

DANCERS IN THE DUSK™



CHANGELING
THE LOST

World of Darkness



*Dusk turns deeper, colors die
Bats go singing in the sky
One and all
We may fall
Down where wicked goblins lie.*

*Shade draws farther, farther on
Light is fading, sun is gone
Friends, draw near
Face your fear
Perhaps there'll never be a dawn.*

*Mime the barn owl's soundless dive
Wake your soul, your senses five
Step the mark
Trip the dark
You dance the dusk, for you're alive.*

— Lily Velvet's Last Waltz

This book includes:

- New tools and scenarios to go delving into dream, from dreamscapes to the dreaded Incubi
- Ways to tangle a twisted destiny, through Contracts and even the presence of Fate itself
- Hedge-towns and strange domains among the Thorns, and a bevy of new hobgoblins to populate them
- New entitlements, the Dusk Court, and more

*For use with the
World of Darkness Rulebook*



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CHANGELING
THE LOST™

DANCERS IN THE DUSK™



*By David Brookshaw, Jess Hartley, Misha Handman, Jennifer Lawrence,
John Newman, Malcolm Sheppard and Chuck Wendig*

Scheherazade at Twilight



"Tell me a story."

Liane's head jerked up from the book on the table in front of her, her concentration shattered. *I've only got a week left before finals. What's the point of coming to the most isolated spot in the library to study if I'm going to be bothered by jerks who* — The thought died as if impaled it on a pin, her lips suddenly dry as old paper, ice crystallizing up the column of her spine.

He couldn't possibly be human, not the way he towered over her, antlers brushing the ceiling. Hair the color of rain in sunlight hung in long, braided chains to his knees, and the coat of leaves and vines he wore coiled and shifted continuously.

But his eyes were the worst, drowning pools the blue-green color of old Coke bottles, drawing her in. She met that gaze and found herself slipping away, the fortress of books heaped around her no protection, memories peeling away from her brain like dead leaves dropping from an oak in October.

She wanted to scream, but the air in her lungs felt frozen, and her legs refused to obey her command to leap out of the chair and run. His stare was a mixture of curiosity and yearning, and even though there was neither malice nor anger in it, Liane still felt her heart stutter at the weight of that look.

"An old story. But also a new story," he clarified, the voice like shards of glass wrapped in velvet. The voice sifted through her memories as the sun hung on the horizon, just visible through the window, the last light guttering like a fading candle in the moment before the ball of fire disappeared.

His smile was golden, but the shadows slithering through the depths of his eyes moved like serpents, raising gooseflesh on her arms. *It isn't a happy ending he wants. And I'd better not bore him, either.*

Desperately, Liane tore her gaze away from him and let her eyes drop to the stacks of books around her, culled one by one from the library's stacks. The textbooks she had brought with her for geometry and history and speech class were worse than useless, but at her right were the additional books she had grabbed for one of her English classes — Hans Christian Anderson, the Brothers Grimm, Andrew Lang. *And friends wondered what good a class on fairy tales would do me...*

She squeezed her eyes shut, all too aware of his patient gaze, the sound of his breathing grating against her self-control like a steel rasp against cheese.

"Once upon a time, there was a little girl who lived in a cottage just outside the wood. She wore a cloak with a scarlet hood, and her mother called her Little Red Riding Hood."

She could hear the confusion and fear in her voice as she spun the tale out, telling him about the day Little Red Riding Hood left the cottage to travel through the forest to take a basket of food to her sickly grandmother. She told him of the wolf that was also a man, savage and fierce, and of the man who worked in the woods with an axe.

"And although she did not know it, the wolf had gotten to the cottage ahead of her, and waited. Little

Red Riding Hood stumbled back from the sight that met her eyes as she stood on the threshold of her grandmother's cabin: her grandmother's body, strewn in bloody chunks around the small house. The man with the axe turned toward her, the light in his eyes maddened, her grandmother's blood soaking into his clothes. She screamed as he lunged for her... and then the wolf crashed through the window. Nine feet of fur, muscle, and rage he was, and he stepped between Red and the man with the axe. He did not feel the blows of the axe as the madman attacked him, for the axe was made of steel, not silver."

She felt his smile and took a deep breath. *Almost done. Almost done, and maybe then he'll go away, and I can tell myself this was a dream.* "And the wolf opened his jaws and bit off the head of the man with the axe. The madman fell, and the wolf turned toward the girl, who thought she would surely be the next to die. But instead, the wolf began to change, his fur fading, his face changing to that of a man. And he took her into his arms, and she began to weep." She closed her eyes and swallowed hard. "And he took her with him into the depths of the forest to be his mate, and her mother never saw her again."

The silence in the library was perfect. The sounds of the other students further away, chattering to each other, dropping books, cell phones ringing, had all faded as he regarded her with those glass-chip eyes, the restlessly-stirring vines on his coat the only movement to distinguish him from a statue.

"Very good," he finally said, and in between blinks, he was gone.

Liane dreamed of him that night, burned for him, the dream not natural at all. He wore a coat stitched with words and woven from torn strips of pages, and although she could make no sense of the story his touch told, she knew there was no escaping it.



When sunset came the next night, he found her again, despite all the trouble she had taken to try to hide. The last rays of light were filtering through the stained-glass windows of the church, illuminating her where she knelt in the pew, her clothes turned inside-out, oatmeal in her pockets, a rowan twig tied with red thread in one hand and a knife in the other.

"Tell me a story," he said again, his eyes like golden caramel melting over a fire. The long mane hung unbraided to his feet, the darker hues of radiant flame: amber, tangerine, honey-gold, and brandy-

brown. His coat was woven from flowers today, roses with the thorns still on, lilies with their drooping petals, gillyflowers, four o'clocks, and ivy. But she knew it was him. *He puts on different faces, different... kinds of beauty the way we change our clothes in the morning.*

"A new story that is also an old story," he murmured, fixing his stare on hers. She tried to look away and could not. Her mouth was as dry as old bone, and she nodded. *How long? How long will he keep coming? He's shown he can find me anywhere, and the old protections mentioned in legends have no effect...*

"Once, ages ago, a man and his wife wanted to have a child. After a very long time, it seemed as though God was about to grant their wish." She told him the tale of Rapunzel, reared in the tower by the sorceress who had taken her away from her parents for the crime of stealing a rampion from her garden.

"Long years passed in the company of the enchantress, learning from her, doing her bidding. And as children are wont to do, she learned the ways of her mother, taking from her what was good and what was evil, absorbing the virtues and vices of the witch as a growing plant absorbs sunlight and water."

No sounds from the streets outside the church filtered in, and she wondered, distantly, what would happen if the priest who held the Sunday services at this church were to come in, unsuspecting. *Will he even see this creature? If he does, will he see him as I do, or as a man? Will this thing kill him, or find him beneath his notice and ignore him? And if he kills the priest, what happens to me?*

"At last, the day came when the young lord saw the witch come and go from the tower, climbing up and down the golden rope of Rapunzel's hair. He waited patiently until the witch left the next day, and then he went to the foot of the tower, and called out to the beautiful maiden as he had heard the witch do. 'Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair.'"

The scent of church incense and the smoothly-polished wood of the back of the pew in front of her still grasped in her hands were her only anchors to the world around her as she told the creature the tale he had asked for. The light from the lamps above glinted off the tips of the branches that grew from the crown of his head where antlers had sprouted last night.

"And after he had proclaimed his love to her, she let him clasp her in his arms. And then she did as her upbringing had taught her, and lifted the knife she had hidden in her skirts, and stabbed him through the heart. And when her mother the sorceress returned at last, they rejoiced over the slain prince's body, and feasted." *Done. At last. Please, please, let him not come again!*

His stare felt like the knife in her story, pinning her own heart through. And then he smiled. "Well-told." And once more, before she could move, he had disappeared.



For four more days he came to her at twilight, demanding a tale. It mattered not where Liane went to hide from him: locked in her dorm room; on the road in the back of a bus, forty miles out of town and on her way back to her parents' home; even seated at a restaurant among dozens of other diners, none of whom saw him.

Each night, after weaving a story for him, he would smile, speak a word or two of praise, and vanish. Each night after he vanished, she slept, and saw him in her dreams, and woke up weeping. There were things about the dreams that would vanish like snowflakes in a volcano's throat upon waking... but the parts she remembered, whether beautiful or horrible, were bad enough.

Her studies fell by the wayside. *I sort of doubt I'll make it to finals*, she told herself in the grim morning hours, after her tears had dried and the memories of the dream had faded as much as they were

going to. *If he goes away, if this ends, I can always take the classes over again.* She no longer remembered most of what her classes had been about. Math, science, and government had withered and died. She spent her waking hours like Dr. Frankenstein, creating something monstrous by stitching bits of old, familiar stories to fragments of new ones.

She told him the story of the beauty whose traveling father stole a rose from the garden of a prince transformed by magic into a beast. The beast demanded the man's daughter in repayment, and the father willingly agreed, rather than face death. But the girl grew lonely, and at last the beast let the girl visit her family again. Her jealous sisters coaxed her into staying two weeks instead of one, and on the last night, the girl dreamed that the beast lay dying out of love for her. She raced back from the visit, hoping to rouse the creature with her love. He woke, but she had been mistaken. Beasts know no love. The monster devoured her.

She told him the story of the girl whose mother died and whose father remarried a woman who already had two daughters of her own. When the father died, her stepmother sent her to live in the scullery, and do all the household chores. When the prince of the land sent out a call to all the women who lived within his realm to come to a ball, so that he might choose his bride, the girl slaughtered her stepmother and stepsisters, and wove a magnificent gown from the long strands of their gold, copper, and silver hair. Their bones she boiled down into glue, making molds around her tiny feet to craft shoes of hardened shellac, clear as glass, with which she danced her way into the prince's heart.

She told him the story of the miller's daughter, whose father boasted to a passing king that she could spin straw from gold. The king married the girl, but warned the miller that if the girl could not make the gold as he was promised, the girl would die. The king locked her into a vast room with mounds of straw and a spinning wheel. A passing dwarf heard her weeping and came to her rescue, offering to spin the straw to gold for her for a price. The dwarf took the straw away and came back with gold, delighting the king. And then the dwarf disappeared. Months passed, and the girl gave the king a



son. The babe was a week old, but not yet baptized, when the dwarf returned, appearing to the queen in front of the entire court. He demanded his price: the child she had borne. The queen begged for a chance to keep her son, and the dwarf relented, giving her three nights in which to guess his true name. She had three chances each night, and on the third night, as the final wrong choice fell from her lips, the dwarf exulted. Before he could snatch up the child, however, the king rose from his throne, fell upon him, and rent him into bits. And the queen, who had originally been unwilling to wed the king of ogres, lifted her child from his cradle and held him to her heart, smiling at her fierce beloved.

Each night, the dreams returned, growing progressively worse. She thought she might go mad from them. And each night, she knew he would come again the next evening at dusk. He did not disappoint her. On the seventh night, knowing there was no longer any point in trying to run or hide, she took a seat under the wide-spreading branches of the ancient oak at the center of the campus quad. The courtyard was deserted as the last light of day strained through the green-leaved branches. Tomorrow was the first day of final exams, and the other students were either cloistered away, studying fervently, or out desperately partying, knowing they were going to flunk anyway.

He walked out of the darkness under the tree, his eyes like bruises, purple and black as overripe damsons. His hair hung unbound to his feet in a cloud of shadow, and little wisps of midnight poured from the soft velvet of his coat.

"Tell me a story," he murmured, his voice almost coaxing. She nodded and began.

"Once upon a time, on a winter's night, a queen sat sewing at her window. The embroidery frame that held her work was crafted of ebony. As she worked, she looked up at the snow and pricked her finger with her needle. Three drops of blood fell out onto the snow. And she thought, 'If only I had a child as white as snow, as red as blood, and as black as this frame.' Soon afterward she had a daughter that was as white as snow, as red as blood, and as black as ebony, and they called her Snow White. And in bearing this child, the queen died, and her husband, who was the king, remarried."

Her voice was steady as she spun the tale, describing the vain and beautiful sorceress who became the new queen. *Seven nights now, he has come asking for stories. But something's different tonight. I don't know if it's the look in his eyes or the chill in the air, but... after tonight, he won't come again.*

"Mirror, mirror, on the wall. Who's the fairest of them all?" the queen asked. And the mirror answered her question.

He sat fixed, unblinking as she spoke, the look in his eyes neither happy nor sad, neither angry nor amused. *So much magic in these tales, and none of it enough to banish him forever.* "And she took a bite of the apple, and it caught in her throat, and she fell down into a sleep that was like death. The seven little men found her body, and grieved, and built for her a wondrous casket of glass and gold and jewels, deep in the heart of the forest where no ray of light ever penetrated. Her body lay there for a year and a day, and it did not rot." She took a deep breath, wishing she had brought something to drink. Her throat was parched, and her voice was beginning to catch.

"A prince rode past the casket, on a dark horse, there in the blackest, bleakest depths of the woods. He was struck by the girl's beauty, and opened the box she lay in. She did not breathe, but he knew somehow that she was not dead. He bent his head and kissed her, and bit his own tongue, and a single drop of his blood flowed into her mouth. And she woke, not alive but not dead either — like him. And that night they feasted upon the blood of the vain sorceress who had tried so long and hard to kill her, and their reign was long and dark upon the Earth."

He neither moved nor spoke, and for a long moment, she was certain this was the end. *I would have turned twenty-one tomorrow...*

He smiled and caught her up in his arms. She was too stunned to scream as the world melted around her, the dark branches of the oak thinning into thorn-bedecked vines. The sun squatted halfway above the horizon, pinned forever between day and night, the last amber rays bleeding into the purpling clouds as everything whirled around her. She squeezed her eyes shut with a moan and buried her face in her hands.

Silence hung heavy as a pall as he put her down at last. "Welcome to your new home," he murmured, stepping aside. The walls of the tower looked made of papier-mâché, the pulp made from pages torn from old books. She could still see the ghosts of words traced in faded ebon ink on some of the bricks.

"I have brought you here to tell me stories," he told her, his expression gleeful as a child's at Christmas. "Perhaps someday, I may tire of you. When that day comes, you may go home."

Liane knew a lie when she heard one and despaired. *He'll never let me go. His kind don't know that sort of mercy. The tales tell it well enough. When they get bored with their toys, they break them, so no one else can play with them.*

He gestured for her to follow him, and she fell into step behind him, shoulders slumped in misery as he led her into the castle. *What can I do? I've never been a fighter. Some of my friends at school took martial-arts classes, or hung out at the gun range or the archery range, but not me. All I know is stories... and look where they've gotten me.* There were others scuttling about her now, small twisted things with servile eyes, beasts with slaverin' mouths full of fangs, tall and willowy beauties with empty eyes.

The sun still stood fixed on the horizon, neither sinking into night nor rising into daylight, shrouding the land in eternal dusk, and she paused at a window, frowning. *He always came to me at twilight, when it was neither day nor night, but in-between. Just as it is here.* Something familiar tickled at the back of her brain, and after a moment, she was able to put her finger on it: *the story of Lleu Llaw Gyffes, in the Mabinoŷion. He couldn't be killed during the day or night, inside or outside, not dressed and not nude, neither riding nor walking, not on land or on water. So his wife, who was having an affair and wanted him dead, had her lover kill him at dusk, wrapped in a net, with one foot in a stream and the other on the riverbank. All of which were states of **between**... liminal places.*

She looked up from the window. He had gone on without her, dismissing her as unimportant, and one of the warped, beetle-shaped things stood waiting to take her away and show her to her proper place. She hid a wearily-hopeful smile as she followed him.

Maybe this thing is subject to similar... well, not rules, as it's clear he knows no rules, but... flaws. Maybe he only comes and goes between night and day because it's the only time he can. I'll give him the stories he wants, and I'll watch him. And maybe some day, I'll find a way to destroy him, or at least confound him long enough to escape. If stories got me into this mess, maybe they'll teach me how to get out of it.



CREDITS

Written by: David Brookshaw, Jess Hartley, Misha Handman, Jennifer Lawrence, John Newman, Malcolm Sheppard and Chuck Wendig

Developer: Ethan Skemp

Creative Director: Richard Thomas

Production Manager: Matt Milberger

Editor: Scribendi.com

Art Direction and Book Design: Aileen E. Miles

Interior Art: Anna Borowiecka, Andrew Hepworth, Brian LeBlanc, Pat Loboyko, Britt Martin, Peter Mohrbacher, Justin Norman, Jami Waggoner

Cover Art: Stephanie Pui-Mun Law

THE *Changeling: The Lost* LINE

Autumn Nightmares

Winter Masques

Rites of Spring

Lords of Summer

The Equinox Road

NIGHT HORRORS GRIM FEARS

DANCERS IN THE DUSK

SWORDS AT DAWN



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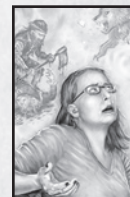
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Table of Contents



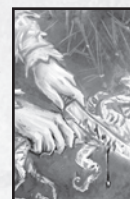
PROLOGUE:
SCHEHERAZADE
AT TWILIGHT
2

INTRODUCTION 10



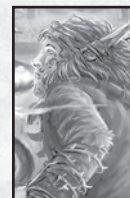
CHAPTER ONE:
DUSK DREAMS
12

CHAPTER TWO:
TANGLED FATES
50



CHAPTER THREE:
SHADOWS
CAST BY THORNS
80

CHAPTER FOUR:
THE DEEPENING DUSK
124



INTRODUCTION

*For I dance,
And drink, and sing,
Till some blind hand
Shall brush my wing.*
— WILLIAM BLAKE, "THE FLY"

The procession of seasons is an apt metaphor for things fae, and for the concerns of the Lost as well. Just as the power of Wyrd binds them to strange fates and unearthly destinies, the seasons march on inevitably, though the dance changes its steps every year. A winter may be mild or harsh, always winter but in very different masks.

There's another metaphor that works well, though — and that's twilight: the state of not quite being day or night, living on the edge between both. Changelings are most decidedly creatures of both worlds. The Hedge itself isn't entirely one or the other: after all, light cast through thorns leaves a dappled imprint, half light and half shadow.

Dancers in the Dusk, and its companion volume, **Swords at Dawn**, explore a little more of the world of the Lost from the perspective of these aspects. These are books about transition, exploring some of the in-between areas of all that is faerie in the World of Darkness. In both books, you'll see the concept of dreams explored more; here too we also explore the concept of Fate, and what it means for the refugees from Faerie.

DREAMS AND FATE

Changelings share a fae gift to enter the dreams of sleepers, where they have the power to terrorize or to protect the dreamer from outside threats. But what are those outside threats? Other changelings and the Gentry, to be sure. But there are other things that can strike at the dreaming mind, some fae, some... unknown. They may have physical forms, or they may not. What matters is the battlefield of dreams.

Less tangible, but no less relevant to the Lost, is the power of Fate. Changelings have some understanding of how the force of Fate seems to be intertwined with the power of the Wyrd. In a way, Fate is another promise, one that can be adhered to or broken like any pledge. As an aspect of the Wyrd — or is the Wyrd an aspect of Fate? — changelings can influence it more than an ordinary mortal could.

But they're also more at its mercy in some ways. Though the Wyrd doesn't force predestined fates on the fae, some can feel an invisible hand moving pieces around them. When a changeling's life begins to seem like part of an older, more archetypal story, the power of Fate may be at work.

ONCOMING NIGHT

As one might expect, the keyword to this book is "Dusk." Dusk is a stage of transition, and a somewhat sinister one at that. It's a time of oncoming night, of darkness about to close over the land. People retire to their beds, where they may fall into dreams. Others pace the streets, unable to rest.

Dusk is emblematic of the transitional space that changeling find themselves embodying. Pulled away from humanity, yet not quite pure Fae, they are creatures of borderlands and twilight. They are still very human at heart, where it counts — and yet their senses and bodies have been altered, and it's easy for them to fall into delirium.

But dusk in particular is a time of deepening twilight. The day has passed, and night is seeping in. For the Lost, this can have grave repercussions. The power of their enemies grows, or their own grasp on their sanity wanes. Hence the tone of this book.

Dancers in the Dusk isn't about the necessity of making a **Changeling** chronicle darker. Rather, it's about the options for doing so, and tools that can be used to explore this theme. Certainly part of the material here deals with the prospect of a world that's worsening for the Lost, but the core message of this book shouldn't be "things are inevitably depressing." It's a simpler message than that. Night is coming. What next?

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Dancers in the Dusk is slightly aspected toward the Storyteller, much as **Swords at Dawn** is slightly more for the player. You'll find threats aplenty here, some variants on

old favorites like hobgoblins, some brand-new. Some are living entities, others peculiar traps, obstacles and even very dangerous abstractions. The enterprising player will find things to appeal as well, no doubt. From the new Hedgescapes that offer delicious rewards for the brave and cunning to the Court of Dusk and new Entitlements, there's plenty to tempt the palate.

Chapter One: Dusk Dreams delves further into the recesses of the dreaming mind. Oneiromancers will learn more about their trade, as a new way of looking at the churning dreamscapes is presented: dreams of Mars, Venus, Lilith and more. More figments of dream present themselves, some of which can be quite helpful to the oneiric changeling. But step carefully: here too you'll find Incubi, those threats peculiar to the world of dreams. From the mad mage Virgilius to the poisonous play called "The Kindly Stranger," there's no small measure of nightmare lying in wait.

Chapter Two: Tangled Fates deals with new peculiarities of magic, not just sorcery but the force of Fate itself. Changelings know that destiny becomes a tangled thing where the Wyrd is involved. Here the enterprising Storyteller will find new tools and advice for making Fate a more tangible — and perhaps menacing — presence in a chronicle. The darker side of fae magic is also represented here, with many tricks that reflect the theme of Dusk — new Goblin Contracts and Contracts that affect Clarity itself,

as well as guidelines for twisted pledges, maledictions and cursed objects.

Chapter Three: Shadows Cast By Thorns returns to the Hedge as its subject material. Not just in offering a new cast of dangerous, rascalion hobgoblins to tempt, mislead, bedevil and harry the Lost — though they're present as well — but even to show more of where they live and how they gather. The peculiar Hedge-towns and domains here provide great opportunities for the brave and clever to win new strength or wisdom. But everything has a cost, and the paths through the Thorns grow all the more dangerous when night is coming.

Finally, **Chapter Four: The Deepening Dusk** deals with the theme of dusk most directly. First you'll find advice for taking a chronicle into an ever-darkening night, both in terms of story opportunities and rule tweaks that will certainly emphasize a growing dread. The theme is then further explored with the Court of Dusk, an organization that waxes and wanes through the years, always becoming at its strongest when a long night is about to fall. Finally, you'll find four Entitlements, Knights of Dusk if you will, that array themselves in noble orders to match the darkness.

Night is falling. We hope you find something in these pages to keep you occupied as it gets darker. It's still a ways to go before dawn.







go to sleep, and there she is. Emily. As lovely as I remember, back when we were seniors in high school. She's undressed to just the right point of provocation, lounging on my teenaged bed, and she only has eyes for me.

I have to remember that she's not real.

"Do you have to look like that?" I ask, knowing the answer. Of course she does.

"Do we have a deal?" she asks without answering. The voice does its work on me, making me tremble. God.

"You do this and we're even," I say, trying to resist the urge to climb into bed with her. It'd only hurt a little... my heart ticks, my mainspring whirring. She shifts a little, drawing my eye down to the movement and sending my gears racing faster. She probably doesn't even consciously realize she's doing it.

Emily.

I was going to be with Emily. We'd made plans, arranged to meet up over the vacation before college. She was going to the same campus as me that fall anyway, and we both knew where our friendship was going. Beautiful, wonderful, witty Emily.

I never met up with her that vacation. I went somewhere else instead, to a place where my heart was turned to gears and cogs. The thing they replaced me with? He never met up with her either. He got cold feet, didn't want to be held back at college by being tied down to a girl from the old home town.

Idiot. Damned idiot.

Ten years later, what does he have? A mortgage, a job in accounting and a failing marriage to the girl he settled with. Emily wound up with someone else who ended up hurting her, badly. Too badly to heal, and now she's alone. She and my fetch haven't spoken in years, though they both still wonder what might have been.

I can understand him taking over my life. He didn't know any different — thought he was me, even. That I can understand. But he wrecked my life. Ruined it, and unforgivably ruined hers too. Even if I take it back, it's not the life I wanted. Not the girl I wanted. The thought of her brought me back through the Thorns, animated my clockwork heart and pushed me all the way home. But home's gone, and my ticktock heart doesn't beat anymore. I'm cold inside.

This creature I'm meeting with in my dream isn't Emily. Not as she is now. But she's just enough like her to make my fetch fall in love. Enough like her to make him remember what he gave up because he was too chicken. Enough like her to make him love her every night while he sleeps next to the wife he settled for. Enough like her to kill.

Normally, she protests, she doesn't take it all the way — doesn't stay with the men she visits long enough for their bodies to burn out. I even believe her, but I saved her kid from the Privates that time and she owes me one for that. So for one week only, she'll be Emily for my fetch until his heart — the flesh and blood heart I no longer have — bursts in his goddamn chest.

"We have a deal," I tell the succubus. My heart whirrs as she licks her lips. She really is perfect.

It's no more than he deserves.

CHAPTER I

Dusk Dreams

*One trembles to think of that mysterious thing in the soul,
which seems to acknowledge no human jurisdiction,
but in spite of the individual's own innocent self,
will still dream horrid dreams, and mutter unmentionable thoughts.*

—HERMAN MELVILLE, *Pierre: or, the Ambiguities*

DREAMSCAPES

Dreams are fields of infinite, startling variety, or prisons of conformity and inescapable repetition. Both extremes are madness; average souls dangle between them, sift the waking day into symbols and confront them in the depths of sleep.

What are dreams for? Scientists are divided on the point, but many theories revolve around memories. Dreams are where human beings hammer the chaos of the day's experiences into coherent narratives. Dreams are the prologue of every person's history, where confused, unfiltered sensations find solid chambers in the human memory palace.

Changelings know that science's point of view is either less complete than most neuroscientists would think or betrays a profound, esoteric truth, depending on your point of view. Dreamers wield powers that are impossible in the waking world, and secret peoples — changelings, Fae and other supernatural dream-travelers — harvest the results for themselves. Knowing this, the Lost often enter dreams with more than a twinge of guilt. There's an air of exploitation around dream voyages. When changelings use them for personal benefit it resembles the way the Others reshape their slaves. When you know that dreams are a plane of existence, what's the difference between controlling someone when they're asleep and when they're awake? Fortunately, while mortal dreamers have much to fear from the Lost, they are not wholly disarmed. Everyone's dreams are dangerous.

ARCHETYPES

Psychologists and mystics both talk about archetypes: recurring symbols that feature in many dreams. Archetypes aren't as well regarded as they used to be. Scientists and metaphysicians moved on to more complex perspectives. The modern science of the mind is more interested in neuron activity, chemistry and function: things that can be measured, compared and held up to falsifiable hypotheses. Many occultists and New Age thinkers still go for ideas like the

Jungian Shadow; there's often a difference between what they say in a for-profit Tarot card reading and the notes they jot down in esoteric workbooks. Archetypes were easier to swallow when cultures existed in more isolated enclaves or within a political hierarchy. Now globally-minded myth-scholars know that Trickster destroys the rules but the Other accidentally reinforces them. Despite superficial similarities, they can't be proven to be the same symbol at all. Not everyone thinks the shadowy space between two trees is a portentous gateway or that the earth is innately feminine.

Nevertheless, there *are* patterns. No dream is an island. It takes in the flotsam of the day — and traumas to last a lifetime. People have enough in common to share these joys and terrors, so even though not everyone stirs at an archetypal Shadow or Wise Old Man, living together in an interconnected world binds histories, their histories, and symbols together.

Beneath it all, rumors and theories circulate among the Lost about the ultimate nature and meaning of dreams. Autumn Court scholars talk of an underworld that gives all dreams their basic psychic shapes — and who in turn, take those shapes from millions of individual imaginations. Changelings who think about such things usually agree that there are immutable powers behind all dreams — the Others, perhaps, or as many hope, another power that stands for humanity. The Morpheans are evidence of something that lies beyond the established structure of Fae, changeling and human — signs of something that could be more hopeful or terrifying than the known shape of things.

The practical upshot of it all is that Storytellers shouldn't treat any source that describes archetypes and patterns as gospel — including the examples in this book. Ultimately, a dream is a sort of indirect biography of the dreamer, chiefly beholden to her experiences, fears and desires.

At the very least, that's true until something *alien* enters the mix and changes things.

Archetypal Advice

Astral Realms, a supplement of *Mage: The Awakening*, contains a number of ready-made archetypal realms and beings that can be easily adapted for *Changeling* play, though the Lost's take on dream worlds should definitely influence their presentation. That book's Storytelling chapter also lays out a step-by-step method for tailoring archetypes for your own group, so you might want to check it out.

THE ELDRITCH PURPOSE

Now we return to the question at the beginning of this section: what are dreams for? Nobody knows for certain, but some often *think* they know. The sciences are not only incomplete, but often wrong. Changelings know that for a fact. Educated changelings also know that dreams and destiny are intertwined above and beyond the simple observation that people dream about desires and personal experiences.

One popular theory among theologians and sorcerers says the body is the prison of the soul. Dreams are the only place true desires manifest without physical or social limits. People take lovers they could never have in the real world, or commit crimes too awful to even speak of. Many Lost oneiropomps subscribe to this view as well. It's not a flawless theory. People fail in their dreams and relive the worst experiences of their lives. It would be easy to say that deep down these mortals want to fail, but that seems hard-hearted.

There's another point of view. It says that dreams are *not* the unexpressed leftovers from waking life. They're Fate's prelude: a grand rehearsal for mortal existence. A mystic might say that dreams are the orders humanity issues to Fate. Destiny balances these desires against each other and unleashes them as far as the limits of material existence allow. Everyone dreams up their own destinies, but the world just isn't wondrous enough to contain them all.

Changelings drift between one camp and the other or design their own philosophies but no matter what they believe, they know dreams evade simple explanations — and they're in a better position to learn the truth than almost anyone else. Sorcerers are more interested in abstract thought and grand families of symbols. Even the Gentry who sculpt dreams into fabulous and accursed shapes don't seem to know the whole truth. For all their power, they know next to nothing about human nature.

THE SKEIN

The Skein is every dream that's ever existed and every dream that will exist, arrayed like beads of silver moisture along an infinite tangle of threads. They cross and twist when people have similar dreams or dreams that complement each other. Few mortals have the power and knowledge to cross from dream to dream, but a few Lost know the way and might journey through an endless array of dreams. Many changelings don't even know this is possible and many who know it can be done believe it *shouldn't* be done. It's too dangerous and perhaps unethical, too, because the Skein gives changelings access to dreams for which they hold no pledge. Skeinwalking invades the most secret thoughts of others. It's presumptuous — only the True Fae would do it.

Dreams and Fate

A dream is what you make of it. At the core, it's a story. Unlike the material world, story precedes sensation; dreaming souls create a tale and populate it with memories and fancies. Stories are the structure of Fate. Its threads create heroes, villains, victims and picaresque rogues. Therefore, dreams and Fate act together, to the point where some changelings believe dreams are the truest expressions of destiny. They're pure Fate; earth and flesh don't bog them down with so-called natural laws. This mirrors the nature of Faerie, which does possess flesh, bone and stone, but as a *consequence* of Fate. In the ordinary world, base matter and energy is the root of existence, but in dreams and deep Fae sorcery, the Wyrd is the root; reality is its ever-changing flower.

Motifs, Personae and Prophetic Paths in Chapter Two express themselves very strongly in dreams. If one of these makes an appearance, its modifier (bonus or penalty) increases by 1. Furthermore, changelings often forge a Link (again, see Chapter Two) with anyone whose dream they enter. Roll the changeling's Wyrd; one success creates a Link.

The Skein versus Astral Realms

If you're familiar with *Mage: The Awakening* this chapter might puzzle you. In *Mage*, human dreams are one layer of the Astral Plane, a psychic expanse that encompasses the thoughts of everyone and everything known to exist. The Skein is more claustrophobic; it's a series of chambers with defined passages that don't always match the neat Awakened categories of "higher" and "lower" worlds. Which one is the real "realm of dreams?"

Both of them are.

Mystic dream travel is inherently, inescapably a matter of perspective. Mages truck with high thoughtforms, conceptual realms and mind-angels with secret names. Changelings *join* the dreams they enter; they're spiritually predisposed to understand them in depth, as more than arbitrary mental "neighborhoods" in some occult over-category. To them, Fate and dreams aren't separate, arcane fields of study; changelings innately exploit connections mages can't see — and the Lost, in turn, can't just meditate their way to the realms of the gods.

Any changeling can travel the Skein, but it takes skill and bravery. The Lost make maps, use divining ways and, sometimes, follow a figurative trail of breadcrumbs to walk from dream to dream. Nevertheless, one cannot always anticipate what will await a changeling in the next dream over. There are no layers or huge, multi-dream realms that cluster in one part of the Skein or the other. There are trends, rules and connections, but not a stable, overarching geography.

MAPS WITHOUT TERRITORIES

To walk from dream to dream, you need an idea of where you're going or some truly exceptional luck — good or bad. The Skein constantly reshapes itself to suit the whims of millions of dreamers, so traversing it with an eye to reaching a particular dream is a tricky job. There are at least three basic ways to do it.

ONEIROSCOPY

To purposefully travel the Skein, an ethical changeling begins by casting an oneiroscope: a divination designed to determine when one dreamer's dream will align with others along one untangled thread in the Skein. The changeling selects a particular dreamer as the subject of inquiry and a target dream as her ultimate destination. Normal humans work best; for some reason their life-threads easily link to others. Supernatural beings are less bound to the whole Skein, but powerfully linked to select threads as they lead wonderful, terrible lives. Fate has plans for them.

Oneiroscopy is an Occult Skill Specialty. Without it, a changeling lacks the knowledge to cast an oneiroscope. Members of the Autumn Court traditionally teach the lore. Custom frowns upon them instructing anyone outside the Court without securing a pledge in return. Skeinwalking is dangerous, and Court scholars don't want just any changeling with something to prove giving it a shot.

There are many different ways to cast an oneiroscope. Dream-sages use lots, Tarot cards, and even electronic random number generators (though these must generate true random numbers and not just very unpredictable ones). There are only two constants. First, some element of chance must represent Fate. Second, the changeling must either know the subject's name and appearance or possess some object that's strongly linked to him — a few hairs or a photograph, perhaps. In game terms, this is an Extended Action that requires 30-minute intervals. Roll Intelligence + Occult and consult the following table:

Successes	Result
1–5	No known dream can take the changeling to her desired destination.
6–8	The subject will have a suitable dream in around a month's time.
9–12	The subject will have a suitable dream in about a week's time.
13–14	The subject will have a suitable dream in a night or two.
15+	The subject will have a suitable dream the next time he dreams at all.

Modifiers: The subject is a supernatural being (- dots in Blood Potency/Primal Urge/Gnosis/etc.), has exceptional knowledge of the destination dream (+1 to -3), has a poor knowledge of the destination dream (-1 to -3), is an Autumn Court member (+ Autumn Mantle dots).

GATE-SHAPING

Impatient changelings resort to gate-shaping to force their targets to have an appropriate dream. This is a form of dreamscaping (see **Changeling**, pp. 195–196) that twists the dreamer's thoughts into a tale that resonates with the threads a changeling wishes to travel. To visit a distant general in his sleep, the changeling makes her subject dream of specific military matters. In all cases, there's a certain brutality about exploiting another person's dreams this way. The oneiropomp turns her target into a means to an end, battering away enough individuality to unveil the common elements that will guide her through the Skein. This induces nightmares, though these may not manifest until the Skeinwalker is gone.

GUIDES

The third option is to find a guide. Any Incubus (see p. 24) can perform this service, though many will only do so after being beaten within an inch of their existences or paid in Glamour, dreams to order, or services in the material world. Incubi walk the Skein easily, through paths no changeling could find unaided. Some Lost believe this is because they are creatures of the Skein itself, bound to all dreams instead of a particular consciousness. A Morphean (see p. 43) can also guide travelers, but rarely does so unless it suits its enigmatic agenda. No game system is required. The guide can even lead Skeinwalkers all the way to their destination, but the further they travel, the heavier the price.

THE TRUE GATES OF HORN AND IVORY

One way or another, the would-be Skeinwalker finds the first gate. It manifests as a traversable boundary such as a door, a bridge, or a wooded thicket. It always looks slightly out of place because it's not only a product of the individual dream, but the thematic thread it shares with other dreams on the way to the changeling's destination. If the changeling uses oneiroscopy or gate-shaping, she can identify it immediately. If she's using a guide, that creature has to point it out.

Dream gates that changelings can perceive without assistance manifest spontaneously from time to time. Multiple gates are rare but not unheard of. They tend to occur during prophetic dreams, or on nights to which the dreamer gives religious or magical significance. Noticing one requires a Wits + Wyrd roll. On a failure it looks like an unremarkable part of the subject's dreams. It can be so innocuous that a changeling might cross it accidentally. Any changeling can pass through even if he didn't enter the dream looking to travel, but even though accidental crossings happen, they never happen without a reason — a seeming contradiction, if you ignore a subtle distinction. Even though the Lost might not want to journey the Skein, there's always some purpose to it, even if it's one known only to Fate.

However she got to the threshold, the Skeinwalker now has a chance to cross beyond a tasked dream, onto a thread of story and Fate that holds multiple dreams beyond her oaths.

INTO THE TANGLE

It sounds simple enough: find the next gate, and the one after that. Walk from dream to dream until you reach your destination. Fate pushes Skeinwalkers to their desired objectives or leads them astray, but it never just stands aside. Whatever happens, the journey will be

Dreams between the Starting Point and Destination*

0–1

Connection

Sensory: Dreamers share the same bed or room. If they were conscious they would easily see, hear or touch each other.

1–2

Intimate: One dreamer wears, is touching, or has recently (in the past eight hours) ingested some part of the other's physical substance, such as hair, nail clippings or a bodily fluid. This connection also applies to lovers, best friends, close family members and a changeling and his fetch.

2–3

Known: The dreamers are co-workers or typical friends.

3–4

Acquainted: The dreamers are casually acquainted but don't know each other well. One is the other's usual checkout person at the grocer's, for example.

4–5

Encountered: The dreamers have met once.

5–6

Described: One dreamer is known to the other by name, voice, or appearance. This is not necessarily a two-way connection.

6 and up

Unknown: The dreamers do not know each other at all, but are merely joined by dreaming along the same thread.

* A Fate Link (p. 55) always halves the number of intervening dreams. Round fractions up.

come a significant part of the traveler's life story, for she travels along threads forged by the compelling bonds between desire and destiny.

Passing through the gate is the first step through a series of dreams. Each one is thematically linked, due to similarities or symbiotic contrasts. Three nightmares about the woods may seem much like a single monster-ridden forest, though its appearance and inhabitants shift as a Skeinwalker leaves the first dream, crosses the second, and reaches her objective at the other side of the woods. On the other hand, the forest at journey's end might be reached from an urban utopia. The dark wood is everything that the gleaming city isn't — one dream implies the other, creating a connection.

The distance between the starting point and the destination is a function of the dreamers' mystic connections. It's easy to travel from one woman's dream to her lover's. They might even be "next door" to each other on the dream-thread. Moving from her dream to one that belongs to someone she doesn't know requires a longer route through more intervening dreams. The accompanying table provides guidelines.

UNBOUND DREAMS

Each dream possesses its own challenges but has related themes. As a Skeinwalker travels, each new dream more accurately resembles the destination. This is partly a matter of the thematic link and partly the bond between the Wyrd and the act of traveling. Dreams change to accommodate the journey. She must locate new dream-gates as she goes but this effect makes it easier; the player gains a cumulative +1 die bonus for each gate past the first one. It's easier to find gates on long dream journeys but then again, navigation is usually the least of her worries.

The changeling will almost certainly cross into dreams she isn't oath-tasked to enter. Assuming the dream doesn't belong to her fetch, this makes travel more dangerous. The changeling can't use dreamscaping in these foreign dreams. Dream riding and dream combat actions suffer a –2 dice penalty. Dream Defense and armor work normally.

There is a more critical problem, however. Unlike personal dreams, fetch dreams, or tasked dreams, foreign dreams can't be abandoned with something as simple as the decision to

Star-Struck Dreams

Celebrity alters the Skein. Famous people loom large in thousands of dreams. This generates tremendous interference because a traveler can't always tell a famous person's dreams apart from dreams other people have about him. A pop star is the subject of sex fantasies, concert memories, hazy recollections of music videos and remembered songs. These dreams also suffer from powerful cultural interference. The more famous the target, the more other people dream about that person's media presence — not immediate impressions of the celebrity himself. Similarly, most people have at least a Described connection to the President of the United States, but it still isn't easy to get inside the Commander in Chief's dreams.

Every dot of the Fame Merit adds psychic clutter to the tune of one or two intervening dreams between the famous dreamer and the Skeinwalker's starting point. Additionally, apply Fame dots as a persistent penalty to attempts to find dream-gates leading to his dreams, or cast oneiroscopes about when some other dreamer will come up with a suitable dream to send the traveler on her way. Dramatic failures usually guide changelings to a particularly strong fantasy about the celebrity. These can be naïve, embarrassing, or absolutely vile.

wake up or leave. Even total Willpower point loss won't knock the changeling back to wakefulness or a personal dreamscape. The farther the journey, the longer it takes to come back. To drift back home, she needs a full hour of rest for every foreign dream she's crossed during the journey. She can move around,

Speak, and even evade pursuit in the dreamscape during her rest, but she can't perform actions that cost Glamour, Willpower points (she can endure attacks that drain Willpower or Glamour, but can't intentionally spend them), or involve dream combat. Once the required time passes she can either wake up or relax in her personal dreams. Experienced Skeinwalkers often choose the latter, since it gives allies a chance to create healing dreamscapes.

Alternately, she can retrace her steps through dreams along the thread. She knows where the gates are now, but one major complication exists: what if one of the dreamers has woken up, or moved on to a new dream? If that's the case, the trail is lost.

Lastly, the delay in returning persists even when the traveler's lost all Willpower, leaving her in a very dangerous state. She's not only helpless, but can't leave her current dream until she's regained at least one Willpower point. Winter courtiers spread stories of changelings who've been captured by Incubi in far-off dreams and tortured to the point of utter madness. Captors flay their prisoners' wills, to keep them from waking up. These wretches starve to death in the material world unless companions care for them though their dream-comas.

HUMAN DREAMS

Billions of people in the world create worlds in their sleep. Most of these imaginary lands are small, vague places, stuck to the cares of the day. People dream of work, love, worries, death — every facet of the human condition. Most dreams are not interesting because of the subject matter as much as the execution. People bring their whole lives to sleep with them. It's easy for ordinary people to classify each other by gender, nationality or subculture and forget their unique perspectives. Changelings know better — they know dreams better than anyone.

THE GLORY OF ORDINARY DREAMS

Changelings are hunted, twisted by their Durance and often afraid, but they're blessed, too. They are among the few beings in Creation capable of looking deeply into the human heart, where people dream wonders out of life's ingredients. The first trip to another person's dreams is one of the most important experiences of a changeling's life. As a culture, the Lost often encourage a certain amount of stoicism about the mundane world. If they get too close to normal lives they might get soft, unready for the Gentry's hunters. Carelessness could hurt their old families and friends. The message is implied, but powerful: to protect what you love, stay away from it — and to stay away, guard your heart.

The unspoken secret of human dreams is that to visit one for the first time is usually one of the most uplifting experiences in a changeling's life.

The exceptions prove the rule. Some changelings accidentally enter psychopathic or traumatized minds, but even in the World of Darkness, most people are sane and caring. They have flaws and dark sides, but changelings see the virtuous forces that temper them, too. This weave of desires is a beautiful thing, but most changelings don't like to talk about it.

They don't want to look careless or weak, but they never forget their first dream.

Tales of the First Dream

The first dream voyage should be a momentous occasion. Imagine if *you* could see the innermost unguarded thoughts of another person. Do you have a thought that you're so ashamed of you would never tell anyone? Are you secretly proud of something you did that nobody else rewarded you for, or even recognized? If you dreamed about it, a changeling could know it.

Changeling: The Lost's mood can take your group to some pretty grim places. Consider switching that up a bit. Make that first human dream a positive experience. This doesn't mean it lacks conflict or dramatic tension but at the end of it all, the dream demonstrates that its owner's life contributes something special to the world. It sounds terribly sentimental, but where *else* should sentiment reign, if not in dreams?

This opportunity doesn't just give you a break from the bleak aspects of the game. It gives the horror meaning. If the world's full of scumbags, who cares if the Gentry drag them off to Arcadia? The wonder of common dreams makes them worth protecting and gives the Lost a higher purpose than raw survival.

THE HYPNACOCIC CONSTELLATION

Half of the Autumn Court's dream-sages are devoted to classifying dreams. They identify primal models and recurring themes. They count dozens, hundreds, or thousands of them. The other half thinks it's a waste of time. They concentrate on dreams that defy easy categorization.

Dream nomenclatures might not reveal much about the true nature of dreams, but at least they provide a starting point for Storytellers.

The late Rowena of Miami (High Oneirologist to Tom Hood, 1950–1962) developed a very simple model that didn't claim particular accuracy but was meant to be a starting point for oneiropumps and dream explorers. Rowena was an astrologer so she used six of the classical planets (the Sun represented waking life) and two fringe categories as the backbone for her ideas. Like astrology, the so-called Hypnagogic Constellation is vague enough to resist falsification. On the other hand (and arguably, this is very much like astrology as well) it's terrible at making specific predictions about how any single dream will unfold. It is best at inspiring further inquiry and as such, it's an excellent way to render the panoply of dreams into basic story ideas.

The modern Constellation consists of eight "planets." Each one claims a broad category of dreams. Naturally, dreams can possess attributes from several planets, and even in such a rough model, there might be dreams that belong to none of them, but inhabit some enig-

matic zone of Fate and thought. Storytellers should mix and match the structure and systems of these dreams to suit their game.

LILITH

Dreams of Mystery

Lilith is the Black Moon: a hypothetical celestial body the mortal astrologer Sapharial “discovered” in 1918, and which Rowena adapted for her own use. It’s invisible to science (and Faerie magic too, for that matter) but it’s a useful symbol that stands for dreams about supernatural forces. The events depicted in many dreams would be considered supernatural if they occurred in the waking world, but Lilith’s domain deals with situations that go beyond flying dreams or monsters under the bed. It concerns itself with supernatural forces that actually exist in the material world.

Dreams of Mystery are more common than you might think. Strangely enough, they don’t seem to depend on direct experiences with the supernatural, though people who’ve had them have Lilith-dreams more frequently. The disturbing thing is that many people have very realistic dreams about creatures they’ve never met and places they’ve never been. This impossible knowledge gives Lilith’s dreams an oracular aspect. Prophetic dreams are considered to be innately supernatural, so they also fall under this category, though naturally, witnesses usually only identify prophecies in hindsight.

Story: A Lilith-dream often unfolds as follows:

- *Enigma:* The dreamer notices something out of place in what would otherwise seem to be a typical dream. His third-grade teacher has runes tattooed on her arm or a co-worker has dried blood under his fingernails. These unusual aspects multiply until the dreamer either feels compelled to investigate them himself or is haplessly drawn into an encounter with supernatural forces. Curiosity matters, because dreamers who lack the motivation to find the truth usually meet a bad end.

- *Investigation:* The dreamer tries to track the source of mystery. Many dreamers draw upon unrealistic methods that owe more to fiction than practical utility, but in a dream they both get the job done. In the process, the dreamer learns more about the supernatural force’s influence over the immediate surroundings. This occasionally takes a highly stylized form, like a silver aura around the people a sorcerer has brainwashed. For information gathering purposes, this is usually the real meat of the dream.

- *Revelation:* Apathy or earnest searching eventually draws the dreamer into a direct encounter with the monster, haunting or whatever else it is. If the dreamer only passively noticed phenomena up to now, the dream normally becomes a nightmare. The monster “kills” him or the haunting drives him insane. An investigator *might* “die” too but on occasion he discovers some cure or counter. The dreamer can’t actually die, but some Mystery dreams leave lasting psychological scars, especially if the supernatural forces in them have special psyche-altering powers.

Systems: When a supernatural creature or element appears in a Dream of Mystery it has all of its powers and unusual characteristics. A dream-vampire channels dream-blood into inhuman strength; a sorcerer casts spells. On the other hand, they follow the same rules as changelings for the purposes of dream combat and (as far as anyone knows) can’t leave or outlast the dream. They also don’t benefit from the extra protection of supernatural power traits like Blood Potency, Primal Urge, Gnosis or Wyrd; don’t add them to dice pools to resist Contracts and similar effects.

Any mortal can have a prophetic dream about the supernatural, but only lucid dreamers remember them. Furthermore, it’s possible for a changeling to induce a Dream of Mystery on a mortal with the Unseen Sense Merit, though this only reveals the phenomena to which the person’s Unseen Sense is “tuned”. The changeling accomplishes this via dreamscaping. The True Fae can force any mortal to have a Lilith-dream using a variant of prophetic dream-poisoning (see **Changeling: The Lost**, p. 200).

LUNA

Dreams of Secret Memory

In astrology, the moon symbolizes the unconscious mind and memory. Luna’s dreams delve into a dreamer’s deepest memories, including events the waking mind has either forgotten, cloaked in self-deception, or blocked out because of an associated trauma.

Luna dreams draw forth every detail. If the dreamer carelessly let a book fall behind a shelf 20 years ago and never bothered to pick it up, the dream will record it. These dreams aren’t absolutely realistic, however. A memory’s significance alters its presentation. Important things look hyper-detailed; their colors are particularly vivid. If the dreamer was a child at the time, everything’s bigger, in proportion to her younger size. These exaggerations never change the truth, however. A dreamer in Luna’s embrace can’t lie.

Changelings commonly explore their own Luna dreams to uncover secrets about their Durances. Durance memories are notoriously unreliable; they’re emotionally charged and chronicle events in a place the human mind wasn’t built to understand. Some hope that by searching deeply they can discover their Keeper’s weakness.

Story: Dreams of Secret Memory often use the following structure:

- *Setting the Stage:* In his phase of the dream, the dreamer gets a fix on the memory’s time and place. Calendars, clocks and visual or spoken references to dates and locations figure prominently. Smells tend to be particularly vivid as well. The dreamer usually ignores visitors, or tells them what’s going on in a frank, unemotional tone.

- *The Event:* Naturally, the heart of a Dream of Secret Memory is the memory itself. Unless visitors interfere, it happens exactly as it did in the past. Sometimes, the memory occurs in slow motion or repeats several times. If the dreamer has a false recollection of events, the dream might play through the falsehood a few times, revealing new inconsistencies on every repetition until the whole truth breaks out.

- *Fallout:* The conclusion of the dream shifts through subsequent events that the memory influenced. Dreams about abuse at the hands of caregivers mutate into later memories of perpetrating that same abuse, or feature the dreamer deliberately distancing himself from his own children. Luna dreams include life-affirming memories too, so don’t forget the virtuous memories also drift into fallout. Changelings see the depth of a good person’s compassion more often than they do the source of a psychopath’s depravity.

Systems: People who have Dreams of Secret Memory gain the 9-again benefit to determine the Intensity of memory dreams (**Changeling**, p. 191). Changelings can also trigger Luna dreams with a dreamscaping roll but that doesn’t enjoy the 9-again effect. The Storyteller chooses the memory unless the changeling knows what she’s looking for. In that case, apply a –1 to –3 penalty to the dreamscaping roll based on how familiar the changeling is with the dreamer.

One of the chief applications of dreamscaping to Dreams of Secret Memory unearths repressed or supernaturally modified memories. Luna dreams are always true even if some supernatural force has warped the dreamer's waking recall. Uncovering a memory that was repressed for ordinary reasons (such as a traumatic car accident) requires a point of Glamour and the standard dreamscape roll of Wits + Empathy + Wyrd, opposed by the target's Wits + Resolve.

Supernaturally altered memories are tough to recover. To even find a Luna dream about the event requires a point of Glamour and as many dreamscaping successes as the supernatural perpetrator's power trait. After that, the changeling must pit her Wits + Empathy + Wyrd against the dreamer's Wits + Resolve + the supernatural being's power trait. If she succeeds, she recovers the memory, and the dreamer knows the truth once again.

Dreamers can't tell lies in their own dreams, but visitors can — and they can turn true dreams into lies, too. On a successful dreamscaping roll, anything the changeling does to affect the dream alters associated memories. Fortunately, future Dreams of Secret Memory don't keep the changes (though normal, superficial dreams do), but the subject no longer

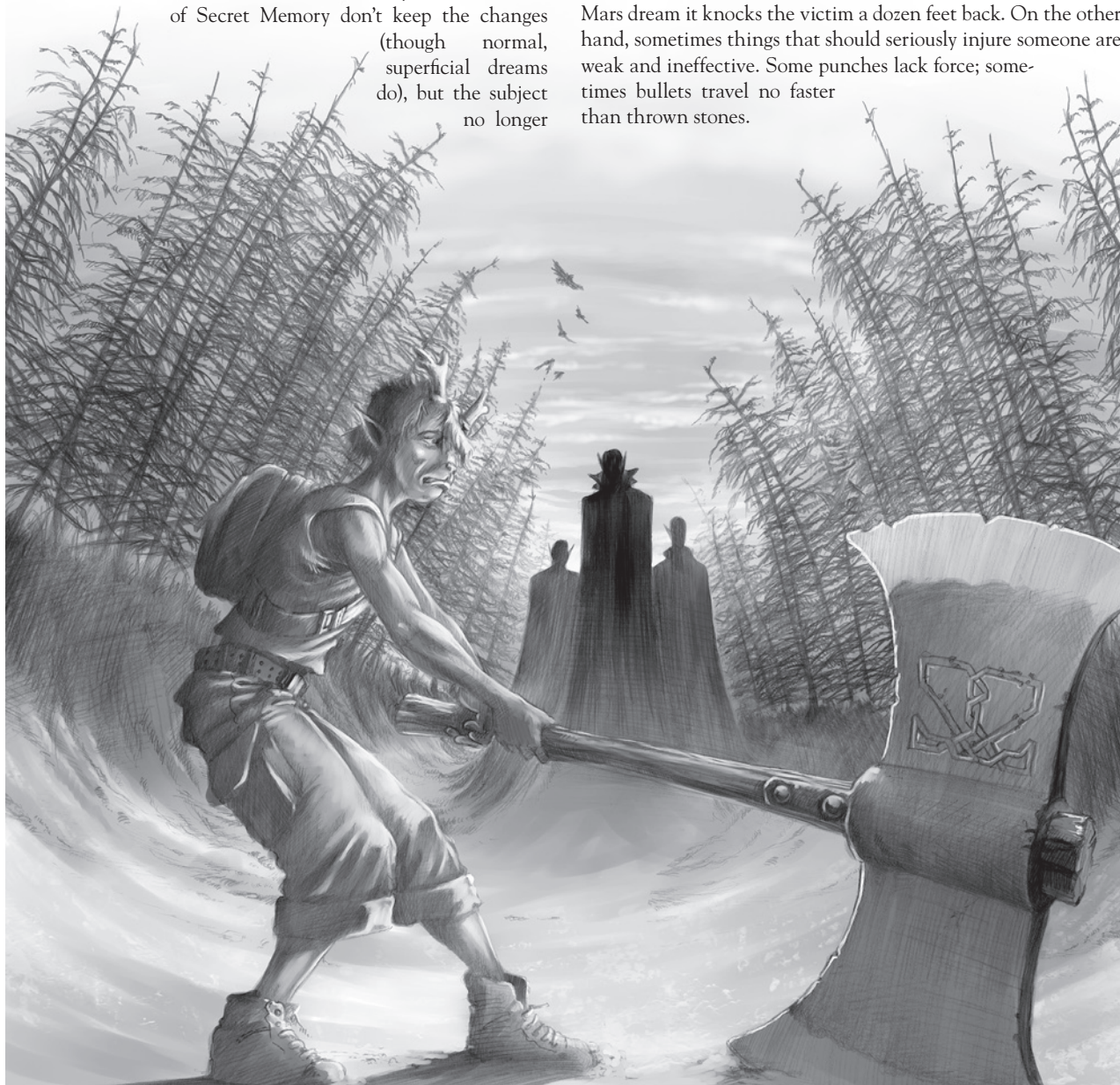
remembers them. The true memory is repressed in favor of whatever happened during the altered dream. The moral ramifications of this are serious and left for the Storyteller to determine after considering the memory and the oneiropomp's motives.

MARS

Bloody Dreams

Violence creates epic stories but painful dreams. Mars dreams include memories of real muggings, brutal revenge fantasies, and post-traumatic battle stress; the dreamer isn't necessarily an active participant. Mars dreams include victims and attackers, but if the dream is based on a memory or waking anxiety it might reverse real-life roles. The bully becomes the bullied, for example.

Bloody Dreams tend to depict violence in an exaggerated fashion. Sights, sounds and sensations mix the dreamer's imagination with the distorted impressions given by kinesthetic sensations. In the real world, a sloppy push might just feel hard, but in a Mars dream it knocks the victim a dozen feet back. On the other hand, sometimes things that should seriously injure someone are weak and ineffective. Some punches lack force; sometimes bullets travel no faster than thrown stones.



Mars dreams aren't always about back alley combat. Dreamers imagine hiding from cluster bombs or see stray bullets from drive-by shootings hit their friends. No matter the scenario, these arouse powerful emotions: fear, rage or the amoral triumph of someone who's used raw force to impose his will on someone else.

Story: Bloody Dreams aren't very structured. Memory and fantasy generate heart-racing events. In the real world this kind of stress causes all kinds of perceptual changes; it twists witnesses' sense of time, memories, and attention to detail. The fight or flight response kicks in and people react on instinct as much as choice. This translates into chaotic dreams where broken downtown streets suddenly shift into missile-blasted mountains and schoolyard bullies drag swords behind them.

Violent memories and fantasies are the subjects of a Mars dream. If it's an unpleasant memory, the dream becomes a nightmare. A few dreamers try to change the scenario, to win instead of lose, or to avoid the confrontation altogether. Wholly imaginary incidents are even less organized. The scenery and participants change without warning. There's still continuity, however, because there's always a sense that even though the faces, weapons, and places change, the situation is somehow the same. Carefully examining these shifts for symbolism unearths common elements and from there, the dream's true meaning.

Systems: In a Mars dream, violence tends to breed extreme results. Dream combat rolls gain the 9-again quality, but every failure is a Dramatic Failure. By default, this Dramatic Failure makes the character's next action totally ineffectual (simulating the feeling of powerlessness dreamers sometimes feel), though the player should roll again anyway to see whether this leads to yet another Dramatic Failure. In addition, every character in the dream temporarily benefits from Wrath and Sloth. Wrath encourages aggression, while Sloth rewards running, hiding, and begging for one's life. Characters can satisfy them in addition to their usual Vice, allowing them to recover Willpower more easily. Characters who already have one of these Vices earn two Willpower points whenever they satisfy the duplicated Vice. Any Willpower points gained from extra Vices disappear when the character leaves the dream.

Changelings can dreamscape Bloody Dreams. They usually do so to win an edge in some future emergency. If a dreamer encounters a violent situation that's largely similar to the dream scenario, she can apply the rote advantage to a single, non-supernatural dice roll in one subsequent scene. This advantage doesn't stack over multiple Bloody Dreams and once it's exercised, it's gone.

MERCURY

Dreams of Swift Knowledge

Mercury's dreams (or whatever a local oneiropomp wanted to call them) aren't what they used to be. Dreams of Swift Knowledge used to be about metaphysics, science and the occult; they were where human beings wondered about the secret shape of the universe and more often than not, hit close to the mark. In the modern era, knowledge seems to be less about possibility than *technique*. People dream a mix of drudgery and intellectual challenge that didn't exist before; it isn't easy to balance a spreadsheet but it isn't necessarily interesting, either. Mercury's role as the god of trade has eclipsed his associations with Thoth, mysticism, and secret knowledge.

Nowadays, most Mercury dreams are about service and administrative work. A few scientists, scholars and artists dream about their

passions but even would-be intellectuals think more about paying the bills first. Scientists who believe dreams are the brain's way of organizing memories wouldn't be surprised to see what happens in Mercury dreams. To changelings in search of wonder and novelty, the situation's a bit depressing, though not without practical value.

Even workaday dreams hide a few gems, though. Changelings visit them not only to uncover the inner workings of an institution, but also to learn how people solve problems on the job. The Lost visit Dreams of Swift Knowledge to acquire excellence in a field.

Story: Most Mercury dreams seem quite ordinary compared to the stranger visions of the Skein, but they usually include an unusual twist on the dreamer's daily life. A typical structure includes the following:

- *The Grind:* The dreamer goes to work. He sits at his lab, office or studio and gets through the day's routine. This is the most monotonous part of the dream and usually, the section changelings are tempted to skip past, but if they do that they'll miss two possible advantages. First of all, the dreamer's practicing a professional skill. The changeling can join in and learn. Secondly, the dreamer's working environment is usually rendered with particular accuracy. That's useful if the changeling's interested in "scouting" that location. Sometimes the dreamer doesn't consciously understand everything he reveals in his dream. For example, the dream depicts the key combination for a door, but the dreamer doesn't know it — he adds it to the dream because he sees it every day.

- *The Challenge:* At some point, the dreamer encounters a challenge particular to his task. For most people, this is a fairly ordinary problem like software troubleshooting, but when the dreamer is an occult researcher, cop, or someone a changeling might be particularly interested in, this can reveal critical information. If the dreamer rises to the occasion, visitors see his sudden inspiration and can replicate it in the waking world.

Systems: The first section of the dream acts as sleep teaching (see *Changeling*, p. 196) for one Skill. If the dreamer overcomes the challenge in the dream, she or an observant visitor can apply it to one future use of the dream's central Skill in either the real world or another dream. That roll gains the rote benefit (re-roll failed dice). You may not save up this benefit with multiple, consecutive Dreams of Swift Knowledge.

Dreams of Swift Knowledge can be provoked with dreamscaping, but the oneiropomp must score an exceptional success.

JUPITER

Dreams of Justice

Jupiter is the planet of rulership, judgment, and wisdom. Its dreams revolve around interpersonal conflict, responsibility, and moral dilemmas. In them, the dreamer belongs to a collective or hierarchy. He's thrust into a situation where he must choose between group pressures and self-interest. Individuality is a major theme in the Dreams of Justice, but it's not always a virtue. The dream could be about doing the right thing despite the prevailing wisdom or abandoning selfishness for the sake of others. Conscience is a powerful force in these dreams; nobody can have one without it. Psychopaths can't experience them and according to most changelings, True Fae can't even comprehend them.

When a dreamer makes the right choice, the dream is inspiring to behold. Some changelings visit Dreams of Justice for no other reason than to see someone follow the better angels of

their nature. This makes a Jupiter dream an appropriate choice for the kind of positive, first-dream experience we discussed on page 18. Better yet, changelings can help reluctant dreamers get better acquainted with their inner nobility. They prod him to say “No” to a tyrant demanding excessive taxes, or convince him to help raise the barn for a poor farmer.

Along with Saturn dreams, Jupiter dreams are an excellent way for changelings to learn the dreamer’s political and social situation. Even if the dream’s a pure fantasy, the dreamer’s imagined superiors and inferiors usually represent real people. Middle managers who dream of being knights owe fealty to people who are remarkably like their real bosses. Dreams of Justice aren’t really about power fantasies, so the dreamer portrays his situation truthfully even if it’s disguised by allegories.

Story: A Jupiter dream often takes the following shape:

- *The Political Stage:* The dream introduces the cast of characters and the general social situation around the dreamer. This often uses symbols and references that he would understand right away but that visitors might not recognize without a bit of research. A few small events take place that establish who’s in charge and who trembles and obeys. If the dream is a fantasy, the dreamer usually envisions groups with extreme traditions or entrenched hierarchies, such as feudal dominions, armies, and crime families.

- *Conflict with the Group:* Next, the dream introduces a moral conflict that pits the dreamer against his milieu. Will he let the Don marry his sister? Will he shred the documents that prove his best friend defrauded the company? Sometimes these situations are genuine dilemmas with no easy answer, but more often, the answer isn’t a mystery. Instead, the problem is the dreamer — he needs the backbone to follow through. Visitors can give him a critical push in the right direction if they choose.

- *Resolution:* Dreams of Justice don’t have to have happy endings just because the dreamer did the right thing. In fact, they often highlight the sole of personal sacrifice. The dreamer “dies” or becomes a social pariah. It’s up to the dreamer to take refuge in having done the right thing — or to feel guilt when he does the *wrong* thing, but gets rewarded anyway.

Systems: When a Dream of Justice ends with the dreamer doing the right thing he experiences the advantages of a stress-relief dream (see page 196 of **Changeling: The Lost**). Furthermore, visitors who helped the dreamer reach that point recover Willpower the same way.

The dream also helps the dreamer and other participants rediscover their moral compasses. If the dreamer makes the right choice, he and anyone who helped him get there earn one experience point per level of dream Intensity toward increasing Morality (including Clarity) ratings.

Dreams of Justice can be provoked with dreamscaping, but oneiropomp requires an exceptional success.

SATURN

Dreams of Ambition

Dreams of Justice are about the tension between doing the right thing and the convenient thing. Dreams of Ambition are about unadulterated selfishness. If the Freudian Id exists, it provokes Saturn’s dreams. They’re about getting what you want when you want it and shoving the opposition out of your way — or better yet, exploiting them for your betterment.

Some of these dreams are rather sanguine, even filled with enough murder to make Macbeth blanch, but that doesn’t mean the dreamer’s going to start killing people. Gentle people give their urges free reign here. Conversely, some of the most callous people around have quiet dreams about embarrassing coworkers at a company function.

A Dream of Ambition tends to portray people as simple caricatures. The dreamer doesn’t care about them and it shows. If a real person has some small, irritating habit, the dream blows it up into something truly odious. Changelings who want to know what their companions dislike about them might tour their Jupiter dreams, but more sensible Lost figure they’re often better off *not* knowing, as those were never meant for public consumption.

Story: Dreams of Ambition often obey the following structure:

- *The Opposition:* The dream introduces the pack of bastards who stand between the dreamer and his goals. The other participants are usually unsympathetic but every once in a while the dreamer’s higher self will throw a decent, fully-realized person into the mix to quietly remind him that his imagination alone can’t justify a selfish end. If the dreamer knows any visitors, he filters their actions through his biases — they’re just a bunch of jerks too.

- *The Contest:* The dream swiftly moves to a conflict. It’s a political race, a robbery — anything where the dreamer stands to gain at other people’s expense. Visitors can play the part of allies or opponents. Idealistic changelings often try to push the dreamer down a better path, but not all Lost take the dream so seriously — they indulge their Machiavellian sides to the hilt. Sure, dreams are deeply meaningful, but sometimes they’re *fun*, too.

- *The Spoils:* Whoever wins the contest, wins the spoils. This part of the dream usually breaks down into incoherent wish-fulfillment; that’s a chance to see what a dreamer wants, but normally strive for due to moral or social considerations.

Systems: Every character in the dream temporarily benefits from Greed and Gluttony. Characters can satisfy them in addition to their usual Vice, allowing them to recover Willpower more easily. Characters who already have one of these Vices earn two Willpower points whenever they satisfy the duplicated Vice. Willpower points gained from extra Vices disappear when the character leaves the Dream of Ambition.

Additionally, witnesses learn how to manipulate the dreamer through his secret urges. If the dreamer won the dream’s spoils, the changeling gains the rote effect (re-roll failed dice) on rolls to Convince the Dreamer (see **Changeling**, p. 194).

Changelings can inspire these dreams with successful dreamscaping, but they must score an exceptional success.

VENUS

Dreams of the Bedchamber

The dream-sage Rowena called Venus and Pluto the “two constant dreams.” Everyone dreams of sex and death. Dreams of the Bedchamber aren’t always explicitly erotic; slow romance and torrid acrobatics with faceless lovers are equally valid members of this category. These dreams are often filled with embarrassing revelations about the dreamer’s fetishes and crushes. Hedge duels have been sparked by a changeling seeing her lover dream up a rival. Some of the Lost think that’s tantamount to calling out someone else’s name during sex, but many others are a bit more easygoing about the whole thing.

Venus dreams can lead to awkwardness and anger, but the dreams themselves aren't truly violent. Rape and abuse belong to the darker face of Mars, not Venus. It's a fine line; some Dreams of the Bedchamber feature enough obsession and possessiveness to make witnesses wary of the dreamer. These dreams are basically peaceful, but they're not always cheerful. The Bedchamber has room for love to be lost as well as found. Some dreamers replay their breakups over and over again, or express feelings of inferiority that make it impossible for them to approach their beloved.

Like all dreams, the Bedchamber contains a mix of memory and fantasy, often with considerable crossover. Dreamers give their real lovers different faces or amalgamate past, current, and imagined partners. Observers should refrain from rushing to judgment. Succubi (see p. 36) often infiltrate Dreams of the Bedchamber. Experienced changelings specifically look for them whenever they enter any dream with strong sexual or romantic overtones. Between impostors and symbolism, a dream-lover can be very different from what they seem.

Story: Dreams of the Bedchamber involve detailed fantasies and nuanced symbolism, but these elaborate on a primal core. The dreamer seeks out a safe place to express his desires with a lover built from his fantasies and attraction to real people. This typically takes two steps:

- *The Meeting:* First, the dreamer meets his lover. This stage often includes the dream's central conflict. He might have to wake the princess with a kiss, strike up a conversation on fetish night or reconcile with an estranged lover. Even if the lover is somebody the dreamer knows (or is an obvious symbol for her), he might struggle through first introductions anyway.

- *Dalliance or Parting:* The dalliance is full-on sex, a single kiss or any other positive, shared experience. Parting is the end of the relationship. Venus

includes one or both of these (including a weird mix — angry sex or arguments that create intimacy) based on the dreamer's memories and aspirations. When the dream is about a relationship on the rocks there's often a battle between honest reflection and fantasy. Part of the dreamer knows that it's over, but there's an emotional and sexual urge to continue. It's satisfying to dream about a love after it's gone, but it doesn't necessarily help the dreamer move on in the waking world.

Systems: Love is a fragile thing, unsuited to brute force. Dreamers are vulnerable in a Venus dream, so use the lowest Finesse and Resistance Attributes to calculate Defense and armor for dream combat. There are action-oriented Dreams of the Bedchamber (people still love to save a prince or princess), but stunting isn't assessed by its visual impressiveness, but by how well it integrates the protagonist's motivations. Leaping in front of a bullet meant for your true love earns a bonus, but doing an acrobatic flip doesn't.

A Dream of the Bedchamber provides insights into the dreamer's sexual and romantic appetites. If the dreamer wins a dalliance, visitors gain the rote benefit (re-roll failed dice) if they use the Convince the Dreamer function of dream riding.

A clever visitor can even impersonate the dreamer's beloved. She has to dispose of the "real" dream form and disguise herself with a Wits + Subterfuge roll with a difficulty equal to the dream's Intensity, but if she succeeds she not only may react to the dreamer however she sees fit, but she may manipulate the relationship between the dreamer and whoever the real lover was supposed to represent. (This doesn't work if the lover was a pure fantasy figure.) Roll Presence + Empathy + Wyrd at a difficulty equal to the dream's Intensity and note the difference between the two rolls. If the impostor succeeds and rejects the dreamer, she curses him with a penalty on Social dice pools equal to the difference between his success and the dream's Intensity.

This applies when the dreamer meets his real beloved. If the impostor succeeds and consummates a dalliance, the dreamer wins a confidence boost; he'll gain the 8-again benefit on Social rolls to communicate with the real person. Both benefits last for the next scene where the dreamer meets and spends a non-trivial amount of time communicating with the target of his affections.



PLUTO

The Final Dream

Pluto was Rowena's second "constant dream," not because everyone contemplates death, but because everyone *will* die. The Final Dream was a late addition to her model — a non-classical planet that a few astrologers adopted after its discovery — but the category was always there, waiting for a spot in the nomenclature of dreams. Ordinary human beings call Pluto's dreams near-death experiences.

Shamans and survivors of grave illnesses report very similar events. Brave changelings who've ridden the dreams of the dying have confirmed it. Some Lost follow too far and finish life's journey themselves. The survivors were transformed by the experience. Some went mad, and some found greater sanity at the edge of death's door.

The Final Dream is also the only type of dream where a Morphean always manifests. The Pale Brother (see p. 43) appears to guide the dying beyond life. They don't always recognize him, but wise people can see Death-in-Dream behind the shapes of wrathful gods, saints and family members. He'll sometimes respond to attempts to communicate with him outside the context of his guise, but interfering in his actions is a foolish and often fatal move.

Changelings sometimes enter the Final Dreams of people they care about to help ease their fear — or in a futile attempt to save their lives. No known oneiromancy can hold back death, but it doesn't always keep changelings from trying. Some of the Lost experiment with near-death experiences to probe the depths of the dream or commune with the Pale Brother. The survivors have gone insane, refused to speak of the experience or revealed their insights using cryptic, mystical language, but the truth might be that the Courts suppressed their discoveries. Why would they encourage changelings to antagonize the Pale Brother?

Story: Final Dreams have many things in common, but they're still the most personal dreams of all. They draw on the dreamer's religion, life story and secrets he may have kept in his heart his whole life. No changeling — no creature of any sort, save Death-in-Dreams — has ever witnessed a full Final Dream and lived, so there may be unknown vistas and experiences deeper down, known only to the dying and the dead. Changelings who've returned and dared to speak of the dream report these stages:

- **Memory:** The Final Dream begins with a strange, booming sound. It's been called "Gabriel's Horn" by some. The dreamer doesn't feel his body and often settles into a tranquil emotional state, but a few dreamers feel a sense of rising terror instead. The dying subject plunges into his memories. They "flash before his eyes." The effects are similar to a Dream of Secret Memory, but broader and faster, focusing on single critical moments stretching from birth to the present. Visitors can accompany the dying dreamer through the memories but he won't necessarily recognize their presence.

- **The Out of Body Experience:** Once the memory-play reaches the present the dreamer seems to leave his body. He floats above his body and sees what surrounds it. Changelings don't know whether this is a dream or a real supernatural vision, but they may share in the out of body experience as if it's any other dream. This hints that from one perspective it is a dream, even if it might be a dream of something real. Visitors float alongside the dying dreamer. Eventually, a tunnel or dark cloud appears and the dreamer drifts into it and through. Death-in-Dreams has been known to appear when changelings try to stop the dreamer from leaving. He usually pun-

ishes or banishes the changeling, though legends say that some were able save the dreamer with an oath or contest.

