacket gives off a pleasant, floral fragrance and has a slight purple sheen, as well as a faint grain pattern that looks similar to veining or marbling.

**Armor Rating:** 2

**Dexterity Penalty:** -1

**Mechanics:** When mounting a desperate defense, the wearer may spend one of his actions to empower his armor. By spending one point of Glamour, he can cause it to emit an ear-splitting shriek. For the next action turn, all other participants in the fight lose one action – friend and foe alike.

## TREASURES AND WONDERS

While things like voile might be deeply personal to changelings, other items are made to either be passed on or serve only temporarily. Treasures last for generations, and sometimes have special abilities; wonders, on the other hand, are fleeting but useful items, and only serve changelings for a short time before they're expended.

Unless otherwise noted, all the cantrips mentioned here can be found in the Arts section of the **Changeling: The Dreaming 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition** core book (pp. 197–232).

## TREASURES

Objects imbued with abilities otherwise found in Arts, treasures are impressive pieces whose usefulness can expand over time. As they're used by different changelings and their stories grow, they can end up with a multitude of abilities. The oldest and most impressive are rarely seen, but widely known and avidly sought after.

## ARTFUL DODGER'S GLOVE

(Unique Item ••••)

A finely crafted leather glove that fits like a second skin, this Treasure makes its wearer a clever manipulator or escape

artist. Rarely discovered on purpose, the nondescript piece has a habit of finding its owners instead of being found. Attempting to seek out the glove ensures you'll never find it... or that a rival will.

**Mechanics:** While wearing the glove, a changeling can draw upon the telekinetic influence of Gimmix (Legerdemain ••••). Capable of manipulating nearly anything from afar, it becomes a useful tool to anyone looking to anonymously interact with a situation. Though they need to gesture with the glove to complete the action they want to accomplish, they do not need to be in contact with their target, nor do they have to make their motions apparent to any would-be witnesses.

## AURORA'S OMEN

(Unique Item •••••)

A small, ornate atomizer made of glass and gold, the bearer of Aurora's Omen can use it to mist floral-scented water over a pillow before sleep. It lulls the owner into a deep sleep, acting as a casting of Dream Walk that allows the target to further use the Omen's power. An older Treasure that vanishes and resurfaces again every now and again, it's rumored to hold some additional effects as well.

**Mechanics:** After laying down to sleep, the owner of the Omen can use the Dream Puppet cantrip (Oneiromancy •••••) and inhabit the body of another. As usual, his number of successes determines the duration of the effects. While it can't cast a village into a century-long slumber, the Omen also serves as a way to influence someone without inhabiting their sleeping mind. In addition to the Art it holds, using the Omen as a perfume instead lulls anyone interacting with the wearer into a sleepy, suggestible state, lowering the difficulty of any Social rolls or opposed cantrips by 2. Changelings or other supernatural creatures can oppose this effect by spending a point of Willpower, but mortal have no such defenses.

**Difficulty:** 8

## THE LADY'S FAVOR

(Unique Item ••)

Infused with the warmth of Summer, this perfectly white handkerchief is monogrammed with a delicate, golden letter T surrounded by soft, embroidered honeysuckle blooms. A comforting piece, it brings sunny light to any room and an aspect of gentle radiance to its bearer.

**Mechanics:** Carrying the grace and calm of a bright summer day, the handkerchief can make anything it touches an object of desire. Using the power of Aphrodisia (Summer •••), the owner can spend a point of Glamour to imbue her target with the effects of the cantrip by touching the Favor to it, however briefly. Additionally, the owner may



spend a point of Glamour to cause their target to glow brightly with the light of the sun for the duration of a scene. These effects may be applied independently or together.

## NARCISSA'S NAMEPLATE

(Unique Item ••)

One of the sidhe who once lead House Leanhaun, Lady Narcissa's prowess in the Naming Art passed on through the necklace she wore, an ornate piece of delicate rainwater and sunlight made corporeal and studded with solid smoke. It twists itself into the whatever name the wearer offers as her own, altering itself as it changes hands.

**Mechanics:** Instead of spending Glamour, the wearer of the Nameplate can spend a point of Willpower to imbue their target with a Nickname (Naming ••). They must be able to see their target, but do not have to be interacting with them directly. While its power of Naming is somewhat limited, Lady Narcissa's legend as an influencer of high society lives on. By spending a point of Glamour, a changeling in possession of the Nameplate can declare an activity or individual to be in vogue. For the duration of the scene, the target of this ability or the activity is seen as acceptable or even encouraged; afterward, however, consequences of any actions taken may come back to catch up to any who participated.