- **The Light:** The dreamer finds a light at the end of the darkness. Many people see dead relatives and religious figures. The Pale Brother's been known to impersonate some of these beings. He's always present at this stage, and there's no limit to the torments he'll visit on anyone who blocks the dreamer's journey to true death. Again, there are myths about changelings who've tricked and beaten Death-in-Dreams, but nothing verifiable. Not everyone's comforted by these apparitions. Demons have torn dreamers apart at the threshold of the light. Angels have read dreamers' sins aloud from an impossibly huge book. When a visitor accompanies the dreamer here she sees her own apparitions: family members, gods and demons. They are signs that it's time to turn back, lest the vision call her to death.

- **Beyond:** Changelings who've traveled deeper into the Final Dream hint at realms beyond, but no two accounts are alike. They speak of heaven, hell and pagan afterworlds, and some even see their Keepers at the uttermost points of their journey. The Lost despise that last rumor, but all these stories are filled with metaphors and vague pronouncements; they were uttered by the mad and, thankfully, are not to be trusted.

Systems: Any changeling can enter the Final Dream the easy way — by dying. A changeling bleeding out from aggravated damage can induce one. The dream ends if someone stabilizes her condition. Changelings looking to visit these dreams need only injure themselves to the threshold of death this way. Stopping the heart with electricity is a common way to do this. Ancient Lost mystics also used controlled strangulation, barbed iron shackles, and other ritual methods to accomplish the same task. Using these intentional methods wisely requires an Intelligence + Medicine roll. If it succeeds, the character is easier to revive. Medical practitioners can use the result as a secondary teamwork roll in one future attempt to treat the character (see **World of Darkness**, p. 134 for teamwork rules).

Changelings can enter their own Final Dream this way, but they can't induce one in another person just by grievously injuring them. It may be the case that changelings can choose to have the Final Dream earlier than usual. Dreamscaping and other oneiromantic tricks are impossible, but visitors can participate in dream combat. Attacking the Pale Brother is usually suicidal, but then again, so is entering a Final Dream to begin with.

Two stages of the Final Dream have other game effects. Changelings can use the memory stage to examine or recover suppressed memories as if examining a Dream of Secret Memory, but they can't alter those memories. Going to the light and back is a profound enough event to justify changing the character's Virtue and Vice. Aside from this, Storytellers should add other consequences as they see fit, based on how the character reacted to the Final Dream and her motives for entering in the first place.

What else happens? Can a changeling stave off death by entering the Final Dream? How far can she travel along it before she dies? Only the Storyteller knows the answer to these questions.

INCUBI

The world is a terrifying place for fae returned from their durance, with unknown threats lurking in every shadow of the World of Darkness. With the fetch having stolen their mortal life, the changes of the seeming divorcing them from humanity, the Others at the gates and the strange inhabitants of the world in the streets,

fae cling to comfort where they can get it as the shadows lengthen: with each other in motleys, with their Court and with the security of their dreams. In sleep, every fae is safe, able to control the dreamscape in a way they cannot control their waking life. Motleys meet under pledges of Dreaming, preserving the sanctity of the refuge.

That sanctity is all too fragile. Some unlucky fae are attacked in their own dreams, victims of nightmarish oneiromancy. Others, slipping into the dreamscape of a troubled mortal, find that they are not alone. Many fae flee. Some try to fight back — the dream warriors of the Summer Court, trained in oneiromachy and devoted to policing dreams for interlopers, face almost nightly battles against enemies they will never meet in the flesh.

Changelings use the term “Incubi” to mean any being that has intruded into a dreamscape without the permission granted by a pledge. An Incubus can be anything capable of entering the dreamscape, though the term is not usually applied to beings that mean to aid the dreamer. Some fae who solved the problem of their fetch peacefully even call those fae who inflict nightmares on their doubles Incubi, claiming they are no different from anything else deliberately torturing a dreamer in their sleep.

ORIGINS

The origins of Incubi are as ephemeral as the dreams they inhabit, and fae that fight them are often forced to admit they have no idea as to the precise nature of their opponent. Some are recognizable as True Fae, entering dreams by Dream Poison for their own inscrutable purposes. Some are fetches, striking back at the fae they replaced through their linked dreams. Others, oneiopomps are forced to reluctantly conclude, are changelings pursuing vendettas.

The “known” Incubi, the ones that can be described as one familiar group or another, are only a very slim majority. Stranger things are found in dreams; beings that do not appear to fit with the changelings’ sketchy knowledge of the world. Self-aware dreams that pass from dreamer to dreamer, archetypes that resemble famous individuals warping the dreams of their fans, strangely powerful versions of the dreamer that shape the dreamscape through oneiromancy and attack intruding fae, creatures that may be hobgoblins, blurring the edges of the dream and the Hedge, bizarre effects that might indicate the birthing of a new member of the Gentry, beings that may be ghosts, manifesting in the sleep of their former loved ones rather than in the physical world, vampires, mages and werewolves — and odder things — using their own powers to enter the sleeping mind and still more intruders beyond recognizable form.

Some Incubi seem determined to prevent others (such as the fae) from altering the dream they’re in. Others shape the dreams they are part of themselves and attack those that attempt to interfere. Many Incubi blend so well into the dreamscape, camouflaging themselves as native dreams (if indeed they aren’t), that they go unnoticed until they strike. Some engage in direct dream combat while others shape the dreamscape to be hostile to travelers. Some might even be the dreamscape in some way.

STORYTELLING INCUBI

The classical incubus (itself represented among the sample Incubi presented later in this chapter) is a spirit that enters the dreams of women and gradually shapes those dreams into sexual fantasies with itself as the partner. The dreams seem innocent, but over time the victim becomes increasingly drained and withdrawn. Finally,

those victims that survive the process sometimes find themselves pregnant; bearing a child that is not entirely human.

The category of Incubi as a whole represents transgression and the warping of something that should be harmless and safe into something harmful. To changelings, they also represent the crossing of the last line a changeling has against the creatures that lurk in the night. By invading the private world of dreams, which the victim changeling may regard as the last place he feels safe, the Incubi bring to mind violations suffered in the durance. Incubi afflicting mortals may feel a sense of outrage that a changeling may dreamride as well — a changeling of the Summer Court might enter a dreamscape to find a member of the Gentry twisting it into a nightmare for its own amusement and feel compelled to act.

Changelings very frequently have total recall of their dreams: rendered lucid by the Wyrd and the changes to their soul, the fae do not find their dreams slipping away upon waking like those of mortals. But Incubi recall the mysterious and ephemeral nature of mortal dreams. The Lost do not understand all of the beings classed as Incubi. Many of them are simply unknown to fae lore or divination — natives of far realms within the human soul that changelings have no access to and members of other supernatural societies using their own powers are two examples. The changeling can glimpse the Incubus at work in a dreamscape, can engage it in dream combat and might even beat it, but she can never know for certain what it was. The Incubus slips away — just like a dream.

Dream combat is not the only possible solution, of course. Some Incubi, like the eponymous dream-seducers themselves, are rational beings that can be spoken to and bargained with. Others, once their inscrutable errand has been run, vanish never to return. Still more, such as Dream Guardians, have more of a “right” to be in the dreamscape than the fae. Many Incubi avoid attacking on sight, ignoring other dream riders unless they interfere with the Incubus’ purpose.

The three forms of Incubus that afflict the fae more than any other are the best known: the True Fae, searching for their former slaves; other changelings; and the changeling’s own fetch upon realization of the psychic bond that exists between their dreams. All three have been amply covered in the **Changeling: The Lost** line so far. The Incubi in the remainder of this chapter are not examples of these; they are a sample of the myriad forms of dream-combatant the fae can face.

Many of these remaining Incubi types primarily target mortal dreamers, attacking fae only when disturbed. One might think that the fae would learn to leave well alone, but oneiopomps instead regularly enter the dreams of unsuspecting humans to battle with enigmatic foes. When simple compassion for a stricken mortal (who has, after all, next to no way of learning the cause of his terrible nightmares and declining health) does not suffice, changelings can find themselves drawn into oneiromachy through pledges — an oath to protect a mortal’s dreams does not have a get-out clause for when those dreams are invaded by external entities. Changelings forced to defend a dreamscape from intruders by pledge on pain of sanction clause may regret the day they agreed to the promise.

SAMPLE INCUBI

The following Incubi are presented from changelings’ point of view, with statistics necessary for dream combat but not physical action. Although many of the beings here are detailed more fully and under other names in other World of Darkness books,

only those aspects of their nature the fae are able to observe are noted. Each entry contains a sidebar entitled “Horn and Ivory”, after the gates of Truth and Falsehood, which gives possible explanations to the origin of the Incubus, but these are only options. A Night Hag might be a spirit of terror, a True Fae, a strange sort of hobgoblin or even a particularly twisted and mad changeling that has learned a new way to harvest Glamour. The changelings encountering it might never learn the truth.

Unusual Skill

Much as the Gentry may use Intimidation or Persuasion instead of Empathy for oneiromancy, each type of Incubus has a skill noted as the one that is substituted for Empathy in the mechanics found on pages 193–201 of *Changeling: The Lost*.

THE CAT

Quote: “Curious.”

Background: Cats sleep a lot. Sixteen hours a day is common, and some go for 20 hours or more, divided into short stretches that are the inspiration for the phrase “cat nap.” Cats dream as easily as they sleep, plummeting into REM sleep moments after shutting their eyes. Scientists have studied feline dreams in detail; they’ve even surgically altered them to remove the paralyzing reflex that keeps dreamers from acting out their experiences. Research films show them at the hunt, fighting for territory and more.

Animal dreams are hard to visit, but it’s a fact that cats have lots of dreams and thanks to human patronage, there are far more cats than any other long-sleeping species. Of these millions of dreams, a few are special things. Perhaps one dream in a million ventures into strange stories, beyond the typical roster of feline obsessions — it even has human characteristics. Of these dreams, maybe one in a thousand has a parallel in the myths of cats: what people see when they dream about them, instead of the alien fancies cats entertain while they sleep.

One of these dreams made the Cat, but it was probably a little thing at first — no more than a supernumerary with an eccentric attitude that roamed some cat-lover’s dreams. It got bigger. It wandered the Skein, eating other cat-dreams, getting smarter and stronger until it became what it is today. Maybe there are even multiple Cats. It can be beaten, after all. Perhaps the Cat hasn’t used up its mythic nine lives, or when one Cat dies, another takes its place.

The Cat can appear whenever anyone dreams of cats. It uses these dreams as gateways. Every time it does, it incorporates the dreamer’s cat-thoughts. It’s now the sum total of thousands, if not millions of cat dreams; it contains lucky cats, cat-headed gods, curse-cats, drowned cats, witches’ familiars, barn toms, quiet predators and clever tricksters. Dreams are an enormous storehouse of traits and tricks. It picks the best ones and rejects the rest when it can, though occasionally it really is too curious, or turns into a slave to its stomach.

The Cat’s a well known part of dream-lore. It’s a harbinger of the change and guards its territory (including whatever dream it’s in) against strange forces. Changelings say the Wyrd lays out the Cat’s path, choosing the dreams it will visit, but oneiromancers can sum-

mon it from any dream of cats, too. It foreshadows strange luck — good or bad. The Lost say it’s good luck, because it hates the Fae. The Others don’t like it either. In fact, they seem to actually be afraid of it.

Description: When the Cat first appears it looks like whatever cat the dreamer was thinking of. It gets bigger when nobody’s looking. It looks slightly larger than a normal cat, then improbably large, then absolutely huge: five feet high at the shoulder at least, with a shaggy coat that seems to shift through every feline color pattern. The Cat can be male or female, but in any form it looks like a veteran fighter. It’s got a slightly shredded left ear, a scarred face and one broken fang. Seven toes on each foot conceal seven huge diamond-sharp claws. It usually has odd eyes and slightly bloody teeth, but despite what you might expect, it almost never smiles. It has to shapeshift away from an authentic feline form for that, and won’t do that unless there’s something to gain, or a dream is exceptionally intense, and bound to a particular set of symbols. That’s when it will pretend to be Bast, for instance. It can casually change shape but it never completely abandons feline traits. There are always at least cat ears, eyes or fur to give it away.

Bestial Dreams

Animals are sentient (though not sapient — intelligent) beings so they dream, but getting in their heads isn’t easy. They’re not smart enough to forge pledges so they can’t lay a dream task that lets a changeling in. Their thoughts are too different from humanity’s to allow reliable Skein-walking. There are a few stories of changelings entering the dreams of animals, but it seems that in most cases the changeling’s intelligence drops to that of the animal.

The question of how accessible animal dreams are, and what changelings might encounter in them, is left to the Storyteller’s discretion. It needn’t be included if such a kettle of fish seems unappetizing, but if you find the prospect of a Beast running through lupine dreams appealing, by all means play with the concept.

Storytelling Hints: The Cat has a mercurial personality; that’s another characteristic from which the creature can pick and choose out of thousands of dreams. It’s capable of human speech but doesn’t always use it, preferring to wait and see how people react to its presence. A cold utilitarian at heart, it likes food before worship — but after the food, a few hymns to Bast or a vigorous scratch behind the ears is most welcome. Once these creature comforts are dealt with, however, the Cat’s a no-nonsense creature and wants to do whatever it showed up to do. It always enters a dream with a mission, but it doesn’t always know what the purpose is. That’s for the Wyrd to know and the Cat to find out.

Changelings can contact the Cat by speaking to any cat in a dream. The player spends a point of Glamour and rolls Manipulation + Socialize + Wyrd. If the roll meets or exceeds the dream’s Intensity the Cat listens and speaks through the dream-cat. At this point, the changeling might negotiate a pledge with the

Horn and Ivory: The Cat

Why does the Cat hate the True Fae? Why do they fear the Cat? Nobody knows and the relevant parties aren't talking. Unlike most Incubi, changelings have a rough idea where the Cat comes from, because it let that slip to a Spring courtier 800 years ago in exchange for a pledge with unnamed conditions. The Lost presume it was a steep bargain, because that courtier's now known as the Servant of the Cat. She's the subject of some eccentric (and at times, ribald) tales. On the other hand, the legend is vague enough (a million cats' dreams?) to be interpreted any number of ways. Who knows how far it's drifted from true fact?

When changelings talk about the Cat, one question naturally arises: what about the Dog? Why haven't other animals ascended to the human dreamscape? One theory says they have, but they don't reveal themselves as often. Another says that cats just sleep more than anything else with as large a population, so they've had time to dream their epitome up.

beast. Breaking it is a bad idea. Not only does the changeling suffer a standard sanction, but like the superstitions say, the Cat can steal a sleeper's breath. Roll Presence + Wyrd after subtracting the victim's Stamina + Wyrd. Every success inflicts a point of bashing damage. The dreamer sees the huge, heavy Cat on his chest. If the target is a changeling or lucid dreamer, the Cat needs to pin it in dream combat first. Nevertheless, the Lost make deals with the Cat because of its reputation as an enemy of the True Fae. Its mere presence is often enough to drive away Gentry who've come to casually poison and harvest a dream. Others who've come on a more serious mission aren't so easily cowed.

Against the Fae, the Cat's ferocity earns it the 8-again quality on dream combat actions. If it drives the Other off it fulfills its Pride Virtue. It's a sneaky fighter; sputtering hisses, roars and fluid shapechanging hide a disemboweling swipe with its rear paws or open the way for a quick neck-breaking bite. It often twists dreams into perilous landscapes that only it can navigate, or tumbles down tremendous heights with enemies in its jaws, secure in the knowledge that it'll land on its feet, but the victim won't.

Dream Combat:

Power Attributes: Intelligence 4, Strength 5, Presence 5

Finesse Attributes: Wits 5, Dexterity 7, Manipulation 5

Resistance Attributes: Resolve 3, Stamina 4, Composure 5

Oneiromancy Skill: Subterfuge 5

Willpower: 8

Virtue: Pride

Vice: Gluttony

Initiative: 12

Speed: 17

Wyrd: 6

Glamour/per turn: 15/6

Oneiromachy:

Personal: (Strength + Subterfuge + Wyrd) 16

Environmental: (Dexterity + Subterfuge + Wyrd) 18

Dream Defense: 7 (Dexterity)

Dream Armor: 5 (Composure)

Special: Pride as a Virtue — Pride isn't usually a Virtue, but things like "prudence" and "charity" are fairly alien to this archetypal feline. However, minor acts of Pride do not refresh its entire Willpower pool. It must triumph over some sort of peril for reasons of pride to reap that benefit.

DREAM GUARDIAN

Quote: "My host must overcome his fears, not feed them to intruders. Leave this place."

Background: The human mind has great depths, unfathomable even to dream-riding fae, and great resources when pushed. Many fae, and especially Gentry, treat the dreamscape as a blank canvas, able to be shaped and formed exactly as they wish, but experienced oneiropomps have learned to tread carefully at first. If Glamour is spent in the wrong place at the wrong time by the dream shaper, certain dreamers instinctively defend themselves against oneiromancy by bringing forth an idealized self. The beings known to fae as Dream Guardians enforce their own design upon the dreamscape, shaping it to the best interests of the dreamer's self-improvement. If a oneiropomp does not take the hint when the Guardian appears and tries to continue shaping, the Guardian has the home-ground advantage and formidable proficiency in oneiromachy.

Description: The Dream Guardian can appear to be any humanoid, but usually looks like the dreamer subtly altered to show its status as a paragon. It has formed to improve the dreamer in some way — to cure a phobia, to make the dreamer stop a particular self-destructive form of behavior or simply to make the dreamer less apathetic — and the shape it takes reflects this. Some Dream Guardians serve as shining examples to their dreamer, others as cautionary tales. The Guardian of a man contemplating murder may appear as a loving family man, for example, or equally as likely as the dreamer incarcerated and awaiting execution.

Storytelling Hints: Dream Guardians appear according to a set of conditions that are only partially understood by the fae. An oneiropomp must have spent Glamour within the dream, and have shaped an aspect of the dream in conflict with the Guardian's self-imposed mission of "improvement" (which, unless the fae has encountered one in a particular dreamer's dreamscape before, is only known after the fact). Even then, they only appear in a small number of cases, leading oneiropomps to speculate that either only some mortals have them or that there are conditions they haven't yet identified.

The Dream Guardian manifests, taking form within the dream and immediately going about its business of dream shaping. If the dream has a low enough intensity, it will dream-scour until the dreamscape is cancelled and then provide a new one as per the existing rules for oneiromancy. It ignores other oneiropomps unless they interfere with its business, at which point it will inform them that they are not welcome and continue. This doesn't absolve any fae who have made a pledge to shape a dream of their responsibilities, though, leading to conflict.



The Guardian preserves itself during dream combat, changing form to hide within the dreamscape and using environment-based attacks to harass intruders until they leave. If confronted directly, most Dream Guardians attempt to flee.

If the dream ends, the Dream Guardian is gone by the next time the dreamer sleeps — returned to wherever it was inadvertently summoned from. If it is *killed*, the dreamer suffers devastating mental effects. The dreamer immediately gains a permanent, severe derangement named “Unguarded Dreams” (see below). Affecting a dreamer in this way can cause severe shocks to a changeling’s own psyche; the act of destroying a Dream Guardian is a Clarity 4 sin. Even then, stories circulate among oneiropomps of certain fae seeking to psychically cripple someone who has crossed them attempting to deliberately trigger a Dream Guardian’s manifestation so that they can kill it. Some True Fae have also been known to hunt them for sport.

Dream Combat:

The Dream Guardian always counts as having performed a Maestro’s Performance stunt, giving it a +3 to all rolls within its native dreamscape.

Power Attributes: Strength 2, Intelligence 3, Presence 3

Finesse Attributes: Wits 3, Dexterity 2, Manipulation 4

Resistance Attributes: Resolve 4, Stamina 3, Composure 3

Oneiromancy Skill: Empathy 5

Willpower: 7

Virtue: Same as Dreamer

Vice: Same as Dreamer

Initiative: 5

New Derangement: Unguarded Dreams

The dreamer no longer cares about negative consequences of actions, having lost the part of their psyche that urges him to improve himself. He must roll Resolve + Composure to avoid acting on his first impulse.

Effect: On a failed roll, the dreamer follows his first impulse, even if self-destructive. The derangement also inflicts a –3 penalty on any roll used to plan anything out.

Speed: 9

Wyrd: 7 (Frailties: must act in dreamer’s best interests, must undo external changes to dreamscape)

Glamour/per turn: 20 / 7

Oneiromachy:

Personal: (Presence + Brawl 2 + Wyrd) 12

Environmental: (Wits + Empathy + Wyrd) 15

Dream Defense: 4 (Manipulation)

Dream Armor: 4 (Resolve)

Horn and Ivory: Dream Guardian

Dream Guardians are believed by some fae to be an aspect of the human dreamer, a tiny shard of Wyld brought out by the Glamour. Perhaps it indicates that the human soul is not that different in its underlying nature than of the fae, which offers believers some comfort.

If you have **Mage: The Awakening** available, the Dream Guardian should be recognizable as being the host’s daimon, the personification of their drive to self-improvement. Somehow, the Glamour expenditure has merged the dreamscape with the Oneiros, the realm of the dreamer’s Soul, and the daimon has been caught up in the inrush of energy.

GOBLIN MINERS

Quote: “Work work work. Ya wont uz ta stap? Tark ta Boss. Work work work.”

Background: At first, the effect is subtle — a fae or ensorcelled mortal suffers from strange, disjointed dreams that do not seem to provide adequate rest. As time goes on, and the dreamer becomes increasingly tired no matter how often she sleeps, the sense of their being something wrong grows. The dreamscape seems unaltered to fae or lucid dreamers at first glance, but if the dream is examined closely, an entrance may be found. There it sits, a gateway into a mine complex that bores through strata of the dreamer’s previous

dreams, rusting mine-carts carrying away elements of their subconscious and props from previous dreams to deposit them on towering spoil-heaps. Hunched, twisted creatures drill and hack at the dreamscape, searching for faintly glowing gems that they carry off back up the rickety elevators to a thorned gate — an entrance to the Hedge, opened right into the dreamscape.

Goblin Miners are one of the few forms of Incubi with a definite origin: they're hobgoblins. Knowing what she's facing is cold comfort to the fae whose dreamscape has become an industrial site presided over by a clan of Hedge-born delvers, though. The Miners are consumed by their quest for their "dreamstones" and wreck the dreamscape in their efforts, which can leave the dreamer suffering ill effects long after the Miners have moved on to untapped veins in other dreamers. The worst danger of the parasites' presence, though, is the tunnel to the Hedge they create in the dreamscape; it is not barred in any way, and other hobgoblins, wanderers in the Hedge and even the Gentry can use it if they find it.

And then there's the dreamstones the Goblins are taking away. What are they? And what does their absence do to the dreamer?

Description: Individually weak, the Goblin Miners move in large groups. Dozens of the creatures make up a social group that acts as a cross between a family and a blue-collar union. Both genders have been witnessed, though all members of the group work equally at the mine face. The group is often lead by a Miner of larger proportions, which the others refer to as "Boss" in their half-language.



The Tools of Goblin Men

Goblin Miners wield wicked-looking pickaxes, drills and shovels of dark, pitted metal. While not strictly iron (the Goblin Miners themselves call it "mine-ral", or "mineral"), the metal is close enough to count as iron in combat. As a result, the defenses of fae attempting to fight a group of Miners off shatter under the assault of Goblin tools, and alternative strategies such as environmental attacks should be employed.

Goblin Miners are hunched to the point of knuckle-walking like chimpanzees, dressed in clothes that seem half-remembered parodies of real miner's clothes: thick, leathery fabrics and tin helmets that bear a single dim ball of wisp-light rather than an electric lamp. Their eyes are large, their mouths pinched with grim concentration and their frames powerful and wiry. They communicate in rasped single words and among themselves by percussion, clanging their iron tools against walls to produce dull metallic sounds that echo through the dream-mine.

Storytelling Hints: The Goblin Miners are technically parasites. They enter the dreamscape and take its resources for themselves while providing no benefit back to the host, but they do so out of lack of understanding rather than malice. All that matters to the Miners are the dreamstones, which some fae have found for sale in Goblin Markets months, even years after they were first taken.

The Miners are difficult to detect at first because their gate from the Hedge opens (or rather is *mined* by Goblins hacking their way through from the Hedge using their strange iron tools) far from the dreamer's point of view; after establishing a mine head, the Goblins quickly go "underground", burrowing and sinking their shafts into the dreamer's subconscious. They can be found with an attempt to analyze the dreamscape for the presence of intruders. At the end of a dream, the Miners down tools and take their prizes back into the Hedge, but return the next time the dreamer sleeps.

The mining disrupts the dreamscape, throwing odd bits of old dreams up onto the spoil-heaps and into the dreamscape, and disturbing deep-seated parts of the dreamer's mind. While the Goblin Miners continue to mine a dreamscape, the dreamer does not regain Willpower from rest and suffers a -2 penalty to mental dice pools.

The dreamstones the Goblins take, though, are precious. Each batch of removed dreamstones, representing a week's mining, reduces the dreamer's permanent Willpower by one. The Miners sell their wares at Goblin Markets, and those suffering from having been mined may buy replacements at Market.

If someone who has been mined touches a dreamstone, either from their own dreamscape or another's,

the gem crumbles and the lost Willpower dot returns. Alternatively, they can be restored with experience points as normal.

Dream Combat:

Power Attributes: Strength 4, Intelligence 2, Presence 3
Finesse Attributes: Wits 3, Dexterity 3, Manipulation 2
Resistance Attributes: Resolve 4, Stamina 3, Composure 3
Oneiromancy Skill: Crafts 3
Willpower: 7
Virtue: Fortitude
Vice: Lust
Initiative: 6
Speed: 12
Wyr: 3
Glamour/per turn: 13/4

Oneiromachy:

Personal: (Strength + Weaponry 3 + Wyr) 10
Environmental: (Wits + Crafts + Wyr) 10
Dream Defense: 3 (Dexterity)
Dream Armor: 4 (Resolve)

Horn and Ivory: Goblin Miners

Although the Goblin Miners are known to be hobgoblins, there are still mysterious aspects to them. Dreamstones are sold at Goblin Markets, but the Miners themselves do not do the selling — there must be some form of commerce in the Hedge by which they supply the merchants in exchange for... something.

And then there are the stories of changelings, usually Tunnelgrubs, that join the mining crews after rough and tumble hazing rituals and application to the Boss. Living in whatever Hollow the Goblins use as a base in the Hedge, the new member of the crew loses himself in industry.

THE KINDLY STRANGER

Quote: (actor 1) *I... I can't live without you.* (actress 2) *You have to!* (actor 1) *I won't let you go to Him!* (actress 2) *What are you... No!* (actor 1 *stabs actress 2, then falls to his knees, weeping.* Focus spot on him, then INTERVAL)

Background: Incubi come in all shapes, sizes, modes of behavior and possible origins, from the relatively mundane to the outright strange. The fae of the Seattle freehold have been dealing with incursions from one of the strangest for the last 15 years; every few months, a rash of mysterious deaths is caused by an Incubus the fae call the Kindly Stranger. The victims are always four men and three women, young, imaginative, dead in their sleep. Sometimes they knew one another, but it doesn't seem to be necessary. There's only one point they all have in common — each has a copy of a script for a stage play somewhere in their belongings.

The Kindly Stranger is a play — a malevolent, self-aware piece of fiction that dream-shapes a group of dreamers simultaneously, assigning them characters in an imaginary production of itself. The dreamers know their lines; the blocking is perfect and the stagehands never seen. The dreamscapes merge into one, until all but one member of the production is a real person, dreaming in concert as the story marches on through the intervals to the denouement. The exception is the title character, whose appearance in the narrative causes the murderous breakdown of the other seven characters. That part, the Incubus reserves for itself.

The play does not have a happy ending; it's a dark tragedy of mistrust, jealousy and murder. Those still asleep and in character when their characters die never wake up.

Description: The script that appears among the possessions of the Kindly Stranger's victims is loose-leaf, stapled in the corner and apparently typed (complete with occasional errors and dropped characters) on a manual typewriter. It appears well thumbed, though there is no other indication that the victim ever actually read it or noticed its presence; it is often buried away in a corner under other papers.

Fae actors and authors searching for hidden meaning and trapped verse have scrutinized the play itself, but nothing conclusive has ever been found. Besides, as the fae have learned to their cost, they are not immune to the play's attentions, and changelings that obsess over it find a copy of their very own appearing in their Hollow and a part ready for them the next time they dream.

The story is broken up into three acts, each of which takes place on consecutive nights. Seven close friends, three couples and a bachelor, go about their lives happily in light-comedy style. Due to some financial difficulties, one couple decides to take in a lodger — the Kindly Stranger, who as far as fae dream riding the victims can tell is the Incubus manifesting itself. All "characters" appear as the dreamers themselves, though wearing appropriate costume. The Incubus looks different each time it picks a "cast" for itself, blending in with the other players.

In subsequent acts, the Stranger's helpful, cheerful presence results in coincidences that reveal a web of infidelities and secrets among the friends. The bachelor, who is having an affair with the wife in the lodging couple, is the first to be murdered by the jilted husband (who is himself having a masochistic affair with the wife in couple number two). One by one, the characters confront one another, trapped by their own lies, until by the end of act three the last pair commit suicide rather than be caught by the always off-stage police. The dreamscape ends with the death of the final victims, but those reading on in the script find an epilogue scene in which the Stranger, homeless again, looks through a newspaper for classified adverts and telephones an unseen couple, inquiring about the room they have to rent.

Storytelling Hints: The Kindly Stranger always selects an entire "cast" for itself before the play begins. Victims do not have to know one another, although there do appear to be geographical limits to the Stranger's reach; the victims are usually no more than 10 miles apart. A copy of the play appears in the victim's home, secreted among their other possessions. The fae have not witnessed the document arriving, and the Incubus' wide range makes it difficult to predict whom it will choose.

The Incubus holds its victims on the edge of REM sleep until they are all asleep, synchronizing the dreamscapes at the point of

creation, and it is vulnerable at this point — if another oneiropomp creates a dreamscape, the Incubus is forced to manifest in “actor” form without the backdrop of the theatre, allowing it to be fought off one-on-one. Some fae victims, realizing what has invaded their dreams, try to stay awake long enough for their motley to find and enter another victim, driving the Incubus away.

If the Incubus is able to forge the dreamscape itself, the play begins. Instead of the usual roll, Intensity is rolled as the Incubus’ Manipulation + Expression for the first of the three acts, while the second act increases Intensity by three and the third by a further two. Non-lucid dreamers are trapped, unable to break out of their roles, while lucid dreamers such as fae may roll reflexive Composure + Resolve + Wyrd versus a target of the dream’s intensity to act of their own volition for a scene.

Dream combat within the Kindly Stranger’s dreamscape has real consequences — Willpower points drained as damage also inflict lethal damage on the dreamer in the form of aneurisms and strokes. By forcing its victims to kill one another in the play, the Incubus kills them in the waking world.

Alterations to the “script” made by dreamers able to act force the Incubus to reroll the dreamscape’s Intensity as it rewrites around the problem. If this roll fails or the Incubus is killed, the Kindly Stranger’s hold over the entire cast is broken, and it does not visit them again. The best survival tactic outlined by Seattle oneiropomps is to shake the Incubus’ hold early in the play and scour the dream’s Intensity as much as possible before going severely off-script.

Story Hook: Other Dream Fictions

The Kindly Stranger may not be the only Incubus of its type to exist in the World of Darkness. Isolated freeholds have encountered similar “dream-fictions” that force groups of dreamers to experience their storylines for good or ill. The Kindly Stranger is a stage tragedy, but variant Incubi could be anything — comedies, dramas, romances, radio plays, pantomime and even film scripts. Imagine the damage a sentient, self-perpetuating film script that kills could do in the LA freehold.

Dream Combat:

Power Attributes: Intelligence 3, Strength 3, Presence 4
Finesse Attributes: Wits 4, Dexterity 4, Manipulation 5
Resistance Attributes: Resolve 3, Stamina 3, Composure 3
Oneiromancy Skill: Expression 4
Willpower: 6
Virtue: Temperance
Vice: Lust
Initiative: 7
Speed: 12
Wyrd: 5
Glamour/per turn: 14/5

Oneiromachy:

Personal: (Presence + Brawl 2 + Wyrd) 11
Environmental: (Wits + Expression + Wyrd) 13
Dream Defense: 5 (Manipulation)
Dream Armor: 3 (Resolve)

Horn and Ivory: The Kindly Stranger

The Kindly Stranger (the fae do note the similarity between the name and “the Kindly Ones”) may be a strange member of the Gentry, some kind of exile that appears as a piece of writing rather than manifesting in humanoid form. Those fae who have learned much about the Gentry note that the Kindly Stranger is at once the play, the eighth actor within the play, the documents in the mortal world and the entire theatre, which resembles the way the Others are both themselves and their kingdoms in Arcadia. Alternatively, it may be a creation of the True Fae, a powerful and strange variant of dream poison.

Others claim to have seen the Kindly Stranger leave when fought off successfully, opening the doors of its theatre-self and striding out. These few individuals claim to have felt, rather than seen, the landscape “outside”; a clamor of voices that made them feel as though they were human again, if only briefly. As the dreamscape ended in absence of the Incubus, they became powerfully aware of how cut off they were from their former lives. Old writings speak of a “Terminus,” a place where all of humanity’s stories dwell and all human interaction takes place. Perhaps the Stranger is a being from this place, a sentient play that reaches out and connects strangers in the pursuit of art without realizing it kills those it touches.

NICHT HAGS

Quote: (slowed-down sound of an animal call)

Background: Every night, the dreamer hopes it won’t happen again. Sometimes she’s lucky. Other nights, the Hag comes. The dream is disturbed, the dreamer aware that something is wrong. An out-of-place animal issues a challenge, and the dreamer wakes in a lucid moment.

The dreamer can’t move. Her limbs don’t respond — the effort that would make her thrash about results in only the barest twitch, though her eyes are open. She can hear the blood roaring in her ears. A presence forms — the dreamer feels the bed depress as though someone else were there, then crushing on her chest. If her head is pointed in the correct direction, she can see

something sitting on her — a wizened, ugly creature. The terror builds... and she wakes up, aching and emotionally drained.

She hopes it won't happen again the next night. Sometimes she's lucky.

Description: One in three adults will suffer at least one attack of sleep paralysis in their lifetime. Medical science has long been aware of such experiences, and believes them to be caused by a failure of the body to remove the hormone that paralyzes the body during sleep in the opposite biochemical problem to that which causes sleepwalking. Attacks often take place during lucid dreaming, or when a normal dream becomes lucid. Interestingly, the precise nature of the creature seen (a hallucination brought on by the half-waking state, the crushing of the chest by being “ridden” being a result of the dreamer not being able to control their own breathing) is culture-specific — Goblins, Demons, Grey-type Aliens, creatures from picture books and most especially old women or “Hags” have been reported. Doctors reassure worried sufferers that, no matter what stories they have heard about people being “witch-ridden”, abducted by aliens or “hagged”, their experience is entirely physical in origin, no more supernatural than having a cramp.

The fae know better.

Night Hags are one of the best-known forms of Incubi thanks to their notably overt method of feeding. Though they are dreams — or creatures existing within dreams — Hags manifest in the physical world during the culmination of the haggings. A Hag is invisible and intangible to mortal eyes, but visible to fae or ensorcelled mortals, including the victim who is ensorcelled during the process.

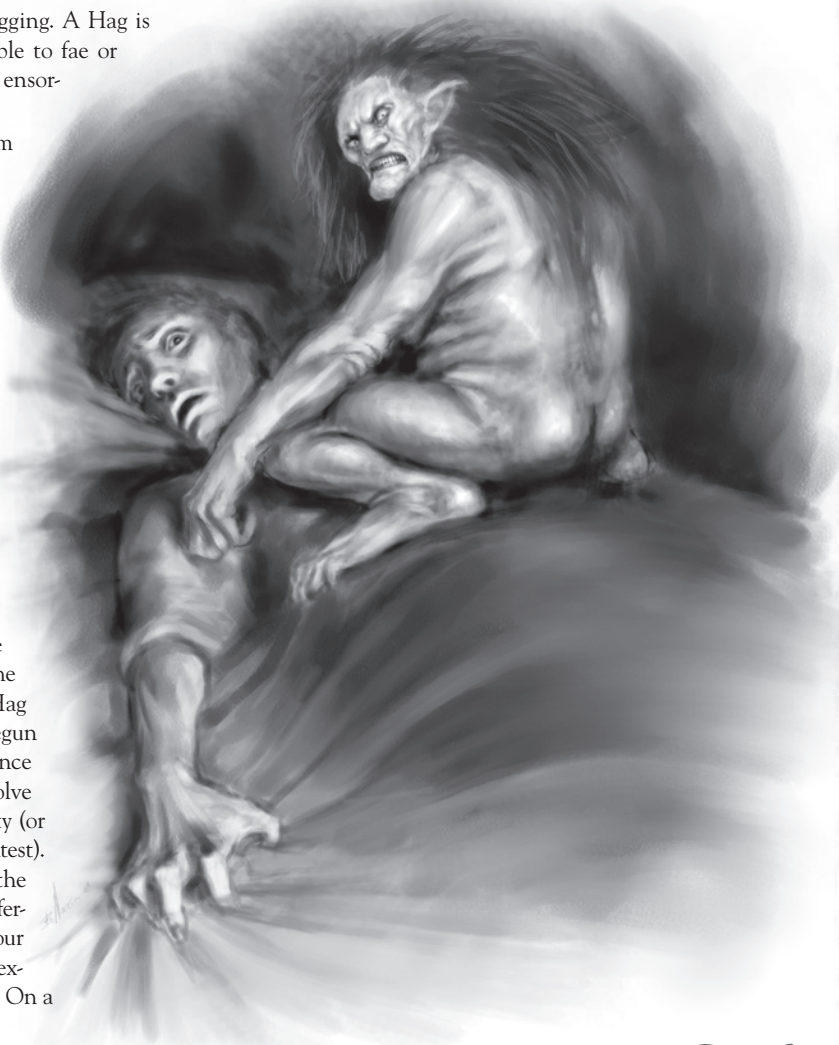
The dreamer's own psyche supplies the form that the Hag's manifestation takes, but it is always short, heavily lined, and ugly. The Night Hag's true form is that of an animal which appears inside the dream at the beginning of the attack. This animal form is outwardly innocuous — a dog, a cat, a bird — but the dreamer is able to sense that it does not belong.

Storytelling Hints: The Hag enters the dream in animal form — from where, no fae has yet been able to discern — before REM sleep begins, and actually shapes the dreamscape right from the start, though the influence is only felt towards the end. It concentrates on raising Intensity as high as possible (remember that the Intensity roll benefits from the 9-again rule for repeat attacks on the same dreamer) and supplying the dreamer with a feeling of mounting dread over the course of the dream to heighten anticipation of the attack. Unlike most oneiropomps, the Night Hag can alter the Intensity of a dream once it has begun by spending a point of Glamour and rolling Presence + Intimidation + Wyrd versus the dreamer's Resolve + Composure, net successes adding to the Intensity (or subtracting from it if the dreamer wins the contest). Once Intensity has reached the Hag's Wyrd, or if the Hag is forced to strike early by oneiropomp interference, the Hag attacks, spending a point of Glamour and rolling Presence + Intimidation + Wyrd reflexively opposed by the dreamer's Wits + Composure. On a

success, the dream becomes lucid for a single turn, just long enough for the dreamer to realize what's about to happen.

The dreamscape then collapses and the dreamer half-wakes, paralyzed but enchanted. All non-native entities in the dreamscape (the Hag and any fae that were in the dreamscape with it included) find themselves in the vicinity of the dreamer, who can see them thanks to the ensorcellment; other beings looking on interact with them as though they were in Twilight. This state lasts for turns equal to the successes on the Hag's roll during which the Hag steals Glamour and temporary Willpower from the dreamer. Each turn the paralysis lasts, the Hag rolls the final Intensity of the dream minus the dreamer's Composure. The dreamer is drained of Willpower and/or Glamour equal to successes. The dreamer can attempt to break out by ending the paralysis with a Strength + Resolve roll minus Intensity — success means the dreamer manages to move, breaking the paralysis early. An exceptional success bans any Hag from attacking the dreamer again.

When the paralysis ends, the dreamer wakes up, experiencing some missing time as their brain finishes the sleep cycle and the enchantment ends. Any beings other than the Hag are ejected from the dreamscape and wake normally. In the aftermath of the Hag's attack, the normal rules comparing Intensity of a nightmare versus the dreamer's permanent Willpower apply, as do the rules regarding gaining temporary Derangements if the dreamer is reduced to negative temporary Willpower.



Some changelings speculate that the Hag can remain inside a mind even when it is awake, ready to attack the next time the person dreams, and worry that Hags may move into fae who intrude on their feeding. If so, the Hag merely uses the fae as a vehicle to enter another mind the fae enters at a later date — Hags have never been known to attack supernatural beings, only mortals.

Dream Combat:

Power Attributes: Intelligence 3, Strength 3, Presence 4

Finesse Attributes: Wits 3, Dexterity 2, Manipulation 4

Resistance Attributes: Resolve 4, Stamina 2, Composure 3

Oneiromancy Skill: Intimidation 4

Willpower: 7

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Gluttony

Initiative: 5

Speed: 10

Wyrd: 6 (Frailty: Cannot Speak)

Glamour/per turn: 15 / 6

Oneiromachy:

Personal: (Presence + Brawl 2 + Wyrd) 12

Environmental: (Wits + Intimidation + Wyrd) 14

Dream Defense: 4 (Manipulation)

Dream Armor: 4 (Resolve)

Horn and Ivory: Night Hags

Many freeholds' Autumn Courts believe Night Hags to be changelings, perhaps even of their own Court, with an unusual entitlement that allows them to force a dreamer into giving up Glamour in a manner similar to True Fae's ravaging. The process is not exactly identical given that the Hag does not use dream poison; the Hag's attack also drains Willpower and involves ensorcelling the victim. The Court refers to the process as "hagging", and every now and again a member of the Court tries to communicate with a Hag to learn the technique.

It has been noted that Hags have a slight preference for beings capable of lucid dreaming as victims — that their insertion into a dreamscape often causes lucid dreams confuses the issue, but they do seem to attack lucid dreamers more than other people. Perhaps, a theory goes, they are spontaneously created by the dreamscape as a reaction against lucidity, reminding the dreamer in a particularly blunt, paralytic way that they are not in total control.

SANDMEN

Quote: "Promise me you'll never forget me... PROMISE ME!"

Background: We all lose people, as the Lost know to their cost. Loved ones disappear literally — and only some are taken by

the Gentry — or figuratively, lost to illness, malice or accident. The missing and the dead live on in the dreams of their bereaved loved ones, who dream of happier times.

Sometimes, those dreams respond.

A Sandman is both a tragedy and a study of a tragedy. Having arisen within a dreamscape or arrived from elsewhere by strange means, these Incubi continually return dreamscapes to being memory dreams, all of which feature a lost loved one that the Sandman takes the role of. While the dreamer is forced night after night to replay the same events, they cannot heal through grief. While something wears the missing face, the pain of their absence will never dull. The Sandman itself gains strength from being remembered, crossing between dreamscapes of dreamers that knew the person it resembles.

If the Sandman does not desist, the dreamer will be slowly driven mad by it's presence, but fae entering the dreamscape expecting to do battle and feel righteous are disappointed. Sandmen are desperate — they don't know what they are, they don't know how it is they're there, but as far as they're concerned they *are* the people being remembered... and if they aren't remembered any more, they'll cease to exist.

The worrying thing is the question at the back of the minds of fae encountering a Sandman: what if the Incubus is the person it claims to be? Changed beyond all recognition, sometimes known to be dead, but returning to loved ones? The Lost can relate all too easily.

Description: Sandmen are not named for the legend, but for their appearance; their dream forms are made up of billions of tiny particles or motes of light that shift about and give the Sandman a blurry edge. Even sitting still, a Sandman is surrounded by a hazy aura of particles breaking free of the central form, circling around it before being reabsorbed. The effect gives Sandmen a blurred appearance only vaguely reminiscent of the person it is pretending to be. The Lost have noted that Sandmen appear to gain definition as the Intensity of the memory dream they are part of grows, until in the most intense dreams they seem almost like the real person they resemble.

Storytelling Hints: When Sandmen arrive from whatever realm they have as an origin, they enter the dreamscape of a bereaved mortal in the form of whomever that dreamer has lost. These Incubi have not been known to move to a different dreamer once encountered and do not appear in every dream, only memory dreams that feature the person the Sandman has replaced. The Sandman's appearances are unnerving to the dreamer and the memory dreams quickly become recurring.

During the dreamscape, the dreamer interacts with the Sandman as though it were the person it represents, playing out a memory scenario. When the dream ends, though, the dreamer is hit by a crippling sense of loss as they realize the person represented has gone forever. The dreamer does not regain Willpower after a Sandman-infected memory dream, and upon waking the Intensity of the dream is compared to permanent Willpower in the same way as for a nightmare to determine if a temporary Derangement is gained.

Sandmen are dependent to a large extent on the Intensity of the dream. They gain power and self-awareness as the memory dreams intensify, which can make them dangerous to fae attempting to stop the nightly feelings of loss. A Sandman's Wyrd is equal to the Intensity of the dream it inhabits and lowers alongside In-

tensity if the dreamscape is successfully scoured. At the end of a Sandman-influenced dreamscape, roll the Sandman's final Wyrd. Successes are applied as bonus dice to the Intensity roll of the next memory dream the dreamer experiences, resulting in the Intensity of a Sandman's visits tending to rise gradually over time.

Conflict between Sandmen and the Lost occurs when the changelings attempt to "heal" the dreamer of their disturbing dreams, often without realizing there is an entity within the dreamscape. The Sandman fights any attempt to scour the dreamscape's Intensity as though it's life depended on it — which, according to some interpretations of what they could be, it might — and resists any attempt to guide the dreamer out of the memory which the Sandman has infiltrated. Outsiders simply observing by dream riding, however, or seeking to understand the dreamer or the nature of the dream will be unmolested to the point of the Sandman not registering that they are there. When outsiders leave the dreamscape, however, they suffer the same powerful wash of grief as the dreamer, despite not knowing the person. This has the curious effect on changelings of granting Glamour as though the changeling had harvested from a grieving person, even down to members of the Winter Court receiving more due to their association with Sorrow. Unscrupulous fae therefore leave Sandmen be until the dreamer begins to slip into insanity, using the Incubi as a reliable Glamour source.

Entering a dreamscape before it forms and causing it to become something other than a memory dream does nothing to the Sandman, which will appear on cue the next time a memory dream does occur. Killing the creature within the dreamscape likewise has no long-term effect. It will reappear good as new in the next memory dream, though the Intensity of that dream does not have the bonus so the Sandman loses ground. Only scouring the Intensity of the dream to zero while the Sandman is still within it results in the creature's banishment — any further memory dreams featuring the Sandman's "character" are free of the Incubus, which has either been destroyed or merely barred from interacting with a dreamscape ever again depending on different oneiropomps' views.

Dream Combat:

Special: A Sandman's Traits are capped by the Intensity of the dreamscape. For example, a Sandman with a Strength of 3 within an Intensity 2 dream only adds 2 dice to Strength-based tasks.

Power Attributes: Strength 3, Intelligence 1, Presence 3

Finesse Attributes: Wits 2, Dexterity 3, Manipulation 3

Resistance Attributes: Resolve 4, Stamina 2, Composure 2

Oneiromancy Skill: Empathy 4

Willpower: 6

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 5

Speed: 11

Wyrd: Special — same as dreamscape's Intensity

Glamour/per turn: Changes with Wyrd

Oneiromachy:

Personal: (Presence 3 + Brawl 2) 5 + Wyrd

Environmental: (Wits + Empathy) 6 + Wyrd

Dream Defense: Manipulation (3)

Dream Armor: Resolve (4)

Horn and Ivory: Sandmen

Sandmen make for tragic opponents for oneiropomps. Whatever these Incubi are, they don't seem to have the malice found in other dream opponents. A Sandman appears only to one dreamer, visibly degenerates as the dreamscape is scoured, and seems to share all the emotion of the genuine person whose memory it has replaced. That leads to uncomfortable questions among fae that deal with them. Many fae dismiss Sandmen as nuisances: mental parasites that evoke pity in the manner of a kicked dog, but which eventually harm their dreaming host. Better to uproot them and be done with it.

Others are not so sure. What if the Sandman doesn't just look like the missing person? What if *it is* the missing person? The need for the host to remember them puts some fae in mind of ghosts, leading them to suspect that the Sandmen are spirits of the dead that have somehow found their way from the Underworld up into the dreams of their former loved ones.

There is a third, darker theory. A group of people who vanish from the lives of their loved ones, sometimes without those loved ones realizing, find their way back through the memories of the life they once had. No one knows what happens to a changeling that escapes Arcadia but doesn't manage to make it back through the Hedge. Perhaps Sandmen are Lost themselves — so injured by their durance they lack any substance other than the need to return home drawn to the dream of the memory that sustains them. Nothing but empty Masks made of Glamour, ghosts of the Wyrd animated by tattered shreds of a once-human soul.

SHAME RIDERS

Quote: "How *COULD* you?"

Background: The World of Darkness offers ample opportunity for moral lapse, its inhabitants committing evil for reasons ranging from the well intentioned to a simple lack of empathy for their fellows. Among all the sin, though, are examples of people doing right — shining examples of virtue, yes, but also people quietly living according to a moral code. They may not be heroes, or inspire others to be so, but at least they have not harmed others and contributed to the poor state of the world.

The Shame Rider takes that away. An Incubus that resides within memory dreams, the Shame Rider takes a potent memory of the past and twists it, forcing the dreamer to face the consequences of acts of sin that they never performed. The experience

is shaking, and leaves the dreamer with a nagging doubt — did events happen as they usually remember or has the dream uncovered something? If the cruelty they exhibited only existed in the dream, doesn't that mean they have the capacity for it?

Supernatural creatures are in no way immune to the Shame Rider's influence. Changelings' souls no longer react as humans do, suffering the balancing act between the Wyrd and mundane reality as they try to make sense of their new-old world, but that gives ample opportunity for missteps that the Shame Rider can exploit in dreams. Vampires may be forced to dream of accidentally having killed when they did not, mages of fulfilling their most power-mad urges. If anything, the creatures of the night have a sharpened capacity, or at least opportunity, for feeling guilt than ordinary humans.

Description: The Shame Rider overrides a memory dream, influencing the dreamer into committing an act counter to their waking morality. The Incubus itself manifests as the "victim" of the dreamer's crime — a beloved family pet that the dreamer starves, a co-worker that he rapes, a favorite blood doll that a vampire loses control over and kills, a reconciled fetch that a fae tortures to death... all are possible. The Incubus has a preference for forms that will stay around, and tries to manipulate the dream-

scape to keep itself in the mind's eye of the dreamer, even if the focus of the dream is "dead" thanks to the dreamer's actions — loved ones, injured by the dreamer's mistake, linger around them piteously and fantasy-murderers see their victims everywhere.

Storytelling Hints: The Shame Rider waits inside a memory dream until an opportunity to take over as oneiropomp presents itself, analyzing the dream and learning about the dreamer as it waits. It rolls the usual Wits + Empathy + Wyrd — Intensity roll to make changes to a dreamscape in order to manifest, whereupon it gives itself a form suitable to the dream. Forcing the dreamer to commit the sin and shift the dream into a nightmare is a Wits + Empathy + Wyrd roll contested by the dreamer's Intelligence + Composure: the true memory of events vying against the Shame Rider's oneiromancy.

The sin the Shame Rider promotes depends on the dreamer, taking the dreamer's Vice and Morality trait into account. A low-Clarity changeling with a Vice of Wrath, for example, might have a memory of being provoked by a rival Court but choosing to turn the other cheek into a false memory of having murdered them. Once the act has been committed the dream becomes a nightmare, and the Shame Rider settles in to ride the dreamscape, experiencing the humiliation and fear as the consequences

of the imaginary action come down onto the dreamer. The Wrathful changeling may be tortured by a nightmare of being the focus of a manhunt by the wronged Court, his motley abandoning him or giving him up as a murderer, followed by a trial.

If an opportunity to make the dreamer's situation worse should present itself, the Shame Rider may try to force the dreamer down ever-worsening paths, each change being a Wits + Empathy + Wyrd roll contested by Wits + Composure, the dreamer acting as the Shame Rider wishes if it is successful. Otherwise, the Incubus contents itself with watching the nightmare and ensuring the dreamer does not wake up prematurely.

Once the dreamer does wake, she suffers the effects of a nightmare (comparing Intensity to her Willpower) and does not regain Willpower for a restful asleep. She also must roll degeneration checks for any sins against their Morality Trait that she committed in the dream. The Morality loss and any resulting derangements are only temporary, recovering at one Morality level a scene (derangements vanishing when the Morality loss that caused them is undone) until the former level is reached. However, if a sin is committed and Morality is lost in the meantime, the Morality trait fixes at the new, lower, level and any remaining derangements become permanent.

Dream Combat:

Power Attributes: Strength 2, Intelligence 4, Presence 3

Finesse Attributes: Wits 3, Dexterity 2, Manipulation 4

Resistance Attributes: Resolve 3, Stamina 2, Composure 2

Oneiromancy Skill: Empathy 3



Horn and Ivory: Shame Rider

Without knowing what the Shame Rider gains out of its actions, pinning down what exactly the Incubus is makes for an exercise in frustrated Autumn Court scholars. They are not strong enough to be members of the Gentry, though they're certainly malevolent, so most fae that have encountered them believe Shame Riders to be a breed of hobgoblin that has learned to enter dreamscape and harvest Glamour from guilt.

Alternatively, those fae that have some knowledge of the Shadow Realm of spirits note the Shame Rider's unyielding focus on promoting a particular emotion — in this case guilt and shame — and wonder if the Incubus is perhaps a native of that realm influencing susceptible minds to make better feeding grounds.

Willpower: 5

Virtue/Vice: The Shame Rider has no Virtue or Vice of its own. It regains full Willpower when the dreamer fulfills her Vice condition, but loses one Willpower when she fulfills her Virtue.

Initiative: 5

Speed: 9

Wyrd: 4

Glamour/per turn: 13 / 4

Oneiromachy:

Personal: (Presence + Weaponry 2 + Wyrd) 9

Environmental: (Wits + Empathy + Wyrd) 10

Dream Defense: 4 (Manipulation)

Dream Armor: 3 (Resolve)

SUCCUBI

Quote: "Deep down, doesn't everyone want to be loved?"

Background: There are seducers among the Gentry that make their abductees fall in love. There are vampires that capitalize on sexual desire in their quest for blood. There are fae that can enter the dreamscape of a mortal lover... and then there are the succubi.

Mortal legend names four storm demons of ancient Sumeria, two male and two female, who seduced women and men and produced ghost-children by exchanging the seed of their partners. Right up to the present, otherwise normal mortals have complained of being visited by spirits wanting sex.

Traditionally, "incubus" refers to a male spirit that has dream intercourse with women while "succubus" is the reverse, but oneiropomps that have dealt with the creatures know they can change gender at will to suit the preferences of the dreamer so the terms are used interchangeably. When a specific manifestation is not being talked about, the creatures tend to be called succubi to distinguish them from all other dream-invading intelligence.

The Courts have been encountering succubi for as long as they remember. Like many other dream antagonists, more is un-



known about the seducers than known. It is well established that they are not Arcadian in origin or from the Hedge; they are easily distinguished from the Gentry by their personalities, which are disarmingly human. It is known that they need to enter dreams and guide them in the shape they do, though why they need to do it is a mystery. Mortal stories speak of succubi collecting sperm from human males, switching to male form and releasing that issue into a human woman to form an unnatural pregnancy, the result of which — a cambion — appears human but does not breathe or have a pulse.

Description: Upon entering a dreamscape, a succubus effortlessly assumes the form that the dreamer will find most attractive — gender included — with a slight preference for sexualized versions of people the dreamer knows or knew in waking life but never had a relationship with. Anecdotal evidence from fae that have had conversations with succubi seems to indicate that this isn't a voluntary process on the succubus' part. She (or technically, *it*) simply appears as the fantasy figure of whoever's dream she's entered. The changing appearance does nothing to the creature's Traits or abilities, however, which can cause confusion when something entering a fae's dreamscape turns into the spitting image of that fae's Keeper.

Storytelling Hints: Succubi are one of the best known forms of dream traveling creature due to their personable natures. Some of the overt friendliness (perhaps even all of it) may be an act, but an incubus is willing to talk to other oneiropomps it encounters while seducing a mortal woman, and a succubus may engage in pillow talk with a fae she's feeding from. The creatures appear to consider themselves trapped in a bittersweet existence, doomed to fall in love with countless mortals and even other supernatural beings but never see the waking world and always be forced to move on to another lover. That tale, like everything else, is probably an act to appear unthreatening.

A succubus enters a dreamscape and after observing for several nights, learning about the dreamer as per the system given on page 194 of **Changeling: The Lost**, assumes a form with a Wits + Empathy + Wyrd - Intensity roll. The assumed form always counts as having the Striking Looks 4 Merit to the dreamer, and Striking Looks 2 to anyone else within the dreamscape, as it is customized to the likes and dislikes of the dreamer.

The act of seduction itself is another Wits + Empathy + Wyrd roll, opposed by the dreamer's Composure + Resolve but including the bonus for the succubus' appearance. That's the easy part. The act of dream intercourse itself, though, is profoundly vivid and leaves the waking victim drained and exhausted — the dreamer loses a Willpower point and suffers bashing damage equal to the Intensity of the dream minus their Composure (round down). The succubus gains successes on a roll of Presence + Empathy + Wyrd in Glamour.

The creatures are well aware that their embrace can cause pain and even death, but they have no choice in the matter — for every night that a succubus does not engage in dream intercourse, it loses a point of Willpower and two points of Glamour. A typical succubus can last only a few days between seductions.

Dream Combat:

Power Attributes: Strength 2, Intelligence 3, Presence 5

Finesse Attributes: Wits 3, Dexterity 3, Manipulation 4

Resistance Attributes: Resolve 3, Stamina 3, Composure 3

Oneiromancy Skill: Empathy 4

Willpower: 6

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Lust

Initiative: 6

Speed: 10

Wyrd: 4

Glamour/per turn: 13/4

Oneiromachy:

Personal: (Presence + Brawl 3 + Wyrd) 12

Environmental: (Wits + Empathy + Wyrd) 11

Dream Defense: 4 (Manipulation)

Dream Armor: 3 (Stamina)

CAMBIONS

It happens. A woman is seduced by an incubus in her dreams and falls pregnant in waking life. Her boyfriend suspects the baby isn't his, but can't put his finger on *why*, and chalks it up to the shock of sudden paternity. A man dreams of a succubus in the form of the girl he never dared ask out at college, and months later a gateway to the Hedge opens, depositing an apparently human baby.

Horn and Ivory: Succubi

Succubi don't know where they came from, or at least that's what they claim. They half-remember an existence when they didn't have to act as they do, when they existed in a state of grace, but that seems impossibly long ago now, like something that happened to their ancestors. All that remains is the seduction, and the knowledge that they definitely aren't fae. They're too self-aware to be spirits, and they don't appear to have physical forms (though some give birth to physical children somehow, perhaps in the Hedge — see "cambions", below). To many oneiropomps, the evidence would seem to point to the succubi being exactly what they sound like. Demons. Fallen Angels. Outcasts from Heaven.

Then again, most fae don't like to think of succubi as being of infernal origin. To do so would be to acknowledge that demons exist, which seems an extra unfairness in the world after the existence of the Gentry has been accepted. That, and the Others take so many forms that many changelings are convinced that another hell outside the worst pits of Faerie would be redundant. To these fae, the succubi are either minor Gentry, some strange fusion of vampire and changeling, or conceptual beings of lust from the little-understood deep realms of human thought.

For as long as humans have had stories of Incubi, they've had stories of the inevitable result: cambions. They are the half-human children of dreams, gifted with odd insights and the attentions of the supernatural. Prospero's servant Caliban, Merlin the Magician and Gilgamesh were all allegedly such creatures.

In modern times, cambions are rare and often hide their powers out of fear. They are blessed and cursed with great insight: thanks to their conception in dreams, cambions have an innate sense of what is real and what is illusory, and they are immune to any of the hallucinatory veils that supernatural beings draw over themselves. They can enter the dreams of others with a touch in a manner similar to changelings, and have lucid control over their own dreams. They can sense supernatural powers in use, though they are no wiser as to their source than any other mortal.

These half-dreaming children rarely grow to adulthood, though, as they are highly prized by the Gentry, who will go out of their way to take a cambion child back to Arcadia. Those few that survive without being kidnapped by the True Fae quickly learn that their ability to see the world's supernatural beings does not protect them from those beings that desire privacy, and so they make their way as petty occultists, information brokers, and hired helpers of oneiropomps.

"Cambion" is presented here as a minor supernatural template that can be applied to a character. It does not preclude a



major template being added — a cambion can be Embraced as a vampire, Awaken as a mage, and most especially be kidnapped by the Others and turned into a changeling. The new template removes the cambion's abilities or drawbacks, although in many cases some powers will be redundant (changelings can enter dreams, mages can use Supernal magic to pierce veils, etc.).

Cambions have the following qualities:

True Sight: Cambions are immune to the perception-altering qualities inherent to many supernatural beings, but they cannot activate deliberate powers of concealment such as a fae using a Contract of Smoke (although those will trigger the cambion's Unseen Sense; see below). They automatically see through the Mask and the disfigurement-concealing illusion of Prometheans. They are immune to the Quiescence of mages and the Lunacy of werewolves.

Unseen Senses: Cambions count as having the Unseen Sense Merit against any *active* supernatural power, which every cambion interprets differently; one might develop hazy vision, while another will detect the presence of supernatural power as a prickling on the back of the neck or hands. This extrasensory perception is limited to detecting active powers only, not the mere presence of a supernatural being — a vampire in a bar will not trigger this Unseen Sense, but one using a Discipline will, while a ghost will be sensed (even if it remains invisible) when it uses Numina.

Dreaming Born: Cambions are lucid dreamers and may enter the dreamscape of another by touching the sleeping person and spending one temporary Willpower point.

Not Truly Alive: Whenever a cambion uses her ability to see through the Mask, her Unseen Sense, or her ability to enter dreams, her body ceases to register as being alive. Although she IS still alive, she does not have a pulse, does not breathe, will not

register on an EEG as having any brain activity and her pupils will not dilate. The effect lasts until the stimulus on the cambion's otherworldly senses ceases or the cambion exits the dreamscape.

OTHER DREAM RIDERS

Dreams are unique among the world's invisible places because they're not exclusive, obscure realms, but regular destinations for nearly every sentient being. Changelings and Fae have particular privileges but they aren't the only ones who can walk into other people's dreams. By accident or intent, other beings walk among dreams. Some of them got lost after stumbling away from their own minds. Others are artists, gardeners and even hunters of dreams. They aren't all threats — at least not at first. Experienced oneiromancers know that the most reliable allies take brief journeys with straightforward objectives in mind. A motley might exchange favors with one to achieve their respective goals. Dreamers who lose their way or abandon wakefulness for some permanent abode in dreams grow callous and deluded. They're accustomed to a world where every event has personal significance and most people are automata (or supernumeraries, detailed below), created to fulfill someone's fantasy. It means nothing to torture or kill them, because they're just set dressing. It's hard to tell dream-things apart from dreamers.

MNEMIDES

Quote: “Her eyes are ice blue. There are eighty-three sets of initials carved into the oak tree on the northwest side of the quad. Dad said you could be his son or an actor, not both. The second date is in three days at seven o'clock. It's a Wednesday. You will bring a bottle of pinot noir. She said she loved pinot noir.”

Background: Scientists often say that dreams help the mind form lasting memories, but the exact physical mechanism is still a mystery. The supernatural “mechanism” is even utterly unknown to them but changelings can see. Every mind has a Mnemid: the symbol of memory in a dream.

Mnemides are easy to miss; they stick to the shadows or crouch to one side of the action, in the misty places where the dream is only vaguely defined in a sleeper's memory; however, they aren't invisible. A changeling who knows where to look can find one as long as the dream involves memories that are intense enough to require its services. Most dreams are about trivial things. The Mnemid doesn't appear as a discrete entity on these occasions; it's nothing more than a sensation in the dream — a vague feeling of being watched. A Mnemid only fully manifests when the sleeper dreams about something of great emotional importance, or when the Wyrd decrees that the dream has deeper import, such as during a prophetic vision.

A Mnemid whispers memories constantly, reacting to events in the dream. It interprets them as the memories they're meant to be, under the symbolism. Unless you listen closely the chatter sounds like city noise in an urban dream, the wind in the country or some odd tone in the soft thudding of the dreamer's heart: the secret sound at the heart of all human dreams.

Mnemides are prized sources of information. They know everything about the dreamer, including things he's forgotten. Foreign visitors annoy them; they're not proper parts of the dreamer's memory. Mnemides listen and look at dreams, wring relevant in-

formation out of them and presumably, send them to wherever memories go for future recall. If someone screws up the dream it screws up their jobs — garbage in, garbage out, as they say. Fortunately, most of them know their dreamers well enough to detect interference and simply neglect to pass that along. The idea that the dream is in of itself an event to be remembered is an alien concept — it's the raw material, not the finished product.

A Mnemid is hard to sway, but it's been done. Oneiromancers can convince them to implant false memories or withhold true ones. The most bizarre thing anyone's ever done to a Mnemid, however, is to repurpose it to crawl through other people's dreams. Changelings encounter these beings walking through the Skein, babbling everything they see to themselves. Nobody knows who suborned them or where they send their information, but the journey's made them veritable encyclopedias of the human condition.

Description: A normal Mnemid looks like a distorted version of the dreamer. Body parts are scaled according to the sensory information it absorbs. It has huge hands, eyes and lips on a big, conical head. The face is far larger than the braincase. Save for enlarged genitalia, the rest of the body is spindly by comparison. Nevertheless, they move about gracefully and quietly, careful to never disturb a dream in progress.

Wandering Mnemides have slightly less exaggerated features and gray skin. They're hermaphrodites with a common, generic

look to them. Unreadable runes cover their bodies. They're still quiet creatures but they move with a robotic shuffle instead of a quick, liquid stride.

Storytelling Hints: A Mnemid only fully manifests in dreams that are associated with important memories. It hides in the dream, but an oneiromancer can detect it if the player beats the dream's Intensity with a Wits + Empathy + Wyrd roll. When approached, the Mnemid does its best to avoid visitors, though it might shoot them an annoyed glance while it whispers information to itself. Bothering or even attacking it won't interfere with its job, though it makes it more difficult; a dreamer's memories tend to be a bit sketchy if they were being recorded while the Mnemid was being assaulted. Destroying one wrecks a human dreamer's long-term memory until his mind grows a replacement: a process that takes roughly 10 days, minus the dreamer's Resolve + Composure + Wyrd, but never less than one day.

Visitors can fool Mnemides by interfering with a Dream of Secret Memory. Change the dream, and change the memory, as detailed on p. 20. Changelings can also use threats and pleas to make it lie to its host. Mnemides hate the prospect of being destroyed and unable to keep their dreamer's memories straight, but they empathize with dreamers, too. In the past, changelings have convinced them to lose traumatic memories. Mnemides don't understand that memories can hurt its host, but once someone points it out they might be willing to "lose" the traumatic recollection. The creature can refuse to handle any memory from the past day, or any memory the host has a great deal of trouble accepting, such as the loss of a loved one. A Mnemid can't actually fabricate a false memory, so this leaves the dreamer with missing time unless it copies a memory from another person and tweaks it to fit its dreamer. Roll the Mnemid's Presence + Academics + Wyrd; if it exceeds the current dream's Intensity it manages to transplant the memory.

Mnemides look strange and scrawny but they're not helpless. A Mnemid has one potent power: if it wishes it can make someone believe anything it says, as long as it's talking about an event that occurred before the victim dreamed inside his own or anyone else's mind. Roll the Mnemid's Presence + Academics + Wyrd - the target's Resolve + Wyrd. Once again, the Mnemid can't invent original memories. It refers to its host's memories instead.

Repurposed, wandering Mnemides have the same capabilities, but any dream they visit is their "native" dream. Unlike normal Mnemides, wanderers can invent virtually any memory; they've trawled thousands of dreams since they were created, so they can easily find the right memory for the occasion. They may be the most knowledgeable beings in the Skein. If multiple people ever dreamed a thing the wanderer probably knows it, though it almost never knows anything about a single, obscure individual. It can even read trends from memories and use them to reveal things humanity doesn't know about itself. Nomadic Mnemides have no sense of whether a particular bit of knowledge is relevant or useful, though. They just collect facts. When asked questions, they rattle off all the raw information they know, as others experienced it. They don't analyze anything. This mélange of facts and images contain the truth but uncovering it is about as difficult as interpreting an entranced oracle's babble.



Mnemides dream combat takes the form of a torrent of remembered sounds and sensations, combined with a complex chant filled with distracting information. A Mnemid strikes enemies with its host's pain, or weapons he used in the waking world. Academics is the key Skill because it relies on the ability to retrieve these memories. Wandering Mnemides have an almost unlimited array of memories to draw from, so they gain the rote benefit (re-roll failed dice) when they use the Skill in battle, but they don't attack unless attacked themselves.

Dream Combat:

Power Attributes: Intelligence 6, Strength 2, Presence 1
Finesse Attributes: Wits 4, Dexterity 3, Manipulation 1
Resistance Attributes: Resolve 5, Stamina 3, Composure 5
Oneiromancy Skill: Academics 5
Willpower: 10
Virtue: Fortitude
Vice: Greed
Initiative: 8
Speed: 10
Wyrd: 5
Glamour/per turn: 14/ 5

Oneiromachy:

Personal: (Intelligence + Academics + Wyrd) 16
Environmental: (Wits + Academics + Wyrd) 14
Dream Defense: 4 (Wits)
Dream Armor: 5 (Resolve)

Horn and Ivory: Mnemides

Wandering Mnemides are the subject of much speculation. Who made them? Where does their information go? Nobody can identify the runes on their bodies, but some changelings have seen sorcerers use similar glyphs. Magi can't read the symbols either, but sometimes they think they can crack the code, if they get more to go on than a changeling's descriptions. This is usually the point where the Winter Court steps in and convinces the loose-lipped changeling to go away. Some modern-minded Lost believe wandering Mnemides are the oneiromantic equivalent of search engine spiders: programs that crawl the web for information to catalog. In effect, someone's "programmed" them to record everything and store it in some great pool of memory, where an adept might go to learn every secret, fact or fancy that ever passed through a human mind. It would be like the occult Akashic Record, or the Christian Books of Life and Death. Where is it, and who's reading it?

SUPERNUMERARIES

Quote: (*Anything required.*)

Background: Supernumeraries are the urban masses in a dream of the city and spear-carriers in a violent medieval fantasy. They're faceless clerks in a bureaucracy. They fill crowds and maybe spout a line or two before leaving a dream's core. They play the bit parts. The name comes from opera, after the non-singers who play servants, soldiers and other background roles. Many changelings think even talking to a supernumerary is a waste of time, but patient travelers can harvest interesting information from them. When they're "off stage," they act like actors in the wings, and they know their stage — the dreamer's mind — better than one might think.

Description: At a glance supernumeraries look like their roles but if you took a closer look you'd notice that their costumes lack detail. They even look fake. The further from the heart of the action they are, the more pronounced the effect is. A supernumerary soldier's gun looks real when he's in the thick of the dream. It even fires. If that soldier's standing around in the background, the gun looks like a hunk of painted wood, or even a weird extension of the supernumerary's body. A supernumerary always looks a bit like the dreamer who made him, modified to fit the part's gender, ethnicity or even species.

Storytelling Hints: Supernumeraries usually don't do anything that isn't in the dream's "script," but they act with more independence when they're off duty. They'll talk about what their parts mean in the greater context of the dream and might even make a few wry observations about what it all means. An average supernumerary knows about as much as an actor who's had a day or so to study the script, and didn't pay attention to much more than his own part.

Supernumeraries are weaker than other dream-creatures on a number of fronts.

- Supernumeraries can only perform dream combat actions. They don't have other oneiromantic powers.
- When it comes to environmental combat and stunts, supernumeraries are treated like aspects of the environment. This doesn't let oneiromachists attack more than once per turn or inflict extra damage, but they can invoke stunts by ordering them to attack en masse, hurling them at opponents with a conjured whirlwind or performing some other stunt that uses them in the description. This doesn't injure supernumeraries, though they might "sell" an injury (complete with broken limbs and spattering blood) in a way that's consistent with the dream's narrative
- Dream combatants can also invoke stunts to attack multiple supernumeraries. Instead of taking the stunt's dice bonus, the combatant can apply his attack's result to a number of supernumeraries equal to whatever the bonus would be. Resolve the attack against the target with the highest combined Defense and armor.
- Supernumerary Willpower is only equal to the highest of Resolve or Composure. It's not the sum of both Attributes.

Dream Combat:

Power Attributes: 2 each, or 3 each for dedicated combatants like soldiers or thugs.

Finesse Attributes: 2 each.

Resistance Attributes: 1 each for standard supernumeraries, or 2 for combatants.

Oneiromancy Skill: Empathy 2.



Willpower: 1 or 2, depending on the highest of the supernumerary's Resolve or Composure.

Virtue: Same as the dreamer's.

Vice: Same as the dreamer's.

Initiative: 3 for standard supernumeraries or 4 for combatants.

Speed: 9 for standard supernumeraries or 10 for combatants.

Wyrd: 0

Glamour/per turn: 0

Oneiromachy:

Personal: (Highest Power Attribute + Empathy) 3; 4 for combatants.

Environmental: n/a

Dream Defense: 2 (Highest Finesse Attribute)

Dream Armor: 1 or 2 (Highest Resistance Attribute)

VIRGILIUS

Quote: "Where is the omphalos? Where is the spire, the whorl of stars? There are only nightmares here. You should leave before I become one of them."

Background: Virgilius is a sorcerer of the Atlantean tradition (specifically, the Mastigos "path" that deals with demons of the mind) who fancied himself a dream explorer, but when he followed a changeling between two gnarled trees he slipped out of the occult "Oneiros" and into a labyrinth of fantasies he couldn't escape. He still walks through dreams, looking for a way back. He can't wake up and he's gone insane.

Sometimes he forgets his predicament. He thinks he's still mapping the human dreamscape for his cabal, but he eventually

Horn and Ivory: Supernumeraries

Supernumerary "dream extras" are usually derided as extras, but the fact is that changelings don't really know where they come from, or where they go when the dream's done. Are they created by the dreamer, or do they come from some collective unconsciousness? A few oneiromancers believe supernumeraries know more than they're telling. Attempts to follow them to wherever they go when their parts are done have so far proven fruitless. They disappear around corners or dissolve into foggy dream-stuff.

snaps out of it and realizes that he has no idea where he is or *when* he is. Sometimes he doesn't even know he's dreaming. He thinks he's returned to the waking world as a reputable mage, gone back to his childhood, or leads another life where he isn't a sorcerer at all. His real name is Norman; it's what he answers to when he doesn't remember being a mage. Then there are the times where Virgilius thinks he's a Demon of the Eighth Circle or a Holy Guardian Angel. He becomes increasingly dangerous during such delusions, just as dangerous as he believes such entities would be.

Virgilius would be little more than a sad story to tell one's motley-mates after an extended Skeinwalk, but the sorcerer has potent psychic gifts. Chief among them is the ability to alter his fundamental self-image. He can make himself inhumanly strong and brilliant, or manifest bestial, monstrous qualities. After exploring the depths of his body and soul, he knows how to manipulate them to fit a visualized self-image. He used to use it to shatter psychological limitations but now that his psyche's been bent by years of dreaming, his magic follows his madness. He believes he is every manifestation he creates.

Meanwhile, a comatose man lies in a Miami hospital as he has for five years. Nobody knows how to wake him up, but they feed him, turn him to keep the bedsores away and use his limp body to teach nurses the finer points of long-term care. Virgilius' friends don't visit much any more. None of them knew much about dream lore (or the "Astral Plane," as magi call it) to begin with, and the dream-adepts they've called for help encounter a dark, quiet place in his mind and a door they refuse to pass through, lest they lose themselves the way he did.

Description: Virgilius usually appears in one of five forms. Some of those forms have different Attributes than normal, as listed below.

Virgilius: This form looks the way Virgilius did when he was awake: a tanned, thin young man with shaggy red hair, dark brown eyes and an energetic attitude. He usually dreams himself wearing red ceremonial robes or a stylish (if slightly dated) white clubbing outfit. He carries a black lacquered cane with a carved raven's head. **Modified Attributes:** None, unless he plans on engaging in dream combat. In that case, use the Attributes listed in parentheses.

Norman: Norman looks like Virgilius, minus the robe, the cane and confident attitude. He stands in a perpetual cringe and wears grungy, cheap clothes. He looks the way Virgilius thinks

he'd be if he'd never learned the mystic arts. *Modified Attributes:* Intelligence 3, Presence 2.

Young Norman: Young Norman is a pudgy, prepubescent brat. He's not really Norman as he was, but a mix of memories mixed up with the willfulness Virgilius developed as an adult. *Modified Attributes:* Strength 1, Manipulation 5.

Virgilius the Demon: This form is based on Virgilius' Vice: Pride. The mage used to split this part of his personality into a separate being magi call a "goetic demon." He would do battle with it to affirm his self-confidence. Now it's one of his aspects. Along the way it collected a story for itself based on Virgilius' memories of Dante and the mythic flotsam of hundreds of dreams. It calls itself a "Demon of the Eighth Circle of Hell" and has an appearance to match: deep red skin, curved horns and shaggy legs with cloven hoofs. *Modified Attributes:* Strength 5, Manipulation 7.

The Angel Virgil: The angel Virgil represents the mage's Virtue of Hope. Virgilius subconsciously compensates for demonic manifestations by appearing as his fantasy of an angel: a sexless, glowing figure with a perfect musculature and flashing gold eyes. *Modified Attributes:* Strength 5, Presence 8.

Storytelling Hints: As a mage, Virgilius uses a trait called Gnosis instead of Wyrd. Gnosis measures his intuitive knowledge about the occult. He uses Occult instead of Empathy to perform oneiromancy and Mana when a situation would require Glamour. In many cases Virgilius uses the mystic arts instead of his natural will to influence dreams, but in a **Changeling** game you don't need to differentiate between the two. Just let him perform the same oneiromantic tasks as changelings, using the same rules. If you own **Mage: The Awakening**, Virgilius has the following Arcana: Life 3, Mind 4, Prime 2 and Space 2, along with any rites you desire. As a demon, angel or mage he can use these abilities to heal himself, enhance his physical or mental Attributes, control minds and see distant phenomena. If you don't own **Mage: The Awakening**, use equivalent Contracts with no more than 4 dots of power. Notably, Virgilius can alter his Attributes. He normally increases his Mental Attributes if he's about to engage in dream combat. Otherwise, see the Description part of this entry for modified Attributes in other forms.

Virgilius shifts between manifestations because in the absence of a clear path back to his own dreams he began investigating himself, looking for something in his memories that would resonate with what he believes are "higher Astral domains." After perhaps the ten thousandth cycle of self-exploration something... broke. Now, Virgilius usually appears as himself, but when he's urged toward sin or virtue, his demonic or angelic aspects appear, respectively. Fear forces him into his non-magical, adult persona, while curiosity turns him into a child who "grows up" into Virgilius or mundane Norman, depending on whether he finds the answer. The non-magical, adult Norman forgets he's a mage and takes everything he sees at face value, but the rest are fully aware of each other.

Dream Combat:

(Note: Traits in parentheses are a typical, magically augmented spread as Virgilius.)

Power Attributes: Intelligence 4 (6), Strength 3, Presence 4

Finesse Attributes: Wits 3 (5), Dexterity 2,

Manipulation 3

Resistance Attributes: Resolve 3 (5), Stamina 3, Composure 2

Oneiromancy Skill: Occult 4

Willpower: 5 (7)

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 4

Speed: 10

Gnosis: 3

Mana/per turn: 12/3

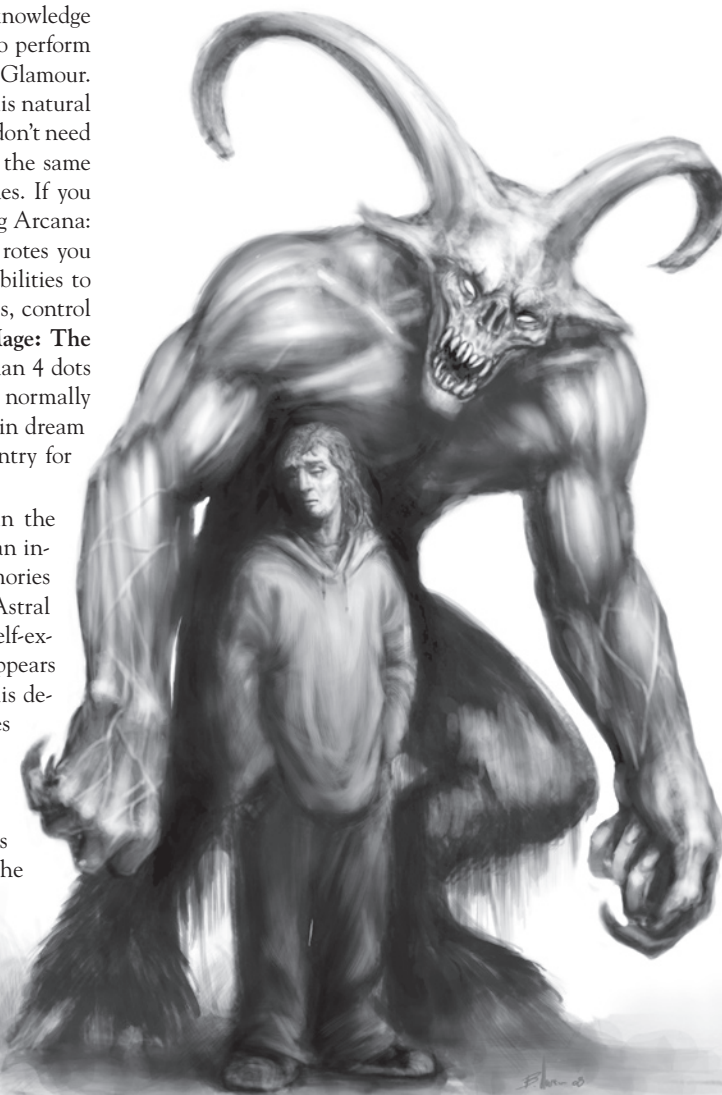
Oneiromachy:

Personal: (Intelligence + Occult + Gnosis) 11 (13)

Environmental: (Wits + Occult + Gnosis) 10 (12)

Dream Defense: 3 (5 with magic; Wits)

Dream Armor: 3 (5 with magic; Resolve)



Horn and Ivory: Mages in the Skein

Mages normally travel through dreams as they perceive them: elements of a cosmos of psychic energy they call the Astral Plane. They can enter individual dreams but can't see the Skein of connected dream-threads. They *can* follow changelings or trip through gateways, however, which dangerously complicates the situation. Skeinwalking tears her from her metaphysical frame of reference. Her enlightened will has no way to get its bearings so she's as helpless as a normal human who's been pulled from her own, natural dreams. She can't travel the "Astral reaches," but must travel from gate to gate like a changeling — but *unlike* a changeling, she can't return home just by waking up. She has to walk the threads of dreaming home.

Neither mage nor changeling scholars know much about alternatives. There's probably a magical solution, or some way for a changeling to help the mage escape. It barely needs to be said that Storytellers should use this situation to create interesting stories, not screw Mage players.

Changelings have great difficulty with the higher Astral Realms mages speak of. They mostly travel through a place mages call the Oneiros, but don't see it as one layer, but a huge web of Wyrd-linked dreams. Some dream threads are technically part of other "layers," but changelings can't tell the difference. If an accident sends them outside the Skein of connected dreams they need help to find their way back. Sometimes they can wake up over a matter of hours, just as if they're waking up from Skeinwalking, but sometimes they sleep until they're guided home.

THE MORPHEANS

If changelings are knights-errant in dreams and Incubi are their native barons, Morpheans are kings: powers that sit on inscrutable thrones at the edges of the Skein. Some changelings find the fact of their existence a comfort: evidence that the Gentry aren't the strongest supernatural powers. These Lost have rarely actually met a Morphean, for if they had, they'd know that just as the Others have no monopoly of power, they have no special claim on cruelty, either. But cruelty implies calculated malice. Morpheans partake of the purest essence of dreams, and it's in a dream's nature to choose symbolism over morality.

MANIFESTATIONS AND BARCAINS

A Morphean never manifests randomly. Changelings seek them out by traveling to an appropriate dream, or encounter them when the Wyrd wills it. They possess an inconstant omniscience, which is to say that they sometimes know secrets that have never been told, but occasionally can't even remember the same of a supplicant. There's no way to know whether this is a trick or the product of an incomprehensible consciousness.

Morpheans are mighty archetypes and living enigmas. Each one is unique, though all can appear in many places at once. Beyond their raw power and mysterious natures they have one thing in common: they want to express their natures in the waking realm. They have no flesh and no powers that can freely pierce the barriers of sleep, so they make bargains, recruiting string dreamers to do their bidding.

Nobody knows how many Morpheans exist. The following are well-known to dream scholars, but writings and oral histories talk about many others. There are figures like the Fire Bringer, the Horned One and the Dragon Dream, and beings that answer to images and emotions. Storytellers may bring as many of them into the chronicle as she likes, but remember that meeting a Morphean is a momentous event, fit for the chronicle's most important scenes.

THE PALE BROTHER

Death-in-Dreams, the Peaceful and Wrathful One, Thanatos

Quote: "On this journey there is no halting, no immovable gate to separate being and nothing that you might stand before, awed, before returning. There is no end but the end of all, but to you, there may be a change you call ending."

Background: The Pale Brother is Death — or Death-in-Dreams, to be precise. He's used both names and more, but Pale Brother is his special title among the Lost. He's called changelings "nephews, nieces, children of Sleep, who will be my equals in another age." That bond is why he favors them with the counsel he normally reserves for the enlightened or the dying — though unfortunately, living changelings may have some special perspective in either state that makes his enigmatic statements easy to understand.

His history is the legend of death: how men and women see it, what they fear and hope but will never know until the end. He changes shape to fit every faith, but he says it's no trick; he really is every form he's ever taken, but he is still Death-in-Dreams. The Lost have questioned him about the afterlife, his true nature — everything a mortal's ever wanted to know, and a few things only changelings would think to ask. The answers almost never fit into neat binaries of truth and falsehood. He says there is no barrier between life and death, but he tells changelings not to test life's uttermost borders, lest they slip away. He says he's every death god, but he's also only one part of death: a vision that enters the dreams of anyone who really understands they're mortal.

Description: He can look like anything but he prefers one form for changelings from the Seasonal Courts: the ever-shifting visage of a corpse that flows between ages, genders and ethnicities in the blink of an eye, carrying a different death sign in every

shape. He can also appear differently to each witness simultaneously. Ordinary people see deities, loved ones and other figures from their culture's death traditions. (Some atheists see nothing, but some don't.) Occultists see entities pulled from their esoteric studies: Egyptian gods, ancestor-shamans and the angelic guardians of esoteric gates. Vampires never speak of their experiences, but some of them snarl in terror. He does not meet werewolves at all and has said: "They are not of my dominion." He obeys different rules in his various forms. Other people can play dice for longevity or move his heart with a poem, but not changelings.

Roleplaying Hints: For all the mystery surrounding him, the Pale Brother plays a straightforward role. He symbolizes real death: the end that can be delayed, but never defeated. He only appears in the dreams of people who understand that they will die not just in an intellectual sense, but as an intuitive, emotional understanding that makes it as real as seeing the moon or the memory of a first kiss.

Before the modern era he'd appear in people's dreams early in life, after they saw war in the fields, disease in their town or animals being slaughtered. These days, some people go through most of their lives without really understanding that they aren't immortal. They talk about death in the abstract, or as a tragedy that happens to other people. Only age or a serious illness brings the reality home. When dreamers fantasize about cheating death they're not seeing him; an Incubus stands in. Death-in-Dreams can't be tricked or beaten. He exists to remind mortals of that and help them accept their Final Dreams. When the dying resist the inevitable or worse yet, don't even know they're dying, the transition can be painful. He alternates between compassion and horror — angels, then demons. Only the very young, or people who by virtue of dementia or insanity can't understand they're dying can forego the purification process. Denial, willful ignorance and arrogance get the lash: what people report in certain unpleasant near-death experiences, or the Wrathful Ones of Tibetan tradition.

What about life after death or the existence of the soul? The Pale Brother's answers are frustrating. They're not exactly vague, but they can't be interpreted as anything definitive. Most mortals would never even get a chance to ask. Only changelings, dying men and women, and an occasional saint, sage or bodhisattva may question him at all.

Strangely, Death-in-Dreams treats the True Fae and their slaves with indifference and occasionally, pity.

The Pale Brother knows when characters will die, but he won't tell them. He could probably snuff out their lives in an instant but he saves that for when changelings interfere in the Final Dream. Despite his habit of providing enigmatic answers to the ultimate questions, he can be a font of information about the causes of death, in individuals and across populations. He keeps his own counsel much of the time, but he'll occasionally tell changelings when their friends have undiagnosed, fatal diseases, or when a lethal influence is

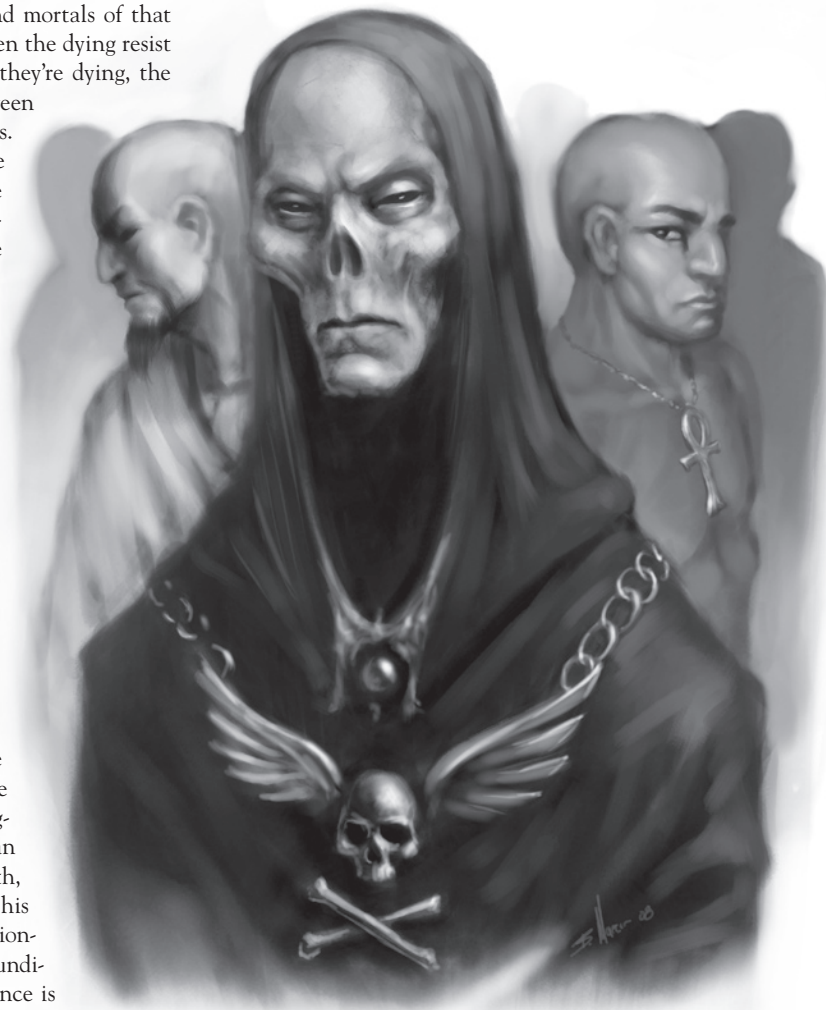
about to strike their home territory. He doesn't demand any service in return. Death-in-Dreams is generous, in his own way.

QUESTING FOR DEATH

The Pale Brother doesn't ask for quests but he'll grant them to changelings who sincerely accept their own mortality. The Morphean wants everyone to *really* understand they're going to die, so that when the time comes, they'll take the journey without suffering excessively. Here are three examples of the quests Death-in-Dreams might commission to those seeking his boon. They're not the only ones; Storytellers should use these as examples and create their own to fit the chronicle.

- The motley must solve a disappearance. The missing person is dead but there's no proof. His closest companions threw away their own happiness to find him, but not for closure's sake. They believe he's still alive. There's an inevitable supernatural complication. Someone may have reanimated the body, leading to false sightings, or a creature's used mind bending powers to convince people he's still alive. The Pale Brother doesn't believe he should interfere with the waking world most of the time, but when supernatural forces intrude he feels justified in appointing agents to deal with it.

- Death-in-Dreams sends the motley to destroy a rumored immortality formula. This can be scientific, occult or religious, but



in all cases it promises eternal life, not mere longevity. The Pale Brother doesn't care what people do to extend life as long as they don't hope to make it last forever. No potion, drug or spell will ever deny him. The myth of immortality makes people fight the Final Dream and their safe passage beyond life. He doesn't seem to mind beliefs about the afterlife or reincarnation, but the promise of continuous, unbroken fleshly existence rouses him to act.

- The Pale Brother commands the motley to take his place in the dreams of a dying person. They become the sleeper's Death. They must comfort or chastise him until he accepts the approaching end. Saving the subject's life isn't forbidden but it doesn't win the boon, either. Saving lives is something Death-in-Dreams neither commends nor discourages. It's simply irrelevant to him.

THE BOON OF THE WHITE TWINS

Upon successfully completing the quest, the motley earns the boon of the White Twins. Any member of the questing motley can call it due to save any other member.

If the changeling invokes the White Twins within one scene of her companion's death, that character returns to life. Whenever possible, it transpires that he only *seemed* dead, but some array of circumstances revealed that he was only stunned, missing or experienced some other deceptive misfortune. The invoker and the resurrected changeling are Linked by Fate (see p. 55) from that moment forward, and share a common doom. If one dies, the other dies with her, no matter how healthy, well-protected or far away she is. No medical or supernatural aid can prevent either death.

The motley can only invoke the boon once; the Pale Brother has never granted it a second time. Occasionally, he allows lone Lost to quest for it. In this situation, the changeling can designate one companion. If the quest succeeds, that companion can invoke or benefit from the Boon of the White Twins just as if she'd gone on the quest herself.

THE ROGUE SISTER

**Tanglewoman, Lady Treachery,
the Fourth Goddess, Hecate**

Quote: "I will free you."

Background: If destiny was simply the weaving of three goddesses, the games of the True Fae or some other set structure, Autumn's oracles would be far more accurate. The Rogue Sister wrecks these systems from within. She's possibility, opportunity and chaos: the power to violate Fate's pattern. If that's all she stood for, she'd be a welcome influence but Fate does more than lock events into place. It is the heart of the Wyrd, which sanctifies oaths and gives the Lost a society. Break Fate, and break oaths; break oaths, and snap the Wyrd threads that give changelings collective strength. The Rogue Sister is called Lady Treachery, too.

Western changelings traditionally identify her with the Greek Goddess Hecate. They acknowledge it's not a perfect fit, but it suits the Tanglewoman's legends. She's never told her story, but scholars have witnessed fragmented hobgoblin-songs, oracular dreams and dire intimations from the True Fae. Together, they form a vague myth.

Hecate went to Greece from Asia Minor to be a foreign entrant to the pantheon, potent because she existed outside the traditional scheme of things. The Rogue Sister traveled too, into the light of being from lonely places beyond the Wyrd's sight, where

misbegotten, unfinished dreams were banished from the sight of the True Fae. She walked into the world, made of a not-substance but undeniably *there*, carrying the mad rules of her home with her. Her every step snarled the Wyrd's threads, opening new possibilities. Fate and nature tangled beneath her stride, liberating some from law but killing others with the lack of it. After she passed by, wood refused to burn; food provided no sustenance. Even the Gentry suffered as their pacts broke. Their great games of survival failed and they starved or even lost the rights to their names.

The worlds burned with mad fire and the Gentry went to war. The Rogue Sister brought hideous monsters to the field. She birthed them from the matter of the material realm, but infused them with the chaos of her home. The Others retreated after the first battle to lick their wounds, and in the depths of Arcadia they reforged their weapons and armor — that is to say, remade their pacts. They remade casual promises into intricate laws, filled with conditions and redundancies, and hammered razor sharp clauses out of every war-constitution. Some say these were the first true Contracts, and even that changelings existed in this myth-time, and commanded these war machines built of promises for their overlords. According to this point of view, it's why True Fae have mutable powers but changelings master well-defined clauses.

The last battle was indescribable, taking place on grimy fields, dream-worlds of lightning and terror, and even in metaphysical conflicts that could be called debates, where the Rogue Sister tested the internal logic of every law thrown up to oppose her. The Others won, fixing her body to the world with an iron spear but even then, Lady Treachery was not dead, and could negotiate her imprisonment.

The Others would accept her into the structure of the Wyrd, even give her a place in the world of signs and motifs. It was merciful and prudent, for to bring her into the mythos would define her. Even so, she'd be imprisoned in dreams, and never again allowed to destroy oaths and natural laws. As the historical Hecate was awkwardly grafted to native Triple Goddesses the Rogue Sister was made into a dream of freedom and possibility: a Fourth Sister to challenge the Three Weavers, but never overthrow them.

She still visits dreams to play her ordained part, but she plots her freedom. The pact has a loophole: the Rogue Sister can't attack Fate or leave dreams, but she makes her own oaths: promises to kill other promises. She uses these in a secret war on Fate, appointing emissaries to gnaw Creation's pattern apart. If she succeeds, she'll free herself — and then anything is possible.

Description: The Rogue Sister usually manifests as a disheveled woman of indeterminate age. Her hair is long and snarled. She carries witches' charms like dolls, roughly carved wands and amulets. She normally appears to come from a culture that's foreign to the dreamer. Her tattered clothes, speech and apparent ethnicity all signify this, though they don't always include accurate cultural symbols, or even signs of any real world community, conforming only to the dreamer's expectations about what's exotic and strange. She often plays the role of an ostracized wise woman, usually alone, but sometimes as three women. They're sisters, or members of a coven. This guise is a deception: an attempt to usurp the Fate's symbolism.

Changelings see there's more to the Tanglewoman, but humans never notice the signs. They don't see her shadow shift and churn, as if her body hides extra slithering limbs. They don't notice a split second of utter inhumanity: scales, fresh brands of

convoluted runes, and extra eyes with oddly shaped pupils or the compound cells of a huge insect. They don't hear the soft, tapping sounds of spiders scuttling.

Roleplaying Hints: The Rogue Sister figures in dreams about betrayal, hope, magic and transgression, especially of they take place at night. She inspires taboo-breaking, nonlinear thinking and innovation, but also backstabbing, violent wish fulfillment and antisocial desires. Changelings seek the Rogue Sister to escape their bargains. They secretly cast oneiroscopes to find her because in so many cases, visiting her is a prelude to betrayal.

She wants to escape dreams. She hates being bound to an archetype, despises catering to dreamers and misses being a pure thing from Beyond: a creator and corrupter of all things. When oaths mean nothing, the Wyrd will weaken too much to hold her; she'll step forth to slay the Gentry. She thinks she knows how to destroy them utterly, beyond even Arcadia's power to rebuild them, because over millennia of dreams she's learned certain secrets about the Wyrd. She hides her motives and calls herself the true face of Fate or a spirit of freedom.

FATE-TANGLING QUESTS

The Rogue Sister's eager to recruit changelings. Her quests revolve around breaking oaths, ripping up Fate's pattern and chal-

lenging the social order. Individual changelings are usually the ones that take up the burden because Lost society frowns on dealing with the Tanglewoman. She's just as happy to bargain with entire motleys, but it just doesn't happen as often.

In the Rogue Sister's case, the nature of the quest determines the boon. The Storyteller should feel free to develop quests and rewards as she sees fit, as the Rogue Sister's chaotic nature lets her set varied, flexible terms. The best-known quest is called the Dark Huntress' Pact, below.

The Dark Huntress Pact

The Dark Huntress' Pact is Rogue Sister's most common quest and boon.

The quest is straightforward: the character destroys one of the Moirae. The Moirae must possess at least as much Wyrd as the hunter. Other characters can help, but the hunter must strike the fatal blow. The changeling must cut off part of it as a trophy. The trophy usually transforms into everyday materials, such as cloth, wood and dull stones, but the character should still keep it with her when she sleeps. The next time she dreams of the Rogue Sister, the trophy comes with her. Lady Treachery eats it, sealing the deal.

Once this occurs, the boon comes into force. It frees the character from Fate-enforced obligations. One character may benefit from this for each Moirae the character kills. This has the same effect as a Pattern Eater's Fate-eating power (see p. 64) with the following exceptions:

- The changeling can pick and choose the Fate-related traits she'll keep and discard.
- The changeling can dismiss even active pledges, with no ill effects. Sanctions will not strike her.
- The changeling isn't disconnected from Fate, as he used a pact to destroy one — a paradox devised by the Rogue Sister.

THE RUINOUS PRINCE

Father-Slayer, End of Empires, the Impure Gatekeeper, Mordred

Quote: "I see greatness and sorrow, flood and blood, bone and stone reconfigured to your will. I see myself."

Background: The Ruinous Prince is often accused of lying by the ones he's doomed, but he puts on a show of candor. Shameless straight talk gives him natural magnetism. It makes him look fearless. Of course, Mordred could speak in a voice so sweet any listener would forever hear its echo in every pleasing sound, but that's not his style. The Morphean doesn't live to demonstrate his immortal power, but to turn men and women into monarchs, conquerors, presidents and stars. The Ruinous Prince is the rash, mad dream of greatness that lurks in every heart, and the price people pay to attain it.

Mordred is a mortal name for him, a human legend that contains a grain of truth. One ancient story from Winter's archives says he was born in some time before time, when the stars formed dif-



ferent constellations and the moon filled half the sky. He was the son of a mortal king and an Old God, born when the Thorns were few and far between, and disciplined mortal dreamers could storm Faerie and demand favors; he was made of a perfect union between lust and political will, the child of a treaty meant to limit dreamers' assaults and Fae reprisals. The Prince was born immortal but with a human heart, and the ability to despise his loveless origin.

Immortality brought a plotting patience. He turned against his father with slow maneuvers. The Prince rejoiced in his father's advancing age and denied him artifacts that would prolong his life. The king approved invasions to seize the secret of immortality. The cost tore his realm apart, but the king was distracted by his haggard face, especially when he compared it to his son's unending youth. Finally, he stormed Arcadia with a sword, arguing that the treaty was broken. The Ruinous Prince met him on the field. Father and son clashed, impaling each other on mystic weapons — death, for him, but victory for the Prince and the True Fae. The current age of ruin commenced.

That's the story the Prince tells, but he mixes in suitable human legends, modified to support his point of view. That's why changelings call him Mordred, but he answers to Set and Loki, too. The End of Empires calls himself the guardian of Fate: the only suitable avatar for destiny in this degenerate age, where every great dream holds the seeds of its own undoing.

Description: He prefers tall, handsome human forms with arrogant expressions. Some are children, but they move and talk with eerily mature confidence. His old forms are bent and scarred, almost as if they have not so much aged as rotted from the inside. Many manifestations have red hair; most are male. In front of changelings he dresses like a monarch or politician from any age that pleases him. These days he enjoys the plate armor of an anachronistic Arthurian figure and the bespoke suit a senator or CEO might wear.

The Ruinous Prince tones down his preferences a bit when he visits an ordinary person's dreams. He goes to artists, athletes and politicians in the form of role models who've paid the price for success. He's been musicians who died young and athletes who reached their peak on drugs that would go on to wreck their health. Scandal-ridden politicians used to be more common, but these days so many of them get away with it they're not relevant to his nature.

Roleplaying Hints: Mordred loves two supernatural peoples above all others: mages and changelings. Changelings are the only beings in Creation who, like him, are Faerie powers with mortal passions. Occasionally he speculates that the Lost aren't just his spiritual relatives, but his *replacements*: the unhappy offspring of unmentionable oaths. If questioned on the point, he freely admits he doesn't know for sure, but he nevertheless believes their mission must be the same as his own. Changelings exist to raise humanity to greatness, but cut it down once it reaches past its grasp.

The Ruinous Prince is the mages' lord of arcane Fate. If changelings share his origins, mages share his spirit, for few other beings carry self-devouring ambitions so proudly, particularly when their own secret masters — beings Mordred probably knows better than the sorcerers themselves — created mighty paths and visions to a better way. The Ruinous Prince knows that changelings and mages have higher destinies that escape this age's entropy. He fears that. The secret way of power without pain foreshadows

things humans call paradise, enlightenment, transcendence and resurrection — a new world where he would be irrelevant.

The high mysteries are more than subjects for abstract contemplation. They inform his role in dreams. He appears in the Dreams of Jupiter and Saturn and all their variations. Motive doesn't interest him as much as the costly, fleeting nature of desire. He'll be a saint and call it all virtuous self-sacrifice. He'll wear a demon's shape and make it a Satanic pact. In any form, he promises the dreamer that she'll reach her wildest dreams as long as she'll do whatever it takes and accept the consequences. The Ruinous Prince doesn't offer ordinary people any supernatural bargains. He doesn't need to. He just plants the idea and life does the rest. A woman blows her savings on a year of successful business and loses it all when sales drop, and the money runs out. A writer turns cokehead to stay awake and creative when he's not working nine to five. The first three books are bestsellers. The rest are incoherent garbage; his wages go to his dealer.

The Prince of Arcane Fate

Mage players know Fate as an Arcanum: a field of magical study that lets practitioners twist the rules of destiny. The Awakened journey to the edge of their Astral Realms to seek favor from Fate's Aeon: a being they call Medraut — or Mordred. (*Mage's Astral Realms* discusses the Aeon.) Mages and changelings have diverging views of the Ruinous Prince just as they have about Arcadia.

The default assumption is that the Aeon and the Ruinous Prince *are* the same being, or at least aspects of an entity that never reveals its root form. That said, Mordred appears as he must for the beings he encounters. Mages seek him out for occult secrets and that's what he gives them. Changelings petition him to live glorious, terrible lives and he acts accordingly. While the ultimate truth is an interesting topic for Storyteller contemplation and the endgame, this need not significantly change the Prince's role in standard chronicles in either game.

THE VOW OF ALL-CONSUMING FIRE

The Ruinous Prince demands no quest that its client would not desire, so its influence takes the form of a unique pledge that no other being can make. The Vow of All-Consuming Fire invokes powers beyond the system described in **Changeling: The Lost**. Therefore, no values are listed.

Type: Vow

Tasks: The changeling defines an endeavor with three requirements. First, it must be among the most difficult things anyone has ever attempted. Examples include rising from the ghetto

to the Oval Office, destroying an entire Feud-group of True Fae, or conquering every Freehold in Great Britain and Ireland. In ages past, this would be the stuff of epic poetry.

Second, it must have a definite success point. A changeling can't vow to defend the world from the True Fae, or demand fealty from everyone who visits his freehold because these are ongoing endeavors.

Finally, it must have identifiable milestones. These don't all need to be defined ahead of time, but thanks to Mordred, the changeling knows his objective, whether it's getting a job in City Hall or challenging three freehold lords to Hedge duels.

The Ruinous Prince vows to ease the way to success. He focuses the changeling's destiny on his chosen endeavor. The ghetto-dweller's thrown into a position to save a senator, who offers to get him a job and expunge a few embarrassing facts from his record. A dusty library tells him that his Gentry enemies bound their names into a red tree — and it manifests in particular earthly forests according to a predictable schedule. Nothing necessary to the endeavor is ever impossible. He also communicates the nature of each milestone to the changeling through dreams and omens.

The changeling has two obligations. First, he must perform the endeavor. Second, he must accept a doom of the Ruinous Prince's choosing. It will strike at some point after he succeeds. The exact parameters are left to the Storyteller, but they could include 0 Clarity, death, or

corruption into a mockery of everything he once stood for. Events also transpire to undo the lasting effects of every accomplishment. Kingdoms crumble. Victorious motleys become Gentry tyrants as destructive as those they destroyed.

Boons: The changeling can swear to the Wyrd that he *must* succeed in a particular scene related to his endeavor if he is to meet his goal. This forces an immediate Clarity check; he's chosen the Wyrd over self-preservation by affirming his doomed Fate. That earns the character a pool of automatic successes equal to his Resolve + Wyrd. The player can spend up to as many successes from this pool as the lower of the character's Resolve or Wyrd on a single roll. This benefit lasts until the scene ends or the pool runs out.

Sanction: No sanction applies for the Ruinous Prince because he can't fail — his task is always attainable. The changeling doesn't irreversibly fail at the endeavor until he fails to complete three milestones in a row. The sanction is death, as described on page 182 of **Changeling: The Lost**. Furthermore, if the character dies or falls to 0 Clarity, the Wyrd systematically destroys any lasting sign or casual memory of his achievements. The run for president becomes an obscure voter fad, and nobody remembers the would-be High King of Britain except for his former motley.

Duration: The Vow of All-Consuming Fire lasts until the changeling fails or attains his goal.



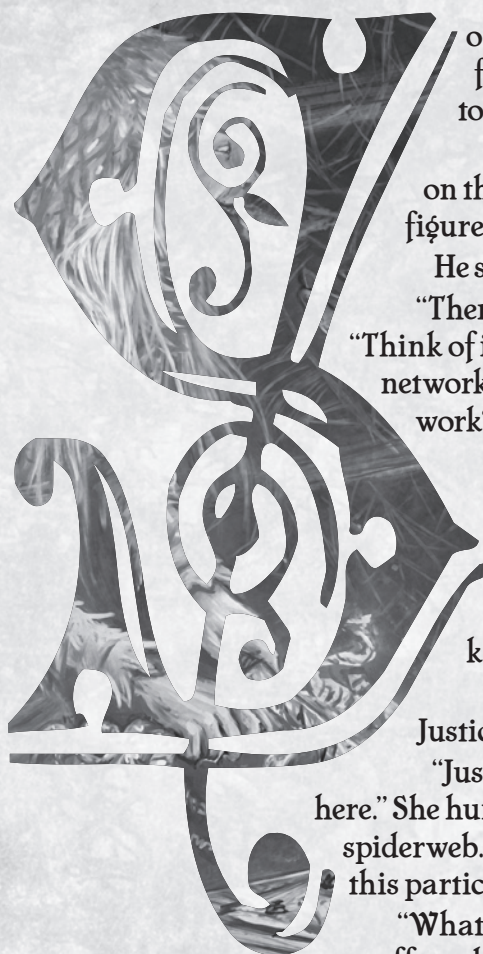
So Begins the Tale

Use the Vow of All-Consuming Fire once per chronicle. It's a major event that restructures the entire game to focus on an epic, a tragic story with a strong central character. That character becomes the chronicle's axis, not only because events revolve around him but because his eventual fall will force companions to pick up the pieces. The pledge also gives your stories a firm, semi-predetermined structure, right down to the central character's Fate. Some groups prefer more traditional roleplaying stories that are less predictable, with the focus spread among every protagonist. Make sure that everyone would enjoy the new direction and remember that fair play for the group is really character "screen time" — not how many successes one of them can score, or whether he's going to be king.

Another option is to give the Vow to an antagonist. The enemy might be doomed to destruction, but the mayhem he'll cause on the road to power provides more than enough motivation for determined motleys. Recipients of the Vow are formidable, but not invincible. If the characters can prevent three milestones, the foe dies, and the Wyrd might just set things to right.







o I have a question: is all that 'eye of newt and toe of frog' stuff actually necessary, or is it something you do to try and convince me that magic's going on?"

The Snowskin didn't look at him. She stayed intent on the knife and the root. "Use your head, maybe you can figure it out."

He snorted. "Pretend I'm an idiot."

"There are connections," she said, ignoring the opening. "Think of it as a complicated series of catches, or a sophisticated network of pledge-tokens. Do you know how either of those work?"

"I thought a catch was a loophole in a Contract."

"It is," she said, wringing seven drops of reddish sap onto the photograph. "But not an accidental one. It's in the fine print, left there on purpose. And a pledge-token is also a required clause in a different kind of agreement."

"Who's this Contract with, then? Did somebody get Justice to sign on the dotted line?"

"Justice? Please. If you wanted *justice*, you wouldn't be here." She hung the photograph carefully on the long strands of spiderweb. "But no, this isn't Revenge, either. The consignatory on this particular little twist of Wyrd is your brother."

"What? You're shitting me." He didn't sound so deliberately unaffected anymore. "You got him to sign off on his own curse?"

"I didn't, no. He signed up for this one by being born. By having a name. By being the eldest of three, even. Everyone signs up for this sort of thing." She opened the scissors, ran the blades along a worn gray rock. "We've all got our names on the paper."

"Holy..." He had to think about it for a bit. "That ain't right."

"Of course it's not right. But that's how it *is*. Now stop talking. You really don't want me to make any mistakes at this point. You and your brother are a little too alike, after all."

CHAPTER 2

Tangled Fates

*Be extremely subtle, even to the point of formlessness.
Be extremely mysterious, even to the point of soundlessness.
Thereby you can be the director of the opponent's fate.*

— SUN-TZU, *The Art of War*

FAERIE FATE

The world in which a new changeling finds itself thrown into is complex and filled with dangers. Despite this, most of the Lost comfort themselves with the knowledge that at least they are free. With no Keepers to control their actions, they can make their own choices and decide their own destinies. Unfortunately, this perception is not entirely true, as many changeling elders are quick to remind them. The Courts follow rules, if none so complex as those forced on them in the past. They must learn the unwritten laws of the Wyrd, and the pathways of magic. And they must contend with Fate, which pushes and prods at changelings to live their lives in accordance with its strange patterns.

Reactions to this understanding vary. Many changelings reject the notion that Fate controls them, proudly stating that they are the masters of their futures. Others become disciples of destiny, doing their best to align their lives with a power that, although it often appears arbitrary, is still simpler and fairer than what the Keepers would demand. Still more choose to study Fate, to understand when it applies and when they are free, and to try and grasp just what this strange force is that so many live with and so few understand.

The nature of Fate confounds many fae scholars, even those who have spent decades studying its effects. It can almost be reached and touched, and it seems to hang particularly on the actions of those who've been touched by the Wyrd. But it's an intangible, and hard to define in crystalline form. Changelings have offered many a theory, however.

Fate Is a Force

According to many changeling scholars, there is no overriding planning on Fate's part. These savants claim that

the simple presence of the Wyrd draws changelings together, and the many Contracts that the Fae have sworn over the years cause many of those forces to come into alignment with each other. The result is that certain actions automatically prompt reactions, in a superficially scientific sense. If you can tease out the relationships between various beings and forces, you could potentially map out Fate itself. Scholars who hold to this theory compare Fate to a form of gravity; it simply draws together beings with power.

Cynics claim this theory is popular only because it makes changelings feel as though they are in control of their actions. If Fate has no designs, no grander purpose, it can be manipulated, even controlled. Changelings imagine learning to turn Fate against the Gentry, using its pathways to guarantee their victory and to protect their homes. Cooler heads point out that even if Fate is no more than an automatic reaction within the world, understanding such reactions might not prove possible with the resources that changelings have to draw on.

If this theory were true, it would make life easier for changelings. As a force, Fate could be altered except by changing the variables that cause certain events to happen — characters couldn't bargain with it, or attempt to trick it into serving them. However, it also would not shift its plans to account for attempts to evade it. On the other hand, even simple forces have a tendency to develop goals and opinions when the Wyrd comes into play. Scientifically speaking, fire is nothing but a process, yet it is capable of forging Contracts with changelings. Changelings who discount Fate as nothing but a mindless energy would do well to remember that nothing in their world is so simple.

Fate Is the Manifestation of the Wyrd

Many savants look at the properties of the Wyrd, and argue that Fate is merely one more of its facets. According to their claims, Fate mirrors the Gentry's attempts to gain complete control of their destinies within Arcadia — Fate, they suggest, is an oath sworn to the Wyrd itself, trading the certainty of future events for control over the present. It affects more powerful changelings because they are more attuned to the Wyrd than mere mortals, and thus a larger part of the great oath that the Gentry swore. These scholars believe the Gentry cannot defy Fate's will at all, without unmaking themselves.

If this theory is true, it would explain the power that Fate seems to hold over changeling lives, and why more powerful changelings seem to have to deal with its influences more often and more dramatically. All changelings have to deal with the Wyrd, and its power echoes through everything that changelings do. If Fate draws on that power, or is a part of it, every Contract activation, every pledge, and every use of Glamour could be subtly designed to ensure that events proceed as they are meant to. This is a deeply disturbing thought to many changelings, who don't like the idea that their greatest powers serve to bind them to a path that they might not want.

At the same time, such an oath would mean that the Gentry are slaves to Fate even above changelings, and that properly manipulating or directing Fate could allow a changeling to trap a Gentry in her own promises, preventing her from taking any actions to stop a course of action guaranteed to lead to death. If this were true, it would make Fate the greatest weapon that the Lost could use against their former masters, something that many changelings do like the thought of. No one has been able to test this theory, as far as anyone knows, so it remains only an idle hope.

Fate Is Alive

Other changeling scholars advocate a slightly more radical approach. Based on their own observations and studies, they believe that Fate is an active, sentient force that is more than capable of trying to send minions, omens, and whatever it feels is necessary in order for events to go according to plan. There are as many theories about its origins and goals as there are scholars who hold to this belief, ranging from sheer malevolence, to Fate being the progenitor of the Gentry and behaving as they do, to the world's survival depending on certain events happening at the proper times and in the proper ways.

Those who subscribe to this belief tend to treat Fate as a divinity: a barely-understandable but appeasable force that can be bargained with, pacified, or outright cheated. Fate, these changelings believe, is an ally that must be courted, not a force that exists to be controlled. By going along with Fate's plan in most situations, it will become easier to win a concession at a later date. Others, however, treat Fate as an enemy; a malign being that must be opposed at every front. These changelings will go out of their way to try and

avoid situations that empower Fate, and will do everything in their power to control their own destinies.

Ultimately, however, none of these three theories entirely contradict one another, and evidence exists to suggest that all or none of them are true. Most changelings are less interested in the origins of Fate, and more concerned with the implications of its existence. They leave philosophy to the philosophers, and worry about what it means when destiny enters your life. Regardless of Fate's origins, those who study it are able to agree on a few things:

Fate Hates Unfinished Business

If a changeling's father walks out on her as a child, that character may be liable to meet him again one day — and in the context of whatever events she is currently trying to deal with. If one of the Lost swears revenge against a compatriot for his actions in Arcadia, the two of them will end up in the same freehold. If the changeling bumps into someone on the street, there's always a chance that the person she meets will be connected to something that she's working on. Whenever a dramatic event begins, and fails to reach an appropriate ending, Fate will take the steps needed for a conclusion to take place.

This is not an absolute rule, of course. Not every figure from a changeling's past is liable to run into her over the course of her time after the durance, and not everyone she meets is someone she will see again. But things *happen*, more often than they technically should. Normal humans can cut and run if things get too dangerous. When changelings try that, they often find that dangers have a knack for following them home.

Fate Likes Patterns

This is one of the more obvious of Fate's rules, and one that even the average changeling tends to recognize, even if they don't understand its source. Three siblings are born: the eldest is proud or even stupid, the second child is quiet and lazy, and the third seems foolish, but is brave and compassionate at heart. Twins find that they are as different as the sun and the moon, sons echo their fathers' actions. When walking in the woods, a girl encounters a monster, who tricks her into leading him to her family. A changeling looking for the themes that Fate favors can be found in old stories and whispered tales, sanitized and reprinted in modern culture, or in the faces and lives of her companions.

It can be dangerous to assume a pattern will present itself. But the Lost do become aware that certain histories tend to repeat themselves. When a pattern begins to surface, many a changeling begins to suspect the hand of Fate. Those who give random help to strangers usually find it returned, while those who spurn them (or are honestly unable to help) will find luck turning against them. Making foolish promises or oaths has a way of turning on the promise-maker, and weaknesses that should remain hidden have a knack for finding their way into the hands of those most able to take advantage of them.



Fate Can Be Manipulated, But Hates Opposition

While it is possible to defy Fate directly, doing so rarely ends well. Tales abound of those who sought to oppose prophecies or denied their power, only to be undone by their own hubris. The Lost have other stories they tell amongst themselves, of a changeling who successfully defied prophecy, only to discover that their actions led to a worse Fate than that which they had tried to avoid.

The organized procession of the Seasonal Courts (and indeed, most Court systems around the world) provides what many changelings would point to as proof of this maxim. Those monarchs who refuse to relinquish power bring trouble on their heads. Some say it's because they defy the purpose of the Courts, and therefore draw attention from the Gentry. But others say that once properly established, the Courts have the power of Wyrd and therefore the touch of Fate. To hoard power isn't just bad government: it draws the attention of Fate, and poorly. One instance often cited to support this argument is the fall of the Spring King Daniel Hawthorne, who despised the King of Autumn and let his hate get the better of him. Daniel, refusing to allow his rival to have so much as a chance of controlling the freehold, shattered the Autumn Court to dust, resulting in every member of the Court fleeing or dead after a year of conflict. Unfortunately, the conflict weakened the freehold so greatly that it fell to a Loyalist attack. The King died in the conflict, and most of his Court was slaughtered or captured. Many changelings nod quietly and claim that if Daniel had simply stepped down as intended, his freehold would still stand.

As usual, there is disagreement about why exactly defying Fate has the potential for such horrific results. Some believe that Fated paths are the best of all possible outcomes, and the fact that so many of them seem to end badly is because the world is just that much of a mess. Others believe that Fate acts directly, either with or without volition, to try and compensate for changes in destiny, and that those compensations can end up greatly increasing damage. Some think there is no greater chance for problems, but when those problems occur, people are quick to point to them, creating a false perception of a vengeful Fate. A few claim that Fate is simply active and cruel. Whatever the reason, the results are hard to argue with. It is far from certain that standing against Fate will result in disaster; many Contracts rely on seeing hints of the future and altering their pathways, without suffering from any ill-effects.

On the other hand, manipulating prophecies so that they can be explained to have passed without actually fulfilling their presumed intentions is a much safer and simpler approach to controlling Fate. As long as the wording and symbolism of a prophecy is fulfilled, Fate does not react angrily, and characters can escape the usual consequences of avoiding destiny's plans. As is common, finesse and cunning serve the Lost where brute force fails.

Fate Is Not Inevitable

Some like to argue that everything that happens was meant to happen. But it just doesn't seem to be the case in every situation. Sometimes a pattern is oddly broken. A character averts a prophecy and does not reap a terrible doom. Many changelings theorize that even if Fate exists as a real force in the universe, it's not omnipotent. It *can't* be — there are too many exceptions to every theory. Even one example of someone successfully breaking a pattern or dying without achieving closure on a major part of his life shows that Fate isn't reliably guiding everything. People, particularly the fae, can defy it. They might not always succeed, but they can try.

Fate, Not Predestination

In the context of a roleplaying game, Fate can be a sticky concept. From an in-character perspective, a chronicle can gain quite a bit from embracing the idea of a doom that cannot be averted, or a character's heroic struggles to defy his Fate. However, from a metagaming standpoint, predestination is a gruesome buzzkill. Few things are more disheartening for a player than to feel that his decisions are pointless. In general, a character's story is best written by the player and the events of the game, not by a pre-scripted narrative.

However, Fate and predestination don't have to be the same thing (and in the context of *Changeling*, they're not assumed to be). Even when a player decides she likes the idea of an inevitable end to her character, such as "you will die attempting to save that which you value most," there's still lots of room for surprises along the way. Will she be successful in her final effort? Is what the character values most what she *thinks* she values most? Most uses of the concept of Fate or destiny in a roleplaying game are best left open-ended in such a fashion.

Within the context of the game, Fate is essentially a narrative convention, much like a changeling's descent into "beautiful madness." It's a theme you can make use of, but simply using Fate as a plot element should not mean predetermining the end of a character or chronicle. It's rather an opportunity to bring in the dramatic, even narrative aspects of fairy tales and other stories as a metagaming element that can add to your game. This section is about optional rules that can be used to mechanically invoke the hand of Fate if you so desire, and we stress that they're *optional*. These aren't rules for "how Fate works," they're rules for how you can model Fate within the context of a game — and only if you so desire.

USING FATE

When it comes time to use Fate in a chronicle, there are three primary ways to do so. The first is to ignore mechanics entirely, using Fate only as a backdrop. The second is for Fate to support the themes of the story, and the final method is for Fate to direct the themes of the story.

If Fate is being used in a non-mechanical manner, most of the information in this section is largely a matter of using metagame conceits to place flavor in a story. Links and motifs can be suggested, but will not provide any actual benefits or penalties, and personas and prophetic paths are unlikely to exist at all (save perhaps as archetypal inspiration for characters). In such a situation, the Storyteller should generally avoid giving much implied force to Fate, since there is a very good chance that players will undermine whatever Fate has planned for them. This approach is ideal for games that choose to dabble in destiny and prophecy as a conceit, but that emphasize the themes of free will and change.

Mechanics may come into play for stories and chronicles that emphasize the patterns of fairy tales more strongly, or that dabble in a certain level of inevitability. If it seems important that a Keeper return to provide a final encounter and narrative closure, perhaps Fate should be a stronger force. In a chronicle in which Fate is playing a supporting rather than central role, its use should be sparing and only just noticeable — generally the default use of Fate mechanics in a chronicle. If a Storyteller is using Fate sparingly, she should generally avoid having more than one element of Fate appear in a given story, and these elements should be side effects of the plot, rather than central elements.

Links are probably not important, and will only come into play very rarely. Motifs are generally the most common Fate mechanics to appear in such chronicles, as they can easily support other themes or provide hints about a plot. Even so, they may work best if reserved for pivotal moments and revelations. Personas are a dicier proposition, as they can direct sections of play when they appear, and prophetic paths likely bring too much predestination into the mix. Characters may encounter one of the Moirae at one point or another, but it will generally be as a sideline — a Nemesis seeking the death of someone that the characters want to keep alive, or a lone Fallen Star causing local trouble as everyone tries to acquire it for their own wishes. In these chronicles, Fate is a mysterious presence, one that adds a depth of mystery to otherwise understandable events. Entitlements that deal with it should be rare, and the Storyteller may wish to keep Fate-related Contracts or other powers to a conservative level.

In a chronicle in which Fate is central, however, pull out all the stops. Motifs appear in nearly every story, and characters with minor roles from early in the story develop links to the players and reappear dramatically. Personas may develop on most of the players, and many Storyteller characters and prophetic paths may form the backdrop of several stories. In such a chronicle, the nature of Fate and its dangers are a cen-

tral element, and characters should be struggling with issues of free will and choice; if their actions are predetermined, does it matter if they struggle? A number of Moirae are likely to appear in order to support or oppose the plans of the players. In essence, the characters become incarnations of the story, playing out roles enacted a thousand times before in new castings of tales old as language.

In any chronicle that makes heavy use of Fate, however, the Storyteller has to be especially cautious. It is one thing for characters to be fighting over whether their choices ultimately matter. It is another thing altogether for the players to get that feeling. Fate is a tremendously dangerous tool in this way, and its mechanics have been left relatively weak for exactly that reason — it is very tempting to use it to sledgehammer the players into line with your chosen story, but players want to have choices, and they want their choices to matter. Even in the most Fate-heavy chronicles, there always has to be a way to avoid or subvert Fate, so that the players can see their goals succeed.

THE METHODS OF FATE

The savants of the Lost have identified four major stratagems that Fate takes in order to ensure the proper functioning of events. By creating connections between people, reinforcing the ideas of fated stories, controlling circumstance and through the power of prophecy, Fate's hand can brush lightly across the lives of those it affects, or slam down like a hammer on an unsuspecting freehold.

All of the following effects are able to apply environmental penalties (or, in some cases, bonuses) to characters' rolls, representing Fate's opposition to their interference. These penalties never stack, nor do they stack with any magical effects that apply penalties or bonuses. Apply only the largest penalty and the largest bonus to a given roll.

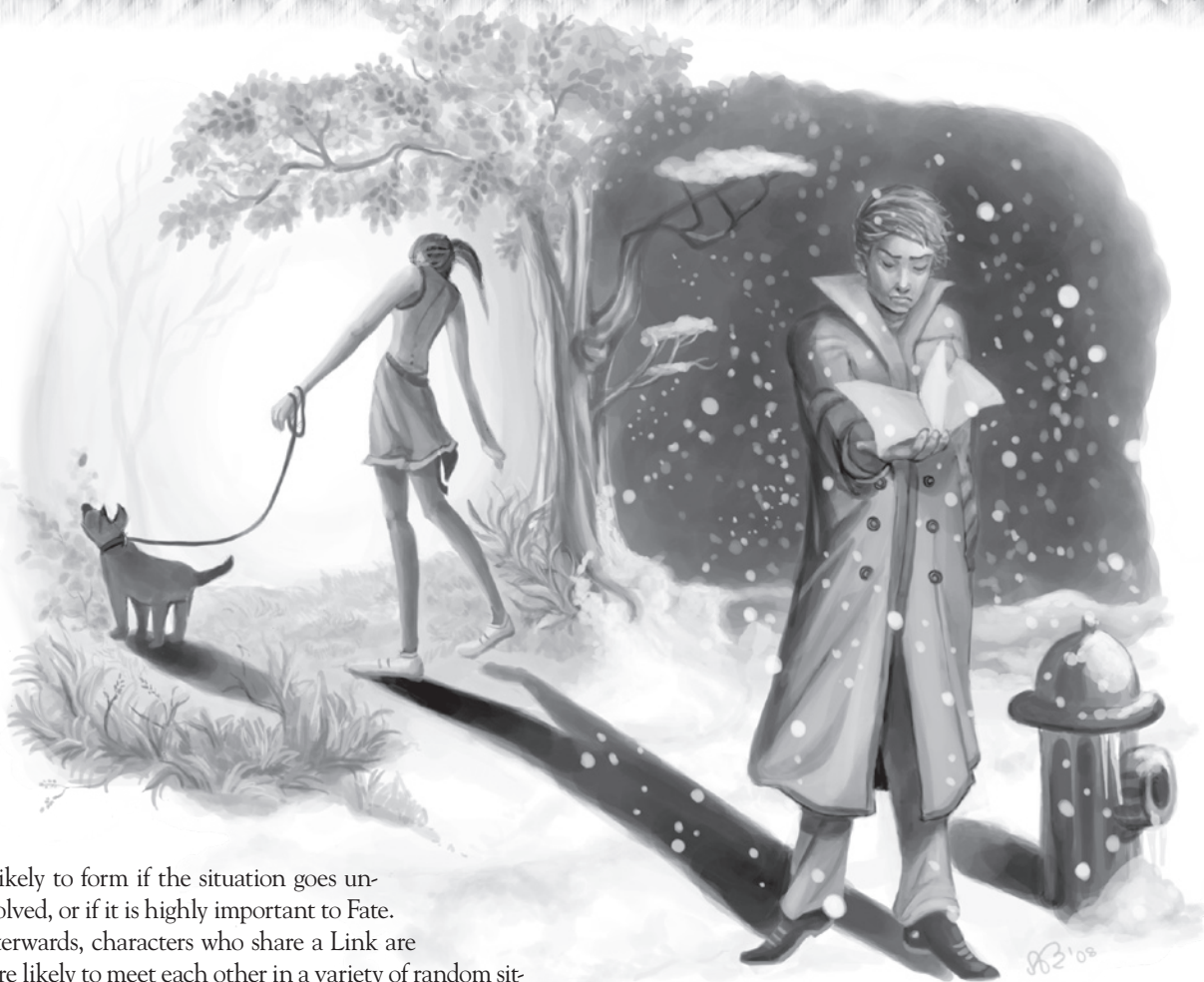
THE LINK

The least complex and most straightforward of Fate's tools, the Link simply exists to connect two or more people together, ensuring that if they undergo one crisis together, the chances of them all arriving if one is subjected to a second crisis increases. Unlike the more complicated or in-depth methods outlined below, there is nothing more to a Link than that. Relationships are unimportant, desires do not matter, and planning is not required — the same group of people just tends to run into each other.

Many changelings theorize that Fate links form between mortals frequently, such that the same groups of people can seem to always be bumping into one another. Others suggest that the Link does not actually exist, and that it is merely the Lost reading too much into simple coincidence. Either way, the Link is a subtle art, if it exists at all.

Mechanically, there is very little to the Link. A Fate link can form whenever a group of people undergo a stressful or emotionally important situation together. Links are particular-





ly likely to form if the situation goes unresolved, or if it is highly important to Fate. Afterwards, characters who share a Link are more likely to meet each other in a variety of random situations. Any attempt to directly bring someone with whom a character shares a Link into a new story gains a +1 die environmental bonus. If the attempt is being made to conclude older business, the roll gains a +2 dice bonus instead. This bonus applies only to bring people into contact with one another — it gives no bonus in deciding their motives, preserving their lives, or keeping them present once they have arrived. Links can create yo-yo effects as a changeling constantly leaves his companions only to find himself running into them somewhere else, but they won't do anything to stop him leaving again.

THE MOTIF

The Motif is a trend in which a particular image or symbol repeats itself, usually through a string of coincidences or otherwise unconnected actions. Generally speaking, a motif is a symbol that can be summed up with a single key phrase, such as “good news comes in threes,” (or, for that matter, “death comes in threes”) “lone candle in the night,” or “nightmares made real.” Events and objects reminiscent of that symbol will then appear across the paths of those dealing with them. The development of a motif is unlikely to create large-scale events to occur, but should have a thematic resonance to the current story in which characters are involved.

Motifs are the weakest of the tools that Fate uses. As such, motifs almost never appear in the same story in which

another aspect of Fate is taking ascendance, and will give way to stronger aspects when they appear. Instead, a single motif will appear during a story that has particular thematic cohesion, underscoring the nature of the story and possibly giving cunning characters a hint about the nature of the dangers or opposition that they may face, or about the advantages that they have on their side.

Example: The Fallen Stars motley is investigating the disappearance of several homeless people from the areas where they live. The Storyteller decides that the motif of the story is “Cracks in the Tower”, and designs a series of examples of ordinary things breaking down. Crossing the street to meet an informant, the motley stops under a flickering streetlight, casting them periodically into shadow as its power fails. Later, they are investigating an old courtyard, and find a scrap of cloth caught on a shattered brick in the wall, through which a holly branch is growing. Gradually, it becomes clear that the kidnappings are a result of Loyalists taking advantage of a breakdown in freehold unity to take root in the cracks of changeling society.

Upon recognizing a motif in operation, changelings can start tying themselves into it in a variety of small ways, drawing on Fate's power to further their own plans. If players recognize a motif in operation, they can make an Intelligence + Occult roll in order to recognize exactly what it

is (if they fail the roll, they can still guess at it, but will not have exact wordings). Once they do, they can attempt to benefit from it by strengthening its presence. In the above example, Billy Fade could realize the presence of a motif, and take the motley to a run-down area of town where the police don't like to go in order to hide, instead of to his safer but likely more public apartment. Facing against the Loyalists, Sandra Dee might use an old, out-of-use phone booth as cover, hiding behind the booth as bullets ping off the broken glass. The key to using a motif is for the players to describe actions that are thematically similar to those being used by the Storyteller, in order to enforce a certain mood.

If the Storyteller deems a character's use of the motif to be thematically appropriate, the player may choose to roll her unmodified Wyrd rating. For every success, she may recover a point of Glamour. Only one character may benefit from this in a given scene, and each character may only benefit from this once per story.

The flip side of this is that a motif, once reinforced, tends to become increasingly difficult to shake. Once a character draws power from a Fate motif, actions that directly contrast with the motif's nature suffer a -1 die environmental penalty. (In the above example, a character seeking to alert the Courts to the Loyalists' activities so that they could close off those areas of the freehold would run into political disputes over which Court held sway and the Loyalists packing up and moving, damaging their efforts.) This penalty increases to -2 dice once three characters draw on it, and -3 dice if seven or more characters draw on it. Unlike prophetic paths (see below), there is no die bonus for reinforcing a motif.

At the end of the story that the motif is reinforcing, it fades away naturally regardless of reinforcement. Occasionally, a motif will echo faintly into future stories, but such echoes are generally faint and have no mechanical effect. On the other hand, a motif may well be recreated in future stories — if such is the case, the motif is restarted from the beginning, and characters drawing from an identical motif in the past will have no effect on the present one. All effects of a given motif are reset at the story's end.

Only characters who are involved in the entirety of a story can draw on its motifs. In the case of player stories, this will be the characters and a few particularly important Storyteller characters. However, the Storyteller might decide that other characters in the setting are encountering their own motifs, in their own stories, and can even have such motifs be a way of hinting to players the trials and dangers that others are going through. If they have two encounters with the Summer King, and both involve images of wilting flowers or faded posters, the characters might begin to suspect that his idealism is waning. The Storyteller can allow for Wits + Empathy rolls in such situations, as appropriate. At the same time, cunning Storyteller characters might use motifs as a way of recognizing at least the themes that the players are encountering.

Generally speaking, the Storyteller should not have more Storyteller characters draw on a motif than the number of player characters who have already done so, and should give players a chance to draw on a motif in a scene before allowing a Storyteller character to take that opportunity away. Furthermore, the Storyteller should make sure that players are made aware that motifs are being used in a story before they are applied, and that they understand exactly what the in-game effects of motifs are. Trying to figure out why so many images of a candle flame are appearing might be interesting for characters, but they aren't likely to realize that there's more going on if they aren't told that it's a possibility.

THE PERSONA

Where motifs affect a story itself, a Fate persona typically affects individuals whose actions have tied them closely to Fate. Personas tend to develop after an unlikely coincidence or significant brush with destiny. They tie a person to the role he played in the event that formed the persona, making it difficult to escape from it, but giving her an understanding of her role in the world that some find comforting.

A persona is typically a role that can be summed up in a single word, but which requires a character to behave in certain ways when exposed to certain events. It also causes circumstance to bring a character into contact with such events, making it increasingly likely that she will be given chances to engage in her assigned role. For example, a character with the persona of "Detective" will find that she is exposed to crimes with greater frequency, and that it is difficult to avoid at least attempting to solve them. Unlike some other patterns of Fate, however, a persona is not concerned with the outcome of a role, nor is it interested in a character's capabilities. A character that has developed the "Mentor" persona might discover that those in need of guidance flock to her, regardless of her actual ability to help them. In many ways, personas can be as much of a hazard as a help.

Personas have been known to develop on mortals who have had a brush with the Wyrd or with fae creatures, but more often appear on changelings and hobgoblins. Some changelings speculate that they always exist on the True Fae (or on their Titles, muse the few scholars who have such knowledge), and that violating these personas counts as the breaking of a powerful oath, capable of destroying the Kindly One utterly. Others say that personas are the Wyrd's way of trying to reduce the complexity of mortals to a single, easily understood image, and that the Gentry seem to embody such images already, and as such don't need personas.

Mechanically, the benefits of a persona are minor. First, when a character encounters the events that typically trigger a persona, and takes action to indulge in them, she may recover a Willpower point. This may happen only once per

story. In addition, such events will usually happen at least once per story, if only in minor ways — a Detective might find that her mail has been stolen, or a friend's car has been broken into, and be asked to help. A Prince might encounter a needy woman with an abusive husband who latches onto him, even if he is out with his wife at the time.

On the other hand, personas do not like to be denied. A character who attempts to ignore the prodding of a persona suffers a -1 die environmental penalty for the duration of the scene, as something keeps pushing her in small ways towards engaging in the required tasks. Actually trying to oppose a persona's call — a Detective trying to cover up a crime, for example, perhaps one committed by members of his motley — suffers a -2 dice penalty. If a persona is actively denied for enough time, it tends to fade away, leaving nothing behind, unless some outside force (such as a pledge) is enforcing it. Normally, it will require either three, five, seven, nine or thirteen rejections to dissolve a persona, with the number required not based on anything that changeling scholars have been able to discover. They have noted that personas that are primarily beneficial seem quicker to remove than those that are unwelcome — deciding a few times that a gift is unwelcome causes it to vanish, while struggling to remove a curse takes time and effort.

Characters may enforce personas as a (-0) task and benefit instead of a pledge. They may do this only on those who do not already have a persona. Such personas may be applied to mortals, and will last as long as the pledge remains enforced. Outside of pledgecraft, a persona will develop entirely naturally; some changelings have them, but most do not. Generally, a persona developing on a changeling requires them to have been placed into a very similar situation and reacting in a similar way repeatedly; mortals can be affected based on their behavior during a single event. A Storyteller should discuss enforcing a persona on a player character before doing so; they are a method to enforce or undermine the behavior of a character, something which many players are understandably protective of.

New Social Flaw: Monstrous Persona

Your character has had the misfortune to endure experiences that tied her Fate to events that most people would prefer to avoid. It might be as simple as being constantly placed in a position to abuse the trust of young companions, or as complex as a dubiously high number of murders occurring just as she stops to stay somewhere. For whatever reason, the character suffers from a persona that has the potential to cause active harm to the character, or severe mental distress; whenever she tries to fulfill it, she runs the risk of getting into serious trouble. Trying to resist it, of course, applies the usual penalties, and a Monstrous Persona will not fade no matter how often it is rejected; something about the character simply causes it to reform. Taking this Flaw, obviously, requires a character to have a persona.

THE PROPHETIC PATH

Fate's plans work in complex ways, but the most straightforward of them is when a simple prophecy is delivered, and then comes to pass. Through this method, Fate directs actions in its favor, shifting events and actions until the prophecy comes to pass. In facing the prophetic path, changelings must contend with events foretold to occur, events that they would just as likely prefer to avoid. Such paths don't happen every day — instead, they are almost always the climax of chains of events, and their fulfillment or cancellation is likely to change the course of entire freeholds.

A prophetic path takes place over three stages. First, a prophecy is delivered. This may occur in a single step, through the agency of a prophet or magical effect, but just as often it happens as signs begin to multiply suggesting that an event is going to happen. Characters might see a group of flies twitch out of their webbing and send the waiting spider falling to the ground. They might pass a schoolyard as a group of children turn on a bully and strike him. The events themselves might be subtle, or obvious. The Storyteller may allow players to make Intelligence + Occult rolls in order to discern that an event of great significance is coming.

In the second stage, events start to move towards the key moment of the prophecy. This is the time when enterprising characters can start to undermine prophecies, or even try to undo them completely, but it also gradually becomes more difficult to do so. In the scenes leading up to the climactic event, the Storyteller should apply a -1 die environmental penalty to any actions that would cause the prophetic path to fail. At the same time, actions whose success would directly lead to the success of the prophecy gain a +1 die bonus.

During this time, changelings can potentially succeed in avoiding the path completely, but with difficulty. Usually, it is easier to undermine the effects of the prophecy by altering its goals and purposes. Doing so is more a matter of cunning than systems, but the general intent of those trying to undermine prophecies is to arrange for an alternate possibility. If done properly, actions designed to encourage an alternate "interpretation" should gain the bonus for encouraging the path to occur, granting an extra incentive to changelings who want to change Fate's path.

The final stage is the event itself. Once the moment comes for the prophecy to be fulfilled, if it hasn't been undone, it is extremely difficult to stop it from coming true. In the scene in which the path is meant to end, any attempt to undo it suffers a -2 dice external penalty, and attempts to fulfill it increase their bonus to +2 dice. When the moment comes, and the prophecy is fulfilled, all of those who survive its fulfillment gain a free point of Glamour for being in the presence of prophecy. As with the second stage, a cunning changeling can subvert the purpose of the prophecy even at the end, gaining the die bonus if she can change the course of prophecy in time.

If a prophetic path is undone at any time during its development, the results for those who dared to overthrow Fate is

disastrous. At the moment that the Fate is undone, everyone responsible for destroying it recovers all of their Willpower, their minds bolstered by the knowledge that they have defied Fate. This joy doesn't last, though. When a path is broken, the Storyteller should secretly roll the Wyrd ratings of every changeling whose actions broke it. For every success, the unfortunate changeling will suffer from one disaster visited upon her by Fate. These disasters could mimic the effects of a dramatic failure rolled, or could simply be terrible chance occurrences, such as a car striking a loved one or a political rival learning a terrible secret of the character's. These disasters could potentially be avoided, but will almost never be, and will usually be thematically related to the Fate that was broken. Characters that survive these disasters are freed from the effects of breaking Fate, and aren't punished anymore. If characters manage to subvert Fate in their desired way, rather than shattering it, they don't suffer from the effects of broken Fate. Instead, they gain the Willpower for subverting Fate to their benefit, with none of the penalties.

If the Storyteller chooses to include the prophetic path in her stories, she should take care to ensure that players are made aware that there are serious penalties for standing against Fate, either by having the characters told of the Fates of those who tried to fight Fate in the past and suffered for it, or by being simply told before the game begins. Players who manage to find a way to stop a path from unweaving would have reason to be annoyed if they all suffered from strings of terrible luck immediately afterwards, if they had no reason to know that it was going to happen. Furthermore, having characters made aware of the potential pitfalls of standing directly against Fate makes them more likely to look for ways to subvert prophecy instead, leading to players looking for more clever ways of solving the problem of a hostile prophetic path. Of all the various mechanical forms that Fate can take in a chronicle, the prophetic path requires the most care: it is the players' right not to have their characters' stories predestined. This method should be used to explore their stories, not to define them.

THE MOIRAE

Many things, abstract and dreamlike, are given flesh by the power of the Wyrd. Where time bends and fancy comes to life, so too can the concept of destiny and doom spin new bodies. Some creatures of the Hedge serve Fate, or at least they believe they do. They feel destiny's approach, and have tied their natures to it. Each of them has its own way of affecting a person's doom, shifting potential to accomplish their goals. They are known as the Moirae, and they can be truly dangerous beings to cross.

No one knows exactly where the Moirae came from, originally. Some believe Fate itself spun them into existence, using the Wyrd as a mechanism. Others think they were once spirits of Earth, who wandered across a gateway into the Hedge and were changed. Where once they maintained and fed on spiritual manifestations of Earthly things, now they are spirits of the Wyrd, dangerous and unpredictable.

Regardless of their origins, all changelings who have encountered the Moirae agree that they are now closer to hobgoblins than to whatever they might once have been, and treat them with similar reservations. Some of them can be helpful, but even those must be carefully dealt with, and react poorly to those who give them offense.

CRIMSON WEAVERS

Quote: *"But you are meant for one another!"*

Background: An old Chinese legend says the gods look over those who are meant to be together, and tie a red string around their ankles. This string forever connects those two would-be lovers together, ensuring their eventual marriage. No force can break or tangle it, and it will last forever.

The Crimson Weavers may not have caused this legend to come into existence, but they certainly take advantage of it. Originating in the tangled Thorns bordering China, they have spread across much of the world, seeking out those that they feel are meant for each other and using their magic to tie their targets together. Once they have completed their weavings, they stay only long enough to ensure that their two targets are coming together, then go to study another loveless soul in order to find him a soul mate.

The danger of the Weavers, however, is that they are creatures of the Wyrd and of Fate, not of desire. Their opinions of what makes a perfect relationship are based on their own opinions of what would complete a person, and may not have any connection to actual attraction. Furthermore, the powers that they use only tie the fates of two people together; their opinions and desires do not change. The result is that many of the victims of the Crimson Weavers end up leading unfulfilling lives with their "destined soul mates," and a few even go insane or kill their destined partner in order to escape the bindings placed on them. The Weavers themselves are blissfully unaware of such problems. Even if such tragedies are brought to their attention, they will be extremely sorrowful that things didn't work out, but consider it to be a failing of the people involved, rather than of their choices. After all, those people were given what everyone wants — a guaranteed soul mate. If they couldn't accept that, it's hardly the Weavers' faults.

When they are not spreading their own ideas of love and joy, the Weavers find cities in the Hedge to inhabit, or occasionally stay across in the mundane world, cheerfully going about whatever simple jobs they might have acquired as they keep an eye out for others in need of destiny's help. They are fully capable of holding down basic jobs and interacting with mortals, and enjoy the experience. Of course, most of those they meet find them extremely odd, but they tend to be unaware of that as well.

Description: Generally, Crimson Weavers appear to be older Asian men and women, their skin wrinkled with strands of red string that wrap around their bodies and slide beneath their clothes (and in fact, beneath their skin). In par-



ticular, threads hang from their fingers, and can be cast out as needed in order to enact their powers. They prefer traditional clothing, although they have been known to be attracted to the simplest fashions of whatever area they are currently operating in, and their eyes shine brightly. In the mortal world, they are typically Masked as ordinary human beings, and usually have an unremarkable appearance, although their frequent references to destiny, archaic turns of phrase, and intense interest in people can serve to mark them.

Storytelling Hints: Remember, you're here to help people. They don't always know that they need help, but without you they would be lonely and purposeless forever. Love and destiny are the highest callings that one can hope for, and you live to see couples walking hand in hand. You would never deliberately break up a lovebound pairing, although you might give them a bit of help — with Fate's assistance, of course.