The difficulty of activating this power is determined by the target; declaring violence to be trendy is substantially more difficult than calling an unpopular musician popular. Each additional point of Glamour spent allows the changing to either extend the duration of the effect by one scene or attempt to target an additional subject.

## SILVER-TONGUED STUD

(Unique Item •••••)

A simple silver bar tipped at either end with tiny rounds, this piece of jewelry is no longer than the last knuckle of a finger. Meant to be worn in the tongue, it amplifies the wearer's ability to spin impressive yarns that have a habit of coming true. It can be inserted painlessly even into a previously un-pierced tongue.

**Mechanics:** With the stud in place, a changeling can spend Glamour as normal to use Stranger Than Fiction (Tale-Craft •••••) to conveniently arrange situations to her benefit (see p. 188). The difficulty of the cantrip is determined by the coincidence dictated by the changeling..

## WONDERS

Though short-lived, wonders are useful for getting a changeling out of a pinch. Usually more limited than treasures, they're easier to find, if not as well-known as their more legendary cousins. Most have a few 'charges'

that can be used before the wonder is rendered inert. A few items might have a more powerful or useful effect, but only one use.

## BACKUP FILE

(Unique Item ••••••)

Infused with the power of Spring, this external hard drive is a rare piece of magical technology. A simple silver rectangle, it has a number of odd inputs and docks on one side, and a thin pane that glows with a soft, pulsing green light. Every now and then, it gives off a soft clicking or whirring sound.

**Mechanics:** Imbued with the epitome of Spring's power, Renewal (Spring •••••) the hard drive has the power to restore something to its prime as if it had been saved as a file. The varied ports on the side always seem to have some way to connect with whatever Realm the caster intends. Its effects only last one scene, unless extended by Glamor; each point extends the duration by another scene. Once used, the hard drive functions normally as a non-magical item.

Uses: 1

## DOWSING PENDULUM

(Unique Item •)

A pointed pink crystal hanging from a thin golden chain, the Dowsing Pendulum offers truths that might not be readily apparent without it. A common tool amongst fortune tellers and spiritualists, a changeling in possession of this particular pendulum can use it to learn a number of useful things.

**Mechanics:** Aided by the threads of Dán, the pendulum allows its carrier to tap into the basics of Soothsay. With the power of Omen (Soothsay •), the changeling can hang the pendant over their target, and interpret its motions as answers to their curiosity. While it's not impossible for the pendulum to answer an open-ended question, it increases the difficulty of the cantrip by one.

Difficulty: 7

Uses: 5

## JACK OF ALL TRADES

(Unique Item •••••)

A single playing card that often changes slightly in appearance, the one thing that remains constant about the Jack of All Trades is that it remains showing a jack. The suit, style, and back of the card all change on occasion, seemingly at the whim of the Dreaming, but the face remains the same.

**Mechanics:** Stored within the card is an impressive amount of Primal force. Housing the Dance of the Five Kings (Primal •••••), the holder of this card can invoke



its power to shape the world around him, or to command it to turn on one of his enemies.

**Uses:** 1

## KISS'S SEAL

(Unique Item ••••)

The logo on this tube of lipstick looks like an ornate royal seal, as if pressed from a signet ring into a dab of wax. The shade is anything the wearer desires it to be, even changing between applications. While the color doesn't lift or rub off the wearer's lips, it has a way of leaving its mark.

**Mechanics:** Held within the seal decorating the lipstick tube, the power of Sovereign waits to be released. While the changeling doesn't have to choose to use the Dictum cantrip (Sovereign ••••) when they apply it, they must kiss their target before issuing their command. Anywhere will do; the cheek or hand is just as effective as the lips.

**Uses:** 2

## WINDBACK WATCH

(Unique Item •)

A relic of a bygone era, this silver and gold watch hangs from a chain and must be regularly wound to keep time properly. While most would overlook such a piece as inconvenient or unnecessary in the face of today's technology, changelings can see the Glamour that glows within it.

**Mechanics:** Winding this watch does more than keep it ticking; it allows the changeling to unlock the power of the Backward Glance (Chronos •). Providing a glimpse into past to sort out the present, the watch is a useful tool in any investigation.

**Difficulty:** 7

**Uses:** 5

## SMOKE BOMB

(Unique Item •••)

A small bracelet with three black beaded charms, this unassuming piece packs a bit of a surprise. An essential piece for anyone looking to make a quick, dramatic exit, the charms on the bracelet come off with a tug, creating excellent cover and an even better distraction.