If threatened with violence, it's time to make a quick getaway. Some people just aren't as grateful as they should be, after all. Don't stick around to see things get better — they'll come around, but it might be too late for you.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Crafts 2, Occult 2, Politics 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Larceny 2, Stealth 4

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression 2, Persuasion 2, Socialize 1, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Fleet of Foot 3

Willpower: 8

Virtue: Charity

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Size: 5

Speed: 13 (species factor 5)

Health: 8

Wyrd: 3

Contracts: None

Glamour/per Turn: 12/3

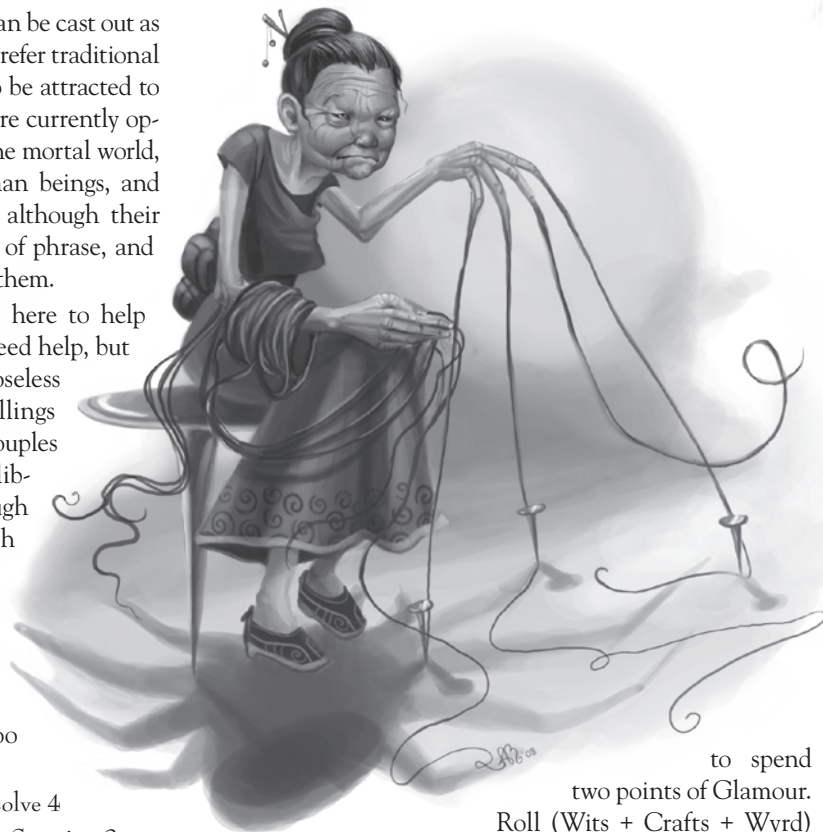
Armor: 0

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool
Punch	0(B)	—	2

Fae Aspects

- **Red String Of Destiny:** With a single gesture, a Crim-son Weaver can tie two people together. Doing so requires the Weaver to be within ten feet of its chosen target, and



to spend two points of Glamour. Roll (Wits + Crafts + Wyrd) against the target's (Composure + Wyrd). Only one roll may be attempted per day. If the roll is successful, one end of the thread has been attached; the Weaver must then find the second target and attach the second end, with the same roll. If both ends attach correctly, the two targets are tied together, their destinies intertwined.

Soul mates bound in this way gain certain advantages and penalties. First, they tend to find each other. Within three days of the binding, a pair always meets for the first time, and upon meeting will immediately recognize each other as somehow highly familiar. Once the first meeting has taken place, spending time apart from each other becomes increasingly distracting, as the two find themselves constantly thinking of each other. After three days apart, both soul mates will suffer from a -1 die distraction penalty on all of their actions. The penalty increases to -2 dice after three weeks, and -3 dice after three months. After six months, the penalty drops back to -2 dice, reaches -1 die after nine months, and after a year and a day apart, the red thread breaks and the characters are no longer bound. Unfortunately, this penalty is enough to drive many slightly insane, and if it ever equals or exceeds the Resolve of the person suffering, he must spend one Willpower per day to not drop everything they are doing and seek out their soul mate. This still applies no actual desire for the soul mate, and obsessed victims have been known to kill their fated partners to get relief from the constant need for them. (It's worth noting that this does not actually remove the thread, although it makes it far more likely that the obsessed will pass a year without see her soul mate."

Changelings can see the red thread bound around the ankles of destined soul mates, and can even see a faint thread linking them together when they are in the same location. However, the thread cannot be broken except through the use of magic that can shatter Fate. Attempts to physically remove it fail automatically. Crimson Weavers can remove the red thread, even if they were not the Weavers that laid it, but convincing one to do so is extremely difficult, as they refuse to admit that they are capable of error. Threatening a Weaver can get a person bound to someone entirely unsuitable, as the Weavers are not above using their powers for revenge. Indeed, they see using their powers on an enemy as an act of mercy — after all, aren't they giving their enemy the greatest gift?

FALLEN STAR

Quote: “I hear you...”

Background: The skies of the Hedge, like those of the mortal world, are filled with stars, and much like in the mortal world, a time can come when a star falls from the heavens. In the mortal world, most such meteors burn up in the atmosphere, and those that land leave behind nothing but rock or metal.

In the Hedge, however, everything is filled with potential, and the sky is no different. Very rarely, a shooting star in the Hedge falls far enough and fast enough to reach the ground, and misses the Thorns altogether to crash into a stable pathway. When it does, what is left behind appears to be, for all intents and purposes, a small hunk of silvered stone, warm to the touch, and filled with the power of Fate and the Wyrd that it gathered in its fall. Those fortunate enough to find them can feel the power within them, and usually take them as lucky signs or mistake them for tokens that can be drawn upon.

These Fallen Stars are more than simple tokens, however. They have will and desires. They are driven by the competing desires to fulfill dreams and to hold onto their own existences, for they have a finite amount of power within them, and will die once they fulfill enough wishes. As such, Fallen Stars conceal themselves as best they can, until the need to use their power grows too great. At that time, they whisper into the minds of those whose desires they have chosen to grant, assuring them that their wish will be done.

Description: A Fallen Star appears to be nothing more complex than a piece of meteoric rock, silver-colored and irregular in shape. They are, however, able to move — usually only when no one is watching — and roll across the ground or even hop short distances if needed. They can speak directly into people's minds, but rarely exercise the ability.

Storytelling Hints: Fallen Stars are quiet and reserved, and generally content to mimic the rocks they appear to be. They will speak only when doing so is absolutely needed to their survival, and they prefer to conceal the extent of their capabilities from those who they do speak to, in order to keep their power longer.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 1, Stamina 5

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

Mental Skills: None

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Stealth 4

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Persuasion 3, Subterfuge (Playing Dead) 5

Merits: None

Willpower: 7

Virtue: Temperance

Vice: Sloth

Initiative: 3

Defense: 1

Size: 1

Speed: 3 (species factor 1)

Health: 6

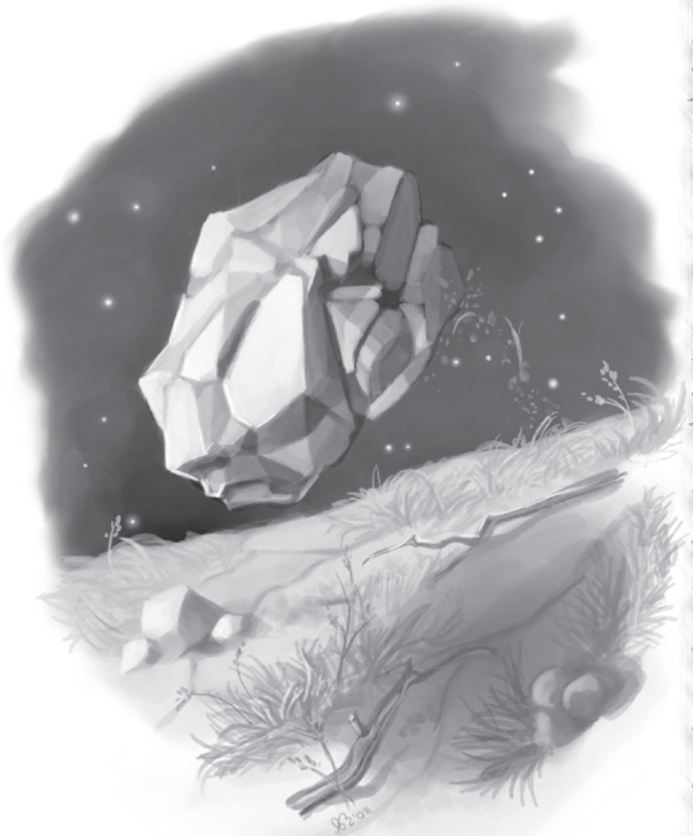
Wyrd: 4

Glamour/per Turn: 13/4

Armor: 6

Weapons/Attacks: None

• **Wish Upon A Star:** Whenever a wish, desire, or intention is spoken in the presence of a Fallen Star, it must roll Resolve + Composure, with a cumulative die penalty equal to the number of such wishes made since its last granted wish. If the roll succeeds, the Falling Star may never grant that wish from that character again. If the roll fails, the



Falling Star must immediately spend four points of Glamour in order to attempt to grant that wish. This creates a prophetic path (pg. 58) that attempts to ensure that wish. If the prophetic path succeeds, the Fallen Star recovers two Glamour. Otherwise, the Glamour is lost. If the Fallen Star does not have sufficient Glamour to activate the prophetic path, it spends everything that it has, and passes into quiescence — no prophetic path is created.

- **Weak Glamour:** Fallen Stars cannot recover Glamour except through the Wish Upon A Star power. Furthermore, if reduced to no remaining Glamour, a Fallen Star will die, reverting to nothing more than a hunk of rock.

NEMESIS

Quote: “Miserable creature! I’ll tear your guts out and wear them like a scarf!”

Background: When characters defy Fate, they often find that problems and bad luck are in their futures. If they are particularly unlucky, that bad luck might include the attentions of a Nemesis.

The Nemesis consider themselves to be the arbiters and avengers of Fate. Their purpose in life is to track down those who stand against Fate and punish them for their arrogance in believing that they know the course of destiny better than destiny itself. They don’t take orders, however; rather, they have an instinctive sense for when Fate has been violated. Discovering such a violation tends to send them into a frothing rage, as they hunt down and try their best to murder whichever poor soul they’ve discovered.

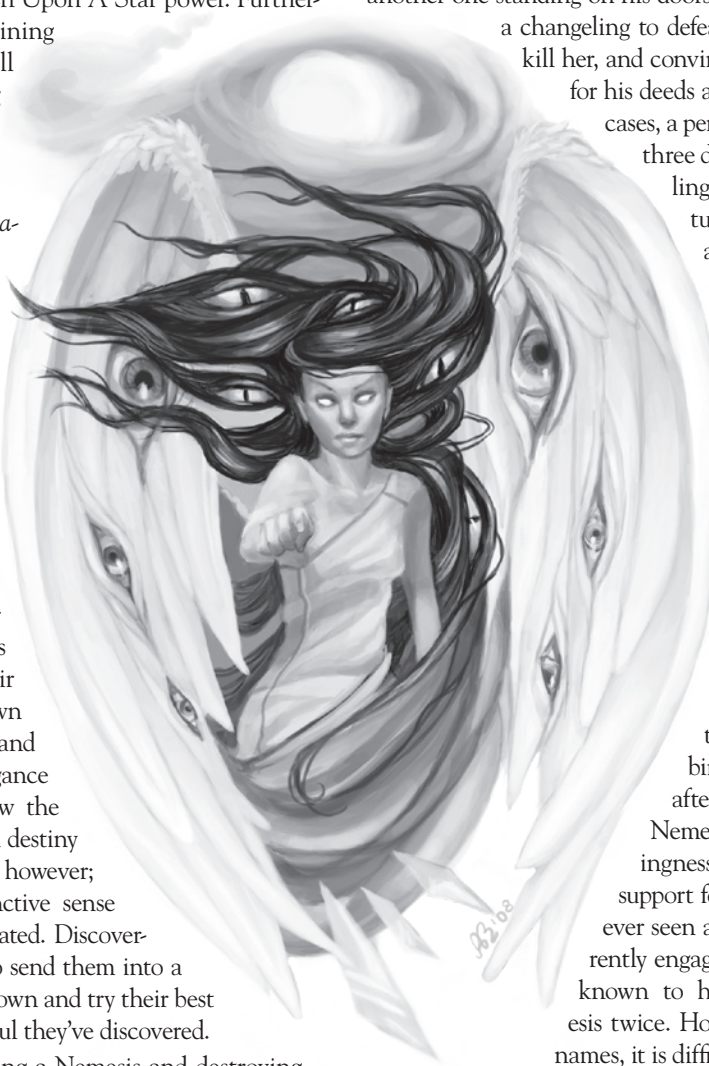
On top of that, defeating a Nemesis and destroying it buys only a brief pause. Nemesis can be killed, but their deaths “count” as a violation of Fate, one strong enough to attract another Nemesis. As time goes on, an ever-growing number of the creatures will appear to have revenge for their fallen kin, leading to a situation that no changeling can win forever. Every season or so, a new Nemesis will arrive to avenge her fallen kin, and roughly every year, the number of Nemesis that arrive at once will increase by one. Stories tell of one warrior of the Lost who battled the Nemesis for thirty-six years, until entire squads of them were being dispatched against him, but even he eventually fell to their blades.

There are only three known ways to escape death at the hands of a Nemesis, and none are easy. The first is to trick the Nemesis into killing a friend or loved one in place of the changeling who she seeks. Nemesis never kill bystanders deliberately, but the accidental death of one is considered equivalent trade for an initial violation, and will cause a Nemesis to leave. The second method is to trick someone else into killing the Nemesis; in such a case, the character is free of future disasters, although whoever actually killed the Nemesis will soon find another one standing on his doorstep. The final method is for

a changeling to defeat a Nemesis in a fight, not kill her, and convince her that he is repentant for his deeds and wishes to atone. In such cases, a persuaded Nemesis might level three difficult tasks on the changeling in exchange for her departure. Such tasks will be strange and random, and potentially dangerous, but not guaranteed to lead to death. Of course, a changeling who is being sought by many Nemesis must deal with each individually, which can lead to a burdensome number of tasks leveled on him at once.

No one knows where the Nemesis live when they are not hunting, or even if they have lives. A popular theory states that twisted Fate actually gives birth to Nemesis, and that after her task is complete, a Nemesis dissolves back into nothingness. There seems to be some support for this belief, as no one has ever seen a Nemesis who was not currently engaged in a hunt, nor is anyone known to have seen the same Nemesis twice. However, as they do not keep names, it is difficult to say for certain.

Description: Nemesis have individual features, but they all share certain features. All resemble tall human women, with large white wings that hang down behind them, and which they spread threateningly as they prepare to fight. Each of them also takes on the rough features of her target, enough so that onlookers often mistake them for siblings or parents of their intended victims. They tend to wear simple silk clothing, which their victims often discover has an armor-like ability to block attacks, and wield large one-handed swords against their enemies. Most Nemesis work alone or in pairs, but larger groups have been known to appear to deal with particularly powerful and unreasonable targets.



Storytelling Hints: Nemeses aren't stupid, but they are direct, angry, and prone to mild rants as they attack. They react badly to being humiliated, and can easily be goaded into attacking wildly. On the flip side, however, they are absolutely dedicated to their tasks, and trying to persuade an active Nemesis to stop swinging her sword around long enough to listen to an attempted excuse or explanation is almost impossible.

If actually beaten, a Nemesis will pause long enough to listen, and might be persuaded to calm down. Usually, though, this doesn't happen, and each generation of Nemeses to attack someone will be angrier, quicker to judge, and faster to attack than the generation before.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 7

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 1, Composure 1

Mental Skills: Investigation 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Weaponry (Sword) 5

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Intimidation 4

Merits: Iron Stamina 1, Striking Looks 2

Willpower: 8

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 8

Defense: 4

Size: 5

Speed: 14 (species factor 5) — Nemeses are capable of flight at their normal speed

Health: 10

Wyrd: 4

Contracts: Stone ••, Delayed Harm (Goblin 3)

Glamour/per Turn: 13/4

Armor: 2/1

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool
Sword	3(L)	—	14

Fae Aspects

• **Aspect of Fate:** As mentioned in their description, Nemeses can instinctively sense their targets. This allows them to track their targets over any terrain with a single success on a Wits + Investigation roll, by spending one Glamour. Furthermore, their deaths count as a violation of Fate (also as mentioned above).

PATTERN EATER

Quote: "Weight of the world on your shoulders? Let me help."

Background: Once, the stories go, the Pattern Eaters were servants of Fate. Their purpose was to crawl across the byways of the world, seeking out remnants of Fate's plans that had failed to fade away as intended. These fragments

could give accidental or incorrect destinies to others, and so the Pattern Eaters devoured them, taking sustenance from Fate's remains. However, the Eaters grew envious of mortal destinies, and one of them stole the Fate of a living man, pulling apart destinies and shattering Fate's plans. In retribution, Fate banished the Pattern Eaters to the Hedge, where they lurk still, waylaying or tricking travelers into parting with their destinies. Some even set up shop in Goblin Markets, trading their capabilities for the sweet taste of dissolved futures. Whatever they lie, they whisper against Fate, convincing those around them it is dangerous and problematic to have destiny take an interest in you, and suggest that they might be able to solve such problems...

Some changelings who have acquired an unpleasant Fate seek out the Pattern Eaters, hoping to free themselves of destinies that they never wanted, and the Pattern Eaters gleefully oblige. Others imagine being free of Fate's demands and can't see why the Eaters are feared. But there is a difference between having your own Fate and having no Fate, a difference that the Eaters are well aware of, and their victims grow to understand this difference and curse the day they met these creatures.

Description: To all intents and purposes, the Pattern Eaters appear to be massive grey spiders, the size of a small horse, with only four legs, their eyes glittering with shades of blue and purple, and their mandibles rubbing together. Their other legs are almost invisible, hints of motion and activity out of the corner of the eye, as they exist only in a metaphysical sense.

For all that they are large and fearsome-looking, however, Pattern Eaters are also fairly spindly creatures. They lack much muscle on their legs, and their bodies are easily broken. Many of their victims are lulled into a false sense of security by the belief that they could easily defeat one in combat — for it is not combat at which Eaters excel.

Storytelling Hints: Pattern Eaters are cunning creatures, highly intelligent and skilled at tricking their would-be victims. Many of them manage to be rewarded or paid to do what they wanted from the beginning — stealing destinies and devouring them. They are also skilled at sensing when those they talk to have strong fates — they are particularly interested in such people, and will try almost anything to convince them to give up their destinies.

Pattern Eaters will not, as a general rule, engage in a fair fight. They will ambush lone travelers only if they strongly believe that they will win such a Fate, and always prefer trickery over brute force. If pressed, they will retreat rather than staying to die.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Investigation 2, Occult 3

Physical Skills: Athletics (Climbing) 2, Brawl 3, Stealth 4, Survival 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken 2, Empathy 4, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 4, Subterfuge 4

Merits: Unseen Sense (Fate) 3

Willpower: 5

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Size: 6

Speed: 13 (species factor 6)

Health: 9

Wyrd: 3

Contracts: Dream 1, Hearth 1, Smoke 2

Glamour/per Turn: 12/3

Armor: 1

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Bite	(0)L	—	6	—
Grapple	(0)*	—	6	Fate-Eating*

Fae Aspects

• **Fate-Eating:** A Pattern Eater who manages to immobilize its subject, or who can find a willing one, may start devouring her Fate, swallowing every strand of destiny within her. This process may begin the turn after immobilization, and requires a number of turns equal to the target's Clarity (or Morality) rating. Upon completion of this, the Pattern Eater recovers one Health and all Glamour. The target, meanwhile, loses all Fate-based effects currently on her, including any Fate links, personas, prophecies, curses, or other effects. Active pledges are not lost, but the effects of broken pledges are. Furthermore, all Fate-based powers that target the character suffer a -2 dice penalty, for as long as her Fate remains broken. As far as Fate is concerned, the character should not exist.

However, there are serious penalties for a target of a Fate-eating. Targets are filled with the knowledge that there is no place in destiny for them. Every morning, instead of gaining a point of Willpower, they lose a point of Willpower as the crushing sense of their own pointlessness beats down on them. If a character has no remaining Willpower when she sleeps, she will wake with a mild Derangement (usually Depression, but occasionally some form of Fixation or Inferiority Complex related to her lack of a future). Furthermore, creatures of Fate recognize the character as an aberration, and will generally react with hostility or active violence to her.

Many of a Pattern Eater's victims commit suicide rather than face this bleak future, but a few manage to forge new destinies for themselves. Doing so would require, at a bare minimum, weeks of effort pushing themselves back onto a destined path, or actively throwing themselves into Fate-heavy situations in the hopes that something will stick. Once the Storyteller rules that a character has regained Fate's interest, she may spend a point of permanent Willpower (which can be purchased back with experience as usual) in order to recover her Fate, removing all benefits and penalties of her broken destiny.

DUSK MAGIC

Life for the Lost is an inherently dangerous prospect. From fetches and the True Fae, hobgoblins and Hedge Beasts, to humans, supernatural creatures and even other changelings, the threats they are likely to face in their lifetimes can be overwhelming. While some fae bolster themselves with physical prowess and weaponry, there are many challenges that face the Lost that sheer brute force is not the most effective answer to. Sometimes cunning, obscure knowledge and a mastery of fae magic are a changeling's best defense (or offense) against the adversity life throws at them. For those that feel the weight of overwhelming odds crushing down upon them, turning to some of the darker and more dangerous aspects of the Wyrd seems a natural response. While these powers carry an inherent danger with them and usually not the first that other changelings share with their newly returned kin, they can be the core of a desperate Lost's arsenal against the nigh-limitless threats he faces.

GOBLIN CONTRACTS OF THE WYRD

Fae magic is based on bargains and agreements. From pledges and vows to Contracts, each can trace its roots back to some ancient pact between fae folk and the concepts, objects or entities of reality around them. These deals are witnessed and given power by the Wyrd, a mystic fae force without which Faerie and the Hedge would not exist. It makes sense then, that some of the oldest and most



Expanded Mechanic: Kenning

Lost with high Clarity ratings (6 or greater) are able to detect the presence of supernatural creatures (fae or otherwise) around them. They are also able to detect supernatural items or magical effects, such as active Contracts, and have a chance to notice when Contracts are being activated.

The mechanics for detecting active Contracts are similar to those for detecting supernatural beings (p. 92, *Changeling: The Lost*.) At the player's request, the Storyteller makes a secret roll using the Lost's Clarity as the dice pool, with standard Perception modifiers applied. The Lost can detect one already activated, non-concealed Contract in the area per success. (Dramatic failures work per the standard Kenning rules.) This detection gives the Lost the general Contract type (Dream, Fleeting Spring or Goblin Sacrifice, for example) but does not reveal the specific clause activated unless the Lost possesses that clause themselves, or an Exceptional Success is rolled. The changeling may, however, make an Intelligence + Occult roll for each Contract sensed by Kenning. Upon a success, the Lost is able to determine the specific clause active. The ST may require more than one success for rare or unusual Contracts or clauses. This roll may be made for each specific Contract detected.

The changeling may target this Kenning in an area (within his eyeshot), or focus it on a specific individual or object. Normal perception modifiers apply to this challenge.

To notice a Contract being cast, however, is a more difficult matter. To do so, the Lost must be actively attempting to notice supernatural effects. She makes her Clarity roll as a reflexive challenge at a -2 penalty (with normal Perception modifiers applied.) Success indicates that the character is aware that another Lost is attempting to activate a Contract, but it does not automatically tell her what Contract is being attempted unless she achieves an Exceptional Success (even if she possesses the Contract and/or clause herself). Upon making an Exceptional Success, she may make an additional Intelligence + Occult roll (with standard Perception modifiers) to determine the specific clause being attempted, with the target number of successes required being determined by the Storyteller based on the Contract's rarity.

These same rolls can also be used to determine if one is being targeted by a Contract, Token or Curse. Being the target of a supernatural effect, individual or item gives a +2 dice bonus to determine that it is being activated (or attempted to be activated), and the same bonus to determine the nature of the effect attempted.

powerful of faerie magic is based upon bargains struck with the Wyrd itself. However, just as making bargains with the canny Gentry is dangerous business for the Lost, so is attempting to exert control over the wily and powerful Wyrd. Goblin Contracts of the Wyrd all have inherent drawbacks that come into play when a changeling attempts to activate them. And, while they are powerful and very useful, the Wyrd does not tolerate incompetence — each Wyrd Goblin Contract also has an unusually high penalty that must be paid if the changeling attempting to activate them dramatically fails to successfully do so. Still, when the cause is desperate enough, some Lost are willing to take their chances.

MANTLE MASK (●)

One of the ways a changeling's Wyrd manifests is through the sensory attributes that resonate with her chosen Court. Just as Contracts of the Mirror allow a Lost to change her Mask or mein, Mantle Mask allows her to manipulate her Mantle, or to create the perception of one where none existed previously.

In no way does this Contract change the mechanical effects of a Lost's Mantle — only the cosmetic appearance thereof. Thus a Summer Courtier with a Mantle of 3 could tempo-

rally modify her flame-cloak Mantle and the sound of crowds cheering her name to a shroud of autumn leaves accompanied by crow's calling. She would not, however, lose the armor and other benefits her Summer Mantle provides, nor would she gain Autumn's equivocal bonuses dealing with the True Fae.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Occult + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling draws, paints or otherwise decorates her skin with an emblem symbolic of the Court whose Mantle she is attempting to mimic.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling's attempt to force a new appearance to her Mantle fails, and her Mantle becomes a jumbled mass of contradictions for the next scene. For a Spring Courtier, her normally vibrant leaves, flowers and vines might take on a jaundiced look as if affected by some Wyrd-blight, or her Mantle's soft spring breeze might become tainted with a malodorous stench. Autumn courtiers might find their dark Mantle turned farcical, or Winter's ice and chill turned to annoying slush festooned with sparks of bonfire. A Courtless who invokes this great of a failure finds

herself possessing an unruly temporary Mantle that blends elements from all four of the seasonal courts in a disturbing and jarring way. Any Lost under this effect suffer a -2 penalty to all Social challenges (offensive or defensive) with anyone who can perceive their disturbing pseudo-Mantle.

Failure: The changeling's Mantle (or lack thereof) is unaffected.

Success: The changeling's mastery of her Wyrd is able to temporarily overshadow the inherent cosmetic manifestation of her Mantle. The materialization of her normal Mantle (visual, auditory, olfactory, sensory, etc.) dwindles to an imperceptible level for the remainder of the scene, and is replaced by that of the Court she focuses upon while activating the Contract. If no Court is chosen, she is left with no Mantle, and is likely to be assumed to be Courtless by those judging such matters by Mantle alone. For every success achieved on her activation roll, she may manifest a single sensory aspect to her illusionary Mantle, up to the level of her normal Mantle rating. Courtless who use this clause to manifest a Mantle from scratch can create the illusion of one up to a level equal to half the successes they rolled on the activation, rounded up, although this number may never exceed 5 levels.

At the end of the first scene, the changeling may choose to spend two points of Glamour to automatically activate the Contract for an additional scene. This must be paid for with Glamour (not a use of the catch). At the end of this second scene, she may pay three Glamour to continue the effect for a third scene, and so on, until she reaches the maximum amount of glamour she can spend during any one turn. This extension can be done for as long as the Lost chooses continues to spend the Glamour and is able to spend enough to meet the ever-growing cost. However, when the changeling ceases to spend the Glamour to extend the effect, the Drawback immediately manifests, and lasts for the entire time the Contract's power was in effect (in days, hours and minutes, not number of scenes.)

Exceptional Success: As with a success, however the changeling may manifest the illusion of any level of Mantle up to 5, regardless of her normal Mantle rating (even if she is Courtless).

Drawback: Mantle's illusion, once created, does not fade quickly. Although the changeling's natural Mantle springs back in full force at the end of the scene, for a time period twice the length of the time period the illusory Mantle was in place, remnants of the false Mantle remain perceptible. A Winter Courtier who had suppressed her icicle-bedecked hair in favor of manifesting Spring blossoms for a three-hour scene, might find that, for the three hours after the scene ended, there were still fading rose-petals encased in her newly-returned frost, for example. For the Courtless, this manifestation results in a fading traces of her manifested Mantle enshrouding her. Too weak to be mistaken for a "real" Mantle, this after-effect is only strong enough to act as a clue to others that the Lost has been tinkering with strange magic.

DAUNTING FORCE (••)

Wyrd is a powerful force, and those with high amounts of it have the potential to wield this power with elegant dexterity or brutish might. While the former is sometimes more effective, the latter is certainly a force to be reckoned with. By using this Contract, a changeling may attempt to use the brute strength of his Wyrd to intimidate someone else.

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Presence + Wyrd - subject's Composure

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling is actively wielding an unholstered, unsheathed weapon or firearm of some sort.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The clause backfires. For the remainder of the scene, the changeling is at a -2 dice penalty to all Presence based challenges and a -2 dice penalty for all Intimidation based rolls (cumulative, for a -4 penalty to rolls using Presence + Intimidation) attempted against any target.

Failure: The subject is unaffected.

Success: For the remainder of the scene, the force of the changeling's Wyrd has an intimidating affect on the subject. All social challenges made by the changeling against the subject gain a +2 dice bonus, and any attempts by the subject to take actions (physically, socially, mentally or supernaturally) against the changeling are made at a -2 dice penalty.

Exceptional Success: As with a success, but the bonuses and penalties are increased to +4 and -4 respectively.

Drawback: Regardless of whether the Contract succeeds or fails, the changeling's Wyrd is taxed by the intimidation effort. For the next 24 hours, any use of Glamour by the subject for any purpose requires an additional Glamour to activate.

NOTHING HIDDEN (•••)

The Wyrd is power, and the Wyrd is perception. Those who are willing to take the proper shortcuts find themselves able to discern things normally beyond their ken... for the usual price, of course.

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Occult + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling has burned the feather of an owl, eagle or other keen sighted bird within the last four hours, and smudged the ashes on his eyelids.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Contract does not take effect, and the changeling is struck blind for an hour or a scene, whichever is longer.

Failure: The Contract does not take effect, and the changeling is blinded for a number of turns equal to his dice pool for activating this Contract.

Success: The changeling's perceptions of the supernatural are enhanced, and his ability to notice and identify

hidden supernatural beings, items or effects (fae or otherwise) is improved. For the remainder of the scene, if the Lost can perceive the presence of the supernatural (through either a naturally high Clarity rating, a supernaturally enhanced Clarity or the successful activation of Wyrd's Eye), this clause allows them to extend that perception to the concealed supernatural world as well.

After successfully activating Nothing Hidden, a player may ask the Storyteller to make a secret reflexive Wits + Investigation roll to detect the presence of concealed supernatural entities, objects or effects (including active Contracts, but not those which are being cast) within a 10 foot radius of him. Should there be any such, he may notice one per success made on the roll, and go on to have the Storyteller make an Intelligence + Occult roll for him to attempt to identify each of the specific Contract, creature or objects (as specified in the Kenning rules.) There is no Glamour cost for making either of these rolls once the Contract has been successfully activated, and the second roll counts as an extension of the first, rather than its own action. Thus a changeling who achieved 3 successes on his Wits + Investigation roll as a reflexive action and detected all three of the concealed supernatural creatures standing beside him could then have the Storyteller roll to identify them. If he achieved three successes on the second roll, he might be able to tell that two of the beings were Lost (an Ogre and a Darkling) and that one appeared to be a huge wolfish creature that didn't appear to be a Briarwolf or Beast (see below.)

The Storyteller is encouraged to use his discretion in both the detection and identification of concealed items, individuals and effects. While it should only take a single success to notice "normally" concealed targets, supernatural targets with exceptionally high concealment abilities might, at the Storyteller's discretion, require more than a single success to locate. Likewise, very obscure creature, object or effect types (one of a kind fae items, creatures, or very rare Wyrdfocused spells, powers or emanations) might require more than a single success to identify clearly. Similarly, this power does not automatically give Lost in depth information about non-fae items or supernatural character types, other than their general appearance, demeanor or resonance, and that they are of a non-fae supernatural type. Thus the lupine creature above would not be identified as a werewolf, although it would be clear it was not one of the wolver creatures the Lost was familiar with. A magic knife might resonate with death energy, but this Contract would not reveal that it's specifically designed for staking vampires.

If the changeling does not possess the sufficient Clarity (normal or enhanced) to perceive the presence of the supernatural (and if he is not currently under the affect of Wyrd's Eye), after successfully activating this clause, he may have the Storyteller make a secret reflexive Wits + Investigation roll to detect the supernatural, and (only if he is successful) another roll as part of the same action (but at a -2 penalty) to either identify the non-concealed targets or

to attempt to detect concealed supernatural beings, objects or effects. Identifying the concealed targets (if he detected them) could be done as a part of the same reflexive action, but at a -4 dice penalty.

After the Contract has ended, the changeling's eyesight is strained by seeking the minute details of the Wyrd that reveal the presence of concealed supernaturals, and all Perception checks made for the next scene are made at a -4 dice penalty.

Exceptional Success: As with a success, but the changeling receives a +4 bonus to his Wits + Investigation rolls to detect the concealed for the remainder of the scene.

WYRD'S EYE: (....)

A favorite of the Autumn Court, this Goblin Contract opens the Lost's senses to all aspects of the Wyrd.

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Occult + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling is breaks a pair of prescription eyeglasses.

Effect: Upon a successful activation, the changeling becomes automatically aware of any activation of unconcealed Contracts within a 10 foot radius around him. The Lost is also able to automatically perceive any active Contract present within that area as a reflexive action (one perceived Contract per turn). As well, regardless of the rarity of the Contracts he perceives, he only needs a single success on the Intelligence + Occult check to identify any specific perceived Contract's Contract type and clause. If this challenge is successful, the Lost gains a general understanding of the Contract even if they have never seen it before. For example, he may learn that Temporary Sanity bolsters a changeling's Clarity, but not for how long or that there is a negative effect to their Clarity afterward.

In addition, during the period of a successful activation of Wyrd's Eye, any Clarity penalties the Lost normally would be functioning under are ignored for perception challenges specifically involving sensing the Wyrd (identifying Contracts, Lost, perceiving fae items, etc.) As well, the Lost gains a +3 bonus to Kenning attempts to detect concealed supernatural beings, items or effects, but only those related to the Wyrd or fae magic (hobs, Lost, Hedge Beasts, True Fae, Tokens, goblin fruit, etc.)

This increased Wyrd perception lasts for one scene, and cannot be deactivated earlier.

Drawback: The Lost's increased perception of the Wyrd creates a kind of sensory overload. Any perception challenges (including Kenning) not related to the Wyrd or fae magic receive a penalty equal to the Lost's Wyrd. This penalty lasts as long as the Contract is active, and for an additional scene afterwards, and cannot be erased, countered or avoided by any means. It takes a while for the Lost to recover from the huge influx of sensation this Contract invokes.



THE FATAL CLAUSE (•••••)

Each Contract is, at its heart, an agreement, a pact that was originally crafted between the True Fae and the world around them, and is now activated by a changeling reaffirming that accord. Every agreement, however, has loopholes. Lost frequently make use of the most common loophole in the form of each Contract's catch. Other loopholes do exist, though, and those who learn this Contract are well aware of how best to take advantage of this. By exploiting a weakness in the Wyrd, The Fatal Clause allows Lost to nullify another Contract as it is being activated, essentially expending their own Glamour to short-circuit the targeted Contract.

Cost: 2 Glamour and 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Occult + Wyrd - subject's Wyrd

Action: Instant and Contested

Catch: Within the last 24 hours, the changeling has been the target of a Contract cast by subject. The catch only negates the need to pay the activation cost of the Contract, not the additional Drawback Glamour sapped from him.

Effects: The Lost makes a contested roll against the character activating the Contract he wishes to nullify, with a target number equal to the level of that Contract. If the targeting Lost achieves a number of successes equal to or greater than the level of the Contract he is targeting, then

the Contract is nullified. Any cost that the targeted character spent to activate the Contract is lost, but to no effect. If he rolls fewer successes than the level of the targeted Contract, then the Contract activates as normal, but the targeting changeling still must pay the full casting cost (unless using the catch) and the Drawback cost.

The changeling must be able to perceive that the Contract is being activated in some fashion, whether through the Kenning rules (see Modified Rules — Kenning, p. 65) or through an already activated Contract (such as Wyrd's Eye.)

Drawback: This Contract uses the Glamour of the changeling who is activating it to attempt to short-circuit the targeted Contract. In addition to the activation cost, this Contract sucks away Glamour and/or Willpower equal to the casting cost of the targeted Contract. This Drawback drain cannot be mitigated by the activator of The Fatal Clause by completing the catch of the targeted Contract, or by any other means. It is automatic, whether The Fatal Clause is successful or not. If the activator does not have sufficient Glamour (or Willpower if the targeted Contract uses that) for The Fatal Clause to drain, the Contract deals 1 level of lethal damage to him for every Glamour or Willpower he is "short". This damage cannot be avoided, redirected or lessened by any means, including armor or supernatural powers — in spite of the Lost's best efforts, the Wyrd will take its due.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The changeling possesses the same specific clause he is attempting to prevent from being activated.
+1	The targeting Lost's Wyrd is higher than that of the subject (+1 for every level higher)
-1	The subject's Wyrd is higher than that of the targeting changeling (-1 for every level higher)

CONTRACTS OF LUCIDITY

One of the biggest challenges any changeling faces is dealing with the ever-present memories of their durance. Try as they might to leave their past behind them, unexpected reminders creep through the tiniest cracks in the Lost psyche, each one with the potential to breach the dam of pseudo-humanity that a changeling wraps around himself upon returning Faerie. Shoring up that dam, bolstering one's own Clarity, or that of others, is the nominal purpose of this Contract, and the only one that most Lost will ever admit to using them for. Any tool, however, can be dangerous in the wrong hands, which is why many changelings will not speak of, let alone learn, these powers.

The use of Contracts of Lucidity is an inherently slippery moral slope. Meddling in other's perceptions (or tinkering too much with your own) can easily trigger best-forgotten memories of one's time in Arcadia, which can only further degrade one's grasp on reality. Because of this, each clause within the Contract has its own price, a Clarity breaking point which must be rolled against each time the clause is successfully activated. Those who make frequent use of these Contracts often find their Clarity slipping as a result of the constant challenges to it. Which, of course, encourages them to use them more often to bolster, support, or supplement their slipping grasp on reason and coherency. A dangerous cycle, but one which some Lost feel is a necessary evil if they are to survive the ever-growing dangers they face.

The Dangerous Secret

The Contract of Lucidity wasn't sworn with the force of Lucidity. It was sworn with the force of Madness. There is no force of Lucidity within the Hedge or Arcadia. Changelings tell themselves that this Contract is one forged with the guiding principle of mental stability, but deep down they know the truth. One doesn't measure a changeling's Clarity (such as they understand the term) by how lucid he is. One estimates his Clarity by how touched by delirium he is. Or, to be fair, how much he's managed to elude that touch... so far.

READ LUCIDITY (•)

While those who have time and opportunity can eventually tell a more stable individual from one who's sunk deeply into the depths of dream and disconnect simply by their words and actions, sometimes one doesn't have the leisure for lengthy observation. In a pinch, being able to read a target's mental stability is an invaluable tool for determining how best to deal with a potential madman.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling is touching the target, skin-to-skin.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling's perceptions of the subject's world-views are dramatically off kilter. She may believe the near-insane Lost to be quite rational, or the logical changeling to be in the throes of a schizophrenic breakdown. While there is no mechanic for this, it will affect the changeling's perceptions and behaviors. She will be more likely to give credence to the thoughts and suggestions of a changeling she falsely believes to be of high lucidity, or discount those of one she inaccurately perceives as mad. As well, it will color how she sees those who view the Lost differently than she does, perhaps leading her to question their motives or even their own Clarity.

Failure: The clause has no effect.

Success: The changeling is able to gain a grasp of the subject's relative Clarity rating. While Clarity ratings as a numeric value are a game conceit, the changeling gains insight into how clear the subject's thinking is, how deeply he is currently being affected by the scars of his time in the durance, and how accurately he is perceiving reality.

Exceptional Success: The changeling also gets a general inkling of cause of the subject's last Clarity loss, although no specific details are given. She may sense that the Clarity sin was "kidnapping" or "killing a Lost", but not who was affected or when the sin came about.

Clarity Breaking Point Level: 9

TEMPORARY SANITY (••)

High Clarity endows Lost with the ability to sense the world around them in a reasonable and logical manner, as well as endowing them with a chance to perceive the presence of supernatural beings, items or magical effects around them. For those who do not possess as strong a sense of balance between the fae world and the mundane one, Temporary Sanity can serve in its stead. At the cost of risking one's normal Clarity, this clause temporarily lends the changeling an increased sense of mental balance, along with the benefits that accompany that stability.

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Occult + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling stands on one foot, eyes shut, arms at her side, for a full minute before activating the Contract.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling gains no additional Clarity, and for the remainder of the scene, suffers from a -2 dice penalty to any Perception tests, cumulative with any other penalties she may be under.

Failure: The Contract has no effect.

Success: For a number of turns equal to the number of successes rolled, the changeling gains additional Clarity equal to the number of successes rolled. For the duration of the Contract, all of her perceptions (including the opportunity to attempt Kenning rolls or Keen Senses (p. 92, **Changeling: The Lost**) are made at the higher Clarity rating.

Exceptional Success: The changeling receives the benefits as with a success, but they last for an entire scene.

Clarity Breaking Point Level: 8

GIFT OF LUCIDITY (•••)

Just as Temporary Sanity can bolster a changeling's own Clarity, Gift of Lucidity allows him to share that beneficial effect with others for a short time. This Contract can buy a changeling time and avoid forcing them to "put down" a motley mate or other valued Lost companion, but it comes at a high price — the temporary loss of one's own Clarity.

When attempting to activate this Contract, the player must commit a certain amount of his character's own Clarity into the attempt. No more than three Clarity levels may be committed, and at no point may this "loan" of Clarity lower the activating character's Clarity below 2. This Contract automatically fails if it is attempted upon a target that does not have the capacity for a Clarity rating, although it can be used on Lost with a Clarity rating of zero, so long as it is successfully activated within 12 hours of their last Clarity loss.

Regardless of whether the target is welcoming the "loan" of Clarity or not, this Contract is always resisted by the target's Resolve + Composure, as the target's psyche reflexively resists the intrusion of outside affects upon it.

Cost: 1 Glamour per level of Clarity rating "lent" (to a maximum of 3) + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Presence + Clarity + Wyrd — subject's Resolve + Composure

Action: Instant

Catch: The subject has lost at least one dot of Clarity within the last 12 hours.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The subject receives no benefit from the Contract, but the activating Lost still suffers from the temporary loss of however many Clarity ratings he invested into the attempt for the next scene. The subject must make a single derangement roll, regardless of how many levels he

attempted to "lend." As the loan and loss of Clarity are temporary, should the Lost gain a derangement in this fashion, his normal Clarity eventually negates it — a derangement gained in this manner lasts only for the next month. This does not negate the need to make the Clarity roll for attempting to activate the Contract, however, and a derangement gained from that roll is permanent.

Failure: The Contract has no effect, and neither the target nor activating Lost's Clarity is changed. The changeling must still make the breaking point roll, however.

Success: For the rest of the scene, the subject gains the benefit of additional Clarity equal to the number "loaned" by the activating changeling. For the duration of the Contract, all of her perceptions (including the opportunity to attempt Kenning rolls or Keen Senses (p. 92, **Changeling: The Lost**) are made at the higher Clarity rating. Likewise, for the same time period, the activating changeling perceives the world as if his Clarity were lowered by a number of levels equal to those lent to the target. The subject must make a single derangement roll, regardless of how many levels he "lent." As the loan and loss of Clarity are temporary, should the Lost gain a derangement in this fashion, his normal Clarity eventually negates it — a derangement gained in this manner lasts only for the next month. This does not negate the need to make the degeneration roll for attempting to activate the Contract, however, and a derangement gained from that roll is permanent.

Exceptional Success: For the remainder of the scene, the targeted changeling receives a temporary benefit as if her Clarity had been boosted by a number of levels equal to the number of Clarity rating levels the activating Lost committed to the attempt. However, the activating Lost also retains his Clarity unaffected for that time period. This does not negate the need to make the Clarity roll for attempting to activate the Contract, however.

Clarity Breaking Point Level: 6

ARMORED CLARITY (••••)

Sometimes a changeling is faced with a situation which he knows, without a doubt, will challenge his Clarity on multiple levels. This can be a situation where the Clarity-shaking action is justified by need — a Hedge-diver who knows he will have to spend an extended period in the Thorns (and thus out of human contact), or a Lost who must ravish a human's dreams in order to accomplish a greater good. Certainly not all uses of this Contract are entirely altruistic, however, and a changeling who knows he will be breaking an oath by kidnapping and then killing a human might well activate it before the dastardly deed to attempt to reduce the impact such depraved acts have upon his psyche. Regardless of the morality and motivation behind them, when a changeling knowingly faces situations which may challenge their sanity, the ability to bolster one's Clarity against breaking points temporarily is invaluable.

Cost: 3 Glamour

Dice Pool: Resolve + Clarity

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling has spent the last hour in the company of more un-ensorcelled humans than ensorcelled humans or Lost.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling's Clarity receives no protection, and he suffers a -1 die penalty on his next Clarity roll.

Failure: The Contract has no effect.

Success: For the next scene, the changeling does not make Clarity rolls as he takes actions. Instead, at the end of the scene, the Lost makes a single Clarity roll for the lowest Clarity rating level he violated, and goes forward from there as if this was the only breaking point he triggered. He still must make the Clarity roll for activating this Contract, however, above and beyond the one he makes to cover his multitude of "sins."

Exceptional Success: As with a success, however the Lost makes receives +1 bonus die on his "lowest of all incurred" Clarity roll, and on any derangement roll which follows as a result. This does not negate the need to make the degeneration roll for attempting to activate the Contract, nor does that roll receive the bonus die.

Clarity Breaking Point Level: 4

THIEF OF REASON (•••••)

While bolstering another changeling's Clarity may be seen as noble, stealing it away is difficult to justify as anything but a hostile gesture. Stripping another Lost's sanity, bringing their memories of their time in Arcadia to the forefront of their perception is an effective tactic for combat or ambush, but the changeling who does so too frequently may well find this action leaves him with little Clarity of his own to spare.

Cost: 3 Glamour + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Presence + Intimidation + Wyrd — subject's Willpower + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The subject has made a statement doubting her own sanity within the last hour in front of witnesses.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling's attempt to steal the subject's Clarity fails miserably, rebounding back against him. His own Clarity automatically drops by one rating. There is no challenge for this, it is automatic, but he can make a test to attempt to avoid gaining a derangement for this loss. This test does not take the place of the degeneration roll he must make for attempting to activate this Contract.

Failure: The Contract has no effect. The changeling must still make the Clarity roll for attempting to activate this Contract.

Success: The changeling successfully (but temporarily) impacts the subject's Clarity by triggering an overwhelming and

immediate memory (true or not) of her experiences in Arcadia. For the remainder of the scene, the subject's Clarity is treated as if it were lowered by a number of levels equal to the number of successes achieved by the targeting changeling. This cannot lower the subject's effective Clarity below 1. Not only does this change in effective Clarity give the subject any penalties to her perception rolls that the temporarily lowered Clarity would (p. 93, **Changeling: The Lost**), but the sudden and dramatic assault upon her sanity reduces her ability to interact quickly and efficiently with the world around her. For the remainder of the scene, she is at a -2 penalty to initiative, and her Defense is lowered by 1. As well, she must test to see if she gains a derangement. If she gains a derangement from this roll, its effects last for the next month before her normal Clarity is able to fight it off.

Exceptional Success: As with a success, however the subject is even more fettered by the impact. On top of the reduction in initiative and lowered defense, all rolls she makes for the remainder of the scene suffer a -2 dice penalty. This does not include the derangement roll for the temporary loss of Clarity.

Clarity Breaking Point Level: 2

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The changeling knows at least one of the subject's Derangements
+1	The subject currently has a Derangement active (cumulative, +1 per active Derangement)

Using Contracts of Clarity for Healing Mental Health

If Storytellers are using the optional rules that cover detailed mechanics for aiding a Lost in regaining their Clarity (pp. 80–81 of *Rites of Spring*), some of the Contracts of Clarity may aid in these efforts. A counselor who is able to accurately assess her subject's current Clarity has a better idea of where to focus her therapeutic efforts. Thus, a successful application of Read Clarity on a subject by a counselor gives her a +1 dice bonus to any future counseling challenges.

As well, a successful application of Gift of Lucidity may temporarily make counseling more effective for a changeling, offering a modifier equal to the loaned level of Clarity for all Counseling challenges against him while the Contract is active. Likewise, a changeling who successfully activates Temporary Sanity may give the counselor a number of bonus die equal to his "boost" in Clarity if active during the counseling session.

These same bonuses can be applied to attempts to bring a Lost back from 0 Clarity.

CURSES

As a general term, a curse is any power which is set in place for the purpose of negatively affecting someone or something. Intent is key with a curse. They are directly focused to bring harm, bad luck, illness, or vulnerability to a particular person. The same power can be used as a curse in one situation and in another be used for other means. Thus Withering Glare is a curse, if used to blight someone's crops or sicken their animals, but not if used on an un-owned tree or animal out in the wilderness. Likewise, Unmaker's Destructive Gaze is a curse if used to cause difficulties for the owner or wielder of the item, but it is not a curse if used on an item or object which the individual casting the curse does not know or is not trying to bring harm to (for example, if used to cause a lock to fail so that a changeling can enter a building). The intention must be to punish or inflict harm upon the object or creature's owner.

As well, curses are a personal matter. They are almost always a reaction to an insult, injury or affront (perceived or real). While they can be used capriciously, they are rarely cast for no reason, and must be focused on a particular indi-

vidual (or that individual's personal property), rather than an area affect. Likewise, powers that enhance one individual are not considered curses against another, even if that enhancement is then used to harm the other party.

A curse can be a Contract that impairs someone's ability (like Fickle Fate or Faces in the Water), makes them more vulnerable to negativity (such as Creeping Dread), or damages their wealth, health (mental or physical) or possessions (like Touch of the Workman's Wrath or Theft of Reason). Contracts which do direct physical damage (in the form of dealing bashing, lethal or aggravated damage) to a person, such as The Lord's Dread Gaze or Brother to the Ague, are not considered curses; cursing is a more subtle art.

While Contracts may be the simplest and most direct way to curse someone (a fact that Witchtooth Ogres take full advantage of), it is not the only means. Curses can be delivered in the form of Nightmares, which sap their target of the ability to regain Willpower through sleep), goblin fruit or oddments (such as Walking Gertrude) or artifacts like the Cursing Box (pp. 146–147, *Rites of Spring*). A more subtle form of curse is invoked when an individual is tricked, coerced or trapped into a pledge designed specifi-

Cursed Tokens

Subterfuge and illusion are common means of implementing curses, especially among the fae. For every goblin fruit, oddment, Token, trifle or Hedgespun item discovered by the Lost, there is a chance that the item carries a curse, either instead of or in addition to its beneficial features.

Curses can take many forms from the very tangible to the abstract. A goblin fruit might causes nausea and other flu-like symptoms instead of (or in conjunction with) its normal benefits. A weapon might offer a bonus to the wielder's skill in combat, or increase his initiative, but cause him to be the first one targeted by enemies in every combat situation. Other curses may be more ethereal, inflicting dice penalties in certain situations or sapping Glamour or Willpower from their owner.

Storytellers should take care in how the introduce cursed items into their story. It's just plain dirty pool to have a player spend experience points to purchase a token or goblin fruit for their character and then find out that its detriments vastly outweighs its usefulness. But when characters shop at Goblin Markets (or accept gifts or items in trade from potentially disreputable sources), their risk of finding a unique (and potentially dangerous) item increases.

One way to introduce cursed items into a story without entirely alienating the players is to treat a cursed version of a token as having a lower dot value than the uncursed version would have. This can be treated as a sliding scale, with a small curse reducing the item by a single dot, whereas a very cursed item (providing more harm than good to its owner) might be considered a trifle, or even "free" — not counting against the number of Tokens its owner can own at all. Similarly, cursed trifles or goblin fruit might allow their owner to carry more than the normal three per dot of the Token merit, with the number ranging larger depending on the severity of the curse. Curses which do not affect the owner (such as a goblin fruit cursed to cause nausea when eaten, but which does not affect the person carrying it around) should not be severely lowered in "cost," as they are likely to be used more as an offensive weapon against the owner's enemies than they are to afflict the owner (at least once he becomes aware of their attribute.)

Another method is to tinker with the positive benefits, balancing an enhanced power level, broader benefit or decreased normal negative with the "curse" to create an item with a net positive benefit equal to that of the normal uncursed item. Increasing an item's useful benefit's duration or intensity, while also enhancing or adding to its Drawback or Catch might well give a Token or trifle a cursed reputation, while also adding variety and mystery to the game by allowing Storytellers to easily customize the standard items offered in the various *Changeling: The Lost* game books.



cally to make him violate the Task. Using pledges as a curse puts the responsibility for not activating the curse in the hands of the cursed individual — a moral loophole that curse wielders use to absolve themselves of responsibility for the harm which befalls those they bind in this manner.

MALEDICTIONS

Ideally, a pledge is a Wyrd-sworn agreement between two knowing individuals to accomplish some positive end. Both are bolstered by their pact, and neither enters into the bargain with the intention of breaking the deal. However, desperate times often produce desperate results, and the Wyrd cares nothing for the intention behind or morality of the pledges it binds.

Over the centuries, some Lost have taken advantage of this fact, developing a variety of pledges which can be used offensively by virtually ensuring that the other individual or individuals in the pledge will violate the task of the agreement and thus trigger the sanction. A pledge which is made specifically with the intent of the other individual breaking it is sometimes known as a malediction, although mechanically they are identical to other pledges.

Some manage to do this with normal pledges, by using mundane or supernatural means to push their adversary harder and harder towards violating that pledge. After entering into a seemingly beneficial pledge with their target, they might use Contracts to manipulate his emotions to make him not care about violating the terms of the vow,

or to actively desire to take actions which would break the oath. Alternately, they might take advantage of a known weakness in the other individual's psyche — a phobia or addiction, perhaps, or just a predilection for a certain object, person or behavior — to use entirely mundane means to push, pull or pester their target into breaking his pledge.

Those who frequently use such tactics, of course, are often looked upon with distaste by the Lost. Even more so are those who go a step further, tricking their victims into pledges they had no intention of swearing (see Unwitting Pledges, below.) This tactic is sometimes seen as the purview of the True Fae, especially when targeted towards those inexperienced in pledges or uneducated in the way of fae magic. However, in some circumstances, the end is viewed as justifying the means. When the target is an oathbreaker, a threat to Lost society, or when the curse is used in self defense against an obvious threat, few would argue the ethics of using any means available to deal with the situation.

VARIANT MECHANIC: UNWITTING PLEDGES

Tricking, bullying or sweet-talking someone into an unwitting pledge is an ageless Fae tradition. While many oaths are sworn of free will, with forethought and planning on all parts, not all are. Some are “caught” into pledges, having their freely given words or agreements which were not intended as a pledge turned into one. Others are ac-



Storytelling with Unwitting Pledges

The idea of being tricked into promises, bargains and deals is one that permeates modern and historic fae folklore. The pledge mechanic, in fact, assumes that some pledges will be made without one party realizing that the changeling can magically hold him to what seems like an off-hand promise. Introducing a new mechanic to further refine and police this activity has both advantages and disadvantages for Storytellers and players alike.

As a rule, the True Fae (and to a lesser extent, the Lost who intentionally or unintentionally emulate them) in the World of Darkness are inherently more cunning, scheming and shrewd than the average human who will be representing them in game. The combination of experience, longevity and supernatural ability possessed by the Gentry and their spawn makes it difficult for a real human being (be it Storyteller or player) to completely accurately portray the depths and breadths of Fae treachery without the other players in the game recognizing it and thus likely thwarting what might well otherwise succeed. Using a mechanic to replicate the attempt to trick someone into a pledge forces character, rather than player, defenses to come into play, creating a more realistic system for whether a character is trapped into an unwitting pledge or not. This can be a benefit for players whose characters possess more faerie cunning and eloquence than the players themselves do, allowing the mechanics to determine success much as a combat mechanic is used instead of a player's physical skill.

However, there is more to a game than the realism of its mechanics, and using this technique does bring other elements into the game as well. These may be seen as positive or negative, depending on the themes of the individual game and the desires of those involved in it, but they should be considered when making the decision of whether to use the mechanics for unwitting pledges.

One of the side effects of the mechanic is that it allows both players and Storytellers to tap into the legendary ability of fae creatures to twist words, forge canny bargains and manipulate others through the use of verbal treachery. This can both benefit and harm changeling characters. It provides another tool for their arsenal, one which is especially useful against humans or other beings that are unaware of the power of Wyrds-worn pledges. A ruthless Lost character can, at the risk of his own Clarity, bind others to his will forming a virtual army of minions, subordinates and underlings limited in number only by the number of pledges he can hold at any given time. However, it also means that characters are susceptible to being preyed upon in a similar manner by both Storytellers' antagonists and other players' characters. This may bring with it an element of hostility which is not necessarily suitable for every chronicle's themes and atmosphere.

Another potential side effect of using this mechanic is that, in some games, it may detract from the focus on roleplay (rather than rolling dice) at crux points in the game. Some players (and Storytellers) will use the mechanic as a substitute for, rather than complement to, roleplay which enhances and supports their efforts to trap others in these unwitting pledges. This may be perfectly acceptable in some games, while in others it may dilute the mood and atmosphere of the setting. If Storytellers feel this is happening in their game, they may encourage complementary roleplay in these situations by offering mechanical bonuses to the roll for strong in-character groundwork being laid before the roll is made. In these cases, the mechanic serves as the final arbiter, but a player (or Storyteller) who puts significant effort into his character establishing an appropriate relationship with the target, laying out the verbal groundwork for the trap and then springing it might receive sufficient bonuses to the roll as to make its success almost a surety.

tually tricked or manipulated into giving an agreement (which is then Wyrds-bound), even though it was not their intention to do so.

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

Most Lost (and those who know about them from direct experience or legend) are extremely aware of making any prom-

ises, commitments or agreements — and rightfully so. While human society may see oath-breaking to be a serious matter only in extremely formal instances (marriage vows, legal contracts and the like), the Wyrds cares nothing for "circumstances beyond your control." If you have promised to tend a Woodblood's plants while she is on vacation, and she locks your promise into a pledge, the Wyrds does not care if her house burns down while you're away or if you are taken into an alternate dimension where your demonic overlords won't let you loose to tend to your gardening. A broken pledge is a broken pledge.

Some Lost eschew the use of anything other than formal pledges. Most often the newly returned, these changelings

believe that to lock another (be they fae or mortal) into a casual promise with the Wyrd is a form of treachery only suited to the True Fae. Others, however, embrace this ability as a vital tool. When there is little to nothing one can trust, the ability to bind others to their spoken word provides a basis for beginning to trust. It prevents treachery, betrayal and deception — or at least invokes a price for them. Binding humans into secrecy is a pledge few Lost would disagree with. If a few more complain if that pledge includes servitude or support, they really aren't arguing against the morality of manipulating others into pledges, but rather are splitting hairs about the nature of "proper" pledges versus unethical ones.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Persuasion + Wyrd vs. the target's Resolve + Occult + Wyrd

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

Unwitting pledges must be a part of a conversation that could be manipulated into the target saying something that could be construed as a promise. The aggressor must determine the constraints of the pledge before making the attempt to trick the target into it. The target's resistance is reflexive, and they do not suffer an unskilled dice penalty for the Occult skill.

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

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

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

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

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

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The target automatically knows that she was being talked into some sort of promise against her will. Any additional attempts to manipulate this target into an unwitting pledge within the next 24 hours automatically fail.

Failure: The unwitting pledge does not "take" and the target may reflexively roll Wits + Occult + Wyrd to determine if they sense the fact that they were being manipulated into

an unwilling agreement. Regardless of whether the target is aware of the trick or not, any additional attempts to manipulate this target into an unwitting pledge within the next 24 hours suffer an automatic -4 penalty (cumulative with successive attempts and failures over any 24 hour period.)

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

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

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

Aeolian attempts to bind an unwitting human into a Reaper's Pledge. She spends a point of willpower and strikes up a conversation with the target. Her starting dice pool is 13 (Manipulation + Persuasion + Wyrd). The human's starting resistance is 3 (Wits 3, no Occult, no Power Stat). Aeolian is further hampered by the Medial Endeavour Task (-1) and the Medial Glamour Boon (-1), although all other aspects of the pledge are Lesser and thus impose no hindrances. Aeolian receives a +3 bonus for her three levels of the Pledgesmith Merit, and she has both intoxicated and ensorcelled the human (+1 for each) for a total of +5 bonus dice. Thus the Storyteller rolls 13 dice for Aeolian's attempt (13-3-2+5) and achieves 4 successes. This is more than the 2 she would need to achieve the Reaper's Pledge, as no aspect of the pledge is greater than Medial, and the human is bound in the pledge. Aeolian must now make a Clarity check versus a sin level set by her Storyteller (but at least a level 4 sin).

PLEDGE CURSES

Pledge curses vary drastically, depending on the purpose of the individuals involved. A Lost who wants to bring about a foe's demise would, of course, use a far different pledge than one who simply wants to make her enemy eat crow or teach him to treat the less fortunate with a bit more respect. The following pledge curses are merely some wide ranging examples of some of the vast variety of pledge curses which exist, and serve as a demonstration of how such a curse might be worded, the mechanics thereof, and a sam-

ple situation which a Lost might use them in. They are not intended, by any means, to be the seen as the only pledge curses that exist, or even the only circumstances which the given curses might be used in.

Like any other pledge, a malediction must be balanced; its tasks, boons, sanctions and duration values all equaling out into a null sum. As the intention of most is to bind the “victim” into a pledge which he will eventually break, it is not unusual for the curser to use a Year and a Day duration or even a decade. This is long enough to ensure that she has sufficient time to manipulate the victim into breaking the oath, or to give him enough proverbial rope to hang himself with. This also allows for a greater sanction than a shorter duration would allow for, all other factors being equal, and lengthens the period of the sanction’s effect to a year and a day for standard curse sanctions as well. The True Fae are known to trick their victims into swearing lifelong maledictions, but few Lost feel that it is worth the great expenditure of Willpower to do so. If a Lost cannot be tricked, pushed or tempted into breaking his oath in 10 years, chances are he may have the resolve to continue abiding by it for a lifetime.

Similarly, it is common for maledictions to use Greater tasks as well. While you could expend your effort into tricking someone into saying they would show up to a movie and then arrange for them not to do it, the potential “backlash” you could impose upon them for so minor an oathbreaking is fairly slim. Since it would be very difficult to lead them into making such a trivial promise on their True Name or a vital emblem, most such curses are low-level vows, and designed just to teach the cursed individual a little lesson about keeping his word (or casually making oaths).

OATH OF CEASELESS STRIVING

“So help me God, I will not rest until this is done.” “I wish you well with that.”

Type: Oath, Higher Power

Tasks: Endeavour, Greater (–3, Will not rest until task is completed)

Boons: Blessing, Medial (+2, Iron Stamina 3), Adroitness, Lesser (+1, Gains +1 to applicable Skill roll)

Sanction: Curse, Greater (–3, Only 10s result in success, no successes equal dramatic failure)

Duration: Year and a Day, Greater (+3)

Invocation: 1 Willpower

Potential Applications: A man neglects his family obligations for the sake of his job, or worse, abuses them and then blames his actions on “work stress”. The child’s “fairy godmother” steps in. A Lost ignores a motley-mate for the sake of a position within the freehold, choosing to seek accolades for her devotion to her duty over protecting and aiding those she’s sworn to. Her motley reminds her of her priorities. A proud craftsman steals his student’s work and claims glory for it, not realizing how seriously his ward takes her art.

True Thomas’ Curse

One legendary example of a pledge curse is the story of True Thomas the Rhymer. While human interpretations of his story have varied over the centuries, the truth is this. Thomas was not given the “gift” of only being able to tell the truth, but was instead tricked into a cursed pledge, specifically designed to force him into breaking it.

After meeting young Thomas near a doorway to her realm, Elphame, the Queen of Love and Beauty, used her True Fae charms to entice the young man across the Hedge into Faerie with her. After what seemed like a few days of eating, drinking and enjoying the queen’s pleasures, Thomas began to pine for home. Elphame, knowing the fickleness of young human men, agreed on one condition. Thomas inquired as to the nature of the request, and the queen fooled him into believing that the condition was that he accept a gift from her — the blessing of prophesy. He agreed, and she asked him to promise on his word. Thomas swore to accept it as the key to his freedom “as a man of his word,” and before he’d finished the last syllable, Elphame had sealed him into an oath — his freedom was his own, as was the ability to see the future, but only so long as he told no lies. Immediately upon uttering his first untruth, he would be returned to her “loving” care, forever more. Thomas found himself under the tree where he’d first met Elphame, with full knowledge of what he’d vowed, but too late to do more than attempt to obey the Task of his oath.

To Thomas’ credit, he lasted longer than most young men would have under the same ban, going on to gain fame as a prophet, counselor and bard. But eventually Thomas lied and seven years to the day from the time he returned, the pledge was broken. Thomas woke in Faerie, at the feet of his “loving” Keeper. To this day, legend has it that Thomas serves his Fae Queen, using his gift to aid her in finding other sweet and easily-smitten young men upon which she may ply her amoral charms.

Most humans never realize what it is to literally work at a task until it is finished, no matter how many hours, days, months or years it takes. Not so for the Lost, however, many of whom learned such a lesson at the hands of their Keepers in Arcadia. Should the victim so much as lay down his pen or stop for a drink of water, this malediction is triggered, virtually ensuring his failure at any challenging tasks for the next year and a day.

THE IMPOSSIBLE QUEST

"I'll find her by the end of the week, or die trying!" "I would certainly appreciate it. I'll make it worth your while."

Type: Vow

Tasks: Endeavour, Greater (-3, Accomplish difficult task)

Boons: Blessing, Medial (+2, Resources 3), Favor, Greater (+3, If he accomplishes the task, she will owe him a huge favor)

Sanction: Death, Greater (-3)

Duration: Lesser, Week (+1)

Invocation: 1 Willpower

Potential Applications: A man has promised, and failed, to accomplish certain acts before, but will not do so again. A rival seeks to show someone up, one time too many. An investigator is nearing too close to an answer that needs to remain hidden, and must be stopped.

Promising to accomplish a certain task in a certain time period is not only common, it's the basis of most forms of commerce. Whether it's egotistical bragging, wishful thinking, or simple enthusiasm, however, it's not unusual for individuals to take these promises too far, and vow to do the unlikely (or impossible) within a set period of time. Add the phrase "or die trying" to this formula, and you've got a lethal combination, should there be a Lost adept with maledictions in the area to witness the oath.

THE UNDESIRED PROHIBITION

"I would never lie to you! Come on, this is me you're talking about! I'm Johnny Dee!" "You're right. You wouldn't do that, would you?"

Type: Oath, True Name

Tasks: Forbiddance, Greater (-3, Never tell a lie)

Boons: Blessing, Medial (+2, Inspiring)

Sanction: Flaw, Medial (-2, Speech Impediment),

Duration: Decade, Greater (+3)

Invocation: 1 Willpower

Potential Applications: A woman lies to the wrong person at the wrong time, and a pledge-master takes note. A criminal has been "proven" innocent, or gotten off on a technicality, but not for long. A self-righteous prig needs to be shown she's not infallible. A corrupt leader has held his position too long and deserves to be dethroned.

For those who deal with the lost, the words "I would never" are practically an open invitation to be bound into a pledge. Unfortunately for those who don't learn this lesson quickly enough, never is a very long time.

THE CARELESS THREAT

"I can't believe she did that! I'm going to kill her!" "May the fates guide your hand."

Type: Vow

Tasks: Endeavor, Greater (-3, Murder person threat was made against)

Boons: Blessing, Medial (+2, Fighting Finesse), Blessing, Medial (+2, Fast Reflexes 2), Adroitness, Lesser (+1, Gains +1 to applicable Skill roll)

Sanction: Poisoning of Boon, Adroitness, Lesser (-1, Gains -1 to applicable Skill roll), Vulnerability, Violence, Median (-2, 0 Defense, no Wyrd-based defense against curse)



Duration: Moon, Medial (+2)

Invocation: 1 Willpower

Potential Applications: A woman in a temper swears to kill a motley-mate, and is heard by her enemy. A trouble-maker at court is pushed to incite violence, and thus earns banishment. An assassin makes his next victim vulnerable to his attack by binding him in a curse to kill an innocent.

Casual threats take on a much greater meaning when someone can bind you to your stated intent. It can truly be a “damned if you do, damned if you don’t” situation. Wise fae learn to watch their tongues, and those who do not, rarely live long enough to make the same mistake too many times.

THE TOUCH OF THE OTHERS

Regardless of how mundane its human-worldly counterpart might be, items which spend extended periods in the Hedge or Faerie have the potential to absorb a measure of the fae magic which embodies those realms and become greater than their origins would suggest. A child’s doll, lost when its former owner was taken across the Hedge, might eventually become infused with enough undiluted Wyrd to become a Baby Cat’s Eye token, or a Blood Poppet. A thorn broken off from the Hedge might eventually evolve into a Hoarfrost Spine, Spinnerthorn or Utterbarb. Almost anything, left long enough in fae-realms, has the potential to do great good — or harm.

Certain items, however, embody this potential for ill. These objects, commonly called Trophies, not only spent an extended time period in Faerie, but were once the personal belongings of a specific True Fae. How these Trophies left Arcadia is uncertain. Some were likely stolen by escaping Lost, who then lost, sold, or otherwise no longer retained possession of them upon returning through the Thorns. Others may have been dropped (unintentionally, or perhaps with full knowledge of the malevolence they could cause) by their True Fae owners, either in the Hedge or while out “shopping” in the human world. Some turn up in Goblin Markets, rare treasures that exact excruciating prices from those interested in owning such a profane item.

Each Trophy is unique, resonating with the particular nature of the Gentry to which it once belonged. A glove from the Gentleman in Roseate Silks, for example, may reverberate with the seductive power that he exemplifies, while The Unholy Hag’s bag (formerly used for carrying disobedient children across the Hedge) might be laden with childhood fear. And, each Trophy’s curses can only be targeted in a purview related to the item’s flavor. Thus the Gentleman’s Glove might be used to lower someone’s Resistance rolls to Social challenges when being charmed or sweet talked, but would not provide the same penalty to Intimidation-based challenges. The Hag’s Bag could tempo-

I Believe That’s Mine

All Trophies have the same drawback — somewhere, out beyond the Thorns, their former owner (or his allies or heirs) still exists. Every time the Trophy is used, the Storyteller should make a hidden roll equal to the combined value of the activator’s Wyrd and the dot level of the Trophy. This represents the Trophy’s “beacon” to its former owner. On an exceptional success, the Trophy has successfully attracted its former owner’s attention.

This does not necessarily mean the True Fae will immediately appear out of a gateway to the Hedge and drag the Trophy (and its new owner) back to Arcadia. However, she is now aware of the Trophy’s location, and eventually (especially if the Trophy is used regularly) will be attracted to attempt to recapture her former possession.

This can be used as a plot arc to bring a character and his Keeper back into conflict, or to introduce some other Gentry element to the chronicle, at a level of danger and mystery in direct proportion to the havoc the character has caused with the trophy.

rarily give a target the mild derangement, Avoidance, but only with a focus of enclosed spaces, not of heights.

Activating a Trophy requires an expenditure of Willpower and Glamour to fuel and direct the item’s malevolent power. As Trophies’ cursing abilities are always harmful or destructive, targeting an individual is always an instant contested challenge made between the activator’s Wyrd + the Trophy’s dot level versus the target’s Resolve + Wyrd. Only a single success is necessary to activate a Trophy, but only one particular curse can be activated per turn. Multiple layers of curses can be levied upon the same individual, however each requires its own activation roll.

Note: being the subject of a curse is a magical effect and has the potential to be detected via Kenning, just as being the target of a Contract or token does (p. 65.)

Trophies may be purchased with the Token Merit, with a dot level equal to the combined value of all of its curses, with each curse being a single level. A Trophy may have more than one different curse of the same type (two different mild derangements, for example) but they do not stack. Each is its own curse, and must be activated separately. As well, additional applications of the same curse on a subject extend the duration, not the intensity, of the curse. Thus two applications of the nightmares curse

would give two consecutive nights of nightmares, not one very intense night, and two applications of a curse that gives a dice penalty on the next action will give that penalty on the next two actions, not double the penalty on the next one.

Storytellers are encouraged to choose from the following list of suggestions for curses, or to create their own using these offerings as a relative power level template:

- Triggers a particular mild Derangement related to Trophy's nature (choose when creating Trophy) for one hour.

- Target gets nightmares relating to Trophy's nature for one night. Target cannot regain Willpower through sleep.

- Next attempted instant action related to Trophy's nature is made at a -2 dice penalty.

- Next Resistance roll related to the Trophy's nature is made at a -2 dice penalty.

- Gives the target a mild illness or disease that will clear up in two days.

- Gives the target bad breath for a day.

- Within the next day, the target will lose a moderate sum of money (relative for his wealth level). This can be lost or stolen cash, a bank error, a drop in stocks, etc. It can be recovered through effort.

- For the next day, the target's luck with random circumstances is horrible. He hits every red light, has trouble finding parking spaces, gets called by telemarketers to an annoying level, gets rained on/steps in puddles, etc.

- In next combat, target is seemingly randomly the target of most powerful enemy present's first attack.

- Target's next physical attack is made at -2.

- Next person target is introduced to gains +2 on all Social challenges against target for first scene of interaction.

- Target loses something mundane but important to him within next hour (house key, wallet, dog, etc.)

- For the next 24 hours, target is seen as "troublesome" by authority figures (cops, teachers, bosses, etc.)

- For the next day, targeted character loses all random chance activities (roulette, lottery, eenie-meenie-miney-mo, drawing straws, etc.)

- Within next hour, something non-supernatural the target is using will break (coffee mug, keyboard, glasses, etc.)

- Target's Defense is at -1 penalty during next combat turn.







he smell was sweet and smoky, like pork over a barbeque pit, and the smoldering wisps suffused the air, making it hard to see or breathe. Grotus felt happy, sick, and numb — all at the same time. His prodigious belly (covered in the fine, silken fur that lay as a contrast to the bristly brush that hid the rest of his pale-pink skin) jiggled like a mound of gelatin, and he licked a tusk and admired the bleary trails that streaked across his vision and wondered, aloud, “Why is my gut wobbling?”

Then he felt his leg moving, too — an unmerciful push-and-pull, a deadened tug-of-war that almost felt like it was *inside* his kneecap, which made no sense at all, did it? He tried to pull himself up, but his arms (which he could barely see through the smoke) didn’t have a mind to respond.

The haze started to clear. He heard voices, echoing and distant, growing closer. Faces emerged from the parting smoke. One, a tawny cat’s face, sat poised above a red velour tuxedo. The other, an owl’s mug with fly eyes, licked at its cracked and weathered beak with a wormy tongue.