**Mechanics:** Each of the beads on the bracelet allows the changeling to flee their location with the Portal Passage cantrip (Wayfare •••). When smashed on a surface (walls and floor are popular), each bead releases an impressive cloud of black smoke and opens a concealed portal, which closes again after the user passes through. Their exit concealed, and the only evidence left a few shards of broken glass, the changeling is free to go on their merry way.

**Uses:** 3





# Swan Maidens

*Don't look so worried, my love. I'm fine. Really. I could endure anything for you.*  
*Inisheer, freelance Prince Charming of the Shadow Court*

Gentle, shy, but deeply passionate, the swan maidens (masc: swan princes, neutral: swan lovers) have only emerged in notable numbers in the Kithain community recently, though legends of their singular and often tragic love lives have circulated for far longer. They are renowned as some of the greatest and most thoughtful lovers of the changeling world, but also seem to suffer terrible, tragic fates at a far higher rate than other fae. Nevertheless, these true believers never lose faith in the power of love and romance.

Born of dreams of purity, grace, and most of all, true love, swan maidens are most numerous – if a word suggesting many exist can really apply – in Italy, France, and parts of Germany. In the past century they have slowly migrated to other areas, often in response to a passionate affair of the heart. Outside of their ancestral homelands, they usually either live in big cities (to be near people) or out in very rural areas (to avoid them after a broken heart). No matter where they go, however, swan maidens always gravitate toward places of great beauty, whether it's a pristine forest glade or a museum district full of breathtaking masterpieces.

Despite their most common sobriquet, there are swan maidens of all genders. As a rule, between their finely sculpted features and natural inclinations, they tend to lean heavily toward non-binary and/or genderfluid presentations. They also usually favor elegant, ornate attire, though whether that means classic Victorian dress, immaculate couture, or Gothic Lolita fashion depends on the changeling in question. Even those of humble means carry themselves with great poise and dignity, and their manners are always faultless. In their fae mien, swan maidens have beautiful wings extending down from their arms, with feathers ranging from white to gray or even black in color. Some have hair that actually proves to be very fine feathers on closer inspection.

Thanks to their unique magical heritage, in their personal lives many swan maidens identify as passionately romantic asexuals, and they put great care into relationships as well

as thoughtful displays of love and affection. Their love lives are legendary among their friends, and they are usually either intensely monogamous or exuberantly polyamorous, with Seelie gravitating to the former and Unseelie the latter. Though they are naturally graceful and often enjoy dancing, the idea that they are all prima ballerinas is a bit overblown. Still, they can usually find a place for themselves in most any profession where their natural love of benevolent etiquette, agile movement, or matters of the heart can work to their advantage: counselors, yoga instructors, art restorers, match-makers, dance teachers, and the like.

**Affinity:** Actor

**Revelry:** Swan maidens are drawn to romance and love a good happy ending, though tragic heartbreak and

## THE RULES OF ATTRACTION

Romantic relationships are at the heart of this kith, and as such, it is important that the Storyteller work with the player to ensure that the love interests in a swan maiden's life aren't just game mechanics but fully developed people who feature in the story in interesting ways. In return, players should understand that selecting this kith naturally invites complex and often tragic romantic entanglements, and embrace such twists and setbacks accordingly. Finally, all parties – the Storyteller, the player of the swan maiden, and other players in the group – should discuss what they're comfortable with seeing in game regarding roleplay and depictions of romance and intimacy, as well as any related sensitive topics.





bittersweet loves can fuel their Glamour too. They delight in hearing about the love lives of others and are superb active listeners, quick to ask excellent questions to provoke deeper reflection or understanding.

**Unleashing:** When a swan maiden Unleashes her magic, the fluttering of great, soft wings can be heard, often accompanied by slowly falling feathers that match her own coloration. Everything glows with a warm, inviting light, and delicate floral notes scent the air as flower petals scatter across the ground – those of a beloved’s favorite flower, naturally.

## BIRTHRIGHTS

**Swan’s Blessing:** Swan maidens receive an additional dot in both Dexterity and Appearance, even if it takes them above five. In addition, thanks to their innate grace, they cannot botch Etiquette or Performance rolls. By default swan maidens cannot fly, but the cost of the Winged Merit is reduced to 2 points. The Winged Flaw remains unchanged.

**Love Conquers All:** Once per session, if a swan maiden has a romantic interest in her life, she may think of her beloved and spend 1 Glamour to reduce the difficulties of all rolls by 1 for the rest of the scene. (This affection need not be mutual, but the swan maiden’s emotions must be genuine.) If the swan maiden possesses

the True Love merit, she may spend up to two additional points of Glamour to further reduce roll difficulties on a one-for-one basis for the scene. Once per story she may make similar Glamour expenditures, but receive automatic successes on a single roll instead of reducing the difficulty. These automatic successes are doubled if she possesses True Love, and may be “banked” to be used over the course of multiple rolls during the scene (any unused successes are lost when it ends). Swan maidens who are not currently experiencing a romantic attraction cannot benefit from this Birthright.



## FRAILTIES

**Profound Loss:** Whether it's the innocent puppy love of childlings, the impassioned flings of wilders, or the devoted attachment of grumps, swan maidens love profoundly... and losses devastate them accordingly. Any time a loving relationship ends, for whatever reason, the swan maiden suffers a Banality trigger. Note that this is not limited to romantic connections, but can apply to close family and friend relationships as well. Should the relationship be especially deep – a long-term lover, a best friend, a sibling – in addition to the usual Banality trigger, the swan maiden must roll her Glamour (difficulty 8). If she fails the roll, she gains a dot of Banality.

**Mantle of the Maiden:** Due to their origins in dreams of idealized romantic purity, swan maidens cannot regain Willpower or use their Love Conquers All Birthright for three full days after enjoying consensual sexual intimacy, even if it was with their beloved. Despite rumors to the contrary, however, physical intimacy is not actually harmful or painful and swan maidens can still fully enjoy sexual relations. As a rule, simple acts such as cuddling, hugging, holding hands, and even some chaste kissing are fine, but anything beyond that triggers this debility. The Storyteller

is the final arbiter of whether an encounter is intimate enough to set off this Frailty. Nonconsensual encounters *never* activate this Frailty, though it's worth noting that Storytellers should definitely discuss well in advance whether players are comfortable confronting topics such as sexual violence and molestation before including them in game.

**True Love's Curse:** One of the great secrets of the swan maiden kith is that within seven days after they find True Love – most often this is romantic love, though on some rare occasions, a friendship or family bond qualifies – the swan maiden is confronted with a terrible choice. Either *they* must acquire the Dark Fate Flaw, or *their beloved* will. Unlike most who suffer from this Flaw, the swan maiden has a strong sense of how close the Dark Fate is to being fulfilled, and she often has visions of what form it will take. Ending the relationship puts this doom on hold, so to speak, but it must be a clean break – if the other person enters their life again, even just for a short time, the Dark Fate resumes, and this time it cannot be stopped. It also unstoppably resumes if the swan maiden finds another emotional connection on this level. If the True Love is another player character, both players must agree on who receives the Dark Fate. This Frailty does not apply unless the True Love Merit is purchased.





## NEW ART: INFUSION

Codified and pioneered by the nocker kith, and fundamental to much of their unique craftwork and chimerical science, Infusion is the Art of manipulating and altering Glamour beginning at the most basic level and advancing into the sublime. It allows for the strengthening of chimerical materials, the deliberate generation of otherwise spontaneous and unpredictably occurring craftable substances, and the fabrication of advanced chimerical beings that, in many ways, straddle the line between “useful construct” and “sapient independent being.”

A jealously guarded Art for centuries, the demands of survival during the long years of the Interregnum finally led the nockers to share at least a few of their secrets with other crafters, particularly boggans and Autumn sidhe of House Dougal whose probity was beyond question. Nockers hold any who suggest that an Art might be inherently Seelie or Unseelie in baleful contempt, and so this Art is freely used by members of either Court.

### UNLEASHING INFUSION

The magic of Infusion fully expresses both the wildly frenetic and intensely deliberate creative energy of physical imagination, the explosive process of *making something that works*. When Unleashed, the air becomes charged, smelling of ozone and tasting of lightning. Glamour arcs from surface to surface, hair-raisingly electric. Chimera spring spontaneously to life, common household appliances gain occasionally high degrees of sentience, and already smart technology gets significantly smarter, with a distinct personality of its own. Even the most fumble-fingered and mechanically inept become capable of unsuspected acts of engineering prowess when in the grip of an Infusion Unleashing. Those who already know what they’re doing with a set of screwdrivers, a circuit board, or a fully equipped chimerical science lab have created unique masterworks permeated with their makers’ genius.

### INFUSION BUNKS

Infusion bunks are all about the fine art of drafting the world’s most perfect Rube Goldberg machine on a dubiously unused cocktail napkin, scrawling an equation belonging to esoteric branches of mathematics practiced only by theoretical Dreaming physicists across at least three blackboards in a combination of chalk and Sharpie, and screaming at your lab assistant to get you your galvanized induction samophlange—NO NOT THAT GALVANIZED INDUCTION SAMOPHLANGE, THE OTHER ONE.