The cat-man held up a leg, the flesh mushroomed into a black, charred stump. A few coils of smoke circled. The owl nodded. Absently, Grotus wondered why they’d made a model of his leg, and who were these strange little hobs, anyhow?

They gibbered and chattered at one another, and Grotus tried to stand again, and this time his arms complied, but his legs did not. His one massive leg — practically a hirsute tree trunk — found easy purchase on the moss-covered forest floor, but his other...

He tumbled forward, his jaw cracking against the hard ground, his teeth slamming together and biting into his cheeks. He tasted blood. It was enough to snap his mind back to focus. The haze hanging in the air and the haze in his mind seemed to retreat, as if afraid of what he might do.

Grotus rolled onto his back and saw, now, what had happened. The two hobs stared at him, holding his severed leg in their hand. The end of the severed limb and the stump just above his knee were both blackened by fire. It didn’t hurt, not yet. But it would, soon enough. Grotus reached for the little monsters, his clawed hands eager to choke the life out of them, but they backed away.

The owl muttered something to the cat, and the cat spoke in sibilant, broken English.

“Leg taken. *Gift to us. Gratitude.*”

The owl took the leg from the cat and shoved it unceremoniously into a burlap sack. The owl said, “We replace, we replace!”

From within the sack, like a disturbed Santa Claus, the owl removed another leg — a bit smaller than the one taken, and clearly not real. It was a clumsy prosthesis, a jointed appendage made of hard reeds, rough twine, and some kind of foul-smelling black mud. The kneecap, though, was a curved bowl of glass, encrusted with chipped and dirty jewels.

Grotus tried to clamber backward, but they were fast, and his head was foggy. He felt their awful hands grab hold of his stump. A saw glinted in the growing moonlight.

“Replace, replace!” the owl chattered.

“It is our way,” cat-man said, “it is our *law*.”

They began to cut. Grotus screamed.

CHAPTER 3

Shadows Cast by Thorns

*I was close in enough to the nearest house to make plants out.
They had thick slobby leaves with red veins, like as if blood flowed in them.
What at first I'd thought were blossoms had more the look of tags of pink meat,
more or less hand-shaped.*

The breeze stirred them, I told myself, but just then there wasn't a breeze...

— MANLY WADE WELLMAN, *After Dark*

Shadows gather, and briars whisper. Spears of light through the thickening Hedge shudder and shake as the ivy parts — eyes peer out. Small hands cradle a pickax, or a basket containing a porcelain doll, or a rusted chain skewering hunks of half-cooked meat. Hot breath smells of honeyed wine and fresh blood. In the distance, down the trod, noises carry: the *plink-plink-plunk* of ill-tuned harp strings, the squalls of a child crying, the burbling murmur of inhuman voices making their needs and wants forever known.

The Hedge sometimes seems a lonely place, it's true. One can wander the trods and feel hopelessly disconnected — the bramble walls sway and teeter, but the road ahead seems empty, as vacant as a hungry mouth.

But the Thorns are not without their inhabitants. Hobgoblins stalk the tangled maze, hiding in twilight pools and down narrow step trails. Some are singular creatures, fiends that hunt alone, driven by their own indecipherable logics. Others travel together, but are barely more than intelligent animals: fat, maggoty serpents that travel in bands, or packs of hunting hounds once having served a forgotten Fae master.

That's not all. Hobgoblins are driven by an intelligence, a sanity, and a morality that is inhuman and often unwholesome. Many are of keen and cunning minds, and they gather together — some form tribes, many carve a swath out of the Hedge and build labyrinthine little shantytowns, and others rove about the warrens in bands of thieves or entertainers.

HOBBS, AHoy

This chapter takes another look at hobgoblins, and more specifically, at the “hob cultures” and Hedge towns that might

arise as a result of their presence. It's a section useful for Storytellers, as this chapter provides a number of new avenues for antagonists and stories (and helps to answer a disturbing question: “If a character is dragged off into the Hedge, where might she be taken besides Arcadia?”). But this chapter is also useful for players, who will find a few tricks and many hooks to help augment their characters and characters' stories.

GATHERINGS IN THE THORNS

The Hedge is wild, untamed. It's as mad as a fever dream, seemingly without laws and civilization, and to a point, that's true. But the strange creatures and beasts that call this place home know that out of the fog and tangle rise weird towns and fortresses, or that down a rutted trod might come rolling a covered wagon or a gutted '57 Chevy pulled by a passel of briar-wolves.

See, culture *does* exist in the Hedge. The Thorns are not without civilization. Hobs come home from the market with their wares and, do what? Disappear? Sink into the boggy earth? Hardly. Some have homes. They have mantles on which to place their trifles and tokens. They bring home gifts (some blessed, some cursed) to other hobs like them. They mumble and chatter. Some build. Others destroy. Any given hob might get a night's sleep or fornicate with a fellow goblin or start putting together an outfit for the mad, whirling barn dance that comes every fortnight.

Hobs have their little societies, their curious settlements hacked into the Hedge. But those changelings who discover such places often make a terrible mistake: they assume that to see such culture, such civilization is also to see sanity. Of course,

such things are hardly mutual, and those changelings who think they're about to find a bastion of safety and sanctity in the dark dream of the Hedge have another think coming.

What follows is an examination of the kinds of places and societies a motley might find in the deepest, oddest corners of the Thorns. Note that none of the following elements are meant to be exhaustive or, for that matter, separate — feel free to combine ideas together to conjure new stories that rise up out of the bramble-fed lunacy!

THORN-TOWNS AND HEDGE SETTLEMENTS

The Thorns are not just towering walls, briar-choked trees and crumbling hallways. A motley trekking down a long-forgotten trod may see strange architecture rise up out of the mist, or hear discordant music coming from somewhere, or wonder at a plume of black chimney smoke drifting up over the Hedge maze. These aren't empty places — no vacant tombs or hollow castles. They swarm with life. Hobs clamber up over ramparts. Keepers exiled from Arcadia sit in the bowels of such places, plotting their eternal vindications or gazing at endless books and maps and paintings, just trying to make sense of it all. In overgrown courtyards, changeling privateers practice their blade mastery or simply count their many coins.

They're not empty places, no — and they're not *safe* places, either. The Hedge is given over to its own rules, and such towns and towers subscribe to an often alien mindset, as well. They are hamlets full of monsters, burgs chockablock with bandits and murderers.

FORTRESSES

Once in a blue moon, war sweeps the Hedge. The lords of Summer go to battle against the Keepers that once claimed them, or two tribes of nasty hobgoblins clash their rusty blades over the muddy ground. The Thorns preserve the battlefields of such wars, and they also preserve the fortresses born of those conflicts. An old stone battlement may sit frozen, swarmed over by vines that shudder from the biting cold. A forgotten militia encampment sits, slowly sinking into the soft mouth of a malodorous swamp. A towering gate made from the bones of a thousand fallen changelings blocks the way down a legendary trod, and those who wish to pass must appease the shadowy soldiers that lurk within. Changelings who come across such places might find them empty, gutted of life but still with some cobwebbed weapons and tokens left behind — or, worse, such places may only *appear* empty.

The Fire Station

For all the Hedge's mind-boggling beauty and horror, the Fire Station is just the opposite: it's a blocky, mud-walled fortress in the middle of a blasted clearing — all the flora and fauna have been seared clean, leaving the ground as nothing more than dirt striated with scorch-marks. The Fire Station is home to a large cabal of potent changelings — appropriately known as "The Firemen" — who are dyed-in-the-wool bridge-burners. They see the Hedge as the gateway between the human world and Faerie, which means of course that the Hedge must *go*. So, they burn it. Anywhere they can. From within the fortress, they don their gear: armor carved from lava rock, welder's masks of metal and asbestos, hissing token torches that blast awful cones of flame.

The Fire Station itself is a dull, lifeless place — plain mud walls, various unadorned "racks" for the separatist soldiers, even a cafeteria where the food *du jour* is little more than snotty slop (they aren't comfortable dining on sweet Hedge fruits, given their opinion about the Hedge being a poisonous place and all). The only adornments one might find at the Fire Station are hobgoblins. Dead ones. Nailed to walls, or dangling from the black-beam rafters. Other than that, the place has all the amenities to live... but it doesn't have amenities to live well, or live happy.

Changelings within the Fire Station note that their Contracts and Tokens seem to resist activation — they suffer a -3 to make active. That said, the walls and locks and... well, just about everything in the Fire Station are all very tough. Assume that everything that is a part of this fortress has a Durability of 6.

The Marchland Needles

Despite what those cartographer imps may suggest (p. 88), the Hedge is not an easy place to map — it's not certain what shape this "between-realm" even takes. A flat plane? A disc floating on the back of a rose-eating beetle? A globe? A tangled weave of dream-stuffs? It seems therefore impossible that the Hedge has an edge, and yet, it does — eventually, the Thorns cease to be, and across that line lurks the splendor and madness of old Arcadia. Where this edge is doesn't really matter. It's a conceptual end to the Hedge, a place outside of space where Faerie's dark and pulsing heart thrusts up out of nothing. And long ago, somebody built a series of six towers of colored stone to mark the border between the two realms. Each tower is easily a hundred stories tall, a coiled spire like a strange hobgoblin's twisted horn. Once, long ago (200 years? 2,000? 2,000,000?), these towers were manned fortresses keeping both the True Fae at bay and ensuring that no foolish wanderers could accidentally stumble into Arcadia and lose themselves entirely. It didn't last. Being so close to Faerie was troubling enough on the mind, as was living sequestered in a tower where one could routinely gaze out and see the mind-breaking majesty of Arcadia just next door. It wore down the minds of those within. Suspicions arose, became alive. Phobias bloomed, whole flowers of fear and loathing. It didn't happen all at once, the murder of those within. It was slow; one night at a time. But eventually, the halls were stacked with bodies. Food spoiled. Metal rusted. Now, the towers — each just close enough so one can see the other tower as a tiny needle in the distance — are home to vagrant hobs and other strange creatures, places of dust and death.

Changelings who enter one of the six Marchland Needles find it has both bonus and detriment. The bonus is, the True Fae cannot enter the towers. It's impossible. It's as if the very air resists them. The downside is, the towers slowly drive inhabitants mad. Every two days, the changeling gains a new mild derangement, has a mild derangement turn to a severe derangement, or has the same thing happen with minor/major frailties (though when they leave the tower for a full 12 hours, all such madness flees).

THORN-TOWNS

People, hobs, and other... *things* live in the Hedge. A few changelings have retired to hidden Hollows. Some hobs dwell in thatch huts, gutted trees, or even within (or beneath) the Hedge walls themselves. Many, though, find community within the Dae-dalian walls, a kind of collective madness that may serve great purpose (protection, commiseration, exploitation) or no purpose at all. These small "Thorn-towns" exist in rare parts of the Hedge.

Some look like one might envision a town to look— a muddy crossroads separating four quadrants of houses cobbled together with various “found items,” or even a *faux*-suburban line of pastel houses confined in a world of white picket fences. Many, though, do not conform to anyone’s rational idea of a “town” — a hive of hobs that live and work beneath the ground, a swaying skyscraper made of vine and petal instead of steel and glass, or even a bleak little burg trapped in a mirror. No matter the form, though, Thorn-towns have their own hard-to-peg cultures. Changelings learn quickly that such places belong to a whole other world.

Malcadence’s Den

It’s a den of iniquity; a sprawling settlement of *sin*. It’s forever night in the burg of Malcadence’s Den. Fireflies flit about. Crickets buzz a jarring racket (and those who listen closely might hear whispered entreaties urging listeners to indulge long-buried urges). Nobody comes to the Den looking for wisdom. Principles die here, choked beneath the salty puddles that dot the boardwalks and muddy banks. Most of the town’s populace is transient: those who come to give into their worst inclinations then stumble away, groggy and sick and happy. It has its residents, though, those mad changelings who run (or work) the brothels, gambling houses and fighting pits. Hobs serve in a lower capacity, and once in a rare while a Keeper comes through, his grim presence darkening even the deepest of shadows and sending everybody but the fireflies into hiding. Soon as the danger passes, the sin kicks back into high gear — narcotic smoke drifts toward the pregnant moon, blood and beer run down between floorboards, and the sounds of belly-laugh and shrieking sobs suffuse the night air.

Changelings who come to the Den find that, while here, they cannot regain Willpower by indulging in behaviors related to Virtue. However, when they indulge Vice, they not only gain a point of Willpower, but they also gain a point of Glamour.

The Pinnacle of Popham

This is the story the people of Popham tell: their boat (a pinnacle) was on the way to the not-long-for-the-world English Colony in Maine, when a terrible storm swept the boat beneath the waves. Their town itself is a boat — literally, a beached Dutch-built vessel, now replete with threadbare sails and rotting wood. They’ve built homes into and off of the boat, with gangplanks and walkways connecting up from the crow’s nest and spreading across to the Hedge walls themselves. They’re an alarmingly moral crew, these so-called people — they wear all black, they hide their faces, they show very little skin at all. They do not brook foul language, shows of sexual impropriety (nary a whiff!), or violence that their elders did not call for. Thing is, these people aren’t people at all. They’re hobgoblins, presumably (those who have laid low one of the pilgrims of Popham found they were little more than bags of skin filled with swirling sand), but they sure seem to *believe* that they’re really people. Theories suggest that the boat is the real deal, but that when it came “through” into the Hedge, those who manned the vessel were probably taken by Fae or butchered by vicious goblins. The current inhabitants seem to take a great deal of their behaviors from a dusty old journal found in the captain’s quarters.

In an odd turn, changelings can use the Pinnacle of Popham to help increase their Clarity. Something about this town and these hobs helps ensure that a character’s sanity comes back into perspective. Doing so is not a pleasant experience. The moralists of Popham are brutal — they beat moral lessons and cold virtue into the flesh of those who

desire (or deserve) such rebalancing. For every point of lethal damage accrued as a result of these lessons, the changeling may take one experience point off the cost of raising his Clarity by one dot, but the catch is that the changeling must accept punishment for a number of days equal to 10 minus her current Morality score. Some freeholds have sent their wayward Lost to the Pinnacle for “reeducation.” Ironic, perhaps, that it is done at the hands of hobs masquerading as humans.

Whiterope

It looks like a nice town. Hell, it looks like a *sane* town. It’s dropped in the middle of the Hedge, but its streets are well-organized, cobbled with clean white brick. The little houses and merchant-fronts are maybe a bit overgrown with the invasive flora of the Thorns, but even that gives it kind of a quaint, organic look. In the morning and evening, hobgoblins come out and sweep the streets with hay brooms. They can be seen on rooftops, hammering down moss-slick shingles, or laying out a sweet-smelling trifle pie on an oaken sill. Changelings might come here and see a place of potential solace, somewhere that will welcome them and offer a bastion of *breath* in the otherwise lunatic labyrinth of the Hedge. And that is all a terrible lie. The citizens of Whiterope *hate* changelings with a murderous zeal. They are woefully prejudiced against the Lost for reasons that are as-yet-unknown; when they encounter a motley, the town mobilizes. They take captives. They lock them away, or torture them, or hang them from the gallows that sit in the middle of town.

The hobs can smell changelings with a Wits + Composure roll + a changeling’s Wyrd (or the highest Wyrd within the motley). Those who do brave its angry streets may find that access to goblin fruits, oddments and trifles is very easy, for the hobs here leave such things lying about.

OUTPOSTS

Not big enough to be Thorn-towns, outposts are the “frontier settlements” of the Hedge. These far-flung gatherings are small — just a building or three — and serve as home to no more than five or six creatures or changelings. They often mark the edge of “known Hedge,” meaning that beyond an outpost lurks a part of the briar that remains largely uncharted. The outposts themselves serve various potential functions: they may watch the wildest parts of the Thorns for danger (exiled Keepers coming through the brush, rampaging hobgoblin beasts, lone changelings gone mad and become truly “lost”), they might serve as a waystation for those seeking to push deeper into the unknown, or they may consist of those changelings or hobs that simply wish to remain isolated from the rest of the realm. Outposts are always on the edge — sometimes literally, like those that sit perched on cliff faces or at the base of a dizzying Hedge mountain.

The Caliginous Trods

This is not one outpost, but a series of them — one might be a small stone house concealed under a hill, another might consist of a pile of ruined glass and thatch held up by little more than a handful of half-rotted beams. The real outposts, though, lie *behind* the surface, hidden away from the known trods and pathways. These are the Caliginous Trods, named as such because no matter the time of day, they are always immersed in dim evening shades and saturated with coils of swiftly-moving mist. The trods are secret, and difficult to find when looking for them (though those who “keep” the trods know the ways in and out). They’re used

primarily to help changelings escape from Arcadia — the journey back when one has fled her durance is no easy trip, and many get taken by hobs or reclaimed by desperate Keepers. The Caliginous Trods represent a safe haven and pathway, manned by a few old changelings and several sympathetic hobs. The roads are not *universally* safe, of course — the Hedge has its many dangers, from sinking pits to lashing vines — but for the most part it seems to be a route that the Keepers have yet to find. The watchers of these hidden byways will do anything to keep it that way. One such watcher, a blue-furred Lost with deep black eyes and a pair of massive stag's antlers, has been a vigilant guardian of the paths for as long as any can remember. He speaks not at all, but communicates in hand gestures to help fleeing changelings use the trods.

Finding these trods without help is difficult — extended Wits + Investigation roll, with a -5 dice pool; each roll is equal to one 24-hour period of searching, and 12 total successes must be achieved. (Alternately, those who know the trods already can always find the secret walking trails in and out of them.) Those who help man these trods — i.e., characters who perhaps walk the trods with escaping changelings to keep them safe and at least a little bit sane — can stabilize their own Clarity for a time (the next roll to check for degeneration gains +2 dice). In addition, those who help for a protracted period of time (shepherding a new motley of changelings back to the world) are able to buy a new dot of Wyrd at a reduced cost (new dots x 7).

Whiskey Tango Foxtrot

It's a small brick lighthouse that sits nowhere near an ocean. Its pale candle-lit beam (reflected by a bowl of mirrored shards) just barely makes it over the Hedge wall. The five wayward changelings that dwell here — each from the militia group known as Bloody Wing — still don't know the truth about why they're stationed at this distant outpost. They were told that something is coming: something big; something terrible; something that'll eat the whole Hedge up in one brutal gulp. It's not true. About 10 years back, their militia group sent them here because these five (well, it *was* seven — go ahead, ask them about the "accident") soldiers had gone mad in the line of duty. So, their superiors in Bloody Wing convinced them that it was their job to watch for the mysterious coming evil and act as the first line of defense against it. Zealous and eager, they went in pursuit of a lie, as the story was just to get them out of the way, not to have them serve any kind of function. Curious thing is, the lighthouse was here long before they took ownership of it — but they found it, and made it their settlement. They dwell here, slowly pickling in their own flavors of crazy.

Changelings who come here may become infected by the madness of the unknowingly-exiled Bloody Wing militants. After the first night, changelings will begin to experience hallucinations that suggest something really is coming — shaking of the brush, shadows darting, a great bellowing voice that roars. The one advantage to being here is that the five lunatics train obsessively, and can help teach martial Skills — one dot of Brawl, Firearms or Weaponry can be bought from them at a reduced rate (new dots x 2).

HOB WORKERS

Some hobgoblins must work — it's nothing so straightforward as clocking in at a fruit stand for an eight-hour shift, but hobs need things. They are given over to both an economy and an ecology: they need to eat, drink, have shelter, and feed their copious urges. They don't exist in a vacuum. Plump fruits don't fall

Choose Your Own Hobgoblin

We said it before, but it bears repeating: the elements here are not meant to exist independently of one another. Use them together. They interlock nicely. A diminutive fox-face hob goes to his temple in the morning, and throws a few bloodied thorns into the fountain to venerate the Hedge. Then he heads out with his band of hunters, tracking briar-wolves for their pelts or trapping changelings for his True Fae employer. Later, he returns to his town — a small outpost forever cast in evening's gloom — and empties the dirt from the boots and scrubs the blood from the soles before kicking back for a well-deserved rest. Take several concepts, pair them together, see how they play.

onto their laps. Tunnels and tree-houses don't build themselves. So it is that hobs must work.

Below are examples of hobgoblins that one might encounter working somewhere in the Hedge, performing their sometimes inscrutable hob-jobs.

ARCHITECTS

They are driven to build, these creatures. Whatever breed they are or tribe they belong to, these hobgoblins are the ones who build up the Hedge towns and fortresses, who carve secret paths (*safe* paths, at least for them) into and above the thorny walls, and who might help a motley of changelings cobble together a Hollow and its many doors and strange amenities.

Boggart Holes

One will find the holes if one looks hard enough, all covered in branches and leaves and other Hedge detritus (and many find it odd that they try to hide). They live down there in their mud-walled homes, warming their hands by heated rocks or sharpening their tools. They live to work, these dirt-cheeked hobs. They'll build anything, including helping a motley build its Hollow. They're efficient. They're fast. They're single-minded, never lazy, and always able to find the best materials, the proper amenities, the right doors. They say little, the industrious fiends. And when they're done, they head back out, returning to their subterranean homes (their "hob-holes") to once more wait for work. It should be noted, though: their work is never cheap. Worse, most changelings never realize that no matter the Hollow's defenses, the boggarts responsible will always be able to enter.

Changelings will have to pay to procure the services of a hole-bound boggart. A potent token, a profound collection of trifles and oddments, maybe a pledge that serves the hob's needs. If the changeling pays the cost, then buying Hollow dots is far cheaper, now, than it was before: new dots x 1 instead of new dots x 2. Finding a "hob-hole" necessitates a Wits + Composure roll, with a -3 penalty.

Pathmakers (or "Red-Hands")

Their hands are red from the blisters and blood. These hobs are obsessed with the cartography of the Hedge and how one gets around. They carve roads. They use nicked machetes to hack new trails. They take planks, branches and barrel halves, and build

pathways, ladders and widow's walks all around the towering walls. Sometimes, these paths make sense and seem to go somewhere — maybe to a Thorn-town or to the hob's own moss-roofed home somewhere in the maze. Other times, they go nowhere at all, just a meandering maze atop a maze, a trick and a trap all the same. The thing is, these hobs can't stop. That's why their hands have been worn down to bloodied tatters. One thing is for certain: don't get in their way, or they'll incorporate you into their design.

Following the paths helps a changeling navigate the Hedge, allowing the changeling's player a 9-again on navigation rolls. But getting in the way of the Pathmakers or damaging their hard work will earn a changeling a swift and murderous rebuke.

DOCTORS

The Hedge is dangerous: even a bad scratch from a long thorn can leave a wound suppurating, becoming infected with who-knows-what kind of fey bacteria. A scrap with a goblin, a melee with a True Fae, even a misstep down a precarious embankment can leave a changeling with wounds from a busted elbow to a shattered skull. But even then, it takes a very brave changeling to accept the medical prowess of a hobgoblin devoted to the task of doctoring, doesn't it?

The Sawbones of Pickwick Circus

Out there, in the Hedge, lies a clearing, and in this clearing are a handful of white tents whose edges are red with blood. A sign, cut with tin snips, reads: *Pickwick Circus*. Hobs of many shapes and sizes mill about, waiting for work. They sit on oaken chests filled with ice. They dangle their legs over rickety, rusted beds. They are poised on the edge of performance. Ah, but when the call comes, they're ready to go, for these are surgeons — not the type to fix a man, oh no, but the type to carve into him. They sell limbs, you see, even if they don't have those limbs available. Livers, too, or hearts, or any organ. When the mission is on, they leave their tents and find a victim wandering the Hedge, and from that victim they take what they need. Leg. Arm. Eye. Whatever. When possible, they bring the victim back to their little tent city so that all can have a hand in the surgery, but if they must, they'll do the work "in-the-field." They've taken an oath, though: whatever they take, they must replace. They build strange prosthetic limbs from stuff found in the Hedge, and that's what they leave behind.

While some changelings have been cursed with prosthetic limbs that seem to have no function at all, most have a body part replaced with a Token Limb (see sidebar). When the surgery is complete, the character has a number of points of lethal damage equal to the dots in the Token Limb. Note that a character cannot ask for a Token Limb — that's not how it works. The token is a side effect, albeit an occasionally beneficial one.

The Yellow Nurses

They're cursed, these hobgoblins. Of all stripes, they are — cat-faced anomalies, hissing half-human things with white larvae flesh, plasticine manikins dragging their legless bodies along by crooked arms. Who knows how they were cursed to become what they are? When a changeling or another goblin becomes wounded in the Hedge, the Yellow Nurses might detect it. Soon, they gather and start to follow — first at a distance, but soon they close in. Drooling. Snapping their jaws. Eyes rolling around like an addict hungry for junk. A changeling might be afraid (and in many ways, maybe should be), but those who let the nurses ap-

Token Limb (• to •••••)

This token is any Hedge prosthesis attached to the changeling's body by the Sawbones as a replacement for a stolen limb. The limb or extremity is unique in that it's cobbled together from various parts of this dream-fed land, and as a result the token contains a Contract bound into it.

The Contract must be one of equal value to the dots purchased in the Token Limb, and that Contract may only come from the Universal Contracts.

The changeling activates the token as usual (see "Activating a Token," *Changeling: The Lost*, pp. 201–202), only requiring the changeling's incensed will to activate. Once triggered, the changeling may use the Contract contained within for the remainder of the scene. Using the Contract necessitates following all the same systems found under that Contract, with the one exception being that the power's Glamour cost is reduced by one (to a minimum of zero). Using Shadowpatch (from a Token Limb that may have oily shadows dripping from its joint) still necessitates the Wits + Wyrd roll, but now has no Glamour cost.

Action: Instant

Mien: As noted, Token Limbs tend to have an appearance appropriate to the Contract bound within it — Skin Mask may come from a false hand whose fingers are topped with differently-shaped scalpel tips (and are used to alter the flesh accordingly), while Pathfinder may consist of an eyeball made of an olive-like goblin fruit (attuned, as it is, to the Hedge).

Drawback: When this token is purchased, the player must choose one Physical Skill that is negatively associated with this limb. This Skill now loses the 10-again quality, and any 1s rolled with that Skill take away one success each (Contract rolls don't count). The diminished Skill should be appropriate to the limb: a new leg might have its Athletics reduced, a new hand might see Larceny suffer, a token eye may reduce one's Firearm ability, and so forth.

Catch: The limb becomes a cause for concern — an enemy item ineluctably fixed to the flesh. The character activates the limb without paying the standard cost, and as a result must assume one of the following mild derangements: Fixation, Inferiority Complex, or Suspicion. This derangement exists until the character gets one full (eight hours) night of sleep.

pear or who cannot fight them off learn the truth: these goblins feed from injuries. They actually *eat* the injuries, clamping their mouths down on the wounds and sucking at the infections and misery with probing tongues. It's an enervating process, a terrible, leeching event — and sometimes, they're hard to keep at bay even after they've fed. After they feed, the hobs grow jaundiced, hence the name "Yellow Nurses."

The Yellow Nurses eat only lethal damage, having no appetite for or interest in bashing or aggravated. For each point of damage they consume (and thus it leaves the changeling's Health track), they also take a Willpower point. They take one point of Health and one point of Willpower per turn. They do not stop, though, and once all of a changeling's Willpower is gone, they start eating Attribute dots. The Attribute dots return at a rate of one-per-day after the fact.

HUNTERS

Amongst the Thorns, many beasts walk — antlered things with almandine eyes, lumbering brutes with oily carapaces, steam-fed mantids, and so forth. As already noted, though, it isn't just beasts, is it? True Fae, changelings, lost humans... all these wander the many mazes, too. Hobgoblin hunters are therefore fairly common. Some are lone hunters, but many travel in roving bands, pursuing their quarries with heavy nets, clockwork blunderbusses, and skull-cracking clubs. Others set traps, preferring instead to let prey come to them. The bigger question is, *why* do they hunt?

Goblins Red in Tooth and Claw

They hunt because they must. These hobs have lost their minds. Once, they were intelligent, but the Hedge has a way of *wearing* down one's sanity, even the sanity of an otherworldly goblin. Perhaps these creatures were tortured by some malefic Keeper, or perhaps the labyrinthine nature of the tangled briar infected their poor minds. Now, they can do nothing but haunt the Hedge, hunting whatever they find there. They do not use weapons; they seem incapable of it. It's all tooth and claw, tentacle and barb — whatever natural weapon lurks on their bodies may find its way rending, slashing, poisoning. The *only* good news is, these hunters seem driven only to hunt prey that their instincts consider "worthy." Creatures weaker than them may pass by, receiving little more than a warning snap of the jaws or a guttural growl that might have once been language.

Compare a character's traits to the traits of the biggest hobgoblin amongst these hunters — generally, the hunters size prey up by their physical presence, so in general add up the changeling's Physical Attributes and compare to the hob's Physical Attributes. If the changeling is higher, the hobs may hunt. If it's equal to or lesser, then they'll ignore the changeling unless they're provoked.

The Grub Legion

It's about the money. They don't want goblin fruits or tokens, no matter how rare. They want cash. Or gold coins. Or ducats, wampum, euros, thorn bits or whatever currency they can get their hands on. These greedy hob soldiers are a true mercenary band, hunting those who they're paid to hunt. They've no loyalties. A True Fae wants them to hunt a changeling? A changeling wants them to hunt a hob? Doesn't matter as long as the customer's willing to pony up the gold. Soon as they're "on-point," they put their roughshod armor and unsheathe their crooked blades and head out hunting. They'll accept whatever parameters the client dictates: keep the target alive, kill him but take and mount the head, hamstring him, whatever. They're not always *good* at restraining themselves, but they do try. One will know the Grub Legion not by their appearance —

despite the name, they do not look like Grubs. But they do follow a powerful hob known as the Grub, and his worm's visage is painted on every hunter's helmet and blade in bone dust and blood.

*The means to contact the Grub Legion is not well-known: a changeling must slather a coin in her own blood and spit, and then bury it in the Hedge dirt. The Legion will show by the end of the day, marching lockstep. Payment is in money, and the cost in Resources increases with the danger posited by the target (look at the Retainer Merit on p. 116 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook** to determine the "dot-level" of the prey). The hunters ask for payment after the act only — woe to the client that cannot pay the fee once the job is complete.*

MERCHANTS

Goblin Markets are not the only time the hobgoblins peddle their wares. Many roam the Hedge, making salacious deals and infernal bargains. Once in a while a motley will come across a hobgoblin who just wants a straight-up trade, no tricks, no damning loopholes. This represents part of a sometimes-inscrutable Hedge-based economy — tinker hobs (below) might make something that they trade with merchants, who go off to sell what they've found. Or perhaps they sell those goods stolen from hapless changelings, or they may even broker secrets and knowledge plucked from minds like fruit from a tree. Goblin merchants don't just work the tangled economy; they are inextricably bound to it, woven into its fabric.

The Niche

It's literally as the name suggests: a small niche carved out of the Hedge walls, hacked out of the brush or eroded from the stone walls. It's a small shop. The store is manned by a single hobgoblin. On the back wall wait a few weapons and rag-tag pieces of armor, hanging from pegs. Lush fruits cluster in hammock-nets above. Other odd baubles and glittery bits are strewn about. Inevitably, a changeling sees something he wants, or is willing to make an offer on. The hobgoblin in-charge seems bored, and wants to get away from the store for awhile — so, the hob makes an offer. If the changeling will take over the store for "a little while," so





the goblin can go stretch his legs, take a piss, whatever, then the changeling can have the item so desired, free-of-charge. When the changeling agrees — and shakes on it — the hobgoblin appears outside the store, and the changeling appears within the Niche. The changeling can't leave. At least, not until she makes a deal to have someone man the shop for "a little while."

A changeling who falls prey to this trap cannot leave the store. Every effort to escape the store earns her one lethal point of damage (her flesh shows terrible razor cuts and broken skin). She has only two ways of escaping: one, for someone outside the Niche to go get the previous storekeeper and drag him back; and two, for the changeling to make the same deal with another individual (hob, changeling, Fae, human, etc.), which is a sin against Morality 5. That being said, when the changeling escapes from the store, she does gain the item she bargained for, but no others.

Wagon Train of Values

Changelings will hear it coming long before they see it — the squeak of the wheels, the *clop-clop* of bony horse hooves, the rattle of wagons as they bound out of potholes and ditches. It's a wagon train, the wagons themselves looking like prairie schooners (though sometimes the fabric covering them is a net of pale leaves or a fine mesh of spun worm's silk). It's a seemingly endless parade, with wagon following wagon following wagon, each bumbling along slowly with a different hob or hob family at the helm. This is the trick to the Wagon Train of Values: they only sell what the characters need. They can *smell* the need carried on the wind, like a drizzle of blood calling a school of sharks in the ocean current. A changeling breaks his only weapon, and finds himself without a way to defend himself? A lost soul is dizzy and starved, unable to find palatable food along the switchbacks and serpentine trods? A True Fae requires the broken heart of a spurned teenage girl to thrust into the chest of an as-yet-lifeless fetch? Along rumbles the Wagon Train of Values, ready to make an offer. It's funny; they only sell what their target needs. If the target needs a weapon, all the wagons play host to weapons, and weapons alone...

Changelings may only inadvertently call the Wagon Train of Values by vocalizing their need aloud; if they seek to consciously summon the merchants, though, they cannot. It must be born out of true desperation and desire. The hobs' prices are steep (and they never ask for favors, instead only asking for something the character possesses), but they rarely entangle the changeling in some accursed deal.

TINKERS

Miners. Mechanics. Breakers. Fixers. A hob with spider-legs for fingers plucks solder wire from a spool. A manikin made of fool's gold hammers listlessly at a shield made of bronzed moth wings. A gaggle of flitting flies repairs the paper-thin gears of an elaborate — and unfathomable — device. These hobs are all *tinkers* — they can't stop futzing, fixing, and breaking things down into their constituent components.

The Imps of Anaximander

Cartographers, the whole lot of them. It's a guild, or so they claim. They're building a map of the Hedge—a physical map, formed of bits and scraps of whatever they can find. They hover over it obsessively. Half stay behind to contribute to the map, the other half goes out to collect bits or to map new parts of the brambled maze. Of course, the Hedge changes — it's not a consistent place, and it shifts with the sluggish tumble of a languid dream, but the imps don't care. They just keep on building the map, forever anon. Those who have seen the map find it truly exhilarating: it's alarmingly accurate, and one can gaze down into it and see themselves and others, small as little beetles wandering the pathways and channels and caverns. Anaximander, for the record, was reportedly the "original" cartographer that started tinkering with this physical (and in some places *mechanical* map) centuries before — but he's been lost to the furthest flung reaches of the Thorns. They long for his presence once more.

For every five minutes a changeling can look at the map, he gains +1 to rolls made to navigate the Hedge for the following week, to a maximum of +5 dice. A problem exists, though, in that the imps are protective of their work, and will attack any they find poring over their obsessive effort. Fortunately, they're so obsessed that a changeling who succeeds on a Wits + Stealth roll can stand right next to one of these chattering, murmuring creatures (provided they're not touching them, of course) and go on unnoticed.

The Triflesmiths

These wandering nomads search the Hedge, laughing, filling themselves on drunken fruits and milky streams, generally catering to their own good-time whims. But it's not all shits and giggles, is it? When it comes down to brass tacks, these tinkers lick the foam from their lips with the back of an arm and get to work — the work of forging trifles and tokens (or, in many cases, repairing ones that are broken). With callused hands, they have an intuitive sense of what makes a token *tick*, as if they can sense the ebb and flow of Hedge magic within. The biggest challenge confronting those who seek the Triflesmiths is how few of them exist — and, given the relative size of the Hedge (anywhere from the "size of planet Earth" to "infinite as dreams"), finding a handful of very-specific hobgoblins is no easy task.

Tracking down the Triflesmiths cannot be relegated to a roll, and likely involves an entire chapter or two within a larger story. Once found, the Triflesmiths demand a laundry list of odd items as payment, usually one per dot of the Token Merit desired. Such items can

be found in the Hedge (the beak of a cobbler cormorant, a twisted branch from the snake-trap tree, the helmet of one of the Grub Legion), and will serve the Triflesmiths as components for future tokens and trifles. Using the Triflesmiths reduces the cost to buy a token — new dots x 1 for one example of the Token Merit.

SOLITARY STRUCTURES

Sometimes, a changeling will find a lone structure way out there amongst the Thorns, a place that once served a certain purpose, and maybe still serves it to this day. Many are populated by hobs that remain bound to such locations out of some mad duty or because they were cursed to dwell there. A few are home to those wild-eyed changelings that have given up the mortal world in favor of this magical and perilous land.

LIBRARIES

Most hobgoblins don't seem to read. If they do, they read books that human eyes cannot parse: pages that stir and flutter like a moth with a broken wing, or with words that seem to crawl off the page and into the eye of the reader. So why, then, is the Hedge home to weird little libraries that linger along remote trods? What is the purpose of such places? They certainly are repositories of knowledge. But for whom?

Owlsback

The Owlsback is a mountain. It has no static location; *it moves*. One may spot it through the heat vapor rising off sun-baked Hedge walls, and then upon reorienting to get a better look will find that it has seemingly vanished. (It has earned its name because the shape of the mountain calls to mind an owl, hunched over and gnawing on prey.) The entire mountain — yes, you read that right — is a library. It constitutes just about an infinite number of books, parchments, scrolls, newspapers, magazines and other forms of written media. It is easily as Byzantine in its organization as the Hedge itself. Books lurk at the top of ladders, comprise the walls of various tunnels and bolt-holes, fill entire banquet halls (replete with place settings where the plates have no food, only books). It's manned by a series of hobs that live and breed there, sometimes stopping to eat the pages of books or, even better, to eat one another. The library is ultimately home to most of the books ever printed, but good luck finding them. Some true gems hide within the endless halls and tunnels, rewarding those changelings that find them. Taking books from the library, however, is not an option: the hobgoblins that dwell here swarm upon the thief, biting and scratching. If a changeling succeeds in taking a book from Owlsback, it disintegrates into meaningless items — fly wings, loose threads, fingernail clippings, and the like.

Changelings that come across books on the ancient pacts between the True Fae and the elements of the world will learn much treasured knowledge, indeed. Those who get a look at such a book can buy non-affinity Contracts as if they were affinity, one for each book found.

MINES

The Hedge isn't all above-ground. Vast and intricate tunnel systems exist beneath the surface, many of which have been carved by enterprising goblins looking for a pretty gem, a vein of precious metal, or long-forgotten trifles. Most of the entrances and exits to such places are well-concealed, hidden the way a changeling might hide her Hollow. Most mines are small affairs, just a shaft and a tunnel, lorded over by one or a pair of goblins desperate for what the

walls might contain. They might eventually bore their way through to a larger cavern system (or they might step on a weak patch of ground and go tumbling into eternal shadow). Some mines, though, are mammoth: entire subterranean worlds unto themselves, thousands of square miles of the darkest places in the Hedge. The hobs that live in such places are often blind, hungry, and quite mad.

The Bone Vein of the Grim Graves

This is the story the wicked barons of this monstrous mining system tell: once, a long time ago, the Hedge was destroyed by some manner of cataclysm (popular theory suggests that somehow, the Gentry did it, perhaps to punish rebellious hobs). The destruction happened in a way that most of the land was swallowed beneath the surface, the ground becoming a great, muddy mouth and sucking it all in and chewing it all up. Whether the story is true or not, one element of it is authentic, and that is what the Bone Vein of the Grim Graves is meant to dig up: *bodies*. They mine the calcified corpses of various hobgoblins here in the endless miles of tunnels, chipping them free from the rock and sending them along to... well, nobody knows where, or for what purpose. The barons, of course, don't do this work themselves. They take slaves — quite often changelings, sometimes borrowed from liberal Keepers (thus making the Bone Vein mine one avenue for potential escape, given that the mine supposedly connects to the subterranean interior of Arcadia itself). So what if their "workers" get trapped in collapsing tunnels, get eaten by nocturnal underground dwellers, or suck in air from a pocket of hallucinogenic gas and get lost in the deep black spaces of absolutely nowhere? They'll find more. Or steal them.

The corpses unearthed often have powerful tokens attached to them — either carried by them when they perished, or as parts of their bodies. A character that unearths such a four- or five-dot token may pay for it as if it would only cost them three dots (12 experience points).

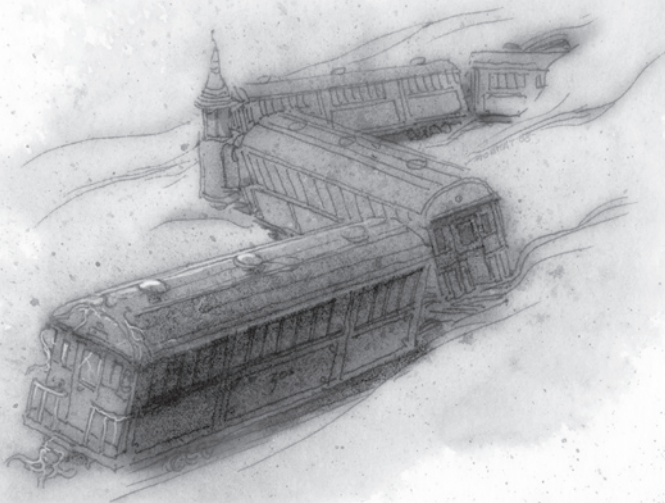
PRISONS

Some of the worst, vilest prisons exist in the Hedge. Violate some unknown precept, and a swarm of hobgoblins might throw you into a dank oubliette, or might crucify you on a yew tree with four of your best friends. It's not just changelings that end up the victims of such unbidden authority, either — some hobgoblins police themselves, and others will even attempt to waylay an exiled or otherwise-weakened True Fae (and no changeling wants to be forever bunkmates with a trapped Keeper).

The Guttred Ghob

It's a traveling prison, lumbering around on two massive legs, each as round as a giant redwood. That's right, the Guttred Ghob is alive... sort of. It's a massive beast with a midsection emptied of its contents and made to fit about 30 different prisoners, from hobgoblins to changelings to, as noted, exiled Keepers. The bones remain, making for excellent cages, but the rest of the guts and viscera were discarded long ago. One would think that the removal of such critical bits would kill any creature big or small, and they'd be more or less correct — the Ghob is actually kept alive by some manner of Hedge necromancy, the rituals performed nightly by the hobgoblin guards that live within the creature's abdominal shell. The hollow-eyed beast isn't really alive at all, then, just *animated* — it has minimal intelligence and its hulking form is urged from one trod to the next by those guards that pilot the thing.

The traveling prison beast known as the Guttred Ghob is a great place to learn Goblin Contracts — not only is the belly-filled pris-



on rife with all manner of deviant characters who might know such sneaky tricks, but many have left behind arcane secrets scrawled into the bones of the Ghob itself. As such, while enduring a stay within the Gutted Ghob, a character may learn one new Goblin Contract at a cost of new dots x 2 instead of the normal cost.

RUINS

It's old, the Hedge. How old? Hard to say, but suggesting that it's as "old as dreams" (meaning, old as humanity itself) is a common benchmark. Because of this, the Thorns carry with them a gargantuan measure of history. Admittedly, much of it's been lost to the shifting nature of the realm, but some signs and scars of the Hedge's past still remain on or near the surface. The land is dotted with ruins, half-collapsed cathedrals and villages and fire-gutted trees. These are markers of another day, one that forces a changeling to ask whether things "back then" were different, or whether the Hedge always remains the same, forever composed of the strange stuff of dreams and nightmares.

The Black Loco

It's easy to envision ruins as some stodgy, dusty artifact — a pile of collapsed Doric columns, a field of mold-encrusted tombs, or an overgrown garden having swallowed its attendant manor house eons before. These ruins are perhaps far more surprising to the motley that finds them: it's the wreckage of a 10-car locomotive. The icy steel tracks fade off into the snow (for the locomotive sits mostly buried beneath wind-swept winter), and the blocky beast of a train sits kinked up like a zig-zagged garden house. It's not a train from the material world, to be sure — close examination shows that despite being forged of steel this is a thing forged purely of Hedge-stuffs. The windows are made of prismatic crystal (once beautiful, now cracked and shattered). The sleeper cars are each home to a gilded cage, in which one finds the two-headed skeleton of some parrot-sized bird (whose purpose has long been lost). The art deco bar is stocked with bottles of alcohol nobody from the "real world" would ever recognize (Fishtail Ale? Cobbler's Ink Liquor? Blue Arsenical?). The seats are most telling, most still home to the original passengers — all dead, just skeletons slowly moldering, slumped forward or backward in their chairs. Most are hobs: misshapen skulls, many limbs, some not humanoid at all but just a nest of tiny bones.

Changelings who sleep inside the Black Loco find that their oneiromancy is greatly improved — any dream-related rolls (pp. 193–201 of **Changeling: The Lost**) made gain +3 dice. Also, Storytellers should consider the possibility that changelings might be able to get the locomotive running again. It's a steam engine, fueled by coal. Repairing it necessitates a Repair Item roll (p. 58, **World of Darkness Rulebook**), but on the extended roll a character will need a number of successes equal to the train's Structure, which is a whopping 50, and in addition, each roll now equals one hour of time. Fixing the train shouldn't be distilled down only to this system, though — it should be punctuated with roleplaying and conflict opportunities that threaten the project. Remember: the Hedge is never truly safe.

TEMPLES

The Hedge is not without its religion. To most, the Hedge itself provides the gods, creatures and ideas worthy of worship, and lesser hobs are the ones who do all the bowing and scraping and worshipping — a bundle of black fruit on an altar, a statue of a leviathan beast wreathed with garlands of blood-red roses, a heretic bible penned in ink made of blood drawn from a thorn scratch. Arcadia provides its own gods in the form of the Gentry, with many of them receiving worship from weak-willed goblins (more than one changeling has stumbled across statues venerating their Keepers in dark corners of the Hedge). The real world, too, offers occasional "gods" and "goddesses." Take, for example, the hobgoblins that have placed an old blocky 1950s color television set atop an ornate stone dais. The glass is broken out of it, but the hobs think they can still hear whispers and prayers creeping from within.

The Wineberry Cross

Somewhere near the "center" of the Hedge (at least, so the stories suggest) sits a tall cross made of dark wood, as tall as three men standing on one another's shoulders. The cross is choked by coils of wineberry vines, the fruits lush but the barbs sharp. Tangled up in the bramble vines is a scarecrow, an effigy of burlap and felt, its "skin" painted stark white with bone dust. The Hedge all around this has formed a natural cathedral of sorts, hard bark vines meshing together above the cross like a pair of fingers ("here is the church, here is the steeple"). Light from above filters down, highlighting the pollen dust caught there. The hobs in the area claim that the figure in on the cross is a representation of their "savior," a fellow named Jack of the Crows. Story goes that Jack is "thrice-blooded," somehow a mix of hob, human and Keeper, making him close to a changeling (but perhaps something more). They say that he was attended to by a motley all his own, a group of very special changelings (such as John the Water-bearer and Matthew the Collector), but was betrayed by his close friend, Judah the Chariot. The hobs have all manner of stories about Jack of the Crows: his father was the first Keeper; he'll unite all the four Courts into one; he comes from the secretive (and perhaps non-existent) Court of Dusk; he can bring fallen hobgoblins back to life, and so on and so forth. The hobs mostly worship him alone, but some gather in congregations, offering him loudly-shouted prayer and babbling at him in garbage tongues.

Offering a bit of worship to Jack of the Crows (always something sacrificed: a drop of blood, a mashed up goblin fruit, an oddment cast to flame as a burnt offering) grants a changeling one point of returned Glamour.

New Goblin Fruits: Wineberry Blush

On their own, wineberries aren't much to get excited about. One can gain sustenance from them, but their taste puckers the lips — too tart.

It's only when left to sit for long periods of time do the wineberries break down and ferment (process takes about a month). The once-purple berries form into a seed-bogged slurry the color of spilled blood, and it provides a potent alcoholic kick.

The hobs that worship Jack of the Crows drink this stuff in copious amounts, claiming it to be part of the ceremony — spiritually, they say the wineberries sprung up around his effigy as a sign of his suffering, and that each berry's pulpy little aril contains a measure of his misery. The resultant wine, therefore, is his blood, and they gobble it up believing that it makes them one with Jack and helps to absolve their many sins.

They're not entirely far off the mark. It doesn't really absolve the sins, but it can grant one a small measure of focus after a loss of Clarity. If a changeling drinks a draught of the wineberry blush within 24 hours of having degenerated *with* a derangement gained as a result, the goblin wine will cause the new derangement to fade immediately, offering a slightly clearer head about one's decisions and perceptions.

MYSTERIOUS PLACES

The Thorns play host to some places that cannot easily be quantified. These "mysterious places" abide by their own rules and have their own bizarre inhabitants wandering about, and changelings should truly be wary of their sanity and souls when nearing such a place. Such places, however, are not absent of reward. Changelings willing to make a grab for the prizes contained within may come out with a powerful new token... or reel back a puckered stump.

THE BLASTED BEACH

They won't know what it is when they find it, probably. The changelings come across a part where the Hedge walls taper downward, and the ground starts to become like sand. Hedge plants become Jersey pines. Tidal pools, salty and stinking of fish, start to appear. The sandy beach landscape is pock-marked with divots and dug holes, some by hand, others by small shovel. Desperate snorting hobs scurry about, making more holes — mostly, they don't seem to notice the characters or even one another, but if anybody gets too close to them, they lash out with a mean hiss and a swipe of their gnarled fingernails.

In the distance, seen through the veil of heat haze, is a massive statue — thrice the size of the changelings themselves. The

statuary, seemingly cut from pink granite, is of a humanoid creature with a magpie's head. Its beak is thrust to the heavens and wrenched open, as if in pain. Its eyes are stark. With frozen taloned hands, the creature seems to be shielding its face, its long dark cloak caught in a mid-motion whirl about its gaunt body. It has no wings, but its boots are cut for crows' feet, not for human feet. The base of the statue — done in dark granite, a deep contrast to the figure itself — has two pieces of text on it, one on the northern side, and the other on its southern side.

The northern bit reads: "A single magpie in spring, foul weather will bring."

The southern bit reads: "One for sorrow, Two for joy, Three for a girl, Four for a boy, Five for silver, Six for gold, Seven for a secret never to be told."

Then, someone has painted across the base (in what may be blood): "I DEFY THEE."

The story of what actually happened here is fairly straightforward in the telling — a greedy Keeper known as the Robber Bird found itself ambushed by a small legion of changelings, all of whom had been kept by the thieving, treasure-hoarding Fae. The Robber Bird, normally a foul thing of great power, was burdened by the many treasures it kept concealed under its cloak. It would not let its baubles and trifles go, and so it could not move like it wanted to — and the militant changelings took advantage of it. A Swimmerskin known as Mary O'Brine was the one who dealt the final blow, thrusting a rusted rapier through the monster's heart.

The Robber Bird screamed and froze in place, its flesh hardening into a vein of pink granite. A harrumphing blast of air buffeted all nearby. Not only did this great exhalation knock down the Hedge walls here (leaving half-of-a-beach in its wake, all blasted sands and briny pools), but all of the creature's kept treasures peppered the area. It was a concussive piñata, a shimmering grenade. Some of the trifles acted like shrapnel, killing a few of the attendant changelings. The rest were driven deep into the sands, hidden.

The hobs who lurk here are treasure hunters, desperate to find the gleaming bits of stolen treasure in the sand. Some stories suggest that the place has been so picked over that nothing is left, but other stranger rumors tell tales of how the Robber Bird's cloak was a thing of infinite space, and that what was contained within is enough treasure to have forever populated these sands with hidden riches.

Rules: With the Blasted Beach, the following rules are in play:

- Those with the Greed Vice gain +3 to any roll while within the area of the Blasted Beach. Those with the Charity Virtue suffer -3 to any roll within the area of the Blasted Beach.

- Digging is not the act alone by which one finds something. Certainly one must dig, but more is needed on the part of the changeling. Unconsciously, it matters how much the changeling wants to find something. The Storyteller should ask the player how badly she wants to find something in the sand. She should ask the player to rank that want on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest. If she ranks it from 7-10, then the changeling will find something. At 7 or 8, the changeling finds a trifle, oddment, or a Token equal to one or two dots. In addition, the changeling gains a mild derangement. At 9 or 10, the changeling finds a Token equal to three or four dots, but gains a severe derangement. The derangement is permanent (though it can be fixed through therapy) unless the changeling reburies what she's found in the sand. Because of the derangement gain, the player needn't spend any experience points to claim the Token as her own.

• The act of digging is soothing, at least initially. For the following hour after digging, the character feels very centered, very calm. She gains +1 to any Resolve + Composure rolls, and gains +3 to any Meditation rolls (including those necessary for oneiromancy). Once that hour is up, however, the character grows irritable, edgy, and anxious. She suffers -1 to Resolve + Composure rolls and -3 to Meditation rolls; these penalties last until she gets eight hours of sleep or until she can return to the beach and do more digging.

Story Hooks

• The characters see that the treasure-hunting hobgoblins are finding things — and, the objects that they're finding are objects related to the characters' own mortal lives: a childhood train set; a diary encapsulating one's teenage years; a mix tape from an old girlfriend. The hobs don't want to give this stuff up, though. And how did the Robber Bird get a hold of these things to begin with?

• Once a year, a number of Keepers come to this place. Initially, it seems as if they're perhaps paying homage or honoring the memory of the Robber Bird... but that's not how the Gentry work. They have little concern over their fallen brethren. As they stand there, the sand whips around them in a furious dust devil, and many of the trinkets and baubles that remain hidden now whirl about their heads. Truly valuable items. The characters, hidden perhaps, see things of great value spiraling about. Do they take the risk while the Keepers draw the sands up around them? What happens if the Gentry notice them?

• They find something. And it's bad news. It's an egg, encrusted in jewels. It seems valuable. But a few days after taking it away from the Blasted Beach, it starts to move. Then it cracks. And what comes out is the Robber Bird — a smaller version, admittedly, but one whose bones shift and crack and grow with terrible swiftness, doubling in size every couple hours or so. The legendary Keeper has returned, and the characters have facilitated it. He's weak at this point, and can be stopped... but he's also small, and very fast. So begins a hunt through the worst parts of the Hedge to try to stop the Robber Bird before he can return to his reign of thieving terror.

GREEDY GOB

Quote: "You give that back to me! Give it back or I'll bite off your stinking monkey hands!"

Background: It's weird. The hobs that come here may once have looked different. Hobs are often singular creatures — one looks like a greasy beetle with an old man's face, another is just a tumbling ball of limbs and eyes. But as they dig, they all start to suffer some universal characteristics — their arms grow longer, their hands wider, their mouths and eyes bigger. They have become captivated by this place. Even when they find something, they merely squirrel it away in a pouch or pocket until they can

hide it somewhere in the Hedge, returning shortly thereafter to find more, more, more.

Description: As noted, they all *technically* look different, but these greedy gobs start to suffer from the same haunted, hungry, greedy appearances.

Storytelling Hints: Their desperation is profound. It's like their hearts are great big empty gaps, and they're trying to shove as much treasure into the vacant pit as possible to fill it all up again (though it never works). They remain mostly focused on the task at hand, but if any get too close — or try to steal their found items — they move fast to bite and scratch and scream.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 1

Mental Skills: Investigation 3

Physical Skills: Athletics (Dig) 3, Brawl (Shove) 3, Larceny (Pocket) 4, Survival 1

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Intimidation 2

Merits: Fast Reflexes 2, Fresh Start

Willpower: 5

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Greed

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Size: 3

Speed: 10 (species factor 4)

Health: 5

Wyrd: 2

Contracts: Goblin Contracts: Trading Luck for Fate (•), Fool's Gold (••)

Glamour/per Turn: 11/2

Armor: none

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Scratch	0(L)	na	5	Gnarled, hooked, uncut nails
Swipe (Sand in Eyes)	0(B)	2/4/8	5	Successes aren't damage, but a penalty on target's next action due to sand in eyes

Fae Aspects

• **Magpie's Gift:** Spend a Glamour point, roll Wits + Larceny. The hob can hide an object up to its Size somewhere on its body — it's as if the item shrinks or disappears from view. Finding the object and retrieving it from the hob's form necessitates a Strength + Brawl attack, but that attack suffers a penalty equal to the successes gained on the hob's Wits + Larceny roll.

THE LUPANAR

This building sits atop a hill in the Hedge, coils of crimson thorn ringing the bottom and a field of Fear Gortach ("hungry grass," p. 223, **Changeling: The Lost**) covering the rest of the

knoll. The structure itself is nothing fancy, and in fact seems far too plain for the Hedge: it's a three-floor construction, just a bland block of dried clay with square windows and a square door. No ornamentation. Little color. Bland in nearly every way — and that includes the interior of the building, too. It is, for the most part, a series of seven rooms per floor, and each room is just (you guessed it), a square room with square windows and a rectangular bed in the middle of the floor. And the bed? It's made of stone. No pillows. No comforter. Just hard, cold stone.

It's perhaps tough to envision that this is actually a brothel (of sorts). Soon as one enters the building, a parade of hobgoblins emerges from the shadowed corners of the rooms, and these entities offer themselves to the character. The hobgoblins run the gamut: beautiful succubi, strange aliens, insectile monsters, and so forth. If a character shows any inclination toward one over another, that hobgoblin tries to take the changeling off to a room. For the most part, the goblin offers no discussion — he, she, or it gets right down to business. No discussions of money take place. They engage in a hard sell of seduction, or at least attempt to. Should the character be unwilling or instead seek to talk first, most of the hobs will allow the changeling some measure of hesitation. The creatures will talk (provided their fey biology allows for such communication). But they'll always try to return to the act itself, even bringing in other hobgoblins to try to continue the seduction. They never force the issue, but they certainly make for not-so-gentle urgings.

When the Hedge-trollop is “done” (or has been summarily rejected), it will return to the shadows where it once more hides in the corner, barely seen. Should a character engage in violence against one of the Lupanar's workers, the Madam (see below) will emerge to ensure the safety of her children.

Rules: With the Lupanar, the following rules are in play:

- Characters that engage in sex here unwittingly perform a trade-off. Every five minutes of fornication with one of the hob-whores causes one of the following to happen: the character loses one point of Willpower and gains one point of Glamour; the character takes a –1 dice pool in a Skill category (Mental, Physical or Social) but gains +1 in a different Skill category (Mental, Physical or Social) with these new modifiers lasting for the next 24 hours; the character heals one point of bashing or lethal damage, but loses one point of Glamour.

- Time is not consistent here. Every minute spent within the Lupanar is a half-hour passed once the characters have left (so, spending 30 minutes within the brothel means the characters have *actually* spent 15 hours inside its walls).

- Any characters with Lust as a Vice who engage in any kind of sexual or seductive act with the hob-whores gains two Willpower points as a result, not just one.

GOBLIN WHORE

Quote: **says nothing beyond whispered breath, trailing hands**

Background: The hob-whores are not forced to do what they do. They do it because it's what they're good at. They are rewarded for the task of seducing and fornicating: each has developed a symbiotic relationship with the Lupanar itself, and what the Lupanar gains from those who partake of its pleasures, the hobs gain, too. They're not automatons, though — each hob has its own predilections, its own moods, and some foolishly give into their ill moods and negative feelings, which only serves to drive off potential clients. One can always tell the novitiates from the so-called

Story Hooks

- The characters enter the Lupanar (whether they know what it is or not) and discover that they are not the only “clients” here — perhaps they discover that this is a haunt of one of their allies or enemies (the Winter King, perhaps, or one of the motley's inferiors). Worse, what happens when they find a Keeper, exiled or otherwise, enjoying himself?

- One of the hobs seems particularly sad. She's quite clear that they're not forced to do what they do — this is no slavery situation. But she's here because she has no other purpose in the Hedge, and to be without purpose is to be hopeless. This isn't what she wants to do, though. She asks the characters, can they help her? Is there anything she can do for them that will help her escape this life?

- All the “workers” of this place are hobs... usually. What happens when the characters discover that one of their own freehold works here? Perhaps it's someone that went missing a long time ago. Was she sold to this brothel by a Keeper? Or is she here by choice, happily feeding from her clientele like any good succubus?

veterans of the trade: the young ones are always nervous, either too eager or too reserved.

Description: They run the gamut from “woman with a human face but elegant spider's limbs” to “priapic satyr with oiled chest.” Some are monstrous, others purely freakish, while only a few are beautiful by human standards.

Storytelling Hints: Most are professional — seduction is everything. It's all about the act, about ensuring that the client feels good. (This can mean that it's not necessarily about sex, of course — any physical pleasures that the hob-whores can bring to the table, they will.) Again, some let their moods or feelings get in the way, but doing so is dangerous. Not only does it run off the client, but it can displease the Madam. Nobody wants that.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Medicine 1, Occult 1

Physical Skills: Athletics (Sex) 3, Brawl (Grapple) 2, Stealth 2

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Expression 3, Intimidation 1, Persuasion (Seduction) 4, Socialize 2

Merits: Ambidextrous 3, Disarm 2, Striking Looks 2

Willpower: 5

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Lust

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Size: 5

Speed: 11 (species factor 5)

Health: 8

Wyrd: 1

Contracts: Mirror •••

Glamour/per Turn: 10/1

Armor: none

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Bite	1(B)	na	5	Grapple first
Sharp Nails	0(B)	na	4	Rake with fingernails

Fae Aspects

• **Exude:** The hob gives off an odor that is both pleasant and unpleasant. The way that a perfume is built off a foul smell, like ambergris, is at work here — beneath it all is a potent, even pungent odor that draws the attention, but the rest is a sweetly-smelling, almost narcotic effect. Roll Strength + Expression and spend a point of Glamour. Successes on this roll become penalties to any character's resistance on a Seduction attempt against him (p. 84, *World of Darkness Rulebook*).

• **Trade-Off:** As noted above, when the character actually engages in a physical act of pleasure (a purposefully ambiguous term) with the hob, some manner of trade-off occurs. The character is aware of the trade-off, and may at any time end the physical act to stop the trade-off from occurring.

THE MADAM

Quote: “Your behavior is terribly rude.” *mandible clicks and hisses*

Background: The Madam built this place with her own... well, hands isn't really the word, but she's the one who sculpted it, who glued the stones together with mortar born of her own frothing spit, who smoothed a layer of clay over the whole affair. She's a simple creature, given over to simple inclinations, and she intends quite fully to remain here at the Lupanar for as long as she can. If ever this place is destroyed or she is somehow removed from it, so be it. She'll build anew, for she is a pragmatic creature.

Description: Her body shape is ostensibly humanoid. Her legs are in fact very human, sensibly clad in stockings and a calf-length red skirt. Most of her lower and upper torsos are human in appearance, but it's once one gets to her arms, hands, and head that any similarities with mortal beings fade away. She's all-mantid up top: atop her shoulders is the triangle-shaped head of a praying mantis, and she has the hooked and barbed forearms to go with it. Forever cocked atop her head (pushing her antennae back a bit) is a pillbox hat — red, like her skirt.

Storytelling Hints: The Madam is infinitely polite. If a client has complaints, she will address them swiftly and in whatever way will invite them to return to the Lupanar. If she finds a client mistreating one of her workers, she remains firmly ensconced in “polite mode,” even as she's biting off a limb and throwing the miscreant down the hill into the barbed thorns that mark its circumference.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Crafts 1, Investigation 3, Medicine 2, Occult 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl (Mandible Bite) 3

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression (Manners) 3, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 1, Socialize 3

Merits: Danger Sense 2, Disarm 2, Fast Reflexes 2, Fresh Start 1, Language (French, German, Greek, Latin, Spanish) 5

Willpower: 8

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 8

Defense: 4

Size: 5

Speed: 13 (species factor 6)

Health: 8

Wyrd: 5

Contracts: Darkness ••••, Mirror •••••

Glamour/per Turn: 15/5

Armor: 2 (carapace)

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Bite	2(L)	na	9	Uses Mandibles
Foreleg Attack	4(B)	na	10	Forelegs (“Arms”)

Fae Aspects

• **Alarming Alacrity:** The Madam may spend a point of Glamour to double her Speed for a single turn.

• **Stinging Spit:** The Madam can, after making a successful bite attack, spend two points of Glamour to fill the bite wound with a gluey spit that immediately starts to harden. It itches and stings, incurring a –1 penalty to all Physical rolls for the next 12 hours. She can do this a number of times in a scene equal to her Wyrd score. At the end of the 12-hour period, the gluey spit cracks and hatches a nest of baby praying mantises (they do no harm and, for the most part, flee to the four corners to live their lives in the Hedge or in the real world).

MUSEUM OF THE SOUL'S SKEIN

It's part of the Hedge, this place. It is not enclosed — characters merely need to find the spiraling ramp that leads them toward the top of the Hedge walls and verdant trees.

At the top of the ramp is a museum, open air, and on display for the characters to see. The museum features pieces of art such as paintings, sculptures, even a multimedia display flickering on an old television set bound up in the brambles. The museum is also home to artifacts: simple items that have come before (eyeglasses, pens, a computer mouse, a love letter, a Polaroid photo) now contained in glass cases.

It doesn't take long for the characters to realize: the elements on display are elements from their own lives. At first, it's all known pieces: a painting of a mother's abuse, a sculpture of the character winning a race when he was in his late teens, a faux-music video portraying the character's escape from Faerie (a desperate and miserable action juxtaposed with pop music like Flock of Seagulls' “I Ran”). As the characters move on to later displays, they find that the materials grow more personal. More secret. What's on display is stuff only the character knows, and soon, may even show things that the changelings wasn't aware of in the first place (images of secret betrayals, snapshots taken from forgotten dreams, a sculpt that identifies the person that's been sending her those anonymous love letters). Secrets both sweet and dark are exposed — as well as secrets each changeling may have been keeping from her motley mates.

At the end of the display wait images from a potential future — a few glimpses of what may happen (or, as some interpret it, what *will* happen). Except, these images are lies. Whether they show a positive future (becoming lord of the Summer Court) or a horrible one (being dragged back to Arcadia in chains), they're all false. Made up. Invented by the museum, or more specifically, by the Curator (see below).

Characters may believe they see the nearly-intangible threads of Fate and time bound up here like a skein of yarn, and it seems certain that if the museum knows so much about them that these final images of the future must be real. But they're not. And yet, those who glimpse their "future" so often go on to unconsciously try to create that future for themselves, often stirring an Oedipal-level tragedy (Oedipus, of course, tried to avoid his supposed Fate and in the attempt ran headlong into his dark future).

Rules: With the Museum of the Soul's Skein, the following rules are in play:

- The images on display become intensely personal. Characters with derangements find them harder to resist here: the Resolve + Composure roll to resist suffers -3 dice.
- For a number of nights equal to the character's Wyrd score, the changeling's dreams are vulnerable. The dreams themselves are bigger, more obvious, more *bombastic* in their imagery, but this seems to send a signal for those who might exploit such things.
- Revisiting a character's mistakes, successes and secrets *can* be enlightening. Those characters who seem to genuinely reflect and gain some deeper understanding are in for an experience point boost at the end of that chapter (game session): between one and three additional experience points depending on the depth of personal revelation and realization. (A character who simply identifies a past error for course correction may gain one experience point. The character who breaks down sobbing and is overwhelmed by a series of gut-punching revelations as to how her life got so wildly off-track is ripe for three experience points.)

THE CURATOR

Quote: *"The Museum is not responsible for the contents of the images or artifacts on display. Please do not touch the exhibits or there will be consequences."*

Background: The Curator is part of the Museum. One might even suggest that the Curator *is* the Museum, for destroying the Curator destroys the Museum. This hob is a powerful telepath, able to read thoughts and view the threads of time and Fate that travel backward from a changeling's current point in time. The Curator cannot look forward, not truly, but that doesn't stop the hob from pretending, does it?

Description: He is a wizened man, scrunched up and twisted. Hard tufts of white hair stick out from his sideburns and skin-shriveling skull. Beady eyes stare out from behind small gold glasses. He wears a dusty old navy blue suit with a red tie, and his hands (which have six fingers, not including the thumb) often gesticulate subtly, as if he's trying to manipulate some invisible material without anybody noticing.

Storytelling Hints: The Curator's a cold fish, to be sure. He bears no emotion. Yes, he may say something that should come part and parcel with an emotion ("Please, don't hurt me!") but the way he says it is devoid of any intonation besides dry, crisp, flat.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 4



Story Hooks

- The characters look back on a seminal moment in the motley's history, and they see something horrible: in the reflection of a window, or perhaps in the refraction of a water drop, they see a True Fae's face and hands, and in his hands is a cat's cradle of glowing yarn (a tangle of Fate?). They can only wonder what part a callous Keeper played in such a significant moment.

- A dark secret is on display. (It bears asking the players before the changelings enter the Museum of the Soul's Skein about their characters' dark secrets — separately, ask them to identify one or several.) How does the character react to it? If she sees it first, does she try to hide it? Destroy it? Or stand proudly beside it, shoving it in her motley mates' faces and telling them they can just "deal with it?"

- One of the characters sees a very dark future for himself: a triptych painting at the tail end of the display shows the character in three scenes, murdering his motley mates. Again, it's a terrible lie, but the characters don't necessarily know that. How do they deal with such a horrific image that speaks of a truly wretched future?

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Investigation 4, Occult 3

Physical Skills: Athletics (Flee) 3, Brawl (Escape Grapple) 3, Larceny 2, Stealth 3, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Expression 1, Intimidation 1

Merits: Eidetic Memory 2, Encyclopedic Knowledge 4

Willpower: 7

Virtue: Charity

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 5

Defense: 2

Size: 4

Speed: 8 (species factor 4)

Health: 7

Wyrd: 3

Contracts: Hearth •••

Glamour/per Turn: 13/3

Armor: none

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Thumb Knife	0(L)	na	3	Small curved blade hooked around thumb

Fae Aspects

- **For Every Action:** The Curator is intimately bound up with the elements on display at the Museum of the Soul's Skein. Assume that every display has between four and ten points of Structure. Anytime a changeling does damage to a display's Structure, the changeling takes damage herself (one bashing per point of Structure damage done).

- **Stimulus, Response:** Anytime one of the displays gets a powerful reaction (weeping, screaming, violence, giddiness, triumph, etc.), this hob gains a point of Glamour.

THE PUPPET'S PARQUET

The characters find a hatch. It's made of strong wood, and its center consists of panes of stained glass showing a red butterfly with golden gears on its wings. Faint light shines up through it, and music drifts — muffled, yes — up from within. It sounds tinny. Like a music box.

The hatch is not locked. In fact, it wants to be opened, and the changelings can probably sense that. What they find is a ladder made of braided vines (shellacked with some kind of sap, only slightly sticky) that descends into a darkness flickering with playful light.

A hundred yards down, the ladder ends at a platform, and from the platform descends a set of spiraling steps: a staircase made of oiled wood, cobwebs fluttering above and dust long gathering, only faintly disturbed.

Another hundred yards down, the characters find the rooms — a room here, a room another thirty-three steps down, and another beyond that. Many rooms. Too many to count. In each room, one will find untold pleasures. A table full of sweet meats and sweet treats, of frosted mugs of hornet's mead and silken napkins freshly washed and pressed.

The next room? The softest beds ever. The smoothest sheets, hospital corners, pillows stuffed with the velvety down of some exotic Hedge bird. The room after? A sitting room. Hot thistle tea. Warm dream-a-drupe brandy. Cool glasses of crisp moonwater. All sitting on tables warmed by a blue-flame fire, paired with plush chairs stitched of oiled leathers. Keep going downward, and more rooms reveal themselves: a training room with combat dummies

(gussied up like scarecrows), a pillow-covered lounge with cabinets stuffed with Thorn-plucked narcotics, another dining room (this one home only to cakes and pies), and so on, and so forth.

The characters poke around. Maybe they partake of the treats and pleasures; maybe they're wise enough to know that all the good things in the Hedge come part and parcel with bad things.

Eventually, the puppets surprise them. They're not puppets, really, not exactly — more like automatons. Think Disney animatronics, or those singing creatures at Chuck E. Cheese. Their mouths are plainly hinged — so too are their elbows and knees, and one can easily see where the plasticine flesh has gaps (where the neck moves, for instance). Their eyes are glassy and dead. They move with herky-jerky imperfection, like robots.

They want to serve, these automatons. They'll bring tea when the cups are empty. They'll bring a pipe so one can smoke strange herbs or will prop up a new training dummy after the old one is shredded. One will disrobe and offer itself (herself? himself?) as one lies back on the swish-posh bed. They don't seem to want to hurt anybody. They only want to serve.

Some of them are human in appearance. Others look like changelings — a mien of bull's horns or skin like boggy seaweed. Some appear like goblins from the Hedge: a small cat-man with a velour tuxedo, a toad-faced and squat-bodied butler, and so forth.

The changelings might be suspicious. But maybe they partake of the pleasures. They expect bad things to happen, but no bad things come. It seems an oasis, a lost paradise, a utopian pleasure pit where one can get a little R&R in the maddening Hedge.

Except, then they go to leave. And they find that the ladder has retracted. The walls of the pit are stone, and slick with moss and oozing fluids. The weird music continues to drift. The puppets continue to try to push pleasures upon the characters — frankly, they start to get a little pushy about it. And when the changelings try to leave — shaping a new ladder or slowly trying to find footholds in the walls — the automatons are there, smiling and trying to pull the characters back.

Truth is, they're not automatons. They're hobgoblins. This is how they serve the Hedge. Some even believe that this whole place is one big hobgoblin, a living belly, a sculpted bowel — because, over time, it starts to digest the characters. They notice their skin grows waxy. An elbow suddenly hangs on a loose joint. They can no longer blink. If they wait too long, they'll become automatons just like the others, joining the Parquet as its pleasure-serving hobgoblin puppets. They are digested... at least, in a fashion. And once they are, the ladder drops again, gladly serving to deliver more visitors.

Rules: With the Puppet's Parquet, the following rules are in play:

- Climbing down is easy — the ladder wants you to use it. The braided plant flesh serves to give one a good grip. Assume climbing down to be an instant roll (Strength + Athletics +3). Climbing up with no ladder is difficult; the walls are slick, oozy. The Strength + Athletics roll suffers -4 dice, and is now extended: a total of 12 successes are needed. (See "Climbing," *World of Darkness Rulebook*, p. 64)

- Once in a while, a hobgoblin or two emerge from the Parquet to replenish some of the lost stock (goblin fruits, the meat of other goblins, etc.). This is both a good way to find the Parquet (tracking the automaton back to the hatch) and might be a way out. The hobgoblins try to sneak out when the characters slumber (or are too gluttonous or drugged-out to do anything), and this requires the ladder dropping for a period of about 30 seconds.

- At a bare minimum, the food, drink and drugs provide the following effects: +3 to Social rolls, -3 to Mental rolls, -1 to Physical rolls. Many also offer effects similar to the narcotics found in the *World of Darkness Rulebook* (p. 177).

Story Hooks

- An ally, friend or loved one of the characters — they needn't be a changeling — ends up caught in the Parquet. And she is "digested" by the place and becomes part of the automaton culture. The characters track their lost friend to this place, and find her again — and she appears to be a mindless hobgoblin puppet. Can they save her? Does saying certain words or performing certain actions force her to give a reaction — one that suggests her soul and mind remain intact buried beneath the plastic skin?