**Attribute:** Intelligence

#### • Harden

Incidental chimera are the slightest of all Dream-things, the products of bored office drones doodling on their legal pads in meetings, of children and their mayfly attention spans on bright summer days at the pool screaming about sharks in the water, or of pre-teens under the covers with a flashlight during a sleepover whispering tales of terror. Delicate as soap bubbles, they drift, mindless scraps of brilliance too flimsy and unformed to amount to anything on their own, but once they’re scooped up by a properly trained specialist, run through a condensation alembic, charged by galvanic aetherium coils, and/or brought up to pressure in a glamourgenic tempering cannister — or all three! — and then decanted, they’re definitely strong enough to be used for better things.

**System:** The realm always used for casting this cantrip is Fae ••••• (Dweomer of Glamour).

An Incidental chimera successfully effected by this cantrip can be crafted or forged as if it were a Dreamed chimera. The number of successes rolled determines the duration of the cantrip.

- 1 success — One hour
- 2 successes — One day
- 3 successes — One week
- 4 successes — One month
- 5 successes — Permanent

**Type:** Chimerical

#### • • Toughen

The Kithain are the masters of many strange and wonderful substances: dust harvested from the wings of faerie dragons in the Deep Dreaming, shed skins of the serpents that gather in thousands upon glittering black diamond sands in the Desert of Endless Night, or the ruby-red, unfallen leaves collected from the perpetually autumnal forests that cradle certain mountains in the Kingdom of Northern Ice, just to name a few. Many substances, however, are as delicate as they are wonderful and, in their natural form, are prone to dissolving into uselessness under rough handling or regular wear — unless properly strengthened by the Glamour-tempering processes known to practitioners of this Art. Any chimerical material thus tempered becomes physically durable, resistant to the ravages of both damage and Banality. True masters of Infusion can even extend this tempering to another changeling’s fae mien and their birthright voile, though such masters are few and far between.

**System:** The nature of the chimerical object to be affected determines level of the Fae Realm needed to cast the cantrip.

Any chimerical substance affected by this cantrip gains an additional Health Level per two successes rolled. In addi-



However, a substance can only be so tempered *once*, including the fae mien. Multiple castings of this cantrip have no additional effect.

- • • Generate

More often than not, however, this Art is now used to produce far more exotic substances of an electrical and magnetic nature (commonly called FUBARs, a designation now extended to all such non-sentient chimerical elements), which are most frequently used as the power cells of modern chimerical machinery or in experiments related to the development of said machines. Some whisper that they grant automatons a far greater innate capacity for intelligence than steam ever did, but no empirical evidence exists to support this assertion.

The caster must first create a containment unit for the FUBAR they seek to summon and capture, rolling Intelligence + Craft, Greymare, and Science, difficulty 7, and accumulate seven total successes among those rolls to produce a container sufficient for the cantrip's needs. This container will hold a FUBAR for up to seven months before the caster needs to begin "feeding" it Glamour points to retain "charge," one point per month thereafter. Failing to do so will cause the FUBAR to lapse into a state of dormancy until infused with a fresh Glamour charge.

Type: Chimerical

- • • Animate

frustration with their refusal to make anything resembling sense, which gives them a significant leg up on real people.

**System:** The Realm Fae • • • • (Dweomer of Glamour)  
must always be used when casting this cantrip.

The resulting automaton is essentially mindless, capable of following simple commands and executing basic tasks but possessed of no true sentience, capacity for mental or emotional development, or personal initiative. Automatons possess a base pool of 50 chimera points to spend on Attributes, Abilities, Glamour, Willpower, Health Levels, and Redes, making them among the most powerful of chimera outside the dream realms and the Deep Dreaming. Most automatons possess ratings in all three Physical attributes and some Mental attributes. No automaton may possess Intelligence at this stage. Many, but not all, automatons entirely lack Social attributes. They tend to possess utilitarian Abilities, robust Glamour and Health Levels, and relatively low Willpower. Automatons may not possess the Dreamform Rede.

**• • • • IT'S ALLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLIVE!**

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System: When granting sentience to an automaton or any other sort of otherwise unintelligent chimera, the Realm Fae ••••• (Dweomer of Glamour) must always be used.

If the cantrip roll succeeds, the chimerical engineer must roll Intelligence + Greymyre, difficulty 9, in order to impress the developing being with the pattern of their own sentience, to act as the basis from which greater self-awareness will grow. The number of successes rolled determines the baseline Intelligence of the chimera.

One success = 1 point of Intelligence

Two successes = 2 points of Intelligence

Three successes = 3 points of Intelligence

Four successes = 4 points of Intelligence

Five successes = 5 points of Intelligence

At the beginning, sentient automatons are typically childlike, friendly, and loyal to their creators, and capable of learning important skills quickly. If a chimerical engineer wishes thereafter to increase their creation's Mental attributes, they may do so at the cost of chimera points.

If the cantrip roll succeeds but the Intelligence + Greymyre roll fails, no points are allocated to the automaton's Mental attributes. The automaton is *technically* sentient but also fundamentally mindless, incapable of learning or developing further, and may actually be less useful than it was before, as its capacity for following its initial "programming" degrades and it becomes increasingly incapable of obeying simple commands or retaining the steps required to execute basic tasks. It will, however, absolutely adore its creator like a large, potentially dangerous, conceivably immortal, and extraordinarily dimwitted dog. Nothing will alter this state, and thereafter, the chimerical engineer must decide if they will care for their creation or extinguish its ill-executed existence.

If either the cantrip roll or the Intelligence + Greymyre roll is botched, the automaton is successfully infused with sentience, but in a horrible and twisted form. Mentally unstable and at best antisocial, the automaton manifests the deepest and most damaging personality flaws of its creator taken to a perfectly horrifying extreme, mounted to an artificial body capable of inflicting enormous amounts of harm to everyone and everything around it. The automaton neither cares for nor respects its creator, is frequently actively rebellious against its creator's wishes or commands, and is hostile to its creator's closest friends and loved ones. The Storyteller will make a secret Intelligence + Greymyre roll, difficulty 7, and allocate automaton's Mental attributes accordingly. If the Storyteller rolls no successes, the automaton is a mindless, ravening mechanical monstrosity. The creator of an antisocially rebellious or mindlessly monstrous automaton may have to destroy it for the safety

of themselves and their loved ones – if not for the good of the world at large.

**Type:** Chimerical

## NEW ART: TALE-CRAFT

Once the exclusive purview of the eshu kith, this rare Art encompasses perhaps the most primal magic there is: the power of storytelling itself. Anyone who's ever cried at a movie, gotten lost in a good book, sang along to a Broadway hit, or felt their pulse racing at the climax of a video game already knows the power this Art taps into. Kithain who master these cantrips go one step further and use stories to transform the world around them.

Tale-Craft is nominally considered a Seelie Art, though it is freely used by members of both Courts. Eshu are still the most common practitioners of Tale-Craft, though it is enjoying increasing popularity with other garrulous fae. In particular, clurichauns, piskies, pooka, satyrs, and even some performance-minded Fiona and Leanhaun sidhe have also taken to it.

## UNLEASHING TALE-CRAFT

Tale-Craft magic expresses eloquence, passion, creativity, wit, and sincerity. Unleashing Tale-Craft makes the character the center of attention ("listen up, everyone!"), causes others to get lost in fantasy ("remember the first time you read about the Boy Who Lived"), compels others to share stories and gossip ("you ever hear about that one time..."), or even inspire those nearby to get caught up in acting out roles from a tale being told. Tale-Craft magic unfettered by a cantrip inspires and thrills, though it can also leave targets wondering what is real.

## TALE-CRAFT BUNKS

Unsurprisingly, this Art almost always involves displays of talent and wordplay, whether through telling stories, singing songs, reading poetry, writing tales, or other narrative expressions. It's also common for Bunks to help set a proper ambiance for the tale being told, whether that means passing around a flashlight for a spooky story or warming up the crowd with an old favorite before launching into new material.

### • Twice-Told Tales

A sluagh runs her slender fingers across an antique mirror that witnessed a grand old romance, watching those love scenes flicker past in its depths like a reel from an old film. A sidhe glares across the table at a political rival, locker room stories of his enemy's prowess in the dueling ring echoing in his ears.

Twice-Told Tales grants the changeling access to rumors, folktales, war stories, urban legends, gossip, tall tales, fam-





ily histories, and other “unofficial truths” regarding the subject of her cantrip. The caster may name a general area of interest, such as romance or scandal, or simply let the most (in)famous or essential stories about a target surface first. Subsequent uses of this cantrips reveal increasingly obscure information, or simply fail if no applicable stories exist. Stories a changeling already knows are skipped over, however, unless there’s a substantially different version she might find interesting. This cantrip also requires that stories have been told in some sort of public venue; an actual secret that no one else knows or a subject that no one ever talks about won’t come up with this cantrip.