- Go deep enough down the stairs, and one might find the *big* hobgoblin that runs the place — a giant eye with an iridescent center, its giant sticky lashes ready to close and catch any who get near it. The eye is tough, but is there any way to irritate it and ideally get... well, regurgitated?

- The Parquet is an interesting place for chance encounters — Fate works weirdly, and it might serve as a confluence of strange meetings. The characters, trying to find a way out, meet others who get trapped in there, too — an enemy motley, a desperate True Fae, a small tribe of hobs.

THE HOB-PUPPET

Quote: "More coddlecake, my lady?"

Background: She may have been somebody, once: someone's maid; a social worker; a Swimmerskin serving the Razorgrass Queen of Portland. But then she wandered down here, hearing the sound of curious music and catching a whiff of the sweet treats within (and oh how her stomach growled). Now, she only sometimes remembers who she is. Most times, she only lives to serve the Parquet and its... guests.

Description: She's pretty, with great big seal eyes and a faint downy white fur. And you get closer, you think she's not real. The fur feels like something off a stuffed animal, and the flesh is waxy and without blemish. The eyes never blink. They're cold and hard, with rarely a bright flicker within.

Storytelling Hints: You're pleasant, if a bit icy and insistent. That smile is fake, but you want to sell it. You don't care about these people, of course, you only care that they stay and enjoy themselves so the Parquet can continue to feed. Sometimes, though, you have flashes of memory... moments that call back to a life that wasn't encased in strange plastic.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Investigation 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Survival (Hedge) 3,

Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Empathy (Needs) 3, Persuasion 3, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Danger Sense 2, Fast Reflexes 2, Natural Immunity, Strong Back

Willpower: 4

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Size: 5

Speed: 11

Health: 7

Wyrd: 2

Contracts: Artifice ••, Darkness •, Stone ••

Glamour/per Turn: 11/2

Armor: 2 (Plastic skin)

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Blunt Plastic Limbs	2(B)	na	7	uses Brawl

Fae Aspects

- **Artificial Constitution:** A hob-puppet suffers no wound penalties. In addition, a hob-puppet can go twice the amount of time without food, water, and sleep (see "Deprivation" and "Fatigue" in the *World of Darkness Rulebook*, pp. 175–176 and pp. 179–180, respectively).

HOBGOBLINS

What good is a Hedge-town without inhabitants, a Goblin Market without merchants, a winding path through the Thorns with nothing lying in wait beneath the hedgerows? The following band of wastrels, Hedge-beasts, scuttlers, lurkers and witherlings can flesh out any trip into the Thorns. They're a dangerous lot, to be certain; you don't want to be caught near some of these devils when it's getting dark.

AMBROSIA, LADY OF DELIGHTS

Quote: "Oh, isn't that just darling! You should really come home with me, lover."

Background: The True Fae are beautiful and terrible. They are majestic in bearing regardless of form and cruel regardless of intentions. Humans have told stories about the fae for centuries, alternately placating or cursing the Fair Folk. But no one ignores them. Some changelings worship the Gentry, some hobgoblins too and some go beyond worship into imitation. It's the rare changeling or hobgoblin that can pull off the feat for any length of time. Even pretending to be one of the Banished is difficult for creatures that lack the touch of devious insanity personified by the True Fae. Worse, for long-term survival, the Gentry hunt these pretenders just as fiercely as they would an escaped slave and quickly remind the poseur of their proper place. Every so often, though, a hobgoblin (changelings never do) manages to fool True Fae, changelings or other hobgoblins for long enough to gain a Title or some other aspect of the Gentry. The pretender enters Arcadia and assumes control of a Domain, becoming, to all outward appearances, another member of the Gentry. Does the façade eventually become truth? None can say for certain and pretenders will kill to keep their secrets.



The hobgoblin named Ambrosia was out one evening, gathering those goblin fruit that only appear at dusk, when the Gentry rode past on their fae steeds. She was awestruck by their splendor and by the power that radiated from them in waves of Glamour. She watched the True Fae until they were lost from sight and her thoughts dwelled on what she had seen for days. The next time she saw the Gentry, Ambrosia was at a market. She watched as business slowed, then ceased completely, as everyone turned to gape at the True Fae and hurried to earn their favor. At that moment, Ambrosia determined to become Other.

She cleared out a large Hollow for herself and decorated it — and herself — in lavish style, mainly financed by theft. She traded with witches for Glamour cast upon her and traded with her kin for Contracts and Trinkets. She tracked down Billy Birch and listened to his stories about the Gentry, soaking up the knowledge like a sponge. Her crowning achievement was the ensorcelled snaring of an Ogre and a Wizen to act as her guard and chatelaine. Her preparations took years to complete, but, when finished, Ambrosia presented herself as the Lady of Delight, Gentry-In-Exile, and found none to object. Since her reinvention,

Ambrosia has taken to collecting changeling servants and has begun to spin plans to capture one of the True Fae to steal a Title.

Description: Ambrosia was considered attractive (by hobs, at least) even before her transformation, but nothing like the divine creature that exists today. Upon learning that Hedge magic couldn't alter her nature enough to permanently remove her horns or exchange her hooves for feet, Ambrosia has settled on the image of a satyr with short, downy fur covering her legs to mid-calf. Great waves of flaming red hair crest from her brow and roll down her back, framing a face of pale beauty with sparkling green eyes. Her figure is full and lush without passing into the realms of the unlikely or artificial. Ambrosia prefers revealing, yet tasteful, styles of dress that enhance her beauty.

Storytelling Hints: Beneath her mask of beauty and sensual abandon beats a heart of ice. Ambrosia is willing to go to any extreme to become one of the True Fae and she doesn't waste a moment's thought on those she tramples to succeed. She will court privateer and Loyalist as readily as Summer Court royalty if she believes it will advance her cause. Her latest plan is to use her enchanted changeling thralls to lure one of the Gentry into her clutches. Her Ogre bodyguard, named Violents (see sidebar), is armed with cold iron daggers and she has commissioned the crafting of cold iron chains to bind her prisoner.

Ambrosia seeks out changelings wandering through the Hedge and attempts to ensnare them with her charms. She offers advice and assistance, care and feeding, or straight-up offers of sex to lure them into her bed. If a target doesn't seem sexually interested in women, Ambrosia will use her magic to take on the form of a handsome man and try the same gambit. Not without reason, most changelings are rightly distrustful of anyone that even looks like they might be True Fae. Ambrosia is willing to swear oaths to ensure their safety in the short term to build a relationship she can exploit later. If her victims tumble to her schemes or seek to attack her on sight (in the case of some Summer Court members), Ambrosia relies on Violents to act as rear-guard while she beats a hasty retreat.

Any character that could bring one of the True Fae to Ambrosia would be greatly rewarded (though how a changeling might accomplish this feat or even learn about her desire is another thing). Though only a pretender, Ambrosia *does* possess extraordinary amounts of knowledge about the Gentry as well as heaping piles of tokens and trifles. Changelings that are being actively hunted by their Keeper could easily find refuge with Ambrosia and, even if the pretender's plans fall through, she might distract the Keeper for long enough to give the changeling a proper head start at escape.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 5, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 5, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Occult (Gentry) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 4, Larceny (Pickpocket) 4, Stealth 3

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression 5, Persuasion (Seduce) 5, Socialize 4, Subterfuge 5

Merits: Fleet of Foot 3, Retainer 4, Striking Looks 4, Token variable (see below)

Willpower: 6

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 8

Defense: 5

Speed: 15

Health: 8

Wyrd: 5

Contracts: Fleeting Spring •••••, Vainglory ••••

Glamour/per Turn: 14/5

Armor: None

Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool
Slap	0(B)	—	2

Fae Aspects

• **Flawless Beauty:** Ambrosia's enhanced beauty is so perfect that it takes a steely resolve to attempt to mar it. Each time a character attempts to physically assault Ambrosia they must succeed on a Resolve + Composure roll at a -3 penalty or find themselves unwilling to harm her.

• **Drunk on Passion:** Ambrosia's bower is considered a place of magic by those that sleep with her. The poor fools are more right than they know. Ambrosia has woven spells of control and passion into her lovemaking to ensure the submission of her victims. Any character that has sex with her must roll Resolve + Composure + Wyrd versus Ambrosia's Manipulation + Persuasion + Wyrd. If Ambrosia wins the roll, the character is smitten, and becomes compelled to act in accordance with her wishes. Anytime a smitten character wishes to act against the desires of Ambrosia, he must spend a point of Willpower to do so. This effect persists for one month. If the character wins the roll, the spells fail to take effect and the attempt goes unnoticed. Ambrosia must wait a full 24 hours before making a new attempt to enthrall the character.

• **Maggie:** Ambrosia collects tokens and trifles the way a sports fan collects baseball cards. Storytellers should feel free to give Ambrosia access to any number of tokens or trifles they feel might be useful or that might appeal to the baser instincts of the players.

Violent Devotion

Violents was the first changeling to fall victim to Ambrosia's charms and has been so completely enslaved to her that he suffers from a permanent version of Drunk on Passion. Ambrosia found Violents stumbling through the Hedge, freshly escaped from Arcadia. At first, the Ogre thought to attack her, but he was unable to bring himself to bruise her comely flesh. Ambrosia took him into her Hollow, cared for his wounds and, when he had recovered, into her bed. Since that moment he has been her most devoted subject.

Cold Iron Defense: Violents always carries a pair of cold iron daggers and will not hesitate to use them to protect his beloved. Violents attacks with a pool of 10 dice with the daggers.

Perfect Slave: Violents is so devoted to his mistress that it's exceedingly difficult to influence his actions in her regard by magic or force. Violents has a pool of 8 dice to resist magical compulsions to betray Ambrosia and has an effective Defense of 6 (not negated by ranged attacks) when protecting her from harm.

ANIMMACULATES

Quote: [wolf's howl, lion's roar, elephant's trumpeting, all mixed in with the click and whir of gears and the grinding of metal on metal]

Background: The term "Animaculate" refers not to a single type of creature, but rather to a wide variety of hobgoblins that share common characteristics. All Animaculates appear to be composed of a synthesis of clockwork parts integrated into the body of a normal animal. Changelings have reported a wide variety of these creatures, both carnivorous and herbivorous — lions, antelope, bears, horses, owls, serpents, wolves, and hyenas. Even smaller and domestic animals such as cats, dogs, mice, rats, fish, and insects have been seen.

Whether these creatures evolved naturally — if anything can be said to occur "naturally" within the Hedge — or are the creation of one of the Keepers is unknown. Some scholars point to an oh-so-scientific Fae noble called the Clockwork Queen, but can't rightly swear that she's responsible for *all* the Animaculates prowling the Thorns. No two, even of the same basic animal type, seem to be identical. For example, Jeremy Question, a Wized Oracle traveling through the Hedge to visit a friend, reported seeing an Animaculate leopard with claws made out of curved metal barbs like fishhooks, and a tail made of long, rubber-sheathed cable. Several months later, Laughing Amelia, Chicago's then-Queen of Spring, told her paramour about an Animaculate leopard she had seen while searching for goblin fruits. The creature she spotted, however, had compound eyes made up of numerous camera lenses, a coat made of metallic fibers, and cogwork wheels grinding slowly in its jaws, rather than fangs.

The "immaculate" root of the creature name, coined by a clever Darkling who made a study of the creatures, refers to the fact that the creatures do not seem to eat, drink, or excrete. Although some sightings have mentioned creatures that incorporate solar cells, steam engines, or even small windmill vanes into their bodies, it is unknown if these parts actually provide the creatures with energy and take the place of the normal digestive system. The creatures do not appear to reproduce as mundane animals do, and it is uncertain as to whether they can do so at all.

There is one other fact worth noting. Normal animals — those that aren't Hedge Beasts, but simply lost — loathe and despise Animaculate creatures. This reaction is especially pronounced when the normal animal is the same overall sort as the Animaculate it encounters. The stray alley cat that has recently wandered into the Hedge will hiss, spit, and yowl when faced with an Animaculate cat. It is unknown whether the mortal animal recognizes any degree of kinship with the hobgoblin, or simply realizes that such a change could happen to it, but in every instance, the flight or fight response takes over. Natural animals will either destroy the Animaculate animal if it can, or flee if the Animaculate is more powerful than it is, which usually tends to be the case.

Description: Although Animaculate creatures vary widely, some generalizations can be made about them. First of all, there do not appear to be any that are entirely mechanical. From what accounts are known, no Animaculates have been spotted that are more than 50% mechanical, and most that have been seen are a good deal less than that, usually in the neighborhood of 15% to 30%.

Secondly, the mechanical parts that substitute for the normal portions of their body always seem to do so in a way that does not hinder or hamper the creatures. For instance, legs are never



replaced with wheels on muddy or stony terrain where wheels could not travel. Although the replacement of parts may seem to be random to observers, they are always functional, and in many instances function better than the creature's flesh-and-blood parts would be.

Storytelling Hints: Animmaculate creatures are always, at a minimum, intelligent in proportion to the actual creature. An Animmaculate gorilla, dolphin, or raven will be more intelligent than an Animmaculate turtle, gopher, or cow, and some of the more gifted creatures have intellect on a par with changelings and mortals (although never as intelligent as the Keepers, of course).

Although Animmaculate predators such as wolves, bears, and panthers will stalk and kill changelings, hobgoblins, and other animals they encounter, this behavior seems to be a remnant of instinct. No one has ever seen an Animmaculate predator eat a living creature they have hunted and slain. However, on the whole, Animmaculate creatures seem to bear no specific malevolence toward other creatures, and such deaths are rare.

Animmaculate creatures are always knowledgeable about the general area in which they lair, and may be persuaded to aid travelers for an appropriate recompense. On rare occasions, Animmaculate creatures have been convinced to accompany changelings or other hobgoblins on visits through the Hedge for short periods of time. They will never do so without being offered some form of reward, such as goblin fruits, tokens, or information.

Automatiger

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 3
Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4
Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 1, Composure 3
Mental Skills: Investigation 2, Occult 1
Physical Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Stealth 5, Survival 4
Social Skills: Animal Ken 3, Intimidation 4, Subterfuge 3
Merits: Danger Sense, Hollow 2 (cave), Iron Stamina 3
Willpower: 6
Initiative: 7
Defense: 4
Speed: 14
Health: 12

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Claws/Bite	(4)L	9

Pandroid

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 2, Resolve 3
Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4
Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 3
Mental Skills: Medicine, Occult
Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Stealth 2, Survival 4
Social Skills: Animal Ken 3, Empathy 2, Persuasion 2, Subterfuge 1
Merits: Common Sense, Direction Sense, Quick Healer 4
Willpower: 6

Initiative: 5

Defense: 2

Speed: 10

Health: 8

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Claws/Bite	(2)L	9

BILLY BIRCH

Quote: "The wind told me you were coming."

Background: No one knows how long the Hedge has stood as a barrier between the world of humans and the lands of Faerie. Certainly the True Fae might know, but accurate remembrance of history isn't a quality commonly associated with the Gentry. The stories told by hobgoblins about the Hedge are somewhat more reliable, especially among those hobgoblins that are possessed of extraordinarily long lives. Billy Birch claims to be the first hobgoblin to develop intelligence, well before human history had even gotten started. Billy says he remembers when the Hedge was wilder, more untamed and less traveled than today. The most interesting thing about Billy's claim is that no one refutes him; not True Fae, changeling scholar, or even hobgoblin curmudgeon.

Billy strides tall among the Thorns with the wind as his constant companion. True Fae and changelings alike seek him out to hear about the history and nature of the Hedge, and to question him about more current events. Billy says the wind whispers secrets in his ears that no one else can hear. He takes no sides in conflicts and answers questions with an honesty that is surprising to find in the Hedge. Billy will direct an escaped changeling toward the nearest exit from the Hedge and, minutes later, report the direction traveled by that changeling to their erstwhile master. Generally peaceable, Billy will respond to violence with violence and his roused ire is a terrible thing to behold.

Description: Some hobgoblins are the result of unfortunate humans or animals lost too long in the Hedge, their bodies and minds warped and twisted by the Thorns they were unable to escape. Other hobgoblins, maybe most, were born directly out of the magic of the Hedge. Billy Birch is undoubtedly one of the lat-

ter. No one that has seen or spoken to Billy believes he could ever have been human.

Billy stands 10' tall and, when still, is easy to mistake for the tree he's named after. His body is covered in peeling white bark, his feet are tangled masses of roots, and his legs are sturdy and trunk-like. Long, thick, branches form his arms, which end in gnarled hands with fingers that constantly break off and regrow. His wooden head and face are nearly hidden among the green leaves growing on the branches that form his shoulders. Billy is much faster than might be supposed, given his apparently unhurried stride and while slow of wit (Billy doesn't understand humor) he is quick of mind.

Storytelling Hints: It might seem a simple thing to find Billy and ask him questions —after all, how does a 10' tall tree hide? Nothing could be further from the truth. Long centuries spent in the Hedge (and the Contracts at his command) have taught him how to hide as well as how to conceal signs of his passing. With the wind constantly whispering in his ears (see below), it's nearly impossible to sneak up on Billy and he's only found when he feels like being found. Most often Billy chooses to be found when he takes a break in the evening to digest a particularly toothsome bit of loam or sink his feet into fresh water. At these times of rest, Billy is usually open to some conversation with passersby and may even seek out fellow travelers if the wind tells him some are nearby.

Billy insists on trading tales for tales. It doesn't matter to him if the story told was made up on the spot, stolen from a TV show or movie, or if the teller relates true-life experiences. What matters to Billy is the telling. Billy prizes knowledge above all else, both the giving and receiving of it. Fortunately, Billy is an easy audience to please. Stories that might bore human audiences to distraction hold Billy just as rapt as the best blockbuster thriller. He soaks up the information presented while whittling away at a piece of wood gathered from his own body, only occasionally interrupting to ask for clarifications. When it comes his turn to speak, Billy will politely ask his "guests" what interests them. He will answer any question and relate any story to the best of his ability, completely

without prevarication. Billy never lies and he recognizes a lie when he hears one. Lies are one of the few things (other than outright assault) that move him to anger. From his point of view, a lie taints information and corrupts the purpose of intelligence.

Other than the obvious drawbacks of angering a giant in tree form, Billy Birch can call upon the other denizens of the Hedge to defend him. Even normally mindless predators hold a strange kind of respect for Billy and will rush to his aid. It's said that even the True Fae will respond to Billy's cries for help and, even if that's not true, smart changelings don't test their luck. If the situation devolves to violence, opponents find Billy eager to satisfy. He dispatches his enemies with crushing blows from his wooden fists or by simply picking up an adversary and hurling them into the Thorns.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 2, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 2, Stamina 8

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 2, Composure 5

Mental Skills: Crafts 5 (Woodworking), Investigation 4, Occult 4 (True Fae)

Physical Skills: Brawl 5, Stealth (Quiet and Still) 7

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Hedge) 3, Empathy 5, Expression (Tale-spinner) 5, Persuasion 4, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Danger Sense, Eidetic Memory, Encyclopedic Knowledge, Natural Immunity, Toxin Resistance

Willpower: 10

Virtue: Temperance

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 7

Defense: 2

Speed: 16 (species factor 8)

Health: 16

Wyrd: 5

Contracts: Smoke ••••, Stone ••••

Glamour/per Turn: 14/5

Armor: 5 (Natural Armor)

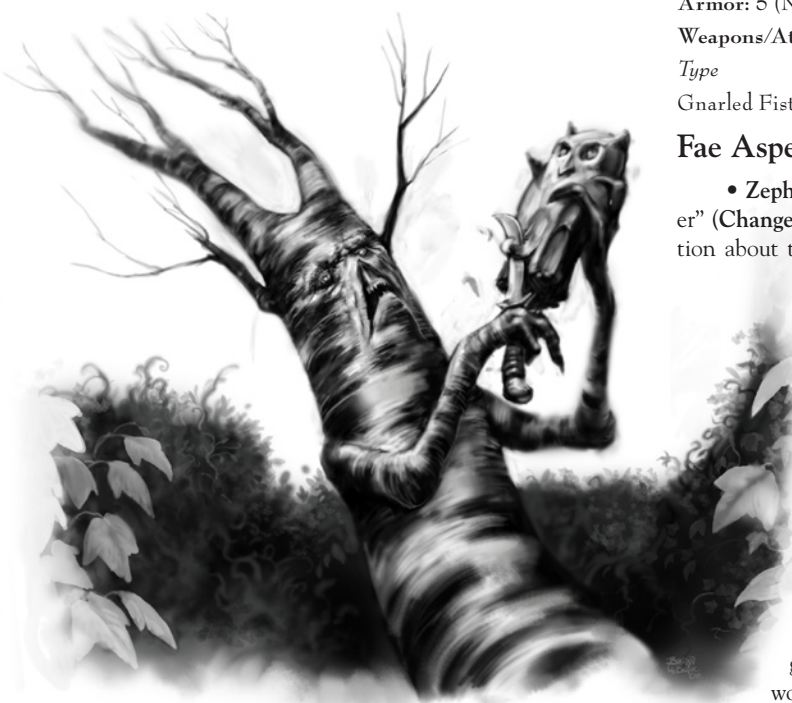
Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool
Gnarled Fists	2(L)	—	13

Fae Aspects

- **Zephyr's Tale:** Similar to the Dream Contract, "Pathfinder" (Changeling: The Lost, p. 124), this Aspect relates information about the Hedge. Unlike Pathfinder, this Aspect is always active as long as the wind blows. This means that anyone hoping to sneak up on Billy must figure out a way to stop the wind from blowing to have any hope of doing so. Information gained by listening to Zephyr's Tale is also much more in-depth than that provided by Pathfinder. At any time Billy can determine exactly who (or what) is within his immediate vicinity and can discern, with complete accuracy, which path leads to where. The wind also whispers secrets about the Hedge to Billy as he travels, like the whereabouts of Hollows, lost treasures and useful goblin fruits.

- **Rising Ire:** Normally fairly friendly and easy-going (for a hobgoblin), Billy transforms into a figure worthy of terror when angered. During combat only,



Billy may activate any Contract of Stone without paying the cost in Glamour, exactly as if he had fulfilled its catch. In addition, the wind carries Billy's howls of outrage to nearby Hedge dwellers (including passing Gentry), who will immediately move to assist him.

Birch Scraps

One story told about Billy Birch is that he uses the papery bark that peels from his hide to record information. It's said that Billy hides these records in the dens of bloodthirsty predators or in Hollows of his own making. Exactly what might be written on the birch scraps is up for debate. Billy is well known for never forgetting a fact, so why should he bother to write anything down at all? One theory suggests that the only way Billy can forget something is by writing it down. The very act of scribing information removes it from his memory. Any number of changelings (especially the Autumn Court) are curious to find out exactly what kind of information is so repellant that Billy would willingly expunge it.

BLACKHAW

Quote: *[harsh, crow-like cawing amidst the rustling of leaves.]*

Background: Rare but long-lived, the Blackhaw tree can be found throughout the Hedge. Records of them among the deep



forests of the Keepers exist as well, leading to speculation that some Fae with a love of botany might have created them from a mundane hawthorn tree, which it resembles. Others believe that seeds from hawthorn trees were brought through the Hedge from the mortal world, most likely either in the gut of some bird or as lucky tokens by a lost mortal. Either way, the trees have slowly spread, and can be found in every demesne and climate. No one has ever seen an entire grove of Blackhaws. No more than one tree seems to grow in an area at a time.

Blackhaw trees have been considered bad luck amongst the denizens of the Hedge for a very long time. Whether the badge of ill omen comes from the flocks of ravens that are invariably found perching in the tree's heights or from their black, twisted branches is unknown. Perhaps it is the fact that no one has ever reported seeing the tree in bloom. Whatever the cause, and because changelings know that things in the Hedge are more than they seem, the Blackhaw has, over time, developed a way to take prey that would be outside the normal reach of a tree's branches.

Description: Blackhaw trees look nearly identical to the normal hawthorn tree, at least as regards its thorns, bark, and the shape of its leaves. The sole apparent difference between the two is that the color of the tree's berries is black, rather than red like those of the hawthorn. The berries, when ripe, are sweet to the point of intoxication, but have no special properties.

Those who think the color of the tree's fruit is the only difference between the two, however, are sadly mistaken. The Blackhaw is both intelligent and predatory, and extremely dangerous to anyone passing within a hundred yards of it.

A few travelers have noted that the Blackhaw tends to host flocks of ravens among its limbs, no doubt drawn by the delicious berries. The truth is that the black-winged birds that sit in the branches of the Blackhaw are not ravens at all, or even birds. Each is an appendage of the tree itself, attached to the branch on which it sits by thin tendrils like vines. The bark that grows on the outside of the tendrils is far more flexible than the bark on the trunk, but in all other respects it looks the same, helping to camouflage the members from casual view.

When an unsuspecting changeling, hobgoblin, or other creature passes near a Blackhaw tree, the "ravens" set up a harsh cawing. Since such behavior from mundane animals is usually a warning of danger, most who hear it instantly look around for a threat. Rarely do they look at the ravens or the tree itself, however. At that point, a number of ravens will fly forward on their tentacles, sinking beaks and claws into the oblivious changeling, and yank her closer to the tree — into the embrace of the ravens and tentacles itself. The tendrils that connect the ravens to the tree are long, extended gullets, covered with the same sharp thorns as the tree's branches, and serve to further pinion the victim in place while the ravens' heads bite off chunks of still-living meat and swallow them.

Because the Blackhaw tree eats only meat, anything non-organic is discarded, and this debris is the only visible sign of danger. Metal armor, for example, is left to rust, while a leather pair of breeches would be eaten along with the one wearing them. Thus, any kind of token or treasure might be found on the ground under the branches, if an explorer were brave or stupid enough to get close to search.

Like most trees, the Blackhaw is vulnerable to fire. While chopping a tree down would work, getting close enough to use an

axe automatically puts the wielder within range of the tendrils. Because they draw their sustenance from living prey, they tend to be more resistant to drought than other vegetation.

The Blackhaw does not reproduce in the usual way. Rather than dropping seeds, or even casting out tendrils as a normal plant might, once every year and a day, three to five of the tree's ravens soar into the air, flying to the end of their tendrils, and stretching against them until they snap. Then they fly out over the Hedge, searching for freshly-dead bodies or prey so wounded it cannot fight a single attacker off. Once it has found its prey, it lands on the body just as a normal carrion-crow would and begins to burrow into the dead or dying flesh. Once inside, the resemblance to a raven begins to fade, as the tree's pod begins to send out roots in the nutrient-rich flesh, rooting deep into the ground. In the course of seven days, a new seedling is born. The tree grows incredibly fast, reaching its full size within three years. Until that time, they are less able to kill larger victims, and tend to attack only smaller animals for sustenance.

Storytelling Hints: The Blackhaw is not averse to eating the carrion cast-offs of other predator's kills, but it prefers its prey alive, kicking, and screaming. Because the trees have no teeth per se, it tends to pass on changelings whose forms provide them with a modicum of natural armor, such as certain types of Beasts (rhino-based Broadbacks, Swimmerskins with an affinity for turtles, etc.), Earthbones, and Stonebones. Blackhaws dislike fae entities with a more "vegetable" taste. They do not attack Woodblood Elementals, Flowering Fairest, and Woodwalker Wizen, and they actively fear Fireheart Elementals.

Like mundane animals, the Blackhaw uses the higher of its Wits or Dexterity scores for Defense, rather than its lowest.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Crafts 1, Investigation 1, Occult 2

Physical Skills: Brawl 4, Larceny 1, Stealth 4, Survival 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken 3, Empathy 2, Intimidation 3, Subterfuge 4

Merits: Disarm, Fast Reflexes 2, Iron Stomach, Strong Back

Willpower: 5

Initiative: 8

Defense: 5

Speed: 14

Health: 13

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool
Claws	2(L)	—	10
Peck/bite	3(L)	—	10
Constrict	4(L)	L	10

BOSCAGE

Quote: "Hey guys, this path looks like it goes in the right direction!"

Background: Not every danger in the Hedge is apparent at first glance. The sweetness of a Hedge-apple can hide a deadly poison. Apparently friendly lights twinkling in the distance might herald the existence of a hob-town or they might be the lights of captured stars, woven into the net of a True Fae hunter. Shaped like an animate section of the Hedge, a Boscage uses its

magic to disguise itself as a safe path through the Hedge in order to draw its prey close enough to attack and devour.

Boscages can be found in nearly any type of Hedge. They hide among urban paths lined by twisted chain link fences and featureless buildings, along the side of mountain trails, the path delineated by jagged rock and cliff's edge or even those few paths that traverse Hedge seas with black water, icy chill to the touch serving as the Thorns. Most frequently, however, Boscages are found in rural settings, watching passersby between dark, green leaves. Stories of the Green Man are thought by some changelings to refer to Boscages in the same way happy tales of faeries relate to the True Fae. This is to say, completely inaccurate and all the more dangerous for it. A Boscage is no jolly protector of wilderness, gentle fertility symbol or pagan guide. It is a predator that prefers its meat fresh and if you happen to see a smiling face among the Thorns, the best plan is to run the other way.

Description: Boscages are very nearly Hedge elementals. Though they prefer green settings, they are capable of adapting to nearly any environment. Seen in its true form, a Boscage is humanoid in appearance and stands over 7' tall. Its body is made from the environment of the Hedge it stalks. In the case of forested terrain, thick vines twist and snake, combining to form powerful arms and legs. Its head is defined by leafy growths and its face has the appearance of aged, cracked wood. In a more urban setting, a Boscage appears to be made mainly of concrete and brick, with glittering, jagged claws shaped from broken glass.

Storytelling Hints: Boscages are intelligent hunters that take the opportunity afforded to them by their natural camouflage to observe their prey before striking. Fully capable of scaling or passing quietly through the thorny walls of the Hedge, a



Boscage will use this advantage to size up potential victims. Travelers that seem at ease in the Hedge or that travel in groups of more than three are likely to be left alone, unless a Boscage has allies nearby it can call on. Other predator-type hobgoblins willingly work alongside a Boscage, knowing it can guarantee prey.

Once a Boscage is sure it can overcome its target or has gathered allies to assist it, the Boscage will move ahead of its victims and settle into the Hedge. Using the knowledge it gained from watching its targets (roll Intelligence + Investigation), a Boscage will create a false trail (see below) that goes the direction it believes its targets intend to travel. As soon as its prey sets foot on the illusionary path, the Boscage strikes. Characters ambushed by a Boscage must succeed at a Wits + Composure roll at a -2 penalty or forfeit their actions for the first round of combat. Boscages attack with sharp claws and brute strength, attempting to dispatch their prey as quickly as possible. Using their connection to the Hedge, Boscages armor themselves with thorny protrusions that slice and tear at the flesh of anyone that fights back and constrict the Hedge around them to corral their prey (see **Changeling: The Lost**, p. 139 “Armor of the Element’s Fury” and “Control Elements”). If the fight turns against them, the Boscage will use its Hedge-climbing and Stealth skills to attempt to flee, making sure to leave no tracks thanks to “Nevertread” (**Changeling**, p. 132). Hungry Boscages have known to use all the magic at their command to launch hit-and-run attacks on large groups, weakening them before a final assault.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 5, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Investigation 3, Occult 3

Physical Skills: Athletics (Hedge-climbing) 4, Brawl (Raking Claws) 5, Stealth (Camouflage) 5, Survival (Hedge) 4

Social Skills: Subterfuge 5

Merits: Direction Sense, Iron Stamina 3, Quick Healer

Willpower: 6

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Gluttony

Initiative: 7

Defense: 4

Speed: 15 (species factor 6)

Health: 10

Wyrd: 4

Contracts: Dream •, Elements (Hedge) •••••, Smoke ••, Stone •

Glamour/per Turn: 13/4

Armor: 1 (Armor of the Element’s Fury)

Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool
Claws	1(L)	—	12

Fae Aspects

• **The False Trail:** A Boscage can increase the effectiveness of “Become the Primal Foundation” (**Changeling: The Lost**, p. 140) by spending a point of Willpower when it activates the Contract. By drawing on its connection to the Hedge, the Boscage creates a nearly undetectable illusion, centered on itself, of a path running through the Hedge where none exists. Characters are allowed to roll Wits + Composure minus the number of successes

gained by the Boscage to activate the Contract to notice discrepancies with the illusion (a twig shaped like a toe, the eyes of the Boscage peering out at them). The first character to step onto the false trail breaks the illusion and is allowed no Defense against the Boscage’s attack for the first turn of combat.

BURR CADGER

Quote: “Got somethin’ for a no-good, feckless filth-monger like myself?”

Background: The Burr Cadger has nothing. He prides himself on it, in fact. Whatever he gains, he consumes as swiftly as it can be consumed — fruit goes right in his mouth, money gets spent at the market or the wishing well, clothes are thrown across his back and are soon destroyed when he nestles back up to the biting Hedge wall.

He’s a beggar, through-and-through, a desperate sort who will plead with characters for anything he can get off them: food, coins, an oddment, a trifle, a pair of shoes, a wristwatch, whatever. If he gets what he wants, he leaves that character alone. If they don’t comply at all with his whining and pleading, he won’t leave them alone — he’s like a bag on the hip, a barnacle on the boat, an eyesore that won’t go away.

Description: The Burr Cadger looks to be a part of the Hedge wall — eyes that look like fat berries, skin that might as well be bark and vine, a body covered in thorn-like nodules and turgid knots. He doesn’t walk so much as drag his body, scraping it along the ground. His every movement implies a kind of weakness: he licks his leafy lips, he chews his fingernails until they bleed sap, he bows and scrapes and hangs his lead low.

Storytelling Hints: Annoying persistence is the name of the game. The Burr Cadger seeks to badger endlessly, causing his victims no end of inconvenience or irritation to get what he wants. Insulting him doesn’t make him go away — he actually agrees with whatever insults are slung his way. Hurting him doesn’t help, either. He leans in to every hit, making noises that are a mix of pleasure and pain, loudly declaring how much he “deserves” the misery the characters visit upon his brittle flesh.



Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 1
Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5
Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 2
Mental Skills: Investigation 2
Physical Skills: Brawl (Cling) 2, Larceny 1, Stealth (Plain Sight) 4, Survival 2
Social Skills: Persuasion 2, Socialize 2, Subterfuge 1
Merits: Iron Stamina 3, Quick Healer 4
Willpower: 3
Virtue: Hope
Vice: Sloth
Initiative: 4
Defense: 2
Size: 4
Speed: 9 (species factor 4)
Health: 9
Wyrd: 1

Contracts: None

Glamour/per Turn: 10/1

Armor: None

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Thorny Grip	0(L)	na	6	Grabs hold with barbed hands, clings tight

Fae Aspects

- **Hate Magnet:** At the beginning of the scene (or when first meeting the Burr Cadger), the changelings must roll Resolve + Composure. Failure on this roll indicates how deeply they loathe this leafy beggar — they likely want to do violence to him. Those with the Charity Virtue are exempt from this roll.

- **Healing Bargain:** Any time the Burr Cadger convinces someone to give him something of even meager value, he can heal a point of bashing or lethal damage.

- **Hedge Merge:** By spending a Glamour point and succeeding on a Dexterity + Stealth roll, the Burr Cadger can literally merge with the Hedge wall, becoming almost entirely invisible — those seeking to find him suffer a penalty equal to his Stealth score (–4).

BUTCHERBRANCH

Quote: *[draws one of his many fingers across his neck, then points]*

Background: His clients are many — Keeper gourmands, a starving Gristlegrinder, a famished hob army. He is a cruel culinarian, a massive beast whose body is a kitchen. He requires no payment — his only cost is the satisfaction offered by those who consume his meals. If one doesn't offer such appreciation, that saddens him. It saddens him enough that, reluctantly, he must make a stew out of them so he may reclaim the meal that now lurks in their stuffed bellies.

Description: The Butcherbranch is huge, with a massive toad's maw (slick with pasty slobber) and softball-sized eyes. He is, as noted, both the worker of the kitchen and the kitchen itself. Two legs, six arms. He can form a spoon from a hand — his bowed



back has a great divot like a soup pot (and anything poured into there seems to bubble and froth, given heat from some ambient source within his hobs body). With two hands, he can butcher. With another two, he can julienne goblin fruits. With the final two, he can stir a dough or tend to a fire. His mouth is an oven. His teeth are cutting implements. His tough, meaty thighs serve as cutting boards. He's a one-man (er, one-hob) show.

Storytelling Hints: This grotesque cook is unstoppable. He is a whirling fiend, his limbs akimbo, desperate to whip up the finest meal in whatever portions and proportions are necessary. He doesn't speak. He only motions and gesticulates, occasionally gibbering when agitated or trying to make a point. For those on the receiving end of his meals, he's haughty, thrusting food up under their chins. For those who *are* his meals, he's implacable, a dead-faced monster coming at them with butcher knives, egg beaters, meat hooks, and so forth.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Crafts (Cooking) 4, Investigation (Find Ingredients) 3

Physical Skills: Brawl 3, Larceny 1, Stealth 1, Survival (Tracking) 5, Weaponry 4

Social Skills: Animal Ken 3, Intimidation 3

Merits: Ambidextrous 3, Fighting Style: Two Weapons 4, Iron Stomach 2, Toxin Resistance 2

Willpower: 9

Virtue: Temperance

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 8

Defense: 3

Size: 7

Speed: 13 (species factor 5)

Health: 10

Wyrd: 5

Contracts: Eternal Autumn •••, Stone ••

Glamour/per Turn: 14/5

Armor: 2

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Meat Cleaver	2(L)	na	10	na
Meat Tenderizer	4(B)	na	12	Massive metal hammer
Tongue Lash	(0)L	3/6/12	7	Toad's tongue does no damage, but delivers a Toxicity 4 poison to the skin

Fae Aspects

• **Fey Food:** The food that comes as a result of the Butcherbranch's work can replenish Glamour. However many successes the hob receives on its Dexterity + Crafts roll (to cook the meal) is the number of Glamour points available in that meal. It can be split by a number of eaters. The Glamour spread is proportionate to how much of the meal is eaten. If the hob gains four successes, and the meal thus has four Glamour points available, a character who eats half of that meal would gain two Glamour points.

• **Many-Limbed Protection:** The Butcherbranch does not find his Defense diminished by a series of incoming attacks. He can also spend two points of Glamour to double his Defense for the next turn.

• **Stalking Walk:** When the hob hunts with grim determination, it appears as if he's just walking in a slow and measured gait. But, he moves with unerring speed, especially when he's stalking prey for his meals. The hob can spend a point of Glamour and roll Resolve + Composure: successes on this roll become bonus dice to the hob's Foot Chase rolls for the remainder of the scene (maximum of +5).

• **Tireless:** This hob never needs to sleep, and can continue on without penalty.

CADWALLOP

Quote: "Oh, don't worry. I know my way around these parts. Follow me."

Background: The Cadwallop is a cruel deceiver that feeds off fear and desperation. He approaches those lost in the Hedge and offers to help them. He'll show them the way; he'll get them where they're going, if only they'd be kind enough to follow along. Of course, he's only going to get them more lost than they were. Unlike the Noppera-Bo (*Changeling*, pp. 276–277), the Cadwallop has little interest in getting his prey killed. No, for him it's far more parasitic. Or, even better, think of how one rides the mechanical bull; this hob is hoping to hang on *just long enough*.

Long enough for what? To exploit those he's purporting to help. They think him they're savior. He'll try to get some food off of them, or be allowed a trifle or a token as "early" payment for helping them. The goblin might try to get them to tell him their life stories, or he might endeavor to seduce one of them. He's a liar and a hanger-on.

It's ingrained in him, this deceit; he can do nothing else but pretend to be something he's not for his own personal gain. When he's inevitably discovered, he flees. This creature is no fighter, and his chosen course of action is to live again to deceive another day.

Description: The Cadwallop is always attractive (and, despite the background notes above, not always male), always dressed in modern human clothing. Warm eyes, easy-to-love smile, a soft



voice... it all adds up to a callow pretender. At least, that's his outer shell. If ever he's damaged, that exterior starts to show what lurks beneath. (Bashing causes small cracks in the skin, almost as if it's made of porcelain. Lethal damage causes whole hunks of the façade to fall away, and aggravated tears much of the ceramic-seeming exoskeleton away.) What lies beneath? A reptilian thing, its layered scales gleaming and slick with gluey fluids.

Storytelling Hints: At first, this hob is nice as cookies. He's a calming presence. He'll make friends. Offer help. Smile. Say comforting things. Over time, though, he starts to play on their emotions. Introduce new worries. Enflame old fears. Make them suspicious or self-conscious (all in that soft voice). Of course, over time, that fades — he grows excited. Their misery and fear thrills him, and before too long they can't help but notice he's gotten them hopelessly lost and oh how he *loves* it.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Investigation 3, Medicine 1, Occult 1

Physical Skills: Athletics (Leaping) 5, Brawl 1, Larceny 3, Stealth 3, Survival 1

Social Skills: Empathy (Sense Fear) 4, Persuasion 3, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 5

Merits: Fleet of Foot 3, Striking Looks 4

Willpower: 6

Virtue: Charity

Vice: Lust

Initiative: 6

Defense: 3

Size: 5

Speed: 13

Health: 7

Wyrd: 2

Contracts: Smoke ••, Vainglory ••

Glamour/per Turn: 11/2

Armor: None

Fae Aspects

• **Buoyant Leap:** By spending two points of Glamour, the Cadwallop can triple his jumping distances (as found on pp. 66–67, *World of Darkness Rulebook*) for the remainder of the scene.

• **Fear tongue:** When the Cadwallop witnesses someone else giving into fear (which means a full-blown measure of fright or dread, not a quiet and quaking apprehension), roll Wits + Empathy + Wyrd — successes gained equal points of Glamour. The Cadwallop may do this once per day.

COBBLEBODY

Quote: “Spare parts. Spare parts. Need a heart. Need an arm. Must do harm.”

Background: It's hard to say whether or not these hobs come from the material world, or are merely affected by it. Some changelings theorize that the Cobblebody hobs start off as nothing more than an object that makes its way from the real world into the Hedge (dropped by a careless changeling, stolen by a Keeper and then discarded). Over time, anything dragged into this realm “marinates” in the magic of the Thorns. Some become tokens. Others, changelings say, gain life. That being said, some disagree, claiming that a Cobblebody is formed when a hob finds such an object and becomes obsessed over it, as many do — they cannot help but stroke it, talk to it, even trying to incorporate it into their own goblin bodies.

Description: A Cobblebody is as its name suggests: a hobgoblin with a body cobbled together from spare parts. They love to find things from the material world and slap it onto their herky-jerky frames — a small boombox comprising one's belly, a handful of marbles becoming teeth, a swatch of sail as a single dilapidated (and altogether useless) wing. They also incorporate anything found in the Hedge: dead hobs, changeling bones, coils of vine, bits of destroyed Hollows (and oh how they love to raid Hollows!). Every Cobblebody is different, obviously. One limps about on two legs. Another bolts forward like a caterpillar, its boat-hull belly hanging close to the ground.

Storytelling Hints: They're not mindless, not exactly, but they are... single-minded. They become obsessed with objects. They see something shiny, and it becomes the entire focus of their world. They babble and chatter and wail until they can have it. They're aggressive when they find such a thing, passive when they can find nothing of interest.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 1

Mental Skills: Crafts 1, Investigation 3

Physical Skills: Athletics (Foot Chase) 2, Brawl (Grapple) 3, Stealth 1

Social Skills: Intimidation 2

Merits: Direction Sense 1, Iron Stamina 2

Willpower: 4

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 4

Defense: 3

Size: 3

Speed: 10 (species factor 5)

Health: 6

Wyrd: 1

Contracts: Artifice •••

Glamour/per Turn: 10/1

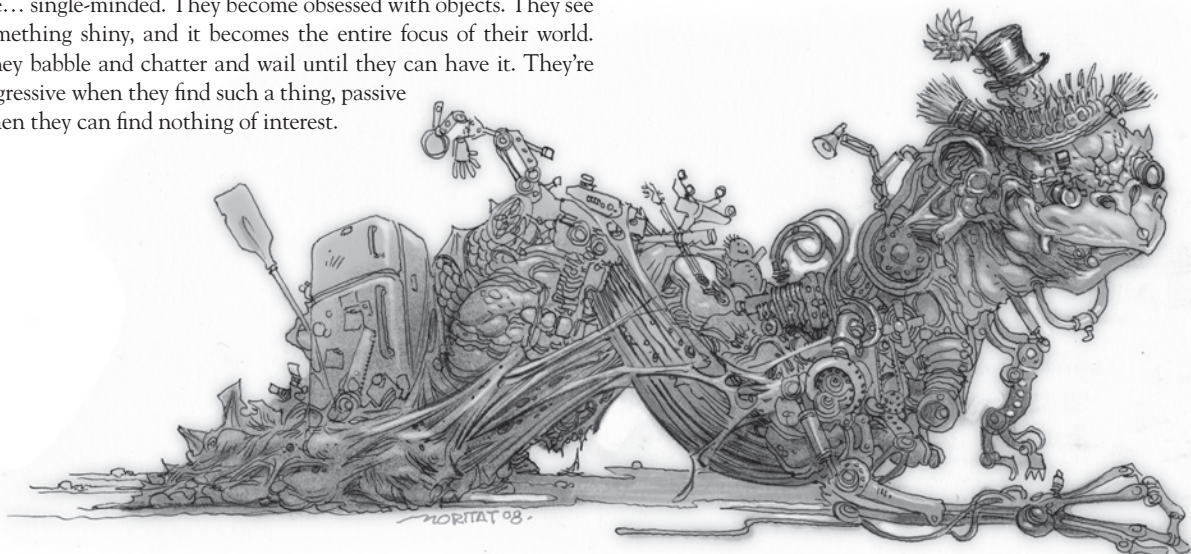
Armor: 1

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Bum's Rush	2(B)	na	7	Knockdown effect (p. 168, <i>World of Darkness Rulebook</i>)

Fae Aspects

• **Build-a-Body:** The hobgoblin can take one turn per an item's Size to absorb that item into its flesh (after which it must be extricated from the hobgoblin only after the creature is dead). For every five points of Structure absorbed in this way, the hobgoblin may add +1 to one of the following: any Physical Attribute, Size, or Wyrd. Doing so costs the hob a point of Glamour. The object absorbed should roughly reflect the trait gained. Absorbing the door to a personal fire safe might increase Stamina by +1, but not Dexterity — alternately, absorbing a series of fan belts from cars might grant a measure of elasticity and thus add to the goblin's Dexterity (+1) instead of Stamina.





GLOOMDRAKE

Quote: “That little torch won’t help you here.”

Background: There are dark places in the Hedge where no sane or sensible changeling should ever go. Unfortunately, a great many Lost are neither. In these places, an unlucky traveler might encounter a Gloomdrake.

Tales say the first Gloomdrake was midwived by one of the Others, born from the nightmares of a changeling whose fear of the dark was greater than her fear of her Keeper. The deadly hobgoblins have since spread from that domain into most of the caverns and lightless realms in the Hedge. Keenly intelligent and utterly amoral, these creatures collect riddles the way misers collect gold. Anyone transgressing in their territory who encounters one of these creatures had better be quick-witted enough to solve the riddles posed by the Gloomdrake and intelligent enough to pose a stumper or two of their own. A changeling who can not only solve the riddles the Gloomdrake poses, but confound the creature with riddles that it has never heard before will find that their intellect and wits have won them safe passage through the creature’s domain. If not, they are swiftly dispatched and eaten.

Description: The Gloomdrake shares a rough resemblance to a dragon created entirely from smoke and shadow — four legs ending in clawed paws, two bat-like wings, a reptilian head with a mouth full of fangs, and a long, serpentine tail. But there the resemblance to traditional heraldry ends. A mane of hissing serpents completely encircles the base of the creature’s neck, and a ridge of long, prehensile tentacles runs from the base of the Gloomdrake’s skull to the end of its tail. These tentacles are extremely elastic, and can stretch up to four times their at-rest length to seize prey and restrain it. The tip of the Gloomdrake’s tail is fitted with a venomous stinger, and the poison it releases is a soporific.

The Gloomdrake’s body is scaled but smooth, like some types of snakes, rather than rough-scaled. This allows the creature to move more easily through the tight, rocky crevices of the caves they inhabit. Their bodies, being made mostly of shadow, are also extremely compressible, able to squeeze into very small niches and through tiny openings. The Gloomdrake dwells in places where light is seldom found, and they bleed darkness the way an octopus

emits ink, making already-dark places even darker, and improving the chances they will not be seen.

Gloomdrakes are born wingless and legless, and grow them only after they have reached a certain size. Because of this, the young are sometimes referred to as Gloomsnakes. Like some types of terrestrial lizards and salamanders, a Gloomdrake can shed a tail or wing or limb if it is seriously damaged, or trapped (perhaps pinned by rocks by trying to squeeze through a cave opening too small for it). They regrow the missing limb in one to four months. Because of this trait, a Gloomdrake cannot be killed by dismembering it. Doing so will simply result in multiple Gloomdrakes instead of one. It can only be killed by piercing the brain or the heart, completely burning the entire body, or completely destroying it with acid or a similar substance. They are, however, as vulnerable to the magic of Contracts as most hobgoblins.

Storytelling Hints: The Gloomdrake’s love of riddles developed as a hunting stratagem. Because all of the creatures currently in existence budded off the original one, growing from a small piece of bled-off shadow to a full-fledged Gloomdrake, the creatures share a hive-mind, and each one knows what all the others know, including all the new riddles the others have learned. This knack virtually ensures that, while a changeling may stump a Gloomdrake with a new riddle once and pass in safety, each time she encounters another, she will have to pose a new riddle to the creature, and again and again. Eventually, it is likely she will run out of riddles and be devoured. Until that time, however, she will enjoy a reputation among the creatures as one of the trickiest, smartest meals that ever got away.

A Gloomdrake will eat anything it can get its hands on, including changelings, hobgoblins, animals, and plants. Even the Keepers may be considered prey if they are weak or stupid enough. Only their own kind and the stronger and wiser among the True Fae are exempt from a Gloomdrake’s insatiable appetite. Due to this, Keepers have occasionally been known to use Gloomdrakes as guardians of pathways and caverns they do not want others entering, and as weapons of war.

Unlike the “traditional” dragon they’re often compared to, Gloomdrakes do not collect treasures or gold. One might find a few shiny gewgaws or trophies to use as a lure into their lair, but it’s just as likely to trade the spoils of its kills to other creatures in exchange for prey.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 6, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Investigation 4, Occult 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl 5, Larceny 3, Stealth 5, Survival 3

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Expression 2, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 4, Subterfuge 5

Merits: Direction Sense, Eidetic Memory 2, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 2, Quick Healer 4, Hollow (Size 1, Amenities 1, Doors 3, Wards 4)

Willpower: 6

Initiative: 9

Defense: 6

Speed: 16

Health: 14

Wyrd: 4

Contracts: Darkness 3, Dream 2, Mirror 5, Smoke 5

Glamour/per Turn: 13/4

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Claws/Bite	(7)L	—	10	—
Tail Stinger	4(L)	M	11	poison (see above)

Fae Aspects

• **Venom:** Those creatures unlucky enough to be hit with the sting must roll their Stamina + Medicine against the Gloom-drake's Strength + Occult. A failed roll indicates they instantly become extremely drowsy (–2 to all rolls for the remainder of the scene).

GUMWORT

Quote: [bubbling, goeey noise]

Background: Gumwort is a plant, but a plant with some tiny mote of sentience lurking within. It has little purpose beyond being hungry for insects, but how it gets those insects is where Gumwort gets dangerous. Gumwort binds up its prey and holds it there, fixing it to the earth. Eventually, insects come — the target grows sweaty or fetid, and various flies and biters come to investigate. Then, the Gumwort feeds. It continues to feed until the target beneath it dies, at which point it feeds some more (maggots are a delicious dessert). One Gumwort plant isn't all that troublesome... but the plants seem to travel in tumbling packs.

Description: Imagine a tumbleweed, but its tangled filaments consist of fibrous red tendrils, each tipped with a dripping, gluey orb. To move, it rolls.

Storytelling Hints: Gumwort is hungry. That's its only motivation.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 1, Resolve 1

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 1, Composure 1

Mental Skills: Investigation 1

Physical Skills: Athletics (Chase) 3, Brawl (Bind) 3, Survival (Hunt) 3

Social Skills: None

Merits: None

Willpower: 2

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Sloth

Initiative: 4

Defense: 1

Size: 2

Speed: 11 (species factor of 6)

Health: 4

Wyrd: 1

Contracts: None

Glamour/per Turn: 10/1

Armor: 0

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Grapple	0(B)	na	6	May grapple as teamwork action if Gumwort is traveling in a pack



Fae Aspects

• **Ichorbind:** Spend a point of Glamour. For the remainder of the scene, the plant can use a character's Strength against him — on any attempts to escape the grapple, the character's own Strength score is subtracted as a dice penalty.

Gumwort's Uses

This strange little plant is not without its uses. The glue, harvested from the tips of the thing, can be used to make traps that bind prey (think of the way a glue trap works on a mouse), or can be used to help bind a subject's hands or feet, or could even be used on weapons (dripping from an arrow, for instance).

MOONWING

Quote: [whispering sound of butterfly wings brushing flower petals]

Background: Not everything in the Hedge is dangerous, deceptive, or ugly. The goblin fruits that many changelings search for have a number of uses, some beneficial, some aggressive. However, perhaps because they are so assiduously sought after, many goblin fruits are very difficult to find.

Enter the Moonwing.

Some changelings have speculated that the Moonwing first appeared after a luna moth from the mortal world somehow crossed over into the Hedge and was changed by the ambient magic there. This theory is supported by the strong resemblance between the two creatures. Whether this is the case or not, Moonwings are as eagerly sought as the goblin fruits, because these insects feed on the pollen and juices produced by most goblin fruits, and have developed special senses to find them.

A Moonwing can't be trained or taught, but it can be followed the way mortal folk have learned to trail a bee back to its hive in the wild in order to harvest the honey. Of course, following a Moonwing as it searches out goblin fruits is a perilous undertaking, as changelings who would do so are hardly the only creatures to seek out such bounty. All manner of hobs and animals likewise search for the fruit. A Moonwing's route in looking for goblin fruit is hardly safe, either. Following one may take the pursuer through swamps and into quick-



sand, over patches of prickly-thorned plants, past other dangerous predators, or even into the realm of one of the Keepers. A Moonwing's hunger does not recognize such boundaries.

Description: Like the mortal luna moth, a Moonwing is fairly large for an insect of its type, with a wingspan five to nine inches wide. Its wings are pale green with silver borders and spots that glow at night under the light of the moon. Its large, feathery antennae are completely out of proportion to the rest of its body, at least half as large as its wings, and over the years, its compound eyes have shrunk in response. These antennae are capable of detecting the scent motes of juice from particular kinds of goblin fruit in the same way that a bloodhound can detect blood.

Rather than feeding on the pollen produced by flowers, as most moths do in the mortal world, a Moonwing feeds on the juices exuded by the skin of most goblin fruits. This is true whether the source of its food is actual fruit, fungus, mold, trees, vines, or other forms of vegetation. In addition, the Moonwing has further changed once it was established here, evolving into separate sub-species that are distinguished by the pattern of spots and the thickness of the silver border on their wings. Each sub-species of Moonwing feeds only on a specific type of goblin fruit, and thus a hefty business has sprung up at Goblin Markets in the breeding and sales of distinct kinds of Moonwings to those hobgoblins and changelings who would seek out different kinds of goblin fruits. Like truffle-hunting pigs, they are greatly in demand.

Like similar insects from the mortal world, Moonwings play a vital role in pollinating some types of goblin fruit. As they feed, their wings and feet transfer pollen from the pistils of nearby flowers to their stamens. They even carry pollen from one type of plant to another, which occasionally results in interesting new hybrids of goblin fruit.

Storytelling Hints: A Moonwing has no more intelligence than the average moth, but that does not mean that all those who use such creatures are as stupid. Other hobgoblins have been known to cultivate certain types of goblin fruit near their dens, with the hope of luring in and capturing or killing changelings

who would follow a Moonwing to the prize. Even worse, certain Keepers have been known to do the same.

Moonwings breed and reproduce just as normal moths do, with one exception. In order for the eggs of the female Moonwing to be fertilized by the male of the proper subspecies, there must be an ample supply of the specific fruit they feed on for them to eat. Because of this, canny changelings who know that hobgoblins breed specific types of Moonwings will occasionally dare a break-in at the enclosed gardens where the Moonwings are housed in order to steal the caches of goblin fruit they need to breed.

Because of their size and frailty, Moonwings have no natural defenses, and when attacked or pursued, their natural inclinations are to flee. They have no stingers, and their mouth is similar to that of mortal moths, containing a long, coiled-up tongue which they use to sip nectar. They have neither fangs nor pinchers capable of developing a bite.

One enterprising Wizenod Chirurgeon recently discovered that, if she brewed a potion containing the antennae of a Moonwing combined with the juice from the type of goblin fruit it fed upon, it would create a one-dot Token that allowed anyone who imbibed it to duplicate the ability of the Moonwing to locate goblin fruits. The ability granted by the potion lasts for one scene.

It is also worth noting that Windwing Beasts with an affinity toward butterflies and moths make the best breeders and followers of Moonwings. Speaking to a Moonwing through the use of the first dot of the Contract of Fang and Talon (Tongues of Birds and Words of Wolves), however, has never uncovered anything but babble.

More than one changeling has noted that individual Moonwings learn from experience. If a Moonwing is followed to a stash of goblin fruit, and the changeling or hobgoblin following the creature takes all the fruit there, the Moonwing will, after one or two such occasions, refuse to seek the fruit out again, preferring to starve to death rather than completely deplete the available supplies.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 1, Composure 1

Mental Skills: Investigation 1, Occult 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Stealth 2, Survival 3

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression 1

Merits: Direction Sense, Natural Immunity, Toxin Resistance, Harvest 1 (Goblin Fruits)

Willpower: 3

Initiative: 4

Defense: 3

Speed: 9 (Flight only)

Health: 4

MORMO, LORD OF THE WASTES, SLAVE OF THE BOG FAE

Quote: "I punish bad children. Have you been a bad boy? I hope not. I really hope not."

Background: The Hedge is home to a vicious stretch of swamp known as the Bleak Bog, and the Bleak Bog is notable because it is a transitional point — here, the Thorns fade and Faerie rises up out of the mists, and some Keepers use the Bleak Bog as a place of travel between the two realms.

Despite the name-that-sounds-like-a-title, Mormo is not a singular beast but a whole tribe of goblins. The Mormos are the

hulking, soggy hobs that call the Bleak Bog home, and have for as long anybody can remember. Their story is a sad one. The Keepers could never dominate this blasted swamp, forever feeling the resistance of these massive bog-beasts rising up out of the mire to protect their land. Creatures of status, the Gentry failed to have any new ideas regarding their assault, simply trying again and again to steal the land out from under these foul hobs.

The story goes that it was a kept changeling that gave them the way to the heart of the Bleak Bog, which was to take a single of the Mormos captive, and to enslave him to their will. They then gave this single Mormo the power to return to the swamp where he would, one by one, enslave his fetid brethren.

It worked. Now, the Mormos serve the Gentry as the guardians of the Bleak Bog, hunting down any of the “bad children” that might think to take this as a backdoor into Arcadia.

Description: The Mormos are built like boggy tanks — massive shoulders, knuckles dragging in the muck, giant underbitten jaws with craggy teeth that could bite through a tree stump. Strands of sodden “fur” (really, it’s just wet vines and roots) dangle from their fat flesh, and their heads are crested with “antlers” (once more, a root system calcified into something resembling bone). When they speak, they bellow — deep, throaty, sending ripples across the swampy waters.

Storytelling Hints: The Mormo doesn’t like what he and his people have become, but he’s also a fairly simplistic creature and recognizes that he’s got little choice in the matter. He’ll try to communicate his regret to those he’s hunting, even apologizing just before he claps his massive hands over their heads, popping the skull like a grape.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 7, Dexterity 4, Stamina 7

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Investigation 2

Physical Skills: Brawl 4, Survival 5, Weaponry (Trees) 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken 2, Empathy 3, Intimidation 4

Merits: Fighting Style: Boxing 1, Iron Stomach, Strong Back, Strong Lungs

Willpower: 4

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Sloth

Initiative: 6

Defense: 4 (see Fae Aspects)

Size: 7

Speed: 14 (species factor of 4)

Health: 14

Wyr: 4

Contracts: Stone ••••

Glamour/per Turn: 13/4

Armor: 2

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Weedy Fist	1(B)	na	12	See Boxing Merit for “Body Blow”
Tree	5(B)	na	15	—

Fae Aspects

• **Beastly Reaction:** Every Mormo uses the *higher* of Wits or Dexterity to determine Defense, as with an animal.

• **Bog Bellow:** By spending two points of Glamour and succeeding on a Strength + Intimidation roll, the Mormo can utter a great yowling roar that forces the swamp itself to lash out at a target (that must be within sight). Successes on the roll contribute toward a grapple: bog water and swamp plants literally reach up to bind a victim and grapple. The character may attempt to escape the grapple as normal. This does no damage to the victim.

• **Kept Hob:** Each Mormo is collared — a tough, black leather band (Size 3, Durability 2, Structure 5) lays hidden beneath the creature’s weedy pelt. This collar is what allows the Keepers their measure of control. Destroy the collar, free the Mormo. Of course, this leads to an unfortunate side effect: all other Mormos then aim to murder the newly-liberated swamp goblin.

ONE-HAND SAM

Quote: “Let me take a look at that.”

Background: Tinkers are some of the most highly sought after hobs by changelings that venture into the Hedge (see p. 88). A tinker can fix, break, invent or improve just about anything his customer’s desire; for a price. Some tinkers specialize in the arcane arts of Contracts, or labor to forge weapons and armor and a few tinkers work with both metal and magic to create unusual mechanical devices. One-Hand Sam is one of the latter kind.

Unsurprisingly, One-Hand Sam has only one hand. He claims it got caught in the gears of one of his inventions, but other hobs whisper he had it lopped off for theft. Whatever the truth may be, Sam has replaced his missing hand with one of his own invention that ticks, whirrs and creaks. Sam travels the Hedge in his steel-horse pulled wagon/workshop looking for work and for bits and pieces of useful material to use in his creations. If he hears about a nearby Goblin Market, Sam will head for it and set up shop. There he buys, sells, trades and takes commissions for work. Soon enough, though, he pulls up roots and sets off again, his desire for company not nearly as strong as his compulsion to move on.



Description: Short and wiry thin, Sam has a face only a mother could love. His brown skin is scarred and charred in places from experiments gone wrong or from his work at his forge. He has squinty red eyes and a short, scruffy beard the color and texture of steel wool. Sam's long arms nearly drag on the ground as a result of his perpetual stoop. His remaining, natural hand has long, thin fingers that are incredibly dexterous and sport fire-blackened nails. The other hand is a clunkier instrument, made from metal plates and leather straps with gears poking out here and there. The fingers of this hand end in useful tools that he can customize for any job such as screwdriver heads, sharp cutting blades, drill bits and leather punches. Sam habitually dresses in an oil-stained smock (the original color might have been blue) and a leather apron bulging with pockets.

Storytelling Hints: Sam is gruff and businesslike in his dealings with changelings. He sticks to the letter of an agreement and never welches on a deal. Like other tinkers, Sam asks for unique and often hard-to-find components for commissions he agrees to take on. Want an engine that runs on broken dreams and emits loss as exhaust? Sam can make it if you bring him the heart of a golem, the blood of a motorcycle spirit and the hooves of a demon. How about a press that prints out pictures of memories? No problem. Simply round up an Orphean harp, a foot-long leech and a gold-flecked, black marble pillar. Essentially, Sam creates mechanical tokens, similar to the manner of Triflesmiths (see p. 88).

Sam is also handy at fixing mundane machinery or complex tools. Muttering to himself as he peers at the broken object, Sam pokes and prods at it and cocks an ear as though listening to a patient. He then fits new bits onto his mechanical hand and pulls tools willy-nilly from his leather apron as he disassembles the machine, always knowing exactly where the problem lies. Mundane machines always seem to work better than they did before Sam's ministrations (repaired objects gain a +1 equipment bonus or a +1 to Structure), even if some of the replacement parts are a tad unusual. Sam is far stronger than he appears. More than one changeling has been astonished to see him heft a machine nearly as large as the hob, with no more than a grunt to indicate the weight he carries.

Wandering along the paths of the Hedge can be hazardous, even for a hob minding his own business. Sam is well versed in swinging his spanner to discourage troublesome Hedge beasts from disturbing his work and his steamgun is always close to hand. Would-be thieves would be wise to reconsider stealing from Sam as he's ornery and merciless with light-fingered folk. Similarly, Sam will not hesitate to track down a customer that has renegeed on an agreement, even going so far as contacting the King or Queen of a local changeling court to vent his grievances.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Crafts (Repair) 5, Occult 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Drive 3, Firearms (Steamgun) 4, Weaponry (Spanner) 3

Social Skills: Persuasion 3, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Ambidextrous, Danger Sense, Fighting Finesse (Spanner), Strong Back

Willpower: 5

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Speed: 13

Health: 7

Wyrd: 2

Contracts: Artifice ••••, Stone •••

Glamour/per Turn: 11/2

Armor: None

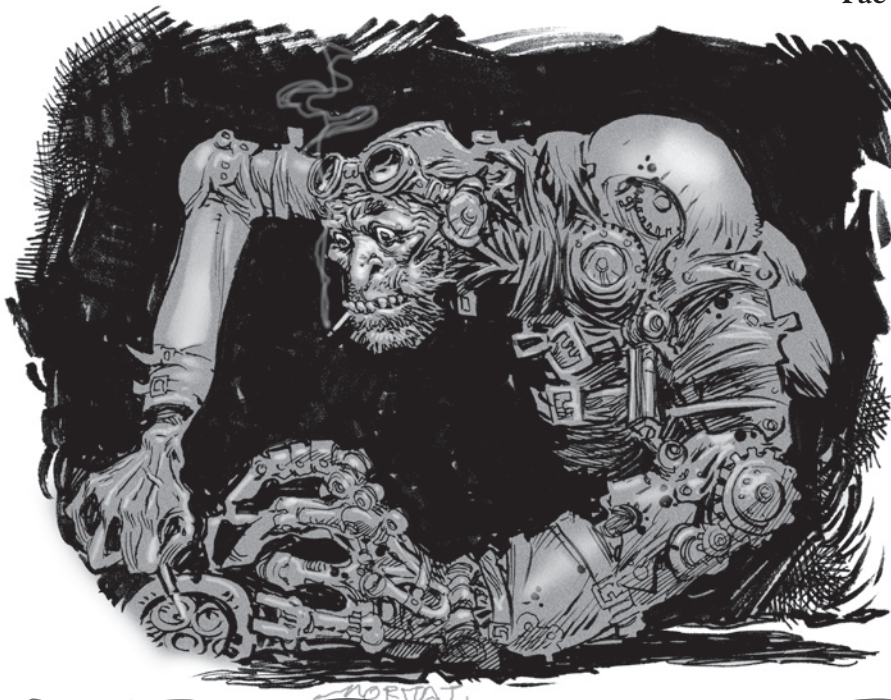
Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Steamgun	3(L)	20/40/60	13	See Below
Spanner	1(B)	—	10	—

Fae Aspects

- **Steamgun:** The steamgun is an unwieldy looking device that appears to combine a potbellied stove, a set of bellows and an extra-long bugle. Sam keeps the steamgun stoked at all times and feeds it all manner of metal scraps to serve as ammunition. When fired, the steamgun emits a shrill tea kettle-like whistle and launches a blob of semi-molten metal at his target. The metal shot is hot enough to ignore up to Armor Rating 3 and has the 9-again quality. Of course, the steamgun does have some drawbacks. If Sam ever rolls more ones than successes on an attack roll, the steamgun malfunctions and is useless until repaired. Additionally, because of the massive pressure required to power the weapon, the steamgun can only be fired every other turn.

- **Mechanical Tongue:** Sam understands and empathizes with machines far better than he does changelings or other



hobs. People that hear him muttering as he works on a machine assume he's simply talking to himself, when in fact he's talking to the machine. Broken or worn machinery complain of their aches and injuries to Sam, allowing him to pinpoint a problem much more quickly than any human mechanic could ever hope to. Any time Sam inspects a broken machine he rolls Dexterity + Empathy to interact with and listen to the machine. With success, Sam immediately knows exactly what the problem is and how best to repair it.

SHADOWBANE

Quote: "Ill omen? I'm the one thing standing between you and oblivion."

Background: There are a lot of names it can answer to: the Black Dog, the Black Shuck, the Hellhound, the Gwyllgi. The Shadowbane is a large black hobgoblin-hound that roams the length and breadth of both Arcadia and the Hedge. While mortals in the mundane world tend to think of the Shadowbane as a premonition of impending doom, changelings who have visited the Hedge for awhile and talked with others know the truth. The Shadowbane is considered lucky, for they generally tend to be friendly toward changelings, and have often aided those in need. Some have even been known to "adopt" changelings they feel are in particular need of their protection.

Although some mortal legends refer to the Shadowbane as a ghost dog, this is incorrect. The Black Dog first came into the Hedge when a dog from the human world was brought through the Hedge along with its master by one of the Keepers. Just as the mortal became a changeling, the dog was also changed by the magic of Arcadia. When its mortal master, now a changeling, died at the hands of his Keeper, the Shadowbane attacked the Keeper, nearly killing him, and escaped into the Hedge. Since that day, they have spread out and bred, and can be found wherever changelings and hobs are found.

Description: The Shadowbane resembles a huge black dog, though its conformation changes from individual to individual. Some appear to be much like a large mastiff. Others may more resemble a German Shepherd, a Saint Bernard, or an Irish Wolfhound. Their fur tends to be short, their fangs long, and their eyes blaze like fire in the dark. They are easily confused with shadow wolves (see below) at a distance, which can lead to tragic results. They loom, being taller, broader, and heavier than their mundane-world counterparts. Shadowbanes can speak human tongues without the use of magic, and seem to understand any language they are addressed in.

Unlike Briarwolves, there is nothing about the Shadowbane that points to their ever having been human. No one is known to have ever spotted a Shadowbane in an intermediate stage between human and hound. Shadowbanes are carnivores, but are not known to prey on changelings or hobs. They prefer freshly-killed meat and will not eat carrion.

Shadowbanes are extremely long-lived. Individual hounds are known to have existed for hundreds of years. Although they can be killed, they do not age after reaching adulthood, and are very resistant to the illnesses and infirmities that accompany old age.

Shadowbanes reproduce in the same way that dogs do in the mortal world, with one difference. Unlike domestic dogs, they



mate for life. Females have litters of two to five pups, which grow to adulthood within two years. They live within a pack structure, with the strongest male and female in the alpha roles. Alpha status is determined by the group consensus on which individuals are the strongest, rather than fighting.

Storytelling Hints: Some villages and Goblin Markets within the Hedge keep Shadowbanes on hand as guardians and protectors. For the promise of future favors or pledges, Shadowbanes have been known to guide changelings through dangerous areas of the Hedge, and having one with you during such travels greatly increases the chance of reaching your destination in one piece. Although they dislike being used as beasts of burden, they will agree to carry small riders, especially children, if it becomes necessary to their wards' survival. They are peculiarly benevolent for fae entities, but they are still fae. A Shadowbane understands the concept of a favor for a favor. Their aid comes with a price, and they've been known to track down those they've helped and call old debts due.

Shadowbanes are known to despise the Others, and the feeling is mutual. More than one changeling newly escaped from captivity has told tales of being dragged along on a Keeper's hunt to track down and slay an unlucky Shadowbane. At least one of the True Fae, the Zookeeper, has a mated pair of Shadowbanes penned up within his menagerie. The protections on that particular cage are among the strongest in his entire enclosure. His precautions are well-founded, as one changeling who escaped from his durance at the Zookeeper's hands has related a story about the one time that the Shadowbanes nearly escaped, wounding their Keeper.

Rumors exist about Shadowbanes that can walk through walls and solid objects, fly, and work magic. So far, these rumors appear to be false. However, as things continually change within the Hedge, the likelihood of Shadowbanes eventually developing such abilities through Contracts is by no means impossible.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Investigation (Tracking) 4, Occult 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (Bite) 4, Stealth 2, Survival 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken 3, Empathy 3, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 2, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Brawling Dodge, Fleet of Foot, Iron Stamina 3, Strong Back

Willpower: 7

Initiative: 6

Defense: 3

Speed: 13

Health: 10

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Bite	4(L)	9
Claws	2(L)	9

SHADOW WOLVES

Quote: [coughing howl]

Background: Humans are rightly afraid of the dark. Lacking the more refined senses of other species, humanity must carry light into shadows to drive away the things that dwell there. The dark places in the Hedge are even more dangerous. Instead of holding some imagined boogeyman or a thug that wants your wallet, the shadows in the Hedge hide creatures at home in the murky twilight. Hobgoblins howl as the sun sets and are only noticed out of the corner of an eye, vanishing when light is turned upon them.

Shadow wolves hunt the broken trails of the Hedge in the dark of night, sleeping during the day and hiding from painful light. They travel in packs of three or more, their noses to the ground sniffing for the scent of travelers in their territory. They prefer their meat flavored with pain and horror and are known to play with their food. Shadow wolves hold a particular hatred for changelings of the Summer Court, who illuminate the blessed darkness with the light of a false sun.

Hobgoblins tell disquieting stories about changelings that lose all reason when faced with a pack of shadow wolves and go haring off into the Hedge in chase. Very few of these foolish Lost are ever heard from again and the hobs swear that the pack grows each time.

Description: Shadow wolves look much like normal wolves if you ignore the fact their very skin seems to be made of darkness. Three to four feet in length, every bit of the hobgoblin is black as night, including teeth and eyes. Their growls rustle the leaves of the Thorns with bass vibrations and their howls are the awful, coughing retch of a dying cancer patient. Their movements are completely silent, even when passing over dry leaves or other substances that should betray their presence.

Storytelling Hints: Normal wolves rarely attack humans, unless they are rabid or starving. The majority of wolf attacks are the result of humans too stupid to back down when they come too close to a wolves' den or after they've trapped or injured one of the animals. But shadow wolves hunt for pleasure. They enjoy the feeling of chasing frightened prey, of ripping into soft flesh with their black teeth. Shadow wolves do more than just hunt prey, however, they terrorize. The wolves leap from shadows to nip at flanks or barrel into their victims from behind, knocking them to the ground. Again, though cruel, these tactics are no different than any number of similar fae predators that can be found in the Hedge. Shadow wolves are much, much more than simple predators.

The eyes of a shadow wolf are listless orbs of black that refuse to reflect any light. To stare into the eyes of the beasts is to become lost

in them and open the way to your soul. When a pack first catches the scent of prey, the pack alpha glides forward to scout. If the prey turns out to be a single victim, the alpha howls for the rest of the pack and the hunt begins. If, on the other hand, their prey travels in a group, the alpha will slink around that group until he manages to catch the eye of one of the travelers. As soon as the alpha makes eye contact, he leaps, becoming pure shadow, and attempts to invade the body of the prey. If the possession is successful, the alpha uses the body to lure other members of the group off one-by-one to his waiting pack. If not, the alpha races away to reunite with the pack, running just slow enough to make sure the prey is following.

Hobgoblins know better than to chase anything through the Hedge. Changelings can't seem to resist. The battle between pack and prey becomes a running fight, with shadow wolves popping out to attack before running off again. Eventually the prey will tire, from fatigue and blood loss, and the pack will slow the pace to move in for the kill. Usually. Sometimes, the pack continues to run, always staying maddeningly just out of reach. At first the chase is a voluntary one, with the pursuer eager to catch and kill his attackers. As the chase wears on, though, the victim feels as though he's being pulled along. His shadow stretches out in front of him, dragging him through the Thorns like a dog on a leash. As he tires, the victim begins to stumble, cutting himself on the thorns of the Hedge over and over again until he bleeds from a thousand shallow cuts. When he finally collapses, ragged beyond all endurance, his shadow continues to run, pulling his soul clear of his body. The shadow begins to take on the shape of a wolf and soon it joins the pack, the newest member leading the way back to fresh meat.



Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3
Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3
Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 2
Mental Skills: None
Physical Skills: Athletics (Lope) 5, Brawl (Bite) 4, Stealth 5, Survival (Scent) 5
Social Skills: Expression 3
Merits: Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Fleet of Foot 3
Willpower: 5
Virtue: Temperance
Vice: Greed
Initiative: 6
Defense: 4
Speed: 26 (species factor 12)
Health: 6
Wyrd: 2
Contracts: Smoke ••
Glamour/per Turn: 11/2
Armor: 2 (Shadowskin)

Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool
Bite	1(L)	—	10

Fae Aspects

- **Shadowskin:** The body of a shadow wolf is only partially solid. Physical attacks can injure the beast, but the damage is always less than might be expected. This grants the wolf an effective Armor Rating of 2 against all attacks. In addition, the wolf gains a +2 bonus to all Stealth rolls as a result of its natural camouflage. Their shadowy natures do come with some disadvantages, however. If the wolves are exposed to any light source stronger than a candle flame, they suffer a -2 penalty on all actions and lose the Armor Rating from Shadowskin.

- **Pack Tactics:** Shadow wolves use their feral intelligence, cunning and pack awareness to attack as a team, rather than as individuals, each strike benefiting from the one that came before it. Any character that is attacked by a shadow wolf has her Defense reduced by two for that turn (rather than the usual one) for the next attack by another member of the pack.

- **Windows to the Soul:** Only available to the alpha of a shadow wolf pack, this Aspect lets the wolf attempt to possess their prey. Roll the alpha's Presence + Manipulation +2 versus the target's Resolve + Composure. If the target wins the roll, the attempt at possession fails. If the alpha wins the roll, the target becomes possessed for the remainder of the scene. If the possessed takes damage from any source while under the control of the alpha, the possession immediately ends and the alpha is ejected from the body. Alphas may only use this Aspect once per night.

- **Strength in Numbers:** Only a fool chases the unknown through the Thorns. For each turn a character chases the shadow wolves she must make a Stamina + Resolve roll at a cumulative -1 penalty (maximum of -5). If a roll is failed, the character takes one point of lethal damage as her shadow seems to pull her into the Thorns. A character may choose to stop chasing the wolves at any time, *unless* he suffers a dramatic failure on the Stamina + Resolve roll or suffers a total of five points of lethal damage. In either of these circumstances the character must make a Strength

+ Composure roll in order to rein in her shadow and come to a halt. Other characters that tackle or otherwise hinder the character as she runs, must hold the character still for two turns before the compulsion to chase the wolves is lifted. This may call for opposed grappling checks (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 157). If a character fills the last point of her Health track with lethal damage inflicted by chasing the pack, her shadow and soul pull away from her body and join to become a shadow wolf. The body left behind exists in a coma state (and gravely injured) and if some way is discovered to reunite body, soul, and shadow, the character may recover.

SHIMMERLINGS

Quote: "Goddamned bugs."

Background: Nearly every changeling knows (or *thinks* he knows) that his soul was mangled by the Hedge on their trip to Arcadia. The thorns rip away pieces of the soul as the soon-to-be changeling is dragged thru or travels further into the Hedge. It is posited by some that this is part of the process of change that eventually results in the creation of a changeling. What exactly happens to the pieces of soul that are ripped away? Of that, no one seems to be sure. Parts of a changeling's soul may be woven amongst other materials to make a fetch, but no one knows if the Gentry collect these tattered bits of soul from the Hedge or directly from the source. One possible answer to the mystery of what happens to lost pieces of once-human souls is the Shimmerlings.

The more intelligent varieties of hobgoblins say that nothing that remains trapped in the Hedge remains unchanged for long; including lost bits of soul. Normally, unhindered by magic spell or mystical containment, a separated soul will either try to return to its body or, if the body dies, move along to whatever awaits humanity in the hereafter. Just like the humans they came from, souls lost in the Hedge can't always find an easy way out and the pieces that aren't captured by other denizens of the Thorns are eventually altered by their captivity. The pieces of soul gravitate toward each other, futilely seeking to become whole once more. As the bits and pieces travel through the Hedge, seeking their lost host or escape, they change and, lacking the energy provided by their usual attachment to a body, they begin to hunger. Eventually, the soul-swarm will come across a changeling or a human also wandering through the Hedge. Attracted by other souls or the familiar form of a human body, the swarm descends upon those it has encountered and attempts to drain their unfortunate victim of precious energy to sate their hunger.

Description: Warped by the Hedge, Shimmerlings take on a physical manifestation similar to a swarm of large flies. If one looks closer, however, they will discover the actual form of a Shimmerling to be completely alien to anything found outside the Thorns. Shimmerlings have black, segmented bodies and transparent, diaphanous wings. The abdomen is clear, with a tiny stinger, and the head of a Shimmerling is vaguely humanoid with protruding mandibles and antennae. Shimmerlings favor darkness or twilight to begin their attacks, their black bodies blending in with the dim light.

Storytelling Hints: Not wanting to frighten off potential prey with the buzzing of many wings, Shimmerlings sneak up on their targets by crawling along the ground or winding their way through the thorns as they approach. Once they have reached their prey, the Shimmerlings leap into the air and begin their at-



tack. Though of limited intellect, Shimmerlings adopt different tactics depending on the situation. If the swarm happens across a lone traveler, the Shimmerlings will attempt to sting, bite and otherwise exhaust him until he is unable to resist as they suck the energy from his body. Faced with multiple targets, the swarm will perform hit-and-run maneuvers, each Shimmerling taking it in turn to feast on the succulent juices of their victim. Opposed to other less-than-natural predators, Shimmerlings don't drink blood, devour flesh or consume any other part of the human body. Being creatures of soul, their appetites are whetted by more intangible delicacies. A Shimmerling that manages to attach itself to a victim drains him of Willpower (if human) or Glamour (if changeling). As they feed from a victim, the energy they steal is stored in the abdomen, which begins to glow and shimmer with a pale, blue light: thus giving Shimmerlings their name.

It is possible to reclaim the energies stolen by a Shimmerling, though the method is exceedingly repugnant. After feeding, each Shimmerling holds two points of either Willpower or Glamour within its body. If a character can catch one of the creatures, he can eat it to regain what has been lost. As the taste of a Shimmerling is best described as the flavor of shit mixed with vinegar, not everyone has the will to partake in such a meal. Each time a character attempts to eat a Shimmerling to regain lost Willpower or Glamour they must succeed on a Resolve + Composure roll or become too nauseous to complete the task.

It should be noted that a character that eats a Shimmerling to regain either Willpower or Glamour needn't capture the actual Shimmerling that fed from him. Regardless of where the energy originated, if a character can choke a Shimmerling down, he gains the energy contained within the creature. Some changelings tell stories about hobgoblins, privateers or other denizens of the Hedge that manage to train Shimmerlings to feast on travelers and return to their owner, who then sucks the juices from their "pets."

Desperate changelings, low on Glamour, that know about Shimmerlings and spot some shining in the distance have been known to hunt the creatures down, just to drain the energies from their bodies. The most troubling question about devouring a Shimmerling to regain lost energy brings one back to the basic nature of the creatures. If the myths are true and Shimmerlings *really* are lost pieces of soul, what happens when a Shimmerling is eaten? Does the act of consuming a Shimmerling make the character some kind of strange, spiritual cannibal? For this reason alone, many changelings accept the loss of Glamour with as much grace as possible, rather than risk the possibility of digesting a soul.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 5, Stamina 1

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

Mental Skills: None

Physical Skills: Brawl 4, Stealth 5

Social Skills: None

Merits: None

Willpower: 6

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Swarms

Animals of Size 1 or 2 are generally best recorded in swarms, flocks and other groupings of the animals, as they are most effective in such groupings. This includes not just insects, but also most birds and smaller creatures such as rats.

Swarms are measured by their size in yards radius. A swarm inflicts one die of bashing damage to anyone within its radius. A swarm can inflict more damage by condensing. Every time the swarm condenses to cover half of its full area, it inflicts one additional die of damage per turn.

Therefore, a swarm of eight yards in radius inflicts two bashing damage per turn if it constricts down to a four-yard radius, three bashing if it halves that again to a two-yard radius, and four bashing damage per turn if it condenses itself down to a one-yard radius.

Armor is effective against a swarm only if it covers one's full body, but even then it provides only half its rating. In addition, targets are distracted by the swarm, suffering -2 dice on Perception and concentration rolls while they are within the radius, even if they're not specifically attacked.

The swarm cannot be attacked with fists, clubs, swords or guns. Only area-affect attacks such as a torch affect it. Each point of damage inflicted by a flame or other applicable attack halves the swarm's size. Once the swarm is reduced below a one-yard radius, either all insects are dead or the few remaining disperse.

Speed: 12 (species factor 10)

Health: Four yard swarm (see sidebar)

Wyrd: 3

Contracts: Darkness ••, Goblin Contract: Delayed Harm (•••)

Glamour/per Turn: 12/3

Armor: None

Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Feed	0	—	9	Ignores Defense

Fae Aspects

• **Feed:** Descending upon their victims in a swirling mass, Shimmerlings attempt to drain energy. This requires physical contact with the target. Roll Dexterity + Brawl, ignoring the target's Defense. If the attack is successful, on the following turn the Shimmerlings may feed from their target as an instant action. Roll Resolve + Wyrd versus the target's Resolve + Wyrd. For each success the Shimmerlings accrue on the roll the target is drained of one point of Glamour or one point of Willpower.

SONGWRAITH

Quote: "Come with me, love me, and we can be together forever..." [eerie, enchanting music]

Background: Legends abound throughout mortal cultures all over the world of exotic women that tempt and lure men with their sexual wiles. Sirens, succubi, lamiae, and other supernatural temptresses similar in nature to them populate stories and myths in every culture's history. Legends from Ireland also tell the tale of the banshee, a spirit which signals the death of a member of the family when it sings or screams.



Both legends seem to have taken root in the same creature. The Songwraith is an entity that feeds on emotional energy, and lures its victims in by precisely replicating the appearance of a loved one, then lowering the victim's defenses with its hypnotic song.

Despite its very archetypal brand of menace, the Songwraith is apparently a fairly new addition to the world of the Hedge. Innumerable deceivers, seducers and sirens exist in the Thorns. The first account of contact with this particular hobgoblin, though, occurred only nine years ago, in a Goblin Market in the Hedge near Washington, D.C. The creature first appeared to a group of changelings just at twilight there, while they were to purchase goblin fruit, and ended up seducing and killing the Winter King of the city. Attempts to attack it in retaliation met with limited success. The Songwraith seemed invulnerable to most standard weapons, although fire and magic both did it some harm.

Since then, they have slowly spread. They are seldom found in the wilderness, but prefer populated areas with access to numerous victims. The Songwraith is a solitary hobgoblin, and will not willingly congregate with others of its kind. When two or more inadvertently choose the same area as their hunting grounds, the strongest will remain in that area, and the others will move on to find new territory.

Some changelings believe that the Songwraith is related to another incorporeal hobgoblin, the Will-O-Wisp. There is no truth to this belief, but unscrupulous hobs have been known to pass the rumor on in order to manipulate a changeling's fears and sell them some trinket or token they insist will help protect the user against a Songwraith. These tokens are invariably worthless.

Description: The Songwraith appears vague at first glance, which always occurs from a distance, and usually either at night or late in the day when the light is dim. As she gets closer, her features begin to sharpen and take on more detail: the color of her eyes, the color and length of her hair, the style of dress, and so on. By the time she can be seen clearly, she has taken on the exact appearance of the one woman the person viewing her loves the most – wife, lover, friend. Male Songwraiths exist, but these are far more rare. If more than one person is viewing the Songwraith, the Songwraith is only visible to her chosen victim, making it more difficult for the target's acquaintances to help defend him. The Songwraith's appearance is usually young. Female Songwraiths can and will go after lesbian females as victims, and male Songwraiths will prey on homosexual men. The only necessary prerequisite is desire.

The Songwraith has no fixed appearance, and between feedings, exists as a cloud of disincarnate shadow, resting in a thin layer along the ground in places where large numbers of people have died, such as battlefields and charnel houses.

Storytelling Hints: Because the Songwraith is composed of shadow, physical attacks are of limited use against it. Enchanted weapons and tokens will harm one, but standard weapons are of no use.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Crafts 2, Occult 3, Politics 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Larceny 2, Stealth 3, Survival 1, Weaponry 3

Social Skills: Empathy 4, Expression 4, Persuasion 3, Socialize 2, Subterfuge 5

Merits: Harvest 2 (Emotions), Striking Looks 4

Willpower: 6

Initiative: 6

Defense: 2

Speed: 10

Health: 8

Wyrd: 3

Contracts: Mirror •••, Vainglory ••••

Glamour/per Turn: 12/3

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Dagger	2(L)	5
Song	special (see above)	9

Fae Aspects

• **Bewitching Melody:** When a Songwraith has chosen her victim, she begins to sing. The target must resist by rolling his Resolve + Composure versus the Songwraith's Presence + Expression. If the roll fails, this song begins to sap the victim's Glamour at a rate of one per Turn. The victim may reroll once per every three turns. Once the victim's Glamour is drained, the song then drains their Health points at the same rate as it did their Glamour, until the victim finally dies.

• **Fleshly Guise:** The Songwraith is capable of taking on a specific form for an extended period of time in order to draw out the deception. During this time, it has a corporeal form, and will appear to eat, converse, and carry out the same sort of activities as any normal changeling. When engaging in such long-term hunting, it will appear as a changeling of the Fairest kith.

SPENSER'S NEPENTHE

Quote: "Can anybody hear me? Please? I'm trapped in here... I need a hand."

Background: The Hedge is home to many carnivorous plants, and this is one of them — this one actually buries itself in the ground or in a Hedge wall, and mimics the shape of a long, slender pit with slick sides. Once someone drops into the pit, it mists them with a faint cloud of shimmering pollen... and the pollen forces them to sink into forgetful numbness.



Description: For the most part, only the lip of the plant is visible — just a curled cusp of damp and dewy green with the faintest fringe of red. However, it's what's in the pit of the plant's belly that matters. The pit is dark, held to deep shadow. The Nepenthe has a hungry floral tongue whose blooming flowers can blossom and shape themselves into the silhouette of a person. The plant then waggles this person-shaped shadow about, mimicking someone who's been trapped down in the deep pit (approximately 10 yards deep, or about 30 feet). The simulacrum "reaches up" and tries to get someone to lower a rope or come down and help him out. The voice that cries out is, quite literally, voices stolen from those who have been trapped prior... meaning that it's not altogether impossible that the changeling will recognize the voice of someone who's been slowly digested by the plant.

Storytelling Hints: None, really — the plant mimics desperation and feigns a person crying out for help.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 1, Stamina 5

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 3, Composure 1

Mental Skills: None

Physical Skills: None

Social Skills: Expression (Mimic) 5

Merits: None

Willpower: 4

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Gluttony

Initiative: 2

Defense: 1

Size: 10

Speed: 0

Health: 15

Wyrd: 1

Contracts: None

Glamour/per Turn: 10/1

Armor: 4

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool	Special
Simulacrum Attack	2(B)	3	Mostly ineffectual, but once down in the pit the creature's "tongue" body can make attacks

Fae Aspects

• **Digest:** Over time, those trapped in the bowels of the plant start to digest. Technically, though, the plant begins to digest inorganic matter first — every 10 minutes, the plant eats one point of Structure from all inorganic or unliving items. Once the character is basically naked, its nectar juices (which smell potent and sweet, see below) start to work on human flesh — it causes one point of lethal damage per hour.

• **Mimic:** Spend a point of Glamour and roll Manipulation + Expression versus a character's Wits + Empathy. If the plant is successful, the mimic is complete — both the voice and the moving shadow of its tongue appear human and in need of help. It should be noted that the plant cannot manufacture new words — it can "answer" a character's questions, but only with things that have been said (or screamed) within its digesting depths.

- **Slick Sides:** The internal walls of the plant's pit run with oozing nectar. This makes rolls to climb out very difficult, equal to a -5 dice penalty on the Climbing roll. In addition, climbing out can cause minor burns to the hands — on every attempt, the character suffers one point of bashing damage.

- **Soporific:** The plant gives off a sweet-smelling perfume from an exhalation of shimmering nectar. Treat this like a substance with Toxicity 4, but instead of delivering damage it incurs dice penalties equal to the Toxicity level, though these penalties are only to Mental rolls. Any who escape the carnivorous plant suffer a persistent -1 penalty to all Mental rolls for the next 12 hours due to a degree of fogginess from lingering pollen inhalation.

SUZARO THE FISHMONCER

Quote: “Of course the fish are fresh. Is that really what you wanted to ask?”

Background: Information is just another type of merchandise to be bought and sold by hob merchants. Some hobs conduct business with a side order of gossip, a few trade solely in information and a select few combine the trading of information and goods into a seamless whole, mixing one with the other like an artist mixes paints. The type of information dealt by a particular merchant will vary greatly depending on their circumstances and profession. A traveling hob merchant that specializes in wishes for all occasions will have a broader, yet shallower pool from which to draw than a hob that has lived and worked in the same Thorn-town all his life. The information available to a hob also varies depending on his clientele. A hob that regularly deals with changelings is more likely to know something about the peccadillo of the Queen that has her court all a-twitter than a hob that deals mainly with its own kind. Changelings are also much easier to barter with for information than hobs (or True Fae, for that matter), given their frequent lack of anything useful to trade a merchant for the goods they desire. Secrets are, after all, quite a valuable commodity.

Suzaro lives in a Thorn-town that has grown up near a bottomless lake. The town is reasonably near a few well-known entrances into the Hedge and is the site of a more-or-less constant Goblin Market. Suzaro conducts business from a neat little wooden building with a sign featuring a painting of a fish hanging over the door. Inside the building, large tanks, literally swimming with fish, line the walls and give the place a somewhat aquatic feel. Customers are given the option to select their next meal and take it home with them to prepare or of turning the fish over to Suzaro and his staff to prepare in the shop's small kitchen. A fair number of battered tables and rickety chairs are spread around the place in a chaotic fashion and in the evenings the place is abuzz with conversation as hobs and changelings come in and settle down for a meal. Day or night, Suzaro is constantly moving among his customers, ensuring their food is well-prepared, exchanging greetings and conducting whispered conversations that are impossible to overhear thanks to the background noise.

Description: Suzaro looks more than half-fish himself, with his bulging black eyes and scaly grey skin. His smile reveals a mouth filled with rows of tiny, pointed teeth and his fingers end in suckers that seem ideally suited for catching a fish by hand. Suzaro's legs are stumpy and slightly bowed with webbed feet that produce a faint slapping noise when he walks across hard surfaces. An indefinable scent lingers around him, mixed in with the ever-present stink of fish, which is reminiscent of muddy bogs or

swampy glens. Suzaro is affable enough; he treats each customer with respect and courtesy while gently probing them for any interesting tidbits of information they might be willing to part with.

Storytelling Hints: The food is always good at Suzaro's place. A nice trout (or something that *looks* like a trout) sautéed with lemon and butter, served up fresh with fried potatoes (goblin fruit roots, really, but still tasty) and a glass of beer (Suzaro imports the finest Budweiser) hits the spot quite nicely. Changelings might find the other customers somewhat distracting, but Suzaro enforces firm neutrality in his shop, aided by glowering looks or busted heads courtesy of some of his more physically capable employees. Word is that Suzaro has a deal with the Gentry to observe the neutrality of the house, having cut deals with them in the past. While the food is lovely, customers really come to the shop to talk to Suzaro.

“Ask Suzaro” is a common reply to questions no one knows the answer to. More than just a simple catch phrase, this oft repeated axiom demonstrates the honest regard held for the hob. His contacts include True Fae visitors, privateer smugglers, Loyalist goons and every hob that lives in or travels through the Thorn-town. Changelings come to Suzaro for information they couldn't get without serious risk to life and limb and his other customers come for information about the changelings. Suzaro is cheerfully mercenary and forthright about his approach to business. He'll deal with any customer that can provide him with useful intelligence and openly admits that anything he's told is likely to be re-told. His gift for gab is legendary. Even customers that come in to his shop with no intention of spilling the beans about anything usually find themselves locked in conversation with Suzaro.

On the rare occasions Suzaro comes up against a character that can't be compelled to talk to him, if the information he's after is especially valuable, Suzaro will employ his knowledge of the Contracts of Mirror to alter his appearance and spy on his mark. Suzaro is always very careful to never let anyone catch him using this tactic. His belief (probably correct) is that people don't know he can change his appearance they will be less likely to become



suspicious about the motives of a new “buddy” that has the same interests as that hob fish seller.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 5, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Crafts (Cooking) 4, Investigation (Rumors) 5, Occult 5

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Larceny 4, Stealth 3, Survival (Fishing) 4, Weaponry (Knife) 4,

Social Skills: Empathy 5, Persuasion (Wheel) 5, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 4

Merits: Allies (Hob merchants) 5, Allies (Privateers) 2, Contacts (True Fae, hobs, privateers, Loyalists, changeling Courts) 5

Willpower: 5

Virtue: Charity

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 5

Defense: 2

Speed: 9

Health: 7

Wyrd: 4

Contracts: Fang and Talon (Fish) •••, Mirror •••, Vainglory •

Glamour/per Turn: 13/4

Armor: None

Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool
Knife	2(L)	—	9

Fae Aspects

• **Loose Lips:** This Aspect functions similarly to the Fleeting Spring Contract, “Growth of the Ivy” (see **Changeling: The Lost**, p. 149) except that it only works to increase the desire for conversation with Suzaro. Even the dourest of customers become amazingly chatty around the wily hob. Faced with a tight-lipped customer, Suzaro activates the Aspect by spending a point of Glamour. Roll Manipulation + Persuasion + Wyrd versus the target’s Resolve + Composure + Wyrd. If Suzaro wins the roll, the character feels inclined to discuss whatever happens to be on his mind for the next hour. If the target wins the roll, the magic has no effect.

TERRADONT

Quote: [The sound of falling leaves, stones grinding together, and then screams.]

Background: The name Terradont comes from the Latin root words for “teeth of the earth”, and this hobgoblin lives up to its name. Originally created by the Others as guardian beasts for their domains, they have since spread from their original niche and can be found in almost every area of the Hedge except those places with arctic or desert climactic conditions.

The first Terradont started out as a slime-mold that crossed over into the Hedge from the mortal world in a shipment of dead leaves brought to a Keeper by a hobgoblin in order to create a fetch. The Keeper found the slime-mold and decided to experiment with it, sensing the potential to change it into something interesting with magic. The Keeper shaped the slime-mold into a number of intriguing variations, eventually resulting in the first Terradont.

Jive-Talking Wizards

Both Suzaro and Billy Birch are useful characters to help along a story or point the players in a certain direction. Both characters have solid reputations based on the reliability of their information and for straight talking. Storytellers that choose to use either Billy or Suzaro in their games should try to resist the impulse to fill the mouths of the characters with enigmatic statements, outright lies or misleading information. Certainly the Storyteller needn’t give the players *all* the information they are looking for, but it should be valuable and reliable enough to warrant the players seeking out Billy or Suzaro. Leave your enigmatic, jive-talking wizards at the door.

It’s also worth noting that Billy Birch, Suzaro and One-Hand Sam are all examples of encounters in the Hedge that needn’t end in violence. Not every encounter amongst the Thorns needs to be a life-or-death struggle.

Description: A Terradont is an extremely large, mostly stationary scavenger that resembles a large pile of leaves and other vegetable detritus. However, the hobgoblin is a master of camouflage, and the details of its appearance change not only according to season, but to specific locale as well. It may mimic a heap of brown and gold oak and maple leaves in a deciduous forest in October, a pile of broken sticks and brown pine needles in an evergreen forest in January, a mound of green vines and creeping flowers in a wildflower field in April, or a morass of fermenting fallen fruit in an old apple orchard in August. Tropical variations, sub-arctic versions, and even subspecies are adapted to blend in to goblin towns and market areas, usually by disguising itself as a compost heap.

The debris that makes up the top layer of the Terradont is composed of protoplasm shaped and colored to mimic specific types of vegetation. Underneath the top layer is a moraine of stones, gravel, and sand, which acts as the creature’s teeth.

The Terradont has no sense of sight, but it compensates for this with extremely well-developed senses of hearing, smell, and touch. A full-grown Terradont can spread out in a roughly circular area almost 15 feet across, and may weigh almost a ton.

Storytelling Hints: The Terradont has two ways of devouring its prey. Its favorite method of trapping victims is to slowly excavate a deep hole in a suitable spot in a secluded location, incorporating whatever rocks it finds in the soil into its make-up. It then spreads itself out over the hole, similar to the leaves and twigs that cover a hunter’s pit trap. It completes the trap by extruding a pseudopod of protoplasm shaped to look like something valuable. This can be anything from a bit of gold jewelry, a piece of goblin fruit, or an imitation of a smaller, weaker animal that flops about as if injured. When an animal, hob, or changeling happens along and attempts to retrieve the lure, the Terradont collapses into the pit, enveloping the target and smothering her.

The Terradont is also known to sit at the edge of cliffs that overhang roads and other areas where prey creatures pass underneath. When it senses approaching prey, usually through sound



THE UNMADE

Quote: "I found Arcadia. Let me show you."

Background: Despite the horrors they endured, Arcadia still calls out to changelings to return. The wonders found in the lands of Faerie can be found no place else and a small part of every changeling feels regret at being separated from Domains that bubble over with miracles and magic of every description. Changelings aren't alone in their fascination with Arcadia. Humans, too, hear the siren call of the land beyond the Thorns. Every culture has tales about Arcadia and most of those tales are madly glamorous and, at the same time, darkly disturbing. A great number of changelings were never abducted at all. They stepped willingly into faerie ring or danced around a menhir, their hearts filled with fae song as they willed themselves entry into the lands of the Fae. The Hedge quickly disabuses

or vibrations in the ground, it will slide off the edge of the cliff, hoping to land atop the animal underneath, crushing it with its weight. This method of hunting is by far less successful than the other, however, and is rarely used unless the pit method has repeatedly failed.

The Terradont is, above all, a very successful scavenger, and will digest anything organic that it can devour. Plants, animals, and rotting carrion all serve to nourish it. Because of this trait, at least one goblin town is known to have captured a Terradont when it was young, imprisoned it in the bottom of a pit, sealed off the opening to the pit with a barred grate, and used the creature as a giant, living trash disposal. At least one Keeper is known to use the creature in the same way to dispose of changelings that have displeased her.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Crafts 1, Investigation 2

Physical Skills: Brawl 3, Stealth 4, Survival 2

Social Skills: Expression 1, Intimidation 2, Subterfuge 5

Merits: Fast Reflexes 2, Iron Stomach, Strong Back

Willpower: 4

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Speed: 15

Health: 11

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Envelop	5(L)	8
Grind	3(L)	8

most humans of any fanciful notions they might have held about the kindness of faeries. Then there are the mages. Nosy bastards, every one, always seeking what shouldn't be found and traveling where they have no business going. Those magicians that claim a heritage with Arcadia are the worst of the lot. They weave subtle spells of Fate and time, seeking entrance to Faerie. Unfortunately, a few succeed.

Oh, they don't make it all the way to Arcadia, at least not initially. No, they wind up in the Hedge. Humans (and for all their grandiose claims of power, mages are still human) don't belong in the Hedge. It saps their will and destroys their minds. Many mages verge on insanity without the corrupting influence of the Thorns to encourage their decline. Meddling about with strange powers that ought not to exist takes a toll on the psyche. From their first step into the Hedge, these sorcerers are lost. They quickly find their magic doesn't work the way it's supposed to or that it works *too* well, a situation that comes with its own set of complications. Arrogant beyond folly, mages that have made it into the Hedge refuse to retreat, growing madder with ever step they take. Some are devoured by hobgoblins, defenseless in the face of fae magic, some lose their way completely and die, cold and alone. These are the lucky ones. The unlucky mages manage to stagger through the gates of Arcadia and into the waiting clutches of Keepers who are thrilled to have a new toy to play with.

Something about the soul of a magician is different from the souls of everyday people. Maybe they retain more of the divine spark, maybe their soul is forged by the magic they wield or, just maybe, they don't have a soul at all, having bartered it away for their powers. Because of this difference, mages that manage to find their way to Faerie are changed in different ways than changelings. Sorcerers quickly find they are unwelcome



even seem capable of rational thought. This is an illusion. Every one is madder than a hatter.

Storytelling Hints: The Unmade approach others they find walking among the Thorns and attempt to engage them in conversation. They offer to act as guides to Arcadia and become quite belligerent with anyone that declines their polite invitation. Questions about who they are and where they came from are met with blank stares or convoluted stories that meander through truth and lie before trailing off into confusion. The only stable point in any of their speeches is the subject of Arcadia. The mind of the Unmade returns again and again to the subject, echoing the mindset of the human it used to be. Some Unmade are more tricky than others, posing as guides to the nearest Thorn-town or Goblin Market while actually leading the way directly to Arcadia. When guile fails, they fall back on force. Attempts to return changelings by force to Arcadia are especially dangerous on those rare occasions when two or more of the Unmade meet up and work as a team.

Even lacking in Wits, the Unmade are still drawn to Arcadia like moths to a flame. Where humans, changelings and even hobgoblins would become lost among the twisting paths of the Thorns, the Unmade always move with purpose along the quickest paths to Arcadia. Perhaps their madness gives them insight into the workings of the Hedge or maybe they feel the tug of the curse placed on them by the True Fae (see the Fae Aspect, "The Fool" below). As much as they desire to return to Faerie, the way is barred to them by dusk. Shadows rise up to form an impenetrable barrier to the Unmade, which, of course, incites them to a fury. Changelings that decide to follow the Unmade to Arcadia are likely to be attacked when the deluded creatures find they can't pass into Arcadia. Some few Unmade have managed to (randomly) find their way out of the Hedge. Bereft of the fae magic that transformed

in Arcadia: the elements refuse to make pacts with them, time ignores them and Fate looks on with a wry smile. To exist in a place where definitions of reality are dependant on sworn oaths, mages are forced to turn inwards to sustain themselves, cannibalizing body and soul in order to cling to life. The one exception to this rule is dusk. Evening breezes whisper to the mage of escape and the setting sun twists shadows to point the way out. Dusk gathers errant wizards to her breast, attracted, perhaps, by the shadows in their minds.

The Gentry can sense when a mage becomes filled with the twilight of the setting sun and, reluctantly, part with their toy, shoos them back into the Hedge. The thing that leaves Arcadia is no longer a mage, no longer even really human. Its mind has been twisted by its travels, its soul devoured for sustenance and its body warped by the caresses of dusk.

Description: The Unmade still retain the basic shape of humans. They have two arms, two legs, a head and all the rest. The resemblance ends there. They wander naked, hairless and sexless, their bodies smoothed by the touch of dusk. Their skin is the slate grey of the evening sky and their eyes gleam with the orange-yellow light of the setting sun. The Unmade can speak and some

them, the creatures slowly crumble and waste away.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills*: Academics 3, Occult (fae) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (Mad Strength) 4, Stealth 3

Social Skills*: Intimidation (Batshit Insane) 4, Persuasion 3, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Quick Healer, Unseen Sense (fae)

Willpower: 4

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 4

Defense: 2

Speed: 9

Health: 9

Wyrd: 2

Contracts: Fleeting Spring ••, Hearth •••••, Smoke •••

Glamour/per Turn: 11/2

Armor: 3 (Mystic Armor)

Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool
Fists	0(B)	—	7

Fae Aspects

- **The Fool:** For their own twisted amusement, the True Fae protect the Unmade. If one of the Unmade ever suffers more than four points of lethal damage, they are immediately transported elsewhere in the Hedge. To the eyes of onlookers, it appears as though the body of the Unmade collapsed into shadows and disappeared.

*As a result of their transformation and subsequent derangement, all Mental and Social rolls suffer the untrained penalty.

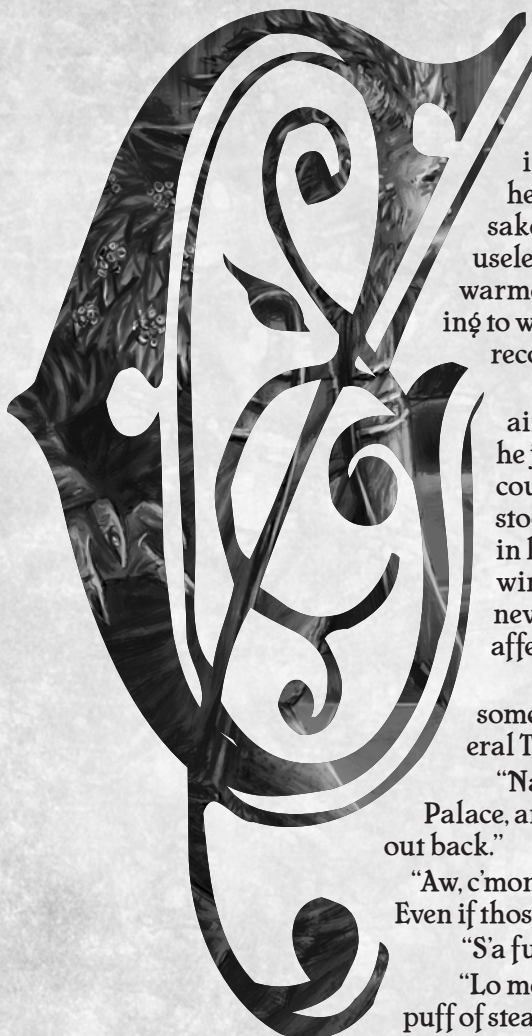
Is This the Fate of All Mages?

Maybe. Maybe not. It's hard to say anything for certain where mages are concerned, given their immense differences in personality, power and tactics. If you also play **Mage: The Awakening**, don't take the Unmade as the absolute Fate of those who go wandering into the Hedge in search of the Supernal; we don't want to limit your options if you want to go into more detail. They're presented in a **Changeling** book, after all, and are a cautionary tale from the viewpoint of the Lost. You needn't treat them as a dogmatic answer to one of **Mage's** mysteries.

Unless you like it that way. In which case, enjoy.







Crassus hated being out in the cold. Not because he wasn't used to it — he'd had damn well enough time for that. What he hated was that being cold and miserable was practically normal for him now. He never seemed to have enough time indoors to warm up properly. He'd spent two hours right in the heart of the Spring Queen's goddamn birthday party, for Christ's sake, right in the middle of all that miserable warm breath and useless laughter, all for the sake of a friend — and he still hadn't warmed up before it was time to go back outside again. He was starting to wonder if he'd ever be warm again. And if he was, would he even recognize it?

The door opened and shut behind him, with a puff of warm air that didn't get within an inch of Crassus' back. He didn't look; he just kept staring at the boarded-up door across the street. He could tell it was Tyke even before she sat down beside him on the stoop, long animal-ears twitching. Her hands were shoved deep in her jacket pockets and she hunched over as though keeping the wind out, which just made Crassus snort. She wasn't cold. Tyke was never cold. She just did it for a goddamn what-do-you-call-it, an affectation.

"Hey," said Tyke. "You want something to eat? I could go get some Chinese or something. Be happy to bring you back some General Tso's."

"Naw," said Crassus. "Only Chinese place open at this hour is Jade Palace, and those bastards use whatever meat they can catch in the alley out back."

"Aw, c'mon," she laughed, slightly. "That's Wan's place. He's practically kin. Even if those stories are true, he wouldn't do us like that."

"S'a fuckin' grub, Tyke. You know what they eat?"

"Lo mein, I hope. I could really use some noodles." She blew out a long puff of steam. "Any sign yet?"

Crassus shook his head. "No scouts, no pets. They ain't sent anyone through yet."

"How long we got?"

"Bout an hour and a half, I figure. You want your damn noodles, you better go get 'em before it's witchin' hour."

"Jesus." She shivered, and this time it was convincing. "You really think it's goin' to happen tonight?"

"What've I been sayin', Tyke? I don't think. I know. I've done the math. This is the corner. This is the night. We got 10 soldiers inside who've seen the writing on the wall." He hissed through his teeth. "Only hope it's enough."

"Hey." Tyke smiled, and this time it wasn't convincing. "I trust you. And I bet we can handle this. I mean... well, it's always darkest before the dawn, right?"

"Sure," Crassus said carefully. "But how long before dawn, and how long is it gonna stay pitch black?"

"God. I don't know," she said, hunching up even further, ears low and flat against her shoulders.

"Well." Crassus' voice was neutral as he slowly shifted from sitting on the stoop to crouching low, eyes fixed on the door across the street, watching as the first board began to pull itself free. "We're about to find out."

CHAPTER 4

The Deepening Dusk

*There is a fatality, a feeling so irresistible and inevitable
that it has the force of doom,
which almost invariably compels human beings to linger around
and haunt, ghostlike, the spot where some great and marked event
has given the color to their lifetime;
and still the more irresistibly, the darker the tinge that saddens it.*
— NATHANIEL HAWTHORN, *The Scarlet Letter*

STORYTELLING IN THE ONCOMING NIGHT

The Lost scramble, wounded and weary, through the Hedge, believing that on the other side lies salvation. That in having escaped Arcadia they have earned respite and found sanctuary. That things will be better now.

They are wrong.

Just beyond the ring of firelight, enemies are gathering, armies of alien creatures with unknowable agendas. Separated only by a seemingly sentient and certainly powerful wall of soul-shredding Thorns, untold realities worth of inhuman godlets poise, ready to strike. Unknowable creatures living among mankind pause in their timeless wars long enough to turn their attentions toward the Lost, seeking to slay or convert them, to pillage their power or use them as pawns. Simulacrum of shadow and soul-shards usurp lives and destroy changelings, hoping to prove their own legitimacy.

Night has fallen. And dawn, if it exists at all, is nowhere in sight.

The ever-deepening night is a theme which runs deep within a **Changeling** game. As survivors of their durance, the Lost come into the game as having already experienced horrors, challenges, sensations and situations beyond normal human kenning. And then things really get bad. Any aspect of the Lost experience can be used as a tool for portraying this growing darkness. From the physical to the esoteric, symbolically or very tangibly, dusk is all around the Lost. Below are

some examples of how different themes, situations and aspects of the Lost game can be emphasized, modified or enhanced to represent that element within a chronicle. For each, some suggestions on how to utilize mechanical changes to reinforce and support the thematic change are offered, along with some thoughts on how such changes may affect a chronicle. Storytellers are welcome to use any of these examples as provided, to mix and match them to paint a broader darkness for their game, or to use them as inspiration for creating their own elements of growing darkness, as best suits their chronicle and the specific themes they wish to portray therein.

WYRD INFLUENCES

Behind everything that makes changelings the creatures they are lies the mysterious force known as the Wyrd. It strengthens them and protects them by fueling their contracts, and sealing their pledges. Paradoxically, it also endangers them by fueling the Hedge and the strange creatures that dwell within, and by supplying the Gentry with their own alien might. It is, at once, the force that allows them to hide their otherworldly existence from mortal eyes via the Mask and the same power that physically changed them during their durance, creating the need for the Mask in the first place. It infuses all fae supernatural beings, items and effects, and permeates the very heart and soul of what it is to be fae.

Changelings, being both fae and human, attempt to strike a balance between the Wyrd and humanity. They continually walk a tightrope, fearful of leaning too far to one side or the other. Too much Wyrd lose touch with their humanity, no longer able to clearly discern reality from illusion or to harbor hopes of being seen as part of mankind again. Too little, and they lose access to their best defenses against the Others, leaving themselves helpless and vulnerable to the Keepers who are all too anxious to reacquaint their former wards with the ways of the Wyrd. Both as individuals and as a society, the Lost

must keep a balance where the Wyrd is concerned, or risk death, destruction... or worse.

Thus, in tinkering with that precarious balance, a Storyteller truly begins to accentuate the Lost condition, shaking the thin line separating changelings from a disastrous fate. Whether by ramping up the effect that the Wyrd has on changelings and its presence in their world, or by whittling away at it and watching the Lost begin to starve as their fae nature wanes away, the more extreme a role the Wyrd plays in a chronicle, the more it emphasizes.

ABSOLUTE POWER CORRUPTS...

For most Lost, the progression in power from weak Wyrd to strong is a gradual one. Certain actions and events can bring about this change more quickly, of course. A Lost who practices her Glamour-fueled powers extensively and spends great amounts of time exploring the Hedge or tinkering with tokens and trifles is likely to grow stronger in the Wyrd much faster than one who abhors such endeavors. Like human muscles, working one's connection to the Wyrd encourages growth, and denying or ignoring it causes atrophy. Thus, to a certain extent, in a normal setting a changeling can control how deeply she immerses herself in the Wyrd and, from that, how strongly she allows the fae force to infuse her with its alien ways.

What happens, then, when the normal gradual pattern of Wyrd development changes? When the Wyrd itself no longer seeps and trickles through its outlets in the human world, but begins to gush and spout with the force of all Arcadia behind it? Lost who expected to navigate the slippery slope of their growth as changelings now find that their powers ramp up uncontrollably quickly, despite their best intentions. All subtlety is lost, and any use of the Wyrd triggers an intense reaction from within. Even the smallest use of Glamour has the potential to ratchet up a Lost's Wyrd rating, shaking her careful balance of human and fae self. In such a setting, rather than worrying about strengthening and honing their fae might, changelings must instead try to shore up their defenses against it like a city building a levy against a fast-encroaching flood.

Now, rather than clamoring to learn new Contracts, increase their Wyrd rating, and acquire new tokens, trifles, goblin fruit and oddments, changelings must weigh carefully how much use they make of fae magic of any sort, inherent or external. Using a Contract or making a pledge is no longer an exercise to build one's power – it is an invitation for an influx of Wyrd which might well drown out one's ties to the human world, shattering Clarity, incurring Frailties and acting as a beacon for the Gentry.

Mechanics

Mechanically, one way to represent this shift in the Wyrd is to change the way in which a character's Wyrd rating is increased. Instead of spending experience points to raise a character's Wyrd voluntarily, players now are subjected to a Wyrd roll every time their characters use Glamour

Why Is This Happening?

The metagame answer is simple: to give the chronicle a sense of deepening darkness. But why are these things happening from the perspective of the changelings? The first and most dramatic answer is "they don't know." That gives an immediate story hook, starting up the possibility of plenty of intriguing roleplay as the changelings delve into old lore, listen to rumors at the Goblin Market, and so on. But as Storyteller, you should have some idea.

Like many changes in the course of a chronicle, you can come up with a wide variety of reasons why this is happening. Wyrd is something made of magic, and magic doesn't have to make clinical scientific sense as long as it's consistent with its own themes. Wyrd might be affected by an increase or decrease in fae activity in the Hedge. Some changelings make easy reasons: bridge-burners in particular might be behind an ebb in the power of Wyrd, and Loyalists may have some plot at hand that is "preparing the way" for their masters by increasing the flow of faerie magic in the area. Trods open and close. The options are many.

Our favorite approach is to tie changes like this to the storylines you're already interested in. If your players are intrigued by the thought of a hazardous emancipation raid on Faerie, then the fluctuations of Wyrd should somehow tie into that upcoming raid. Maybe some great events are about to play out, and the Wyrd swells or ebbs as Fate itself begins to stir. If a fetch has become a major thorn in the motley's side, perhaps it's found a way to boost its own powers or found a patron to call on that, in turn, is affecting the nearby flow of Wyrd. With this approach, the shift doesn't compete with the already extant plotlines of your chronicle. Quite the opposite: it calls attention to them, raises additional questions about their potential resolution. The resulting roleplay can be exceptionally rewarding.

in any way: fueling fae powers, making pledges, activating Contracts or tokens, crossing into or out of the Hedge. The Storyteller rolls a number of dice equal to the character's current Wyrd rating, and if the roll garners even a single success, the character's Wyrd is raised by one. At low Wyrd levels, using these powers is relatively safe. However, as the changeling's Wyrd rating increases — and more dice are rolled for each activation — the chances of the Wyrd surging more powerfully increases exponentially.

At first glance, this mechanic may seem to favor the changeling. No longer do they have to buy Wyrd rating dots to become more powerful, giving them the opportunity to spend their hard-earned experience points in other areas. However, increased Wyrd carries its own risks — increased visibility to the True Fae, alienation from humanity (and at high levels, even more human changelings), the risk of becoming addicted to using Glamour, Frailties, and eventually, madness and utter lack of control of one's fae side. (For more information on the drawbacks of the Wyrd, see pp. 86–87 of *Changeling: The Lost*, or Chapter One of *The Equinox Road*.)

Using this new mechanic as written virtually ensures that characters will quickly attain high Wyrd ratings (and all the drawbacks connected to that.) There is little subtlety therein,

Wyrd 10 — and Then?

For Storytellers who are inclined to incorporate it into their chronicles, the *Changeling: The Lost* supplement, *The Equinox Road*, contains a plethora of suggestions, options and guidelines for how high Wyrd ratings may affect characters. For those who do not, a simplified answer to the question of what happens to a character who reaches Wyrd 10 is offered here.

Upon reaching a Wyrd rating of 10, characters must make a Clarity roll every morning (or after every long period of sleep or rest); failing results in a Clarity rating drop (and a resulting derangement roll). When a changeling reaches Wyrd 10 and Clarity 0, they are no longer in control of their actions or reactions, and pass out of player control and into the hands of the Storyteller, where they more than likely either cross the Hedge and enter Arcadia, or become antagonists to plague their less-powerful but more-sane former-comrades.



and it can have a very immediate impact on a story. Storytellers who wish to more gradually darken their setting may choose to make the Wyrd roll only when previously unused means of spending Glamour are activated — when a particular Contract clause is used for the first time, or a new Token is first activated. Similarly, the roll may be made only upon attaining new Wyrd-related abilities or item — whenever a player spends experience points on a new Contract clause, supernatural Merit or makes a new pledge. Either of these options will increase the speed and accompanying danger of Wyrd growth (while taking control of it out of the hands of the player), but not at as severe a level as the originally offered alternate mechanic.

Results

Making any of these changes is likely to heighten a chronicle's emphasis on the Wyrd as a dangerous pseudo-entity. When Lost come to realize that using it carries a greatly increased risk of losing control of their characters to the Wyrd, it may result in even simple Glamour uses being carefully weighed beforehand. This, in turn, may well increase the "grit" factor of a chronicle, as characters rely more heavily on mundane solutions to fae problems, rather than turning to Contracts, tokens, pledges or the like for them. Hedge travel is likely to be reduced, as distrust of the Wyrd is heightened, and some changelings may even espouse that the Lost should eschew the use of fae magic altogether, linking their companion's rapid descent into Wyrd-spawned madness directly to the Gentry and their Glamour-infused reality.

An additional side effect of implementing any of the aforementioned mechanics is an increased reliance on the methods available to the Lost for voluntarily reducing their Wyrd rating. These processes (detailed on pp. 87–88 of **Changeling: The Lost**) take on vital import in a setting where players do not voluntarily control their characters' Wyrd growth, and where characters constantly risk falling to the throes of every drawback of the Wyrd when using fae powers. The Blackbird Bishopric may also take on an increased role within such settings, with sub-sects within the order focusing on aiding other Lost in reducing their Wyrd power before the increase can begin to whittle away at their Clarity.

FEAST OR FAMINE

While drastically increasing the rate at which a Lost's connection to the Wyrd is enhanced is one way of creating a setting with an increasingly desperate feel, the opposite tactic can be taken as well. Changelings will likely think carefully before using fae abilities if it means their Wyrd may spin out of control in a Glamour-rich environment, but what happens when Glamour instead becomes a rare and difficult-to-obtain resource? When becoming more adept with the Wyrd grows increasingly more challenging, and where higher level Glamour-fueled powers and abilities are both more difficult to obtain and to activate?

When increasing one's Wyrd rating becomes a very slow and resource-draining prospect, Lost will likely be fo-

cused to treat it as a super-specialization rather than as the birthright of all changelings. Struggling to obtain fae power and knowledge may become the specialized purview of a narrow sub-sect of the Lost, while others may cling only to a few minor Glamour-fueled abilities but rely almost entirely on more mundane resources for the rest of their needs. Frivolous expenditures of Glamour might become almost unheard of — the fae equivalent of lighting a cigar with a hundred-dollar bill. Those who have focused their efforts almost entirely upon the Wyrd may find their services both highly in demand — and greatly distrusted. If the vast majority of changelings cling more closely to their human sides, those who do not may well be seen as near-Gentry, and treated as such. Even worse, jealous peers who know how difficult it is to wield the Wyrd may wonder who exactly their more-powerful companions have bargained with to advance as far and strong as they have — and treat higher-Wyrd changelings or those who seem to have greater access to Glamour as potential loyalists or privateers.

And, as if the internal impact on Lost society was not enough, imagine the external effects. If changelings who are powerful in the Wyrd act as a beacon to the Others in a normal setting, how much more brightly must they call to the Gentry in a world nearly devoid of Glamour? Here, any inherent Glamour-linked individual or item would appear to shine more brightly, like the stars do in areas devoid of other light pollution. And any expenditure of Glamour, whether to seal a pledge, activate a Contract or token, or enter the Hedge would set off a virtual flare, alerting those who are aware of such matters to the use.

Mechanics

To some extent, the skeleton for a setting where changelings' connection to the Wyrd and their ability to learn more powerful Glamour-fueled abilities is already in place in the core rules of **Changeling: The Lost**. As a basic mechanic, this is represented by the experience point costs which increase at a "cost x new level" basis — as powers and ratings become higher, the cost of each increases as well. If a Storyteller wanted to create a setting where higher levels of Wyrd rating and more powerful Contracts and tokens were increasingly rare and more difficult to obtain and use, it is possible to do so simply by increasing the point costs to purchase these traits.

Less strident settings might simply implement an additional cost of a few experience points — "(New dots x 8) + 5," for example, or "(New dots + 1) x 8." Doubling the cost to increase Wyrd ratings (from "New dots x 8" to "New dots x 16") is a more severe method, but for a truly strident mechanic, "New dots squared x 8" virtually ensures that changelings almost never reach high levels of Wyrd. If a Storyteller also wanted to make it more difficult (and costly) to learn more powerful Contracts, similar changes may be made to the mechanics of purchasing Contracts. Each of these variations has its own unique effect on players' abilities and ease of purchasing both low and high level traits. Some will provide a

fairly constant handicap to all Wyrd or Glamour-related trait acquisition, while others (especially utilizing a squared dot factor) will make high-level acquisitions drastically more difficult to procure compared to lower levels.

Alternatively (or in conjunction with some of the milder changes), the cost to use Glamour might be increased. Adding an additional Glamour point cost to every Wyrd-related ability (Contracts, pledges, tokens, crossing into the Hedge, etc.) is a subtle increase that weighs down the tone of the setting in a gradual fashion. Exponential increases (squaring the Glamour cost so that an expenditure of 1 Glamour still costs 1, but any ability requiring 2 now costs 4 points, 3 costs 9, etc.) might create a setting where subtle Glamour use is common, but anything beyond very minor abilities are very rare.

And, finally, making it more difficult to actually regain spent Glamour provides yet another means to mechanically suppress a setting by whittling away at the power of Wyrd. Applying penalties to all attempts to harvest Glamour from human emotion or dreams, decreasing the availability of Hedge bounty, or making the Glamour pledge boon a Greater, rather than Medial aspect of a pledge are all means of reinforcing this theme. Removing the Harvest Merit (and its associated bonuses to reaping Glamour in various means) can be done along with or instead of any of the other means.

Results

Whether Storytellers create their game using a Glamour-poor setting, or implement it mid-story as part of a plot or general darkening of the game's theme, decreasing the character's access to their fae side is sure to have an impact on the way Lost interact with the world around them and each other. The rarer the Glamour, the more valuable it becomes. This may drastically increase how important a role it plays in changelings' motivations – those desperate to attain (or retain) it are driven to greater measures to do so. On the other hand, it may also create entire factions within Lost society who eschew all but the simplest of fae magic, and rely almost entirely upon mundane resources, discretion, and merging into human society to the best of their ability.

It also may increase the Lost's hunger for those fae powers or items which the Storyteller has chosen not to affect. If Wyrd ratings are harder to obtain but Contracts remain the same cost, players may be drawn to purchase a wide variety of lower-level powers for their characters. If Contracts are expensive, but tokens and goblin fruit are common and easy to purchase, changelings (and their players) will likely shift their focus towards making the most of fae items. Or, if powers and Wyrd are unaffected, but Glamour is increasingly more difficult to refresh, a shift of focus towards finding new sources of Glamour, new ways to store it, or using items and powers that do not "waste" the rare resources might well follow.

PLEDGES, PROMISES AND OTHER PRETTY WORDS

At their roots, Lost are all bound by promises. From the changes made to them in Arcadia to the Contracts and pledges they use upon their escape, the sworn word is key to the changeling way of life. Upon returning through the Hedge, most Lost are wary about trusting others. For many, the last individual they trusted was likely the one who seduced, kidnapped, or tricked them through the Thorns in the first place, and they are wont to make such a grievous mistake again. Because of this, once they learn the power of pledges, vows and oaths, many rely heavily upon them, requesting or requiring promises of one another in situations where humanity would, for the most part, be willing to simply risk extending their trust.

The use of treachery in pledges, such as the mechanic for Unwitting Pledges found on pp. 73–75, is one avenue that a Storyteller can use to darken a game's themes. By trapping characters into increasingly more restrictive pledges (or allowing them to both use and be hampered by the same) the weight of the sworn word can press heavily upon the setting. By the same token, taking away the surety offered by pledges is another way of rattling a game's foundation and encouraging characters to doubt even the relative safety they've come to expect from pledge-sworn bonds. If, after all, a changeling cannot trust an ancient and time-honored oath, what can she trust?

LOOPHOLES AND ESCAPE CLAUSES

One of the tools that can be used for increasing the paranoia factor (and thus the feeling of impending doom) of a changeling game is removing one of the time-honored and strongly trusted aspects of the Lost society: pledges. If pledges become nothing more than promises, with no supernatural backing to enforce them, the foundation which binds most aspects of changeling society together is stripped away. Motleys and freeholds no longer have reassurance that everyone in the group is tied to a common set of standards. Monarchs can no longer inherently feel their bond to those sworn in loyalty to them, nor can knights and nobles know that the rulers they protect and support will return the gesture. Connections the mortal world begins to fray as humans can no longer become ensorcelled and the Lost's ability to protect their dreams is hampered. Changeling treaties and romantic liaisons, long the territory of Wyrd-bound oaths, are now as vulnerable to deception and betrayal as those of their mortal kin, leading the already paranoid Lost even further into an isolated existence of suspicion and mistrust.

Even darker, perhaps, than removing pledges entirely from a game, is the technique of making them fallible. While Lost who are denied the tool of Wyrd-sworn promises simply must learn to do without them, a world where

the one trusted constant is now found to be corrupt, faulty, or even venal is a sinister one indeed.

Mechanics

Simply removing the Wyrd's ability to seal oaths is one way of implementing these changes to a given game's setting. Another is to make the change not to the Wyrd itself, but to the Lost. Other creatures of the Wyrd retain their ability to bind others into pledges, but changeling (perhaps by inherently, perhaps as a result of some misfortune) do not have sufficient mastery over the Wyrd to force it to their will where sealing promises is concerned. By allowing pledges to exist, but putting their control out of changelings' purview, a Storyteller leaves the Lost even more vulnerable to the predations of the Gentry or other Wyrd-wielding beings than in the traditional game setting. This vulnerability can be further emphasized by removing the ability of Lost to add their Wyrd rating into attempts to resist being tricked into unwitting pledges, a technique that leaves them as weak as humans in their susceptibility to such guile.

For a more subtle (and devious) change in a setting, a Storyteller could introduce a challenge to pledges' concrete nature. By starting with the standard perception of pledges as being dependable and slowly but surely leading players (and their characters) to the realization that for some reason the oaths they've come to depend on are no longer entirely steadfast, a Storyteller can darken the setting of his game. More importantly, this can encourage characters to explore the mystery of what has happened to their formerly-trustworthy pledges and how, if possible, they can return this staple of Lost society to its unspoiled status. This change could be the result of a localized effect — a token that temporarily gives oath-swearers the Wyrd-equivalent of making promises with their fingers crossed, for example, or a Contract that allows a changeling to sidestep the sanction while breaking a pledge. On the other hand, it could be something vastly larger in scope and more sinister. Perhaps the duration of the ancient pledge that was originally sworn with the Wyrd to ensure it would witness countless generations of promises has finally expired. Or perhaps sufficient numbers of oaths have been broken to finally act as a violation of that same timeless pledge, and now Lost must find a way to swear a new over-arching vow with the pledge-binding aspect of the Wyrd itself.

Results

Using any of the above-mentioned changes is will likely increase the overt and subtle paranoia level of changelings in a Lost game, both as individuals and as a group. When trust is given, it is likely to be given strongly, and seen as a matter of life-or-death. Those who earn that trust and then break it may be dealt with even more severely than oath-breakers in the current setting, because of the rarity of the trust being extended.

Motleys, freeholds and other fae organizations may find other ways to enforce loyalty amongst their numbers, be it

Oathbreaker's Honesty

For those who have access to *Lords of Summer*, the themes of escaping the effects of a broken pledge's sanction may sound familiar. Oathbreaker's Honesty is the 5-dot clause of the Contracts of Spellbound Autumn, and as such may be used as the keystone for implementing a plot that introduces a change in setting where pledges are less concrete than in the established core rules.

At the Storyteller's discretion, the same Contract's mechanic can be used as the base for a Token that allows its bearer to sacrifice something important to him in order to temporarily get around the sanction of an oath, or even for an antagonistic creature or plague that "eats" pledges, dissolving any vows or oaths tied to those who come near it.

bullying, bribery or blackmail. The cost to prove oneself to others (groups or individuals) before being trusted to join their numbers may increase dramatically, along with the penalties for even the smallest perception of disloyalty.

HEDGE GAMES

In some ways, the Hedge can be seen as a symbol of the Lost, themselves. Like them, it stands between the world of the Gentry and the world of humanity, and yet is a separate entity from either of them. Like changelings, the nature, behavior, and appearance of the Thorns are influenced both by the human world and that of the Others. And, perhaps most poignantly, the Hedge is deep, dark and deadly — just as the Lost themselves often are. This resonance makes the Hedge a perfect playing ground for Storytellers who want to impress a more sinister atmosphere upon the characters in their game.

And, if the game's default setting and description of the Hedge is seen as the balance between Faerie and the human world, then by either drastically increasing or decreasing its power, utility and influence, a setting is created which is out of balance and thus requires changelings to attempt to compensate in a myriad of ways to maintain their own balanced natures. Whether the Hedge throws broad its gates and allows all manner of fae beast to encroach on the Losts' attempts at "normal" lives, or withdraws its gifts and protection, leaving them starving for its former bounty and scrambling for safe shelter, an imbalanced Hedge means an imbalanced changeling society.

PUSHING BACK THE THORNS

For some Lost, the destruction of the Hedge (or at least the excision of all connections from the human world to the Thorns) is more than a dream: it is their lives' goal. Only by severing this connective tissue between the con-

joined twins of human and fae realities, they believe, can mankind (and their changeling cousins) be assured of safety from the invading fae forces that have preyed upon them for millennia. For these Bridge-burners, any reality where the Hedge became less powerful, less passable, more difficult to travel in is, at the very least, a step in the right direction.

While nowhere near taming the Hedge, changelings have learned at least to make use of its bounties and resources while attempting to steel themselves from its harshest components. Goblin fruit and oddments provide many Lost with their primary source of Glamour, while other changelings use the Hedge's connection to the Wyrd to create fantastic Hedgespun items (or to bargain for them at Goblin Markets.) Hollows offer their fae owners a relative safe haven not only from the Thorns' more hostile denizens, but also from the oft-overwhelming human world as well. Many Lost utilize the same separation to settle disputes in the form of Hedge Duels.

The Hedge's trods offer opportunity, if not utter safety, for travel between freeholds. They also serve when one must travel a great distance in a short period of time. In particular, they have many advantages over mundane methods of transportation. Mortal vehicles can be slow, expensive, and difficult to obtain, especially if a changeling no longer retains ownership of his own mortal identity. Similarly, although the Hedge holds countless dangers to life, limb and soul, many changelings rely upon it in a pinch when escaping from a more direct threat in the mortal world. The possibility of encountering a Harvestman or Laughing One by dashing into the Hedge may seem a good risk when a pistol-wielding homicide detective, mob enforcer, or irate husband is hot on one's trail. So, while the Hedge is, without a doubt, a hazardous place, potentially lethal to body, mind and spirit, it also is a resource for Lost who are brave, strong and smart enough to use it. And resources are something that changelings often feel they have altogether too few of.

Despite the dangers, passing in and out of the Hedge and tapping into its resources comes fairly naturally to the Lost. Were the Bridge-burners successful in their attempts, and the Hedge pushed away from the human world to the extent that changelings could no longer easily enter it, few Lost would be unaffected. Even those who eschew the Hedge likely rely, in some fashion, on its presence, whether through their freehold or motley-mates utilizing it, by purchasing or bartering for items obtained there, or simply the reassurance that no mortal bonds can hold someone who has access to a limitless supply of doorways, should need demand. Other effects are possible as well, however. If the Hedge is, as some see it, a connective passageway between Arcadia and the human world, shoring it up might prevent more than fae creatures from passing back and forth – it might well strangle off the flow of Wyrd to the mortal world as well. This theme ties in with that of Feast or Famine above. Storytellers who wish to incorporate the separation of the Hedge and the human world into their game

may well desire to add some of the same results that are discussed there.

Whether through the Bridge-burners' efforts or some other means, if changelings as a group somehow lost complete access to the Hedge, the effects would be even greater – especially if the situation did not stop the Gentry and denizens of the Hedge from making the same passage.

Mechanics

If a Storyteller wishes to implement a total break between the Lost and the Hedge, the ruling is more of a setting statement than a mechanical one. All that is truly required is to begin the game with this change in the base rules being made clear to the players, or, in the case of an ongoing chronicle, to begin establishing through failed rolls that, for one reason or another, changelings no longer have the power to enter or exit the Hedge on their own. For those who wish to emulate the gradual severing, Storytellers might assert that the point of Glamour which is normally required to open a gateway into the Hedge is no longer sufficient. Perhaps two points are required, to begin with, with the cost increasing as the barrier between the two realms thickens until the point where only those changeling with very high Wyrd ratings can spend sufficient Glamour in any given turn to activate a gateway at all.

Or, for those who prefer a bleaker outlook, the Hedge could be entered as normal, but its bounties begin to shrivel away. Goblin fruits and oddments might be almost impossible to locate, and those growing in Hollow farms and orchards subject to famine, blight and disease. Hedge predators might increase dramatically, hungry for their own source of Glamour in the form of a tasty Lost buffet. Hollows, once havens for their owners, begin to become less secure, the Merit's dots being slowly whittled away month after month until the changeling returns one day to find his once-safe haven is now little more than a wide spot in a desiccated crossroads of the Thorns.

Results

While severing the Hedge from the mortal world (or at least blocking the Lost's inherent powers to pass back and forth through it) may seem a positive gesture in some changeling's eyes, the aftereffects such a change to the setting are both broad in scope and potentially debilitating to Lost as a society. Without easy access to goblin fruit, oddments and Hollows, changelings need to focus almost entirely upon humanity as a source for Glamour, either through harvesting their dreams, forming pledges with them or reaping the Glamour spawned by their emotions. While at first glance this might seem a change which would bind the Lost closer to their human kin, in all likelihood this dependency could change how the Lost look at humankind altogether. Few humans truly empathize with the plants and animals they harvest for food, and changelings were all born and raised as humans. The potential for the

Lost to begin looking at humans with the same sort of unemotional dissonance that much of humanity views the food they consume is high, as is the likelihood for changeling society to begin tolerating less and less empathetic means of harvesting this all-so-important resource from its human “hosts”.

Likewise, devoid of the relative privacy of the Hedge, changelings will be forced to find sanctuary in mundane locations, and the relative relaxation afforded by the safety of a Hollow will be denied them. Hedge Duels, long a means of settling differences without risking alerting humans to their nature, will no longer be feasible, and Lost may well turn to more severe (and less secure) means of settling their disputes.

Perhaps the most severe effect of Lost losing their access to the Hedge, however, lies in the fact that hobs, Hedge Beasts, and the Others may well not have lost their ability to come and go. When one of the Lost (or someone or something they value) is taken across the Hedge by someone (or something) that still can pass through it at will, they no longer have the option of charging immediately after them. Or, if they do manage to follow through the opened doorway closely enough to enter, they may well not have a means of egress after their tasks in the Hedge are completed.

THROW WIDE THE GATES

No matter how useful the Hedge may be to changelings who are capable of withstanding its dangers, the dangers still remain. Not only are the Thorns dangerous themselves, capable of shredding the soul from a human body and the sanity from a Lost's mind, but they are also chock full of dangerous inhabitants: hobs, Hedge Beasts, and other horrors who seem to exist only to prey upon the minds, bodies and souls of those foolish enough to be caught in their claws. Perhaps most importantly, however, the Hedge is the pathway to Faerie, and the route through which (by force, treachery or accident) humans enter Arcadia. It is also the means for the Gentry to return to the human world in search of their es-



caped former-prisoners, and through which, given the opportunity, they will drag them home once more.

With the exception of the Gentry, most Hedge threats are limited in their power to plague the Lost. Hobgoblins and Hedge Beasts tend to stay within their own territories, and changelings who choose to enter the Hedge usually do so well aware of the risks they are taking, and thus able to prepare at least nominally for them. Even within the hostile realm, some Lost are able to carve out havens for themselves, exerting their will and control of the Wyrd to create sanctuaries among this antagonistic territory.

But, like many aspects of life as one of the Lost, all it takes to send this pseudo-balance reeling out of control is a minor change in the power levels they've become accustomed to. When the Thorns cease to be a passive threat and actively strike out against those who would travel their passageways, or Hollows are no longer a strong enough fortification to allow changelings to stay safe within the Hedge, life for those who have come to rely on those luxuries becomes a much more complicated matter. Likewise, when the dangers from within (including the Gentry) come bubbling out like a flood of fae malice, many changelings may rethink their opinions of the value of the Hedge.

Mechanics

As with Pushing Back the Thorns above, some of the changes to the core themes of the game that can be used to represent an increase of the power level and malevolence of the Hedge and its denizens are entirely thematic in nature. Storytellers can offer their players reports from nearby freeholds of increased attacks by Hedge Beasts boiling out of gateways to the Thorns like insane ants in a broken hill. For those characters with connections to the media or police, missing persons cases may skyrocket, to the extent that authorities begin to suspect a cult or serial killer is plaguing the area. The Lost, however, are unlikely to mistake the signs of increased Gentry activity, especially when the vast majority of those taken are replaced, seemingly seamlessly, by duplicates soon thereafter.

To those who enter the Hedge, this change is likely to be easily apparent. Trods become more overgrown and difficult to follow, quick to shift, and blur confusingly. While the strength of the Hedge is apparent and goblin fruit and oddments abound, so do predatory Hedge-dwellers. The chances of Lost encountering something not only malevolent but *strong* and malevolent are drastically increased when the Hedge itself is more powerful. A Goblin Market might appear as a metropolis covered in thorny kudzu or a wondrous oasis floating overhead and accessible only by climbing the sharp-tined vines that anchor it to the rest of the Hedge. Lost who go there, however, are likely to be treated as penniless urchins might in a mundane marketplace; when the Hedge's bounty is strong and its denizens powerful enough to brave forays into the human world on their own, their need for human goods or other tradable

assets that changelings might bring to the table is drastically reduced.

Other aspects can be represented mechanically. If the Hedge's power is increased, Hollows' ability to withstand the daily onslaught of the Thorns and Hedge-dwellers is lessened. Storytellers may choose to represent this by increasing the cost of the Hollow Wards Merit (potentially off-setting this by decreasing the cost for Hollow Amenities accordingly.) Another option a Storyteller might use is to show the incursion of the Hedge on Hollows by making a roll of a number of dice equal to each Hollow's Wards rating as each month of game time passes. On a failure, the Hollow's Ward rating is reduced by one level, meaning that a changeling who is not careful to continually shore up her Hollow's protections may well be surprised to return one day and find herself defenseless to the Hedge's dangers. Similarly, those who try to exert their own Wyrd's power over the Hedge may well be shocked to discover that their abilities to do so are proportionately reduced as the Hedge itself grows more powerful. Storytellers may use the information on pages 212–213 of **Changeling: The Lost**, but increase the amount of Wyrd necessary for a changeling to manipulate the Hedge consciously or subconsciously by whatever number of levels he feels are appropriate to represent the increased might of the Hedge (and thus its resistance to being changed by outside forces.) Those with Wyrd ratings of 1 or 2 might be able to conjure no effect on the Thorns, for example, while ratings of 3 or 4 can create only effects listed for Wyrd 1–2, and so on.

Storytellers can also increase the numbers and power levels of Hedge-denizens encountered by the Lost, adding dots to their antagonists' character sheets in quantities relative to the level of Hedge augmentation they want to represent. This might include providing sentient hobgoblins with increased access to supernatural powers and items, ramping up the strength, speed and overall lethality of Hedge predators, or even creating new and unique challenges from within the Thorns to show the escalating and evolving nature of that realm's inhabitants.

Results

Many of the previous options for bringing a darker theme to a **Changeling** game do so by increasing the Lost's paranoia levels, taking away their resources or shaking their world views. This one, however, promises near-constant excitement, action and, most of all, terror. While dark and foreboding, it is a setting which is likely to spur characters to action or reaction, increasing the pace and energy of a game along with the tension therein.

By escalating not only the hunger, malevolence and lethality of the denizens of the Hedge (and the Hedge itself) but also crafting the Thorns as a virtual Fae highway, this decision takes most of the changelings' darkest nightmares and brings them kicking and screaming into the light of day. No longer is the human world predominantly a safe

haven from the predations of any fae creatures less powerful than the Gentry themselves. Instead, they may find themselves protecting their homes, friends and family from an onslaught of Hedge-spawned creatures that the vast majority of the human world is simply not prepared to deal with. Human contacts and allies might easily fall prey to entities venturing out from the Hedge, and if a changeling wants to keep them alive (out of selflessness or a desire to make use of them in the future,) increased duty to protect their safety may well fall squarely in her lap. This may make those Merits much more real to players; no longer is their contact at the college just a dot on a character sheet. He's a family man with a thing for hiking who needs to be convinced that the wildlife preserve is not the best place to take his children that weekend for a picnic.

As well, those who do venture into the more powerful Hedge will find no shortage of new challenges there. Gateways to the Hedge may open seemingly spontaneously, as if encouraging an influx of travel from the human world. Goblin fruit and oddments may be in plentiful supply, but the vibrant power of the Hedge may encourage spontaneous cross-pollination and mutation, resulting in a constant question as to the true nature of any given item harvested therein. Items (or individuals) left within the Hedge may also begin to mutate far more quickly than in a normal setting. While this may seem a boon to those who desire to craft Hedge-spun items, it may also mean that such works are much more difficult to control. Even for a master craftsman, creating a watercolor with a fire hose is a challenging endeavor.

In a similar vein, those who wield fae magic of any sort within the Hedge may well find that the realm's amplified power level taints their own Wyrds as well. At first glance, being more powerful in an environment fraught with peril might seem like a good thing, the new strength is not a natural attribute for the changeling, nor has it been gradually acquired so that he can have hopes of controlling it. Instead, it is the equivalent of someone who is accustomed to a bb gun being given a rifle and expected to control its fire. Contracts may well rage out of control, affecting more than the intended target or backlashing onto the Lost who is activating them even if he is normally wholly in control of them. These combined factors may well discourage Lost from spending time in the Hedge altogether, or may force those who do not use discretion about their actions there to pay a harsh price for their folly.

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

So many opportunities to portray growing darkness exist within the **Changeling** environment. The possibilities are nearly endless, and the theme is one that can easily be ingrained within a chronicle. So easily, in fact, that it can often take over a chronicle. As shown earlier, almost any

aspect or theme within **Changeling: The Lost** can be enhanced (or downplayed) to resonate with a Dusk theme. The challenge often lies not in how to darken a **Lost** game, but how to do so while still providing players and characters with the inspiration to continue striving forward in a consistently darkening story.

One tool for doing so is to ensure that, despite the difficulty of doing so, an avenue for characters to affect their surroundings always exists. Even when taking a normally player-controlled mechanic (such as the purchase of Wyrds ratings) out of their hands, some means of at least influencing the situation should exist. It may be difficult. It may require the players (and characters) to make tough choices, or to sacrifice one focus for another. But an utter lack of power in a given situation makes for depressing games and bored players – neither of which breed fun for those involved.

Another way to ensure that **Changeling** games continue to hold onto their appeal throughout an ever-worsening chronicle is to provide opportunities and avenues for glimmers of light to be found, despite the darkness. Remember that madness is only half of the theme; the other half is beauty. Like Arcadia itself, the atmosphere of **Changeling** is one of both wonder and horror. Utter darkness is only enhanced by the appearance of brief gleams of brightness. By giving characters the opportunity to sometimes capture a moment of mirth, frivolity or beauty despite the growing night, you not only keep the darkness from becoming overwhelming, but you actually enhance its depth by providing contrast.