Although this cantrip might seem similar to the Backward Glance cantrip, that power reveals what *actually* happened in the past, while this cantrip imparts *stories* associated with a target — even those based on facts are still likely distorted or exaggerated compared to the actual reality of the situation. Wise changelings thus take care before acting as if what they’ve learned is cold hard fact, but even entertaining lies can still have some utility too.

**System:** The Realm used determines what subject the changeling learns stories about. Actor would reveal stories

about a particular mortal or Prodigal, for example, while Nature could provide tales of local wildlife. One story is learned per success gained, though the Storyteller may rule that a particular topic is exhausted after a certain point, in which case the changeling is aware there are no more tales to learn.

#### • • Work the Room

An eshu jumps atop the barricades and delivers a raw, heartfelt speech to renew the fighting spirit of the wavering rebels. A pooka bites her lip and finds the exact tone to apologize to her parents and promise not to stay out all night (again). A redcap tells a joke so dirty and so funny that it breaks the ice and lets rival prison gangs sit down and settle their feud.

Work the Room allows the changeling to send out magical pulses that infuse her targets with a chosen emotion or impart a simple idea, typically in order to augment her performance. The emotion or idea imparted with this cantrip must be simple enough to express in no more than a couple of words. The changeling could inspire feelings of “rebellion,” for example, but not implant the specific idea of “rebel against Duke Manchester and burn his holding to



the ground.” Likewise, though she may attempt to channel a target’s response with other means, the changeling cannot directly compel action, nor can she control exactly how a target might react to a feeling or idea — a redcap biker hit with a wave of “indulge yourself” will almost certainly react differently than a staid Gwydion sidhe!

**System:** The Realm used determines what type of audience can be influenced with this cantrip. Note that Scene is required to affect more than one target, making it a very common addition to this cantrip. Each success on this cantrip increases the power of the magical pulse and lowers the difficulty of Performance, Expression, or related rolls by 1 for the rest of the scene, so long as they reinforce the emotion or idea being conveyed.

### • • • Bated Breath

A satyr lays out a complicated tale of car troubles and girlfriend problems while the rest of her crew hurriedly unloads the kegs from the back of the truck. A battle slows to a halt as a troll delivers a heartbroken eulogy over a fallen friend.

This versatile and mischievous cantrip allows a changeling to hold her audience in place while she speaks, holding their focus solely on her, allowing her to slowly leave a scene or serve as a powerful distraction for others. Targets are not literally paralyzed, but utterly absorbed in what the changeling is saying to the point of missing all but the most obvious events around them. Language is not a barrier for this cantrip, though lacking a common tongue will increase the casting difficulty unless the story is simple enough to be effective with gestures and mime work. The changeling must speak without significant interruption for the duration of the cantrip. Targets will remember what she told them during the cantrip after it ends, though they may not exactly be able to explain while they were quite so spellbound.

Although this cantrip is certainly good for all kinds of narrow escapes and other mischief, the Dreaming doesn’t allow those under its spell to come to immediate harm. A changeling could not keep her target on the tracks while a train was barreling toward him, for example, or force someone to stand in the middle of a burning building. Any actual harm or imminent danger breaks the cantrip, even if the target isn’t immediately aware they are in peril. However, this cantrip can be used to allow the changeling to get closer in order to strike, or help allies set up an ambush. Targets are considered surprised for the first action turn in such circumstances.

**System:** The Realm determines who is being enthralled. Each success keeps targets spellbound for 1 minute outside of stressful scenes such as combat or heated confrontations, or 1 action turn during high pressure situations. During this time, the changeling must continue speaking, but may

move at a walking pace, interact peacefully with her environment, and use non-aggressive magic. This duration may be extended by one interval per additional point of Glamour spent during casting. A target may only be affected by this cantrip once per scene.

### • • • Legend Tripping

A childling joins hands with her terrified friends and describes how they remind her of her favorite superhero team, giving them the strength to fight a terrible Nightmare monster. A gallant clurichaun recites a story of his grandfather’s legendary charm, channeling his ancestor’s silver-tongued prowess.

By telling a story and casting this cantrip, the changeling infuses her targets with the power of narrative, temporarily boosting their capabilities so long as they act out the role she has assigned them in the story. The targets do not need to hear or understand the changeling, but she must still tell a story and work out the specific parts and qualities each target embodies within it, as it determines what traits may be boosted with this magic. For example, if the changeling declares a target to be a modern Lancelot, then his Melee rating may surge as the mythic role takes hold. However, he could not improve his Computer rating as that’s not really associated with Arthurian figures.

It is important to establish that Legend Tripping requires specific roles for the individuals to play. It’s not enough to say “we’re the good guys, here to defeat the bad guys” — whether the story is drawn from history, from legend, or from the mind of the changeling herself, each role being cast still must have definite features and expectations to fulfill. Treat it as if the cantrip gave a target new Quests and Bans suited to the role. Invoking Lancelot, for example, may make a target a master swordsman, but come with a Quest to battle injustice and a Ban that ends the cantrip immediately if he behaves unchivalrously. Note that when using this cantrip on a group, the changeling may mix characters from different stories or her own imagination as she sees fit.

**System:** The Realm used determines who receives the effects of Legend Tripping. This cantrip costs 1 Glamour and 1 Willpower in addition to any other costs. For each success gained, the target may improve an Attribute or Ability by 1, even if it takes him over 5. The changeling has control over what traits are boosted. This cantrip lasts until the end of the scene or until the target acts too far outside of their assigned role, as determined by the Storyteller.

### • • • • Stranger Than Fiction

A pooka brushes aside the despair of her motley by explaining that the local chief of police is actually her favorite cousin and sure enough, he lets them off the hook for their trespassing. A redcap laughs as he explains that



the Thallain goons didn't search *everywhere*, and produces a switchblade from an unmentionable hiding place before cutting his friends free.

Stranger Than Fiction allows a caster to tell a story so powerful it alters reality itself, subtly but powerfully bending events so they fit the changeling's personal narrative. Essentially, this cantrip allows the changeling to create their own lucky breaks, freak chances, fortuitous coincidences, and other technically plausible if not particularly likely events.

It is important to note that Stranger Than Fiction is more like creatively editing the narrative of reality than outright re-writing it. The cantrip cannot simply "undo" actions that already occurred, nor can it contradict long-established facts. If a changeling's friend was taken away by the police, he could not use this cantrip to say no arrest happened... but he might be able to explain how, in the confusion, the police actually arrested his friend's twin brother instead. If his mother died when he was young, he can't suddenly bring her back to life by saying she actually just ran away, though he might be able to describe how an old key his mother left him just happens to fit the mysterious chest the group found among his mother's old things.

As a rule of thumb, the longer a fact has been established or the more commonly it's encountered by others, the harder it is for this cantrip to twist it, since the magic relies in part on exploiting the gaps in what's commonly

known or expected. Thus the Storyteller should adjust the difficulty of this cantrip accordingly, or even declare that it cannot achieve the desired result.

Stranger Than Fiction also cannot blatantly conjure people or objects from thin air in front of witnesses — that's the domain of other Arts — so a changeling cannot describe how an empty driveway actually has a car in it and watch as one appears. She could, however, explain that she keeps a car hidden under a tarp out back, then go around behind the house and find one. (If someone is already waiting in the backyard and thus the car cannot appear, the cantrip fails but any related costs are refunded to the caster and no Banality points are incurred.) The Storyteller is the final arbiter of whether this cantrip can justifiably produce a desired result, though she is encouraged to be liberal in its application whenever possible.

**System:** The Realm used determines what sort of coincidence is being conjured. In addition to normal costs, this cantrip also requires the changeling to acquire Banality points. Kithain theorists speculate that this cantrip works because the changeling actually diverts the Banality that normally keeps such amazing events and lucky breaks from happening. Relatively minor or easily explained coincidences inflict 1 Banality point, seriously unlikely chances inflict 2, and truly outlandish but still *technically* plausible events inflict 3.





# CHANGELING: THE DREAMING PLAYER'S GUIDE

## AUTUMN LEAVES TUMBLE DOWN

The Dreaming is a vast and ever-changing place, especially in the turbulent time of the Evanescence. New dreams take shape as Winter winds howl outside the windows and Glamour fights to bring light and warmth to a world where hearts go cold even as temperatures rise. Changelings everywhere must make a dangerous choice – unite and stand together against the rising dark... or take what they can for themselves and hope to rule from the shadows.

## WINTER WINDS ARE RISING

This all-new Changeling: The Dreaming Player's Guide features:

- A new form of playable chimera: the enigmatic Lycians
- In-depth exploration of lands and new kiths from around the world
- Add a gameplay edge to political chronicles with the new Agendas system
- Rules for creating highly customized Banner Houses
- A first-ever look at playing Siocháin, the elusive fae immortals
- Secret societies to add mystery and intrigue to any chronicle
- A deep dive into the culture and inner workings of the Shadow Court
- Updated Arts: Tale-Craft and Infusion
- And much, much more!

## LET THE BALEFIRES BURN BRIGHT!