Finally, but perhaps most importantly, is a tool available to a Storyteller who wants to ensure his Dusk-focused chronicle remains interesting and fun: simple perception. Be aware of whether your players appear to be enjoying the increased challenge and darker themes you are introducing into the chronicle. Regardless of whether you, as a Storyteller, are having a great time bringing the wrath of broken pledges and chronic night-lethal nightmares down upon your players' characters' heads, if the players are walking away from each game session depressed, annoyed or (perhaps even worse) bored, you should likely take another look at the focus you're bringing into the game. Maybe you've done too much, too fast. Maybe your players are feeling unempowered, and feel their focus has been shifted from protagonists to spectators in the growing apocalypse. Maybe your themes have progressed too relentlessly. Or maybe your players are just looking for a different mood and feel to their game than the one provided by a Dusk theme. Being aware of (and open to communication about) your players' perceptions of the chronicle is vital to maintaining a good game, and with awareness and empathy, a good Storyteller will be able to discern whether a single Dusk aspect (or an entire suite thereof) is right for his game.

DUSK COURT

(THE GLACIAL AXE, THE UMBRAL COURT,
THE COURT OF DOOMS)

For each of us personally, and as a group, things can only get worse. They will only get worse. That is the truth. It's also the reality which most Lost hide from themselves. But only by accepting it, and going into that Fate in full knowledge and awareness, can we have any hope of exerting control over our own destinies. The end is coming. What we do between here and there? That's up to us.

For some Lost, all that keeps them going forward is the cherished (and perhaps futile) hope that today may be a little better than yesterday or that in the end all of their suffering, fear and pain will be relieved. They see escape, driven by the same hope for freedom and release that pushed them back through the Thorns and into the human world once more. To them, the idea that one's existence is nothing but an inescapable path to destruction would take away all motivations. The burden of such knowledge would weigh them down until they could no longer function, let alone make an effort to accomplish anything.

Not so for the Court of Dusk.

These intrepid changelings accept that their Fate is sealed, that slowly but surely danger is building to a cataclysmic level and that nothing they can do will change that. But this belief also tells them that they have carte blanche to shine in the growing darkness. There are no happy endings, they believe, so all that matters is the epic story that is told along the way.

Inspired by their surety that the end is coming and that whatever lies ahead of them it is most certainly worse than today, Dusk Courtiers see no reason not to strive

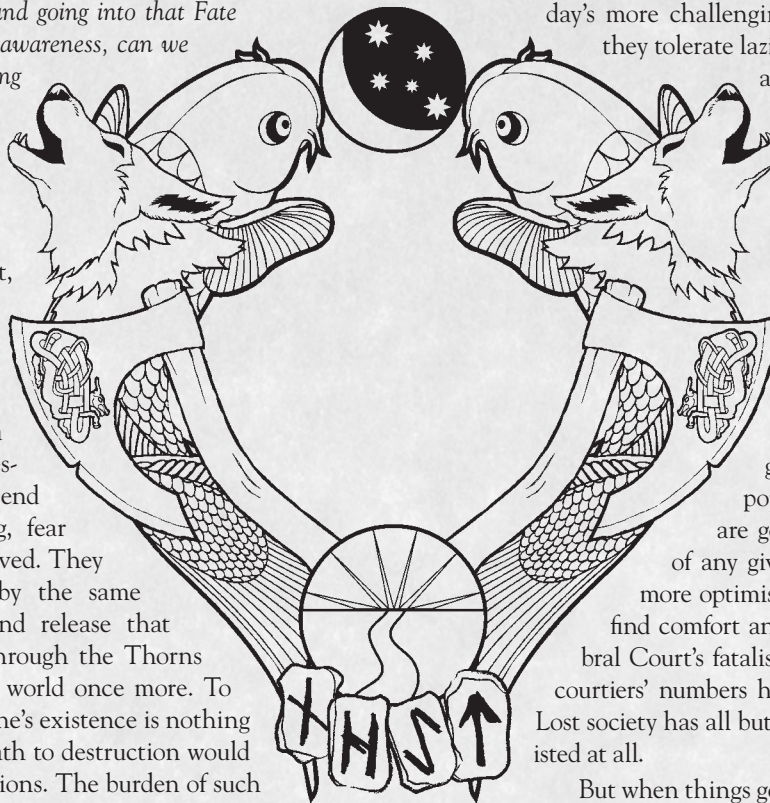
to do, be, and accomplish whatever they are inspired towards. They are not drawn to procrastination, because any endeavor put off until tomorrow will only be one day's more challenging to achieve. Nor do they tolerate laziness, weakness or cowardice.

Night is falling, say those of the Dusk Court, and there will be time enough to rest, mope or cry after it falls. Until then, make the most of what time you have left.

The Dusk Court waxes and wanes over the years, growing and ebbing in popularity. When things are going well and the Lost of any given generation become more optimistic, fewer are driven to find comfort and strength in the Umbral Court's fatalism. At times, the Dusk courtiers' numbers have grown so few that Lost society has all but forgotten that they existed at all.

But when things go badly (and eventually they always do) there are always those changelings who respond to the growing darkness not by being frightened or intimidated into inaction, but by rising up to meet the challenge. They laugh boldly in the face of adversity and set out to take the proverbial bull by the horns and make certain that their lives, no matter how short, have a great impact on the world around them.

This waxing and waning has led to a great deal of contradiction in the history of the Glacial Axe. After a particularly long waning period when things turn forth worse again, the Court often experiences a seemingly spontaneous revival as the core principles of Dusk once again become popular and pertinent. Sometimes these resurgences were, in truth, spontaneous — the drive for



some to stand strong despite the growing odds is one that Dusk Court claims and recruits into its numbers as much as it fosters and inspires it. But in some cases these “new” incarnations of the Court were seeded by those who had heard of the Court in the past, or even belonged to it formerly, and knew the time was right to plant the seed of fatalism-spawned-defiance in a new generation.

Because of this, there is a great deal of controversy, even among Dusk courtiers, as to the origins of their group. Some believe it to have been started in countless eons past, when the first brave (or foolhardy) Lost stood his ground against a Keeper intent on taking him back across the Hedge. Those who credit this history claim that when his defiance proved futile but provided his motley time to escape the same Fate, their stories of his bravery inspired the creation of the first group of Dusk courtiers in his honor. Others claim the Court’s history began at other points and locations: in Icenia during the first century of the Common Era, on the steppes of the Eurasian plain during the late 1100s, or on the Indian sub-continent in the early 16th century. One group even claims the Court is, in its modern incarnation, a “copycat court” of an older now-lost group, whose true roots are less than a hundred years old, and that each resurgence of the Court is not actually a waxing of its numbers, but the advent of a new group, unrelated to those who used the name before. These “modernists” are, for the most part, ignored, however. Regardless of the true time and place of origin, or whether the Court is one seamless organization or a series of unique ones all sharing the same name, Dusk seems to do what Dusk has always done — it perseveres and thrives, regardless of the challenges that seek to destroy it.

COURTIERS

Unlike the traditional seasonal courts which rotate in power and leadership as the year passes, Dusk’s power (and popularity) waxes and wanes as tragedy befalls Lost society. During a time when the Others’ predations are light, or where life as a Lost seems to be “not so bad”, Dusk rarely finds individuals with the particularly fatalistic mindset that suits their Court. In fact, during such times, they often lose many of their members to their sister court, or to one of the greater Seasonal Courts. It is not unusual to find former Dawn courtiers (especially those who were formerly Gallants) among the ranks of Summer, where their seemingly boundless bravery often makes them premiere candidates for the Red Victor (p. 54, **Lords of Summer**). The Unfettered, on the other hand, often join the Autumn Court if they leave Dusk, using their innate understanding of the dark Fate that all Lost face to spur others into vigilance.

What drives someone not only to recognize that their Fate is sealed, but then to stand defiantly in the face

of that certain doom and strive to accomplish great things within that fatalistic framework? Dusk courtiers are often recruited from other Courts when the normal ups and downs that face any freehold slowly but surely morph into downs and further downs. When dream-plagues bring nightmares for months on end, and even the strongest oneiromancers are powerless to stop the onslaught. When the local trods are patrolled not by Lost, but by packs of Briarwolves, and their marauding hunt is only interrupted by a Border Reaver Hedge-siege. When the seasonal monarchs’ Clarity is slipping and the local Blackbird Bishop is discovered to have been selling her patients across the Thorns in exchange for her own continued freedom. In some freeholds, tragedy upon tragedy means nothing but a slow and painful end for the local Lost community. In others, however, this desperate situation breeds even more desperate response. In these cases, a brave (or terminally stubborn) soul will emerge from the pressure as something greater than he was before, inspired by the certainty that the Fates have forsaken him, and set about doing whatever he can to make the best of a bad situation. That individual, should he live long enough to come to their attention, may well find himself recruited into the Dusk Court.

RITUALS

Far from stoic, the Dusk Court’s fatalism often manifests in exuberant, or even rowdy, manners. Many of the Court’s traditions are focused on giving its members the opportunity to laugh in the face of doom and embrace life to its fullest while they may. They love life, and the fact that things are bad now and doomed only to get worse serves only as inspiration and motivation to enjoy every aspect of it to its fullest.

Dusk Court gatherings are rarely held at particular times or locations each year. Because the Umbral Court’s numbers are small compared to those of any of the seasonal courts, a courtier may be the only one of his kind at a given freehold. The Court accepts this as just another challenge in a game of already overwhelming odds, but it makes holding seasonal or annual ceremonies a somewhat hollow endeavor. This does not mean, however, that the Court does not gather or uphold traditions — far from it.

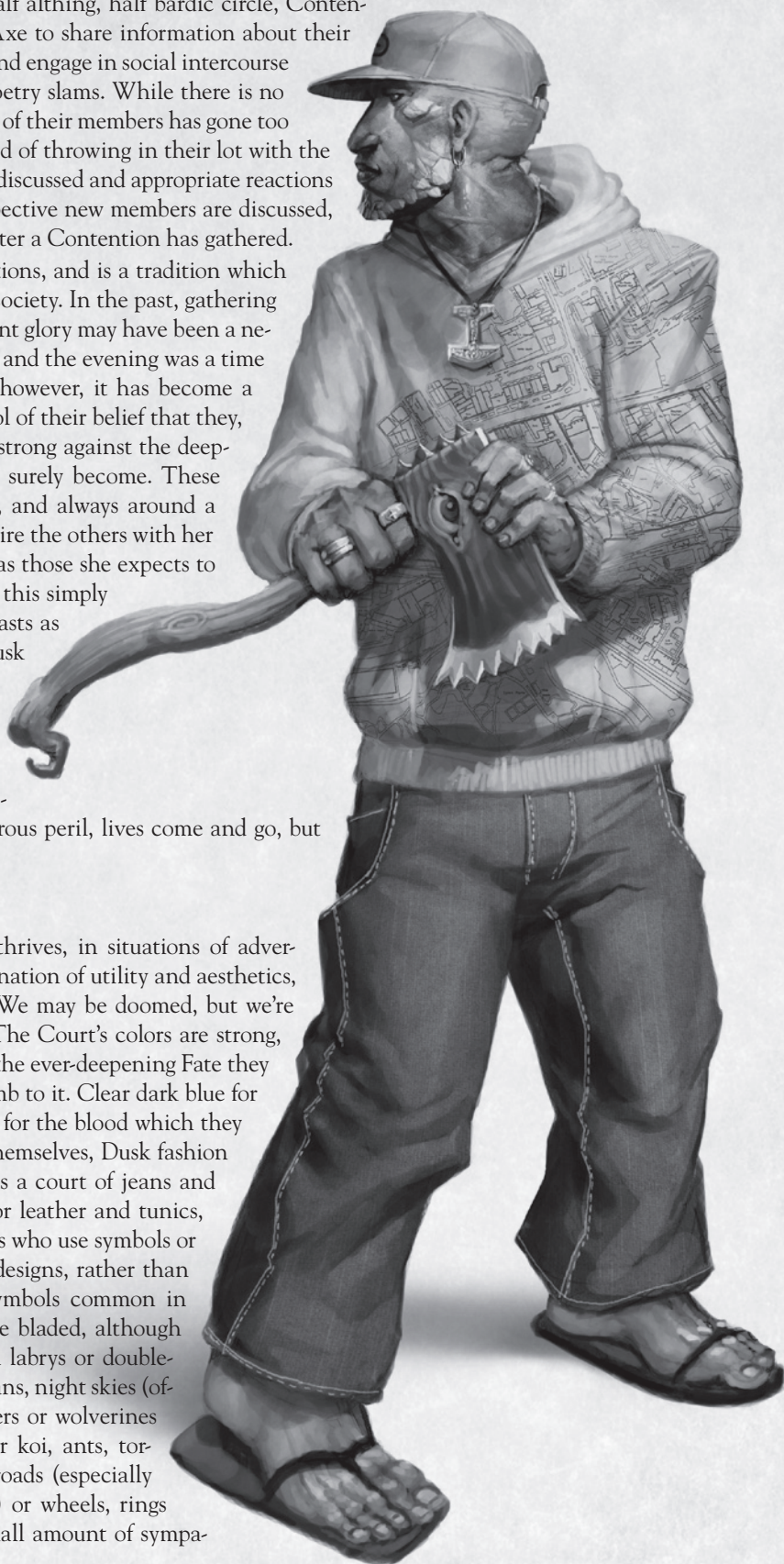
When there are enough of their numbers to do so, the Dusk Court attempts to keep tabs on the challenges facing and general health of every freehold they can. The reason for this is two-fold. Firstly, it allows those already within the Court to seize opportunities for glory and accomplishment outside of their local areas. A freehold strangling itself under civil war? Prophecies of the Wyld Hunt sweeping out of the Thorns? A plague-carrying Hedge-creature wiping out an entire area? Such happenings draw Dusk Courtiers from across the globe, rallying for a chance to make the most of a dire situation. And, whenever Dusk Courtiers gather together, time is set aside

for a ritual known as a "Contention." Half althing, half bardic circle, Contentions are times for those of the Umber Axe to share information about their local areas, swap stories of their exploits and engage in social intercourse that ranges from wrestling matches to poetry slams. While there is no formal hierarchy among the Court, if one of their members has gone too far, falling prey to low Clarity or suspected of throwing in their lot with the Gentry, this is when such allegations are discussed and appropriate reactions decided upon. It's also a time when prospective new members are discussed, and many new recruits are approached after a Contention has gathered.

The Boast is a part of most Contentions, and is a tradition which harkens back to the earliest days of Lost society. In the past, gathering around a fire to tell tales of past and present glory may have been a necessity. Few other entertainments existed and the evening was a time when most had leisure to gather. Now, however, it has become a matter of pride for the Court and a symbol of their belief that they, more than any other changelings, stand strong against the deepening night, no matter how dark it will surely become. These gatherings, always held outside at night, and always around a fire, are a time for each of the Axe to inspire the others with her stories of the dangers she's faced, as well as those she expects to encounter next. Other Courts might see this simply as bragging, but the Dusk Court sees Boasts as performing a vital role in their group. Dusk does not believe in false modesty — fame not only inspires those who come after to continue striving in their own dark night, but it grants its subject a kind of immortality that inspires them to keep going as well. In a world full of ever-dangerous peril, lives come and go, but legends last forever.

HERALDRY

The Glacial Axe perseveres, even thrives, in situations of adversity. Their pageantry is based on a combination of utility and aesthetics, sending a clear message: "We are here! We may be doomed, but we're not going to go down without a fight!" The Court's colors are strong, simple and enduring. Black representing the ever-deepening Fate they face, and white for their refusal to succumb to it. Clear dark blue for the depths of the unyielding sea, and red for the blood which they will inevitably shed. Like the courtiers themselves, Dusk fashion is generally simple and strong — Dusk is a court of jeans and boots, simple gowns and sturdy cloaks, or leather and tunics, not lace or heels. Likewise, Dusk courtiers who use symbols or banners are likely to have simple, clear designs, rather than multi-dimensional or elaborate ones. Symbols common in Dusk Court heraldry include axes (single bladed, although certain feminist factions have adopted a labrys or double-headed axe), red wood trees, glaciers, oceans, night skies (often with moons and stars), drums, badgers or wolverines (renowned for their persistence), carp or koi, ants, tortoises, crosses, mushrooms, mountains, roads (especially those disappearing towards the horizon) or wheels, rings and circles. The Dusk Court feels no small amount of sympa-



thy for the Norse legend of Ragnarok, as well. They have adopted many common symbols from Nordic cultures: knot-worked animals (especially dragons), wolves, runes (especially Hagalaz, Eihwaz, Tiwaz and Nauthiz), Thor's hammers, Viking longships or Norse helmets.

MANTLE

The Mantle of a Dusk courtier represents the strength and self-determination he achieves from accepting that the cards are stacked against him and still rising forward to meet that Fate. Where other Mantles may manifest in a variety of every-stronger manifestations of the symbols of their Court, Dusk simply goes on, unaffected by its surroundings. Other Court Mantles may war for dominance when those of differing Courts are in proximity to one another, Winter's chill wind pushing at Summer's flames or Autumn's fading touch taking the bloom from Spring's blossoms. Dusk Mantle simply blanks out that of other courts, temporarily stifling music, stilling wind, or erasing visual effects of any other Court's Mantle of equal or lesser dots within a 5-foot radius of the Dusk Courtier. Thus a Spring Courtier with Mantle 3 standing next to a Dusk Courtier of Mantle 3 or higher might be disturbed to discover that her ever-present birdsong dwindles away to an awkward silence, and the flower petals that normally play in her Mantle's warm spring breeze fade away as long as she remains within 5 feet of him.

A member of the Dusk Court with Mantle •+ is able to call on this internal fortitude to lend him additional strength when exerting his will. He receives an additional die (four rather than three) when making a Heroic Effort (p. 132, **World of Darkness Rulebook**). A character with Mantle •••+ is bolstered in his ability to endure hardship. He pays one-half the normal cost for the following Merits: Iron Stamina, Iron Stomach, Natural Immunity, Quick Healer or Toxin Resistance. A character with Mantle ••••• finds it easier to resist being influenced (physically, socially or mentally) by outside forces. Once per day, the character's player may re-roll any failed roll using Resolve, Composure or Stamina as a trait. He must keep the second roll.

FATALISM

Perseverance. Acceptance. Striving in the face of overwhelming odds, not to cheat one's Fate, but to accomplish something despite it. These ideas embody Dusk Court. Inherent in the Dusk philosophy is not only the idea that things can only get worse, but also that with the acceptance of that inevitable Fate, one is given the opportunity (within that framework of inevitable destruction) to truly create one's own destiny. If, as Dusk believes, everything will become nothing but dust in the end, why hamper oneself with niceties or limitations? Instead, this

is the opportunity to truly shine in the coming night to do, say, and be all that one can, because the end is inevitable. If one cannot hope to survive a situation, why not make the most of it? What have you got to lose?

This viewpoint manifests in a myriad of ways, although there are two major divergent philosophies or factions within the Dusk Court. While neither are formal groups, they represent the two extremes within the Dusk philosophy. Most Glacial Courtiers do not completely embody either extreme, although many lean more heavily towards one side or the other. Balance and moderation are not traits most associate with the Dusk Court.

The first philosophy favors glory and attempts to manifest greatness. Known casually as "Gallants," those who lean this direction tend to picture themselves as the true heroes of the coming apocalypse: glorious warriors, masterpiece artisans, noble statesmen, passionate lovers. If in the end we all must die, say the Gallants, why not take every risk or challenge and strive to outdo what others think is possible. A martially-minded Gallant may find inspiration in the persona of Leonidas of Sparta or Jim Bowie, fighting or leading others into situations that most Lost would consider suicidal. While many Dusk courtiers die in this manner, their tales are told for decades or centuries at Contentions, a sort of immortality that the Court believes is worth far more than a long life lived in cowardice. Other Gallants might exert themselves in other areas, risking everything to accomplish a task others might think impossible: scaling a never-before-conquered mountain peak, creating peace between two long-warring peoples, or leading a social movement which common sense declares will never succeed.

Desperation, however, does not breed heroism in all Lost — not even among the Dusk. For some, the freedom that accompanies knowing one's Fate is sealed is not inspiration for great or selfless acts, but instead for completely amoral behavior of the most selfish design. These Dusk Courtiers are frequently referred to as "Unfettered," although those who have run afoul of their schemes may well have less kind titles for them. They lean towards the view that, if everything is destined to destruction, then the niceties of social mores, traditions and laws are really pointless and designed only to postpone the inevitable. They tend to see those who are bound by such constraints as either sheep, slowly but surely being led towards their slaughter, or as pawns, tools and resources to be used by those forward-thinking enough to tap into them.

True fatalism is a difficult emotion to harvest. A person who succumbs to negative emotion tends to fall more into despair. And those who fight on in difficult situations because they believe things can still get better feel more hope than resignation. Accordingly, the Umbral Court tends to rely more strongly on pledges and goblin fruits for

Glamour than most other changelings do. Many courtiers tend to cultivate a few potential contacts for that reason, rather than seeking out potential sources. Veteran policemen, paramedics, schoolteachers, volunteer workers and even career criminals are common unwitting allies of

the Dusk Court — those people who have had almost all hope ground out of them by the harsh realities of a difficult world, and yet who continue to struggle for what they believe in. Many Dusk Courtiers go trolling for emotion in the worst parts of town, feeling a certain kinship to the real survivors there.

STEREOTYPES

Summer Court: Brave, surely, but only because they believe they can win. Take away that hope, and their fire is extinguished.

Autumn Court: Fear has no hold on those who have accepted that the worst will come regardless of our choices.

Winter Court: They understand what it is to be doomed. Unfortunately, they allow it to drive them to inaction, rather than greatness.

Spring Court: Like us, they are unfettered by the constraints of “should” and “should not”. Now if they would just harness the power which that freedom brings.



CONTRACTS OF ENTROPY

The end is predestined; it is only our path between here and there which we have any control over. All things will fail in the end; we can only shine as brightly as we can before the night envelops us entirely. This is the basis of the Dusk Court's philosophy, and the bargains they've struck with Entropy reflect this fatalistic belief. Because the Dusk Court believes that the truth behind their fatalism affects all Lost, not only those of their own Court (and because they believe that the Fate of all Lost is to eventually come to realize the truth in their philosophy), no Court Goodwill for Dusk is required to purchase the Contracts of Entropy. Whatever pact was struck with Entropy, apparently it was a generous one. They are, however, considered non-affinity Contracts for any Lost who is not a part of the Dusk Court. Those with Dusk Court's Goodwill can also purchase them as affinity Contracts.

BABEL'S CURSE (●)

Communication is based on a carefully crafted set of common understanding, symbolism and meaning. An utter breakdown of one's ability to give and share information is a devastating blow.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Expression + Mantle (Dusk) – Resolve

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling writes the target's name or commonly-used nickname on a piece of paper and tears it into tiny pieces.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Contract backfires, and the changeling suffers from the effects of Babel's Curse for the next 24 hours.

Failure: The Contract has no effect.

Success: The targeted individual is unable to communicate in any manner for a number of turns equal to the changeling's successes. This includes verbal, written, physical or supernatural means. It is not simply a matter of losing one's voice or forgetting how to write; the shared basis for communicating ideas breaks down for the target, leaving them able to speak words, write letters or use gestures, but not in such a way that they have any meaning for those around them. The most fundamental of communications: a shout of alarm, a cry of pain or a joyful laugh can be communicated. Anything more complex is scrambled until its meaning is lost entirely.

Exceptional Success: As with an ordinary success, however, for the duration of the Contract the targeted individual can also not understand any written, verbal, physical or supernatural communication more complex than the

fundamentals expressed above, effectively shutting off communication entirely as long as the Contract is in effect.

SENSE THE INEVITABLE DOOM (●●)

The changeling invoking this clause is able to sense disaster headed his direction. His sheer certainty that something bad will without a doubt befall him becomes not paranoia, but a supernatural sensitivity to the many dooms lying in wait.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Wits + Occult + Mantle (Dusk)

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling has consumed at least a serving of caffeinated beverage within the last hour.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling's fatalism reaches paranoid levels, effectively undermining his ability to sense potential true danger. For the next 24 hours, all Perception rolls he makes suffer from a –2 penalty. This penalty is cumulative, if he suffers multiple instances of dramatic failure while making attempts to activate this Contract.

Failure: The changeling's senses are unaltered.

Success: The character's acceptance that bad things will happen to him gives him the ability to react to them faster when they do. After successfully activating this Contract, the changeling receives the benefit of the Danger Sense Merit for the scene. If he already possesses the Danger Sense Merit, the normal +2 modifier becomes +4 for the duration of the Contract. As well, when entering into an inherently dangerous situation with the Contract activated (even one which does not involve an impending ambush) the Lost experiences an uneasy feeling. The Contract gives no indication of the nature or source of the danger, but it does grow somewhat stronger should the Lost continue towards a dangerous Fate. This power is not specific enough to determine which wire is connected to a bomb and which is not, for example, but might be used to warn a changeling that opening or passing through a certain door is more dangerous than remaining in the room or going back the way he came.

Exceptional Success: As per a success, but the effects last for a 24-hour period.

GIFT OF THE SKALD (●●●)

This clause allows the Dusk Court to share the strength gleaned from their acceptance of their Fate with those around them. It is often used as a recruiting tool to the Dusk Court, by those who believe that it is the ultimate Fate of all Lost to join the Glacial Axe.

The Gift of the Skald bonus cannot be stacked with other applications of the same Contract. Any individual may only be affected by one "application" of this Contract at any given time.

Cost: 1 Glamour per target (to a maximum of the changeling's Wyrd in targets) + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Presence + Persuasion + Mantle (Dusk) (vs. the target's Resolve + Wyrd, if they are actively resisting)

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling is a member of the Dusk Court and proselytizes to the target(s) for a minimum of five minutes about the truth of the Dusk philosophy.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling suffers a -2 penalty to all Resistance-based rolls for the next 24 hours.

Failure: The Contract fails to have any effect.

Success: For a number of turns equal to the changeling's successes, each target receives a +2 bonus to all Resistance rolls made.

Exceptional Success: As with a normal success, but the targets' bonuses last for 24 hours.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	At least half the targeted group is Dusk Court.
+1	The changeling has bested at least one of the target group in combat within the last 24 hours.

HERO'S STAND (••••)

Using this clause allows the changeling to draw a proverbial line in the sand and declare a formal duel against any single enemy or foe within earshot of him. While this challenge does not force the enemy to engage him in battle, it gives the changeling strong bonuses when fighting his declared enemy, and curses the foe who would run rather than face him.

The changeling indicates his target, challenging him in no uncertain terms. This can be visual (making an obscene gesture) or verbal (anything from yelling "Hey you!" to a formal declaration of challenge.) The target must be able to perceive the challenge (visually or audibly) but the Contract makes the nature of the challenging words or gesture immediately apparent.

Cost: 1 Glamour + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Resolve + Brawl or Weaponry + Mantle (Dusk) vs. Composure + Wyrd

Action: Instant Contested

Catch: The changeling is standing on something which marks off a small territory (no more than 5 foot by 5 foot). This can be as simple and temporary as a blanket thrown on the ground, or as elaborate or permanent as a formal Holmgang square or inlaid square of flooring. If the changeling uses this catch to activate the Contract, all effects of the Contract (bonuses and target's curse) end immediately if he steps (or is forced) outside of that marked ground.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling suffers a -2 penalty to all Brawl or Weaponry rolls for the next 24 hours, and the Glamour is wasted. The target is aware he has been

challenged and may respond, but is under no ill effects if he does not.

Failure: The Contract fails to have any effect and the Glamour is wasted. The target is aware that he has been challenged and may respond, but is under no ill effects if he does not.

Success: For a number of turns equal to the changeling's successes, the changeling's Brawl or Weaponry (whichever was used in the challenge) is increased by a number of dots equal to the number of successes rolled, but only against the specified target. As well, should the targeted enemy attempt to flee or refuse to engage the changeling in combat, he is cursed with a -2 penalty to all Composure rolls for a number of turns equal to the changeling's number of successes.

Exceptional Success: As with a normal success, but the target's penalty curse lasts for 24 hours.

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
+1	The changeling is wielding an axe.
+1	The changeling and his target have already exchanged blows within the last 24 hours.
+1	The target's allies in the immediate area outnumber the changeling's allies in the immediate area (+1 for each ally over to a maximum of +5)
-1	The changeling's allies in the immediate area outnumber the target's allies in the immediate area (-1 for each ally over to a maximum of -5)

THE CENTER CANNOT HOLD (•••••)

Even Wyrd is not immune to the effects of entropy, and with sufficient effort a changeling may turn the Wyrd against itself, dispelling an active Contract. The targeting changeling must specify what Contract she are attempting to cancel. If the Contract is specifically cast on a target object or individual, she must specify the object or individual as well.

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Occult + Mantle (Dusk) - level of Contract

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling herself possesses the Contract which she is targeting and has activated it within the last 24 hours.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The attempt to nullify the Contract fails and some unpredictable but negative by-product befalls the changeling. This effect is left to the Storyteller's discretion. Options include (but are not limited to) having the changeling fall under the effects of the Contract she was attempting to dispel (mirroring the level and duration that

it was originally activated at), a loss of half (rounded up) of her remaining Glamour, delivering lethal damage equal to the dot level of the Contract she was targeting, or bestowing a major derangement for a number of days equal to the dot level of the Contract she was targeting. Derangements gained in this way do trigger clarity checks at the appropriate level. Storytellers are encouraged to elaborate on cosmetic but neutral effects for this backlash of Wyrd, as well.

Failure: The changeling is unable to affect the targeted Contract. If the Contract is actively affecting someone else, the affected individual may make a Wyrd + Occult test to attempt to determine that someone was attempting to dispel the Contract. An exceptional success on this test allows them to identify the source of the attempt as well.

Success: The targeted Contract is nullified. If the Contract is actively affecting someone else, the affected individual may make a Wyrd + Occult test to determine that someone was attempting to dispel the Contract. An exceptional success on this test allows him to identify the source of the attempt as well.

Exceptional Success: The Contract is nullified, and none of the previously-mentioned tests can be made to determine where the dispelling came from. This does not stop others from assuming the Lost is guilty, if they are aware of her ability to cancel Contracts, nor does it protect her action from being sensed by other abilities or Contracts (such as Wyrd's Eye.)

Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
-1	The Lost who activated the targeted Contract is of a higher Wyrd than the changeling attempting to cancel it (-1 per level higher)
+1	The changeling has witnessed the specific Contract she is attempting to nullify being activated
+1	The changeling spends additional Glamour into her efforts (beyond the required 2, +1 modifier per extra Glamour spent up to a maximum of 3)

TWILIGHT TREASURES

While Dusk Courtiers are not limited in any way to the types of tokens, Hedgespun items or goblin fruits and oddments they may use, they do tend to favor a few items which they hoard fairly closely as a Court. While it is not impossible for a Dusk Courtier to create one of these things for a non-Court member, or to gift, sell or trade one with those outside of the Court, most often they are shared only with those outsiders who a Dusk Courtier has deemed "worthy" of wielding such treasures. Still, times being what they are, it is not unheard of for these treasured tokens to be found in a Goblin Market, or being used by a Lost with no apparent connection to the Dusk Court.

CHAOSIUM (TOKEN ••)

Whether to rush towards it or flee in the opposite direction, sometimes it's useful to know just where the worst part of a bad situation is. After being activated, this token simply indicates the most dangerous situation in the immediate area at the given time.

Action: Reflexive (Instant if activated with the catch)

Mien: Traditionally, the Chaosium takes the form of a small bronze hand-held compass, complete with spinning pointer. In recent years, however, Chaosia have been discovered in a variety of different forms ranging from complicated gear-driven gyroscopes to clunky Geiger-counter looking devices to slimline GPS-esque hand-held indicators. One of the most exotic Chaosia ever documented was reported to have been purchased at a Goblin Market in the Far East. It resembled nothing more than a bamboo cage which held a small clock-work cricket which, upon being activated, scrambled and chirped madly and tried to escape its confinement in the direction of the greatest immediate danger.

Drawback: For the next 12 hours after the Chaosium is activated, the activator suffers from the mild derangement Suspicion. Along with the regular effects of the derangement, this manifests as a desire to continue checking for the greatest source of danger (which, of course, resets the 12-hour period.) Roll Resolve + Composure once per hour to resist the compulsion to "check again," along with the normal rolls triggered by the derangement.

Catch: The activator must hold the Chaosium out in front of himself, shut his eyes and spend his entire instant action turning a full circle in place and concentrating on the token. He can take no other actions during this turn, including dodging or even speaking. If he opens his eyes before the full circle is made or otherwise interrupts this process, the token will not activate.

CROWSBILL (TOKEN •••)

Few weapons are as utilitarian — and potentially deadly — as a well-balanced axe. It can crush bones, split armor asunder or chop through a door with similar ease, and in the hands of an experienced wielder, can be thrown across a room to deliver as much damage as it does at hand-to-hand range. Little wonder, then, that the Dusk Court favors such a versatile and efficient tool. The Crowsbill is the traditional weapon of the Glacial Court, a deceptively petite single-bladed axe with a wooden handle. It can be used as a hand-to-hand weapon or thrown at close or medium range (as per Small Ax from the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.) Because of its small size, many opponents underestimate its efficiency, but it is against many opponents that the Crowsbill truly shines.

Upon activating this token, for every sapient opponent the Crowsbill kills, it gains a +1 dice bonus to every other attack it makes for the rest of the combat. These bonuses are cumulative with each death, and only gained when the Crowsbill is the weapon that actually delivers the death blow.

Action: Reflexive

Mien: The Crowsbill's mien appears to grow larger and fiercer with every kill made with the weapon during a given combat. While this does not change the weapon's actual size or affect its weight, those with the ability to perceive such changes will notice an obvious difference for the duration of the combat, once the axe-token is activated and begins to kill.

Drawback: Once activated, if the Crowsbill does not take a sapient life during the course of the combat, it "bites" its wielder, delivering 2 points of lethal damage which cannot be reduced in intensity or averted through mundane or supernatural means.

Catch: For the next 12 hours after the Crowsbill is activated, the wielder seems to attract danger. If there is an antagonist in the area, it is much more likely to attack

her, whether that means a street punk trying to snatch her purse, a fierce stray dog or a cruising vampire with an eye out for a quick snack.

KNIGHTS OF DUSK

It does not take changelings long to learn that the world is filled with dangers, and that times come when everything seems arrayed against them. Most shrug their shoulders and try to move on, but some seek greater meaning in their lot, or stand against the darkness with blade drawn and eyes ready. The following Entitlements are made up of changelings who understand the dangers that can come from all sides, and have sworn to stop them — by whatever means necessary.

All of the following Entitlements have a tendency to put their members in significant danger. In every case, they are meddling with an aspect of the world that prefers not to be approached, or standing in the way of dangers that are seeking others. Nobles of these orders understand that their chances of outlasting their enemies are slim, and their chances of long-term victory are even worse. Still, they fight, because the alternative isn't worth considering.



THE FAMILY OF SILENT NIGHTS

When chaos rages within, I will bring calm. As hope fades, I will bring quiet. When the night holds terror, I will chase it back into the mists from which it came. I am the Silent Night, in which all things find peace.



ly trusted when they arrive unannounced in a freehold. Those who have heard of them are well aware that there is a cost for their aid, and in some

When freeholds struggle against the Fae, they often focus on the physical threats they face. Gateways to the Hedge are warded, Hollows are barricaded, and changelings set in, expecting a siege. But the first path that the Gentry often tread in their assaults are within the very minds of changelings and mortals, spreading nightmares and horrors, pulling out their memories and twisting their thoughts until nothing but confusion remains. Dreams are overlooked by many, and mortals fail to even recognize a threat from the mind, but if you can't trust even your dreams, all that remains is madness.

The Family claims to recognize this threat, and to move forever to fight it. They are an ancient order, known throughout history by a hundred names. Everywhere they travel, they are known in legends as guardians against nightmares and protectors of sleep, but this is only part of the story. The Family holds the terrifying power to trap dreams, only to release them later against their enemies.

In its ideal circumstances, the Family are defenders of the Courts, and they use their unique gifts to steal away dream-poison and undo terrible nightmares, ensuring that proper rest comes to the victims of the Fae, and helping to send healing dreams to those who have suffered. They are the front line of dream-warriors, gathering the weapons of the Fae and turning them against their minions; dangerous nightmares are sold back to the Goblin Markets in exchange for tokens or favours, or even snuck into the minds of Fetches or loyalists that serve the Gentry who dared to launch the attack in the first place. One ancient story even tells of a Sister who managed to capture a nightmare so deadly that it shattered the minds of those who dreamt it, and unleashed it against the very Keeper who had crafted it, destroying him in a single night as his power was turned against him.

Despite their stated goals, however, the Family are rare-

cases, that cost transcends the physical. The Family collect dreams, and are not above stealing dreams from their charges to use at a later time. Some, more corrupt, branches of the order go so far as to extract nightmares from one victim in order to inflict them on their political rivals or personal foes. None have been proven to unleash dream venom on their enemies, but there are enough rumours of dangerous dreams leashed and then released to make most people wary of the motives of their would-be benefactors.

The Family shrug off such speculation, if directly confronted, with grace and a distinct lack of actual information. What they do with the dreams they harvest are their own business, they are quick to say. If they should choose to retain some particularly interesting dreams for later use, or try to restrain particularly dangerous Incubi, that is their business, and nosy changelings would do well not to question too deeply.

Titles: Brother or Sister

Prerequisites: Contract of Dreams 2, Empathy 2, Wyrd 4

Joining: The Family are extremely cautious about who they invite into their ranks. In most places, members must have the proper balance of dedication to the protection of the innocent, and understanding of the potential dangers that their dreamwalking entails. Members of the Family must be ready to stand against beings that are literally so monstrous or frightening that they could not possibly exist. They must be ready to resist seductive dreamscapes, and withstand murderous ones.

Candidates come to the attention of the Family in a variety of ways. The most common is for someone to accomplish some useful feat of oneiromancy, from facing off against a dangerous Incubus to swearing numerous public pledges to defend the dreams of their motley-mates. Prospective members can also reach the Family's ears by being dedicated to the concept of dreams, learning the higher ranks of the Contract of Dreams, unearthing new clauses

that help with their dream-walking, or simply spending much of their time researching arcane concepts to do with dreaming and the dangers therein.

Once a candidate has been considered worth approaching, the Family's test for such things is to unleash the most horrifying dream imaginable upon a charge, who must withstand it (or, even better, best it) without assistance. The Family member chosen to test their prospective new member swears a pledge to unleash a dream worthy of the Family, and the newcomer vows that she will not seek aid in trying to outlast it. The nightmare takes the form of a dream woven by the changeling recruit, which the mentor reweaves into a dream attack against the new recruit. Mentors will often hold back, but not significantly; they want to ensure that the student is capable of handling themselves in dream combat. If the student can weather the dream without being driven into retreat or madness, she is accepted into the order.

This method of introduction leaves many would-be initiates with severe mental scars, and the simple rumours of the sorts of nightmares that will be suffered by those who the Family feel are wasting their time are usually enough to deter all but the most determined oneiromancers. This suits the Family's needs, as well, as they far prefer quality of their membership over raw numbers.

Mien: The Family prefer to create an aura of mystery about themselves, the better to reinforce their natures. They tend towards several layers of clothing, designed to suggest the form rather than to reveal it. Even in the depths of summer, many of them will wear coats or heavy shawls, along with dark hats or hoods. Their ensemble is often coordinated to be just slightly off-setting — colors that almost match but are just a hair off, sleeves that are a quarter-inch longer on the left than on the right, or shoes that have slightly different patterns in their heels. The net effect is a collection of tricks of the eye that many can't quite place, leaving people faintly uncomfortable without really understanding why.

The one sign that always tells of the Family, however, is the eyes. The eyes of those who would hold dreams are dark and shadowed, even in the brightest lights, as though the changeling were wearing a dark hood. Faint sparkles of light in a dozen colors can sometimes be seen, and as the Family member's Wyrd rating increases, these sparkles come and go more quickly, and in shades that never exist outside of the strange mindscapes that the Family frequents.

Background: Those who join the Family are those who have an interest in dreams, and often come from the ranks of those who have first-hand experience in the dangers that many overlooked. Some of them have felt the touch of dream-poison themselves, before they were captured by the Fae, while others have seen friends or family driven insane or even killed by the creatures that infest dreamscapes. Many of them had durances that related to sleep or dreams, forced into lands of nightmare logic by uncaring Keepers.

Most of the Family focus on one of two aspects of dreams. A narrow majority turn their attention to nightmares, battling them and confining them, and these usually enter the order from the Autumn Court, turning fear against their enemies and guarding their friends. The rest



look to restoring peace after the nightmares are gone, and these tend to be members of the Spring Court, understanding the desires of their targets to craft the perfect dreams for them. This blend of understanding desire and fear is what the Family looks for in all its members, so it is common for members to be of one of those Courts with Goodwill in the other.

Mental Attributes tend to be high, along with Social Skills — especially Empathy, but others as well. High Composure or Resolve are liked, but not required, as they aid in holding off dangerous monsters. Physical Traits tend to be less developed, as the Family fight most of their battles in places where their bodies can't help them. Merits that have to do with dreams are, of course, highly valued and common, especially Fighting Style: Dream Combat (*Winter Masques*, p. 90).

Organization: The Family tend to congregate in areas where rumours of growing nightmares and Fae assaults are beginning to spread. Often, they follow stories of particular Incubi or similar beings, offering their services to the leaders of the Courts where they arrive. Because of the difficulty of tracking such phenomena, when the Family gather in a given area, they spread out and take various areas of society in order to hunt down signs of Fae infestations.

Young members of the Entitlement are considered to be Brothers or Sisters. While they are able to work on individual dreams on their own, they report their actions to the Family as a whole, and work on the understanding that they are to be able to come to the assistance of their leaders when asked. Siblings of the Family are expected to maintain the mystique of the Order, and not to act in ways that disgrace their natures; those who abuse their talents for personal profit are usually quickly brought to heel by their superiors.

Those of the Family who reach sufficient levels of skill (typically a minimum of Wyrd 5, with ratings of 4–5 in Intelligence, Wits, and Empathy, and a decently high level in the Contract of Dreams) are named Fathers or Mothers. There are at most two Parents operating in a given freehold; usually only one if the freehold can only support a few Family members, with two if the situation is much more dangerous. The Parents are the members of the Family who deal directly with the leaders of the Courts, and their rules ultimately decide what the Family can or can't do in a region.

Rumour has it that there is a third level of organization to the Family, known as the Grandparents. These mysterious leaders of the organization are few in number, and if they exist, would have a minimum Wyrd rating of 7, along with a host of other capabilities. Siblings never meet the luminaries of their Order, except in the most extreme circumstances, and even the Parents meet with them rarely. The Grandparents, so the story goes, have the vision and knowledge to recognize trends taking place across the world, and often order branches of the Family to attend to a freehold

before anyone else has recognized that a problem exists.

Corrupt branches of the Family do exist; these view their own advancement to be as important as the war against the Fae, rationalizing that difficult measures must sometimes be taken for the Family to prosper. No one knows what the Grandparents think of this, if anything; it is possible that the corrupt branches act with the tacit approval of the Order's leaders, or that they simply shield their dreams from retribution. It could even be that the Family are gradually splitting into two separate Entitlements — it would not be the first time in their history that the dream-eaters split over a difference in beliefs.

Concepts: Mercenary oneiromancer, blackmailer, cryptic healer, silent stranger, dream-artist.

PRIVILEGES

Joining the Family gives access to a single trick, but it is one that many oneiromancers would give their souls to possess. The Family has the ability to craft empty vessels with Dreamweaving, creating a void that they can lurk inside. In doing so, they can trap dreams or even, with sufficient luck and effort, dream-creatures.

Dream-Prison: Crafting a dream-prison uses the normal rules for Dreamweaving (see **Changeling: The Lost**, page 196), with the exception that the character does not craft a dream, but a hole into which a dream can fall. When crafting a dream-prison, a changeling specifies what sort of dream she wishes to trap: this could be as vague as “any nightmare,” or as specific as “any dream infested by an Incubus with a Wyrd rating of 3.”

When a dreamer sleeps next to a dream-prison, and an appropriate dream takes place, the Storyteller compares the Intensity of the dream with the successes rolled when crafting the dream-prison. If a dream of lower Intensity takes place, it is instantly and entirely sucked into the dream-prison, and the dreamer doesn't feel it. A member of the Family is instantly alerted when one of her dream-prisons is activated, and may enter it and interact with the dream trapped within as though she had a pledge with the original dreamer.

If the dream being captured was woven by another oneiromancer, things become more complicated. The oneiromancer rolls the die pool used to create the dream (Wits + Empathy + Wyrd for changelings, for example) against the Intelligence + Empathy + Wyrd of the Family member who crafted the prison. If the oneiromancer succeeds, the dream evades the prison and takes place, and the prison is ruined. If the Family succeed, the dream is caught as usual. This includes any dream that contains dream-poison.

Finally, if the dream-prison attacks a dream that actually contains an Incubus, which is more than capable of shattering it from within unless quickly subdued. They may roll to reduce the Intensity of the dream-prison as though Dream-Riding. If they reduce the Intensity of the prison to

0, it shatters and they are released. If the Family member enters the dream-prison before it is broken, he can engage the Incubus in dream-combat; an Incubus reduced to below 0 Willpower by dream combat is pushed into passivity, and cannot recover Willpower or affect their dream-prison (on the other hand, if the Incubus is successful in dream-combat, she will infect the Family member normally). If the dream-prison is later broken, the Incubus will be freed. Dream-prisons cannot hold the minds of any being with a form outside of dreams, including changelings, mortals, and the Fae. Such beings will leave the prison as normal when they awaken.

Any oneiromancer who is present at a dream-prison may interact with the dream inside as though she had a pledge with the original dreamer, but she must sleep next to the prison itself. An oneiromancer who does so may alter the prison with a single success on a Wits + Empathy + Wyrd roll, weakening it enough to let the dream inside slip out at a later date. If this happens, the dream-prison becomes a normal dream vessel, and will open into the dreams of the next person to sleep next to it. This will release any Incubus or dream-poison contained within the prison.

In recent decades, many members of the Family have taken to producing dream-catchers as their prisons, knowing that many mortals will blithely place such things over their beds or near them as they sleep. A few members consider this painfully tacky, but the majority are more than willing to take advantage of the belief to ease their way into the dreams of their targets (of course, they then have to acquire the dream-catchers once they are filled, but that is another matter...)

Rumors of the Night

Any Entitlement that makes its trade on secrets and mystery will spark rumours about its purpose, and the Family is no exception to this truth.

- Many claim that the Family's understanding of dreams is far beyond what it will admit to. Through careful study of the dream-poisons that they have acquired, the leaders of the order have learned to reproduce it. According to these rumours, when the Family want to spread terror, they will unleash their own dream-poison against the friends and allies of their rivals, spreading contagion-dreams that they then charge dearly to "cure".

- Some have whispered that the leaders of the Family discovered a Goblin Contract that allows them to step bodily into dreams, and they have long since stopped being anything but dreams themselves. The Grandfathers and Grandmothers, as the rumour goes, walk through the dreams of their Family, organizing and enforcing their desires.

- The Family's ability to steal dreams gives them the power to access the depths of their victims' minds. If they steal enough dreams, they can start taking pieces of a changelings' memories, abilities, or even beliefs, until nothing remains but a hollow shell.



THE HEDGE WARDENS

I am the gate, and the key. I pledge myself to the endless patrol, to stand at the border of what is safe and what is monstrous, and to ensure that only what is right shall pass by. The darkness will not consume me, and the light will stand always at my back.

When it comes to the Hedge, every freehold sits on a knife's edge. Powerful trods ensure that many changelings will swell the ranks of the local Courts, but provide an easy path for the Gentry to ride to find new prey. Goblin Markets teem with potential power for a cautious soul, but are filled with traps to capture the unwary. Groves provide goblin fruits for the cautious, yet dangerous hobgoblins lurk on the pathways, and there is no safety for those who leave them for the Thorns. Wise changelings understand that the Hedge is a dangerous locale, but one that cannot readily be ignored.

The Hedge Wardens believe there is promise in the Thorns. At the same time, this promise is overshadowed by the vast danger that faces most of those who choose to dare the pathways of the Hedge. Their mission is a simple one, but one that seems insane to many: to tame the local Hedge around the freehold in which they find themselves, to root out and destroy the most dangerous of the region's Hedge-Beasts, and to keep the trods open so that changelings can escape from Arcadia.

In their desire to interact with and calm the Hedge, the Wardens are far from alone, but where they break from such others is that they are less interested in understanding the Hedge, and more interested in controlling it. Most Wardens would be the first to admit that this is a quixotic dream — the Hedge has existed for as long as any changeling story goes back, and it has never been controllable. Despite this, the Wardens believe they might have a chance now, when they never did before.

The Hedge Wardens are a modern Entitlement, one which traces its origins back only decades, rather than centuries. Its founder, a Wizen soldier known as Iron



William, saw the chaos and feuding of the creatures of the Hedge, and came to believe that modern communications and technology could allow freeholds to co-ordinate, giving them the capabilities that they would need in order to create a network of trods and paths that defied the Gentry and leashed the Hedge. Most of his fellows thought this was a mad task, but William was able to

gather enough fellow soldiers to begin his plan. Since then, the Wardens have expanded gradually. Their typical approach is to find the largest freehold in a region, and watch it for signs of danger from the Hedge. When such dangers approach, the Wardens arrive to battle them, using their extensive knowledge and organization to help make short work of such monsters. Along the way, they recruit new soldiers from the endangered freehold, adding them to their ranks and creating a new chapter-house. If the freehold can be stabilized, it becomes a new centre from which the Wardens begin to look at neighbouring regions.

In practice, of course, matters run much less smoothly. Many of the dangers of the Hedge are beyond the abilities of the Wardens to police, and they find themselves embroiled in brutal or vicious battles that claim lives and resources for no gain. Worse, success can breed even greater war, as new hobgoblins move into destabilized areas of the Hedge, or the Gentry arrive to see what these rumours of new warriors in their territories are. For every victory the Wardens can proudly point to, there are a dozen defeats that they are fortunate to walk away from. If their dream to control the Hedge is even possible, it will be a long time indeed before it is a success.

Titles: Warden (Male or Female), Lord or Lady (leader)

Prerequisites: Wyrd 3, Investigation 2, Occult 2

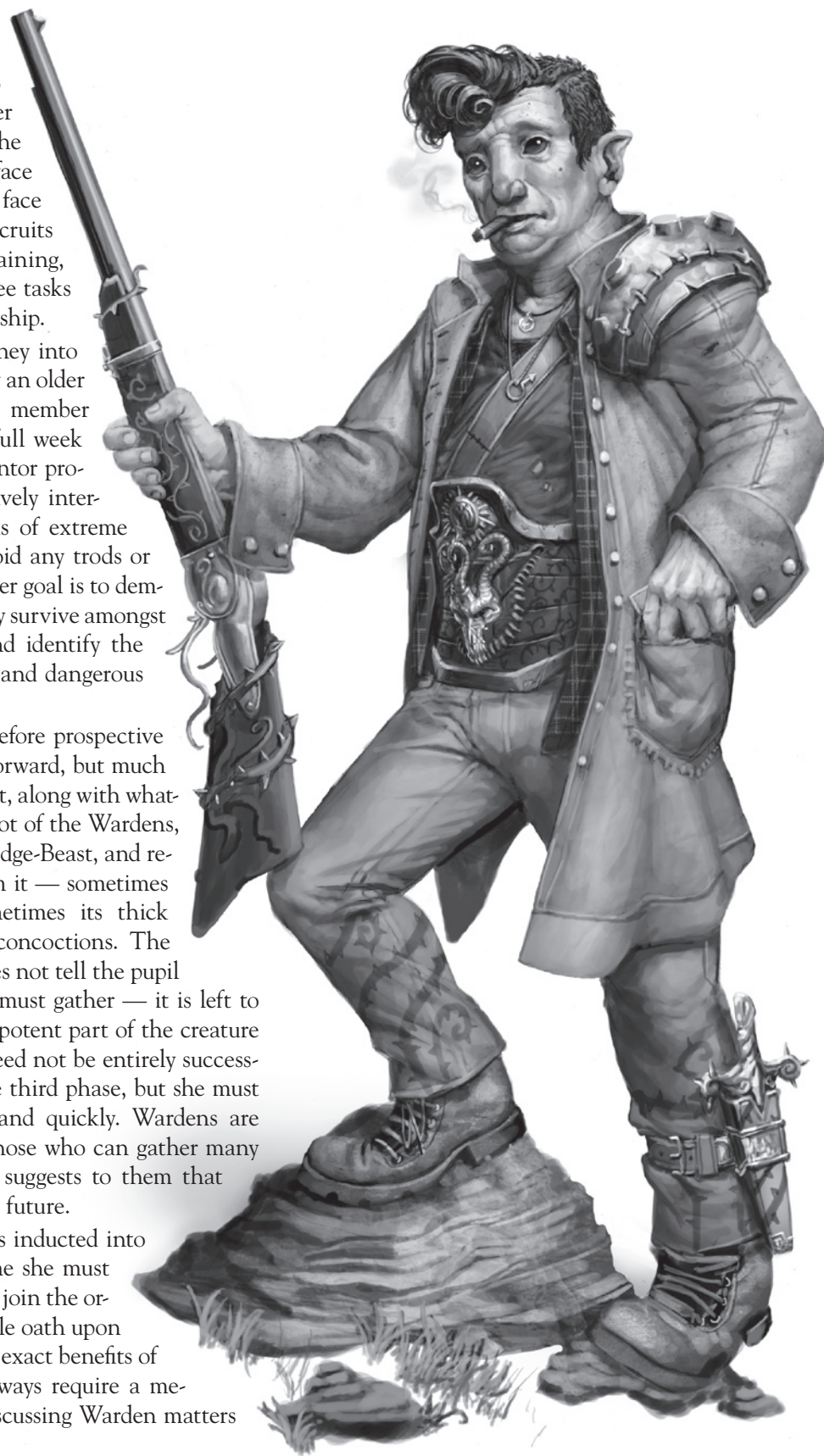
Joining: The Hedge Wardens are a demanding group. Although they will sometimes offer member-

ship directly to deserving changelings, their usual tactics are to impress the locals of whatever freehold they enter, and then allow those changelings to compete with one another for the honour of joining the Wardens and the power to face off against whatever threats face the freehold. Potential recruits are given basic levels of training, before being set on the three tasks required for proper membership.

The first task is a journey into the Hedge, accompanied by an older Warden. The prospective member must be ready to spend a full week in the Hedge, with her mentor providing advice, but not actively intervening except in situations of extreme danger. The pupil is to avoid any trods or Hollows during this time; her goal is to demonstrate her ability to simply survive amongst the Thorns if need be, and identify the differences between useful and dangerous locations or beings.

The second task put before prospective recruits is equally straightforward, but much more dangerous. The recruit, along with whatever allies she can gather not of the Wardens, is sent to destroy a local Hedge-Beast, and recover a valuable thing from it — sometimes its enchanted blood, sometimes its thick hide, sometimes stranger concoctions. The Warden giving the task does not tell the pupil exactly what it is that she must gather — it is left to her to determine the most potent part of the creature she destroys. The recruit need not be entirely successful to be considered for the third phase, but she must perform respectably well, and quickly. Wardens are particularly interested in those who can gather many allies for their quest, as it suggests to them that such aid might come in the future.

Finally, the character is inducted into the Wardens, at which time she must swear two oaths, the first to join the order, and the second as a Title oath upon her newly-forged rank. The exact benefits of the oath vary, but they always require a medial forbiddance against discussing Warden matters



with outsiders without permission, last a year and a day, and include a Sanction of Banishment from the Hedge itself. Typical benefits are the granting of a two-dot Physical Merit to cover some area that the elder Wardens feel the character is weak in. Wardens renew their oaths once each year, before their local Lord.

Mien: The nature of the Wardens is to oppose Arcadia and the Hedge, and this reflects itself in their appearance. At first, young Wardens find that their weapons and armor take on a faint, dark metallic sheen. This tint gradually spreads to cover all of their clothing, their hair, and eventually their skin, giving them the look of people reflected in iron. Usually, this also reflects itself in Wardens appearing unyielding or inflexible, regardless of how limber they might actually be.

The Hedge also recognizes the danger that it faces, and hesitates to challenge it directly. In the presence of a Warden, the Hedge always appears faintly wilted or weakened, in addition to whatever other changes a Warden might impose with her presence. This has no effect in the mortal world, of course, and what effect it has upon Arcadian Realms is a matter of pure speculation.

Background: A military mindset and desire for control are paramount to the Wardens, and they draw heavily from changelings who seek to reverse the circumstances of their durances. Many of them were in positions of authority before their captures, or at least had plans to reach such positions. Military or police backgrounds are especially common, which is unsurprising given the origins of the Entitlement.

The Hedge Wardens gather their recruits most often from the Summer or Autumn Courts. Summer grants them the force and power to attempt to impose order on the viciousness of the Hedge, while Autumn Wardens remind hobgoblins that there are things that even monsters should fear. Members of the Spring Court are less common, and the Winter Court is almost unheard of among the Wardens, whose philosophies run directly counter to Winter's beliefs about deliberately antagonizing the Gentry.

Wardens strongly favour Physical Attributes, Skills, and Merits, to enable them to keep order. Mental Traits are valued for their practical capabilities, rather than for the research of knowledge as a concept, and Social Traits are valued as long as they help the Wardens gather the allies and resources that they need to do their jobs — in particular, the Wardens are happy to gather new members with strong ratings in Court Goodwill, Allies, or Contacts. Finally, once they join the order, many Wardens develop high ratings in the

Hollow, Retainer, or Token Merits, as they pull together ever-growing networks of allies and tools.

Organization: The Hedge Wardens have a strictly regimented organization, with every changeling's role in the organization carefully assigned and hierarchies of rank quickly determined. At the bottom rung are what are known as Warden cadets, made up of changelings who are willing to work with the Wardens, but lack either the skill or the desire to actually join the order. Many of these cadets swear an oath of secrecy, involving themselves in the Wardens, without ever fully joining. The cadets also include more than a few ensorcelled mortals, allies of the Wardens who have had experiences with the Fae and wish to take part in restricting their activities. These mortals typically concern themselves with opposition on the mortal side of the Hedge, given the dangers of actually entering it, but can provide a powerful backup unit in case of serious trouble.

In each freehold in which they operate, the Wardens organize into a Base, which takes advantage of the cadets as needed and allows some of them access to Warden supplies. Each Base is under the command of a single Hedge Lord or Hedge Lady, who gives orders to the others in the Entitlement as needed. Each Base also includes one loremaster, one quartermaster, and one speaker. The loremaster's duties are to catalogue the enemies that the Wardens encounter, and to learn what they can about the local Hedge. The quartermaster handles supplies, co-ordination with other Bases, and personnel issues. Finally, the speaker looks to recruitment, and cooperation with other Entitlements or with the local Great Courts as a whole. Any Wardens who do not fill these roles are general soldiers, although they may provide backup as necessary. It is not uncommon for the loremaster or quartermaster to have cadet assistants, but these cadets are never allowed to see any of the highest secrets that the officers study.

In areas where there simply aren't enough Wardens to fulfill all four tasks, it is not uncommon to roll them together; the loremaster becomes the quartermaster as well, or the Hedge Lord takes on the role of speaker. In such cases, the Wardens will attempt to recruit aggressively; they are generally uncomfortable with fewer than six actual Wardens on a Base, although they often must take what they can get. Occasionally, the Hedge Lord will also be the leader of a local Court, in which case the Wardens will generally integrate themselves extremely well into the local Court framework.

Every Base co-ordinates its actions with a central Base, which is still run by the Entitlement's

founder, the Hedge King. Exact details of that Base's location remain secret; the Wardens don't want to risk a Gentry spy uncovering too much information and launching an attack that would cut off the Wardens' organization. Ultimately, what the Hedge King says goes, and there have yet to be any recorded incidents of a Base completely severing its ties with the larger organization. In practice, however, individual Bases have a great deal of free will to deal with local conditions as they see fit, and the Hedge King rarely intervenes.

Concepts: Grizzled veteran, idealistic young squire, bloodthirsty trophy-taker, self-exile from the mortal world, detached Hedge-gardener, trod-walking smuggler.

PRIVILEGES

In addition to whatever Hedgespun or Tokens they acquire as a part of their activities, all of the Hedge Wardens gain the following advantage upon joining the order.

HEART OF IRON

The Hedge Wardens have dedicated themselves to doing battle with the myriad dangers of the Hedge, and this dedication grants them a certain degree of protection against the dangerous forces that they face. As many Wardens would be quick to remind new recruits, it is far from perfect, but it has saved more than one Warden from death. Whenever a Warden is targeted by a magic that allows her to either apply her Wyrd as a die penalty, or roll her Wyrd as an opposed check, she increases her effective Wyrd by 1 for that purpose.

Rumors of the Wardens

The Hedge Wardens put themselves into the path of danger on a regular basis, and their dedication inspires both envy and concern among their fellow changelings, who whisper rumours such as the following:

- The Wardens couldn't care less about protecting people. The truth is, they want to control the Hedge so that they can control its products — if you let them take over, pretty soon they're the only ones who can make Hedgespun, own Hollows, or get any of the benefits of the Hedge. That's a lot of power to concentrate in one group's hands, isn't it?

- The leaders of the Wardens have found a way to forge a contract with Iron, that's why they start looking the way they do. They're really bridge-burners, but they know they can't just shut off a few gates, so they're looking for a way to shatter the whole Hedge all at once. If they ever think they've found it, things are going to get messy fast.

- The Wardens actually invaded Arcadia, and conquered a Fae Realm, making it into their new base of operations. They're grabbing mortal recruits and sending them there, turning them into new changeling soldiers to swell their ranks. They think they can get enough soldiers together to declare war on Arcadia as a whole, but it's all going to go sour, and then there'll be hell to pay.



THE SQUIRES OF THE BROKEN BOUGH

My blood for victory. My blade for vengeance. My life for peace.

Centuries ago, a mortal town was fortunate enough to have for a champion a Draconic knight. The Rowan Knight, as he was known, stood against various threats to his land both mortal and magical, and he gathered around him a motley of like-minded friends, who stood behind him and helped him to defend their people from those who would harm them.

Unfortunately, success breeds resentment, and the Knight and his motley made many enemies. One day, while they were in the Hedge doing battle with a monster that had been stalking the region, a group of such enemies attacked the town. The Rowan Knight returned to find his home burned to the ground, his family and friends murdered, and nothing but ashes and smoke to mark their passing. Rage boiled inside him, and he swore revenge. And his motley, who had also lost their friends and families to the attack, stood at his side.

The Knight attacked his enemies, and cut them down one after another. Every wound only served to increase his frenzy, and foe after foe fell to his blade, until every last one of those who had attacked the town lay dead. Only then did the Knight fall, his many wounds finally bringing him down. His motley gathered around him, and they broke their shields together and swore that he would not be forgotten, and that they would carry on his legacy and fight for those who still had a purpose to live for. And thus were born the Squires of the Broken Bough.

In modern times, the Squires spread into freeholds that are facing major threats, or those plagued by corruption and pain. A freehold that faces only political or social threats is one that the Squires have no interest in, and a peaceful freehold, by definition, has no purpose for them. They recruit from those who have lost everything that they cared about — usually to the Others but sometimes due to other causes — and who have no reason left to live, and they give them something worth dying for. Their purpose is simple and straightforward: they will fight so that others can rest, and die so that others will live. Their lives have no other purpose, and every drop of blood shed will be accompanied by rivers of blood from their enemies.

The Squires are respected by other members of their freehold, but also generally avoided; after all, the degree of devotion that they show to their ideals frankly tends to

make other changelings a little bit nervous. The Squires don't mind, particularly; if others don't get close to them, they will not mourn so much when a Squire finally dies. Instead, most of them turn their attention inwards, interacting with others on a purely professional level, and considering only their fellow warriors as family.

Titles: Squire, Martyr (by others only)

Prerequisites: Resolve 3; Any of Brawl, Firearms, or Weaponry 2; Wyrd 2

Joining: The Squires are extremely careful about those they let into their ranks. Many changelings, when they first return from the Hedge, feel like their lives have been shattered, and many more are willing to share rash oaths in the aftermath of tragedy (as, some whisper, did the Rowan Knight himself). Because of this, it is a flat rule in every domain inhabited by the Squires that the apprenticeship period must last a minimum of three months, and existing Squires may not directly attempt to recruit their charges; the recruit must approach the Squires to join himself. During those three months, the Squire tests the new recruit, training her to defend herself and pushing her to see reasons to stay alive. Many recruits find this philosophy a strange one, as the Squires seem to try to discourage others from joining them regardless of their qualifications, but the Squires are more interested in recruiting those of a particular mindset than with padding their numbers. At the end of the season's training, all existing Squires within the freehold gather and secretly voice their opinion, beginning with the prospective recruit's primary trainer. Anyone that the majority feel are too suicidal, or too attached to life, is denied entrance to the Squires. Only those whose actions reveal a willingness to die for a cause are allowed entrance.

If the Squire is accepted, she is brought before her new companions, and told to bring a bladed weapon of her choice. As she swears the oath of allegiance to the duties and principles of the Broken Bough, she grasps the blade of the weapon with her hands until blood runs down its surface, and lets her fervency empower it. At the conclusion of her oath, she is left with faint scars that will never fade, and the blade of the Broken Bough.

Mien: Whatever their natures, the Squires' miens always change gradually and unstoppably. They grow worn-down, their clothing showing signs of frequent and partial repair, their skin growing rough and calloused, their hair faintly uneven, and their eyes shadowed. No amount of careful groom-



ing can undo this wearing, and as the character's Wyrd grows, she appears more as though she is working herself to the bone.

The second sign of the Squires is their scars; the hands of a Squire always bear the twin scars of their initiation, scars that flush red as the Squires do battle and become subtly more pronounced as her Wyrd score grows. These scars never impede a Squire's movements or cause pain, but they sometimes appear as though they should. The final symbol, and the one that most Squires point to, is the blade that each of them carries; no Squire would be caught without her weapon if she can avoid it, and when forced to leave them behind, they tend to be ill-at-ease and jumpy.

Background: The Squires recruit based on the past, and all of them tend to share certain experiences. Any given Squire is certain to have had a terrible tragedy in her past, one which she lays at the feet of her enemies and swears vengeance. Some Squires join in order to achieve that revenge, while others have already won their personal vendettas and now seek to prevent others from the need to walk that path.

Members of the Squires draw almost exclusively from the Summer or Winter Courts. Summer Court members tend to be direct, charging into battle as necessary to reap bloody vengeance, while Winter Court members slip into enemy camps, visiting their own sorrow onto their foes. Members of the Autumn Court occasionally join, but tend to be more interested in understanding than destruction, and the nature of the Spring Court tends to oppose surrendering one's own desires for the sake of revenge.

In general, virtues of Fortitude and Justice tend to fill out the order, along with the common Vice of Wrath. Those who become Squires tend to spend much of their time improving their Physical Attributes and Skills, unless they were already highly skilled within those areas, and frequently neglect their Social traits. Similarly, Physical Merits are much more common than Social ones — the Squires tend not to connect themselves closely to others, focusing instead on honing themselves into living weapons.

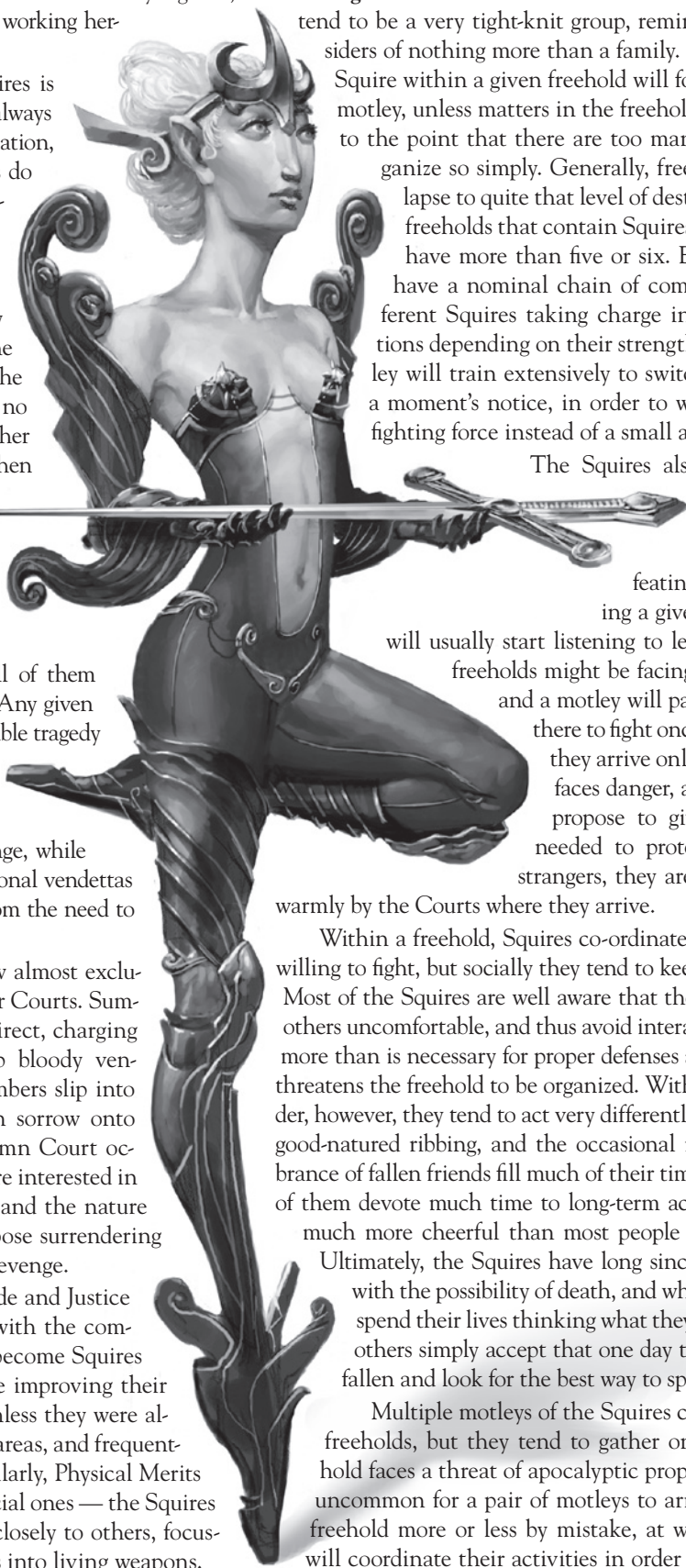
Organization: Because of their nature, the Squires tend to be a very tight-knit group, reminding many outsiders of nothing more than a family. Generally, every Squire within a given freehold will form into a single motley, unless matters in the freehold have degraded to the point that there are too many Squires to organize so simply. Generally, freeholds don't collapse to quite that level of destruction, so most freeholds that contain Squires will usually not have more than five or six. Each motley will have a nominal chain of command, with different Squires taking charge in different situations depending on their strengths. A given motley will train extensively to switch command on a moment's notice, in order to work as a unified fighting force instead of a small and violent mob.

The Squires also tend to be a mobile group. When they are successful in defeating the threats facing a given freehold, they will usually start listening to learn where other freeholds might be facing serious threats, and a motley will pack up and travel there to fight once again. Because they arrive only after a freehold faces danger, and because they propose to give their lives if needed to protect almost total strangers, they are usually greeted warmly by the Courts where they arrive.

Within a freehold, Squires co-ordinate with any others willing to fight, but socially they tend to keep to themselves. Most of the Squires are well aware that their natures make others uncomfortable, and thus avoid interacting with them more than is necessary for proper defenses against whatever threatens the freehold to be organized. Within their own order, however, they tend to act very differently. Rowdy parties, good-natured ribbing, and the occasional maudlin remembrance of fallen friends fill much of their time, and while few of them devote much time to long-term activities, they are much more cheerful than most people expect of them.

Ultimately, the Squires have long since come to terms with the possibility of death, and while some of them spend their lives thinking what they have lost, many others simply accept that one day they will join the fallen and look for the best way to spend their lives.

Multiple motleys of the Squires coordinate across freeholds, but they tend to gather only when a freehold faces a threat of apocalyptic proportions. It is not uncommon for a pair of motleys to arrive in the same freehold more or less by mistake, at which point they will coordinate their activities in order to help solve local problems as quickly as possible, but most changelings



who know of the order know to be extremely worried if a third motley arrives and shows signs of intending to stay.

Concepts: Grieving widow, beat cop with a history, warrior wracked with survivor's guilt, ex-organized crime soldier, victim of freak chance.

PRIVILEGES

Below is the token that serves as the physical manifestation of the oath that the Squires swear. It is formed from whatever weapon the Squire chooses; it is common to choose something relatively small and concealable, such as a large knife or machete, although some Squires prefer the damage of a larger blade. Some Squires, those who can afford to find them, acquire Hedgespun blades and empower them further with their oath; in such a case, increase the cost of the token by its Hedgespun rating.

THE BROKEN BLADE

To mortal eyes, the Broken Blade appears to be nothing more than whatever type of weapon it was forged from, be it a simple knife or an elaborate sword. Beneath the Mask, however, it is more impressive; the weapon is cracked and seems as though it could break at any strike, and tiny beads of blood dot its sides. The weapon can be wielded normally, in which case it behaves as a mundane item of its type.

Activating the token is simple. When activated, the beads of blood along the sword start to flow, running down the hilt to the wielder's hand and along the blade, giving it a viciously sharp edge. Upon a successful activation, the character may boost the weapon's damage bonus by up to her Wyrđ rating for the duration of the scene.

Action: Reflexive

Drawback: The damage bonus granted by the Broken Blade is not free; it draws on the life and power of its wielder in order to focus that power into killing force. At the end of the scene in which the Broken Blade is used, the character takes bashing damage equal to the amount that she increased the weapon's damage bonus by. This damage cannot be healed with magic. If the character took enough damage, this is fully capable of killing her.

Catch: A character can forgo the usual cost of activation and draw on the Blade's hunger directly. If she does this, half of the damage she receives at the end of the scene (rounded up) is lethal, instead of bashing.

The Broken Blade is a physical manifestation of a Squire's oath. If one of the Squires forsakes the Entitlement, or dies of natural causes, his blade promptly shatters. Interestingly, such blades are not destroyed if their wielder falls in the course of his duties, and can potentially be recovered and used. Persistent rumors that anyone who makes constant use of a Broken Blade will suffer the loss of his loved ones, and eventually join the Squires himself, have never been proven.

Rumors of the Squires

The Squires' natures make people worry, and their insular nature lends itself to many rumours spreading about their natures:

- Some people say it's awfully convenient the way that the Squires always find people to fight their battles for them. Sometimes, it's not a coincidence at all — the Squires have been known to step in when it looks like someone's about to recover their lives, and will go as far as killing innocents in order to recruit another soldier into their endless war. After all, what's one or two deaths against the lives of scores of others?

- The Squires mean well, but they've got tunnel vision. Sometimes, they'll show up somewhere just as things are starting to calm down, and make everything worse. They'll launch attacks against dangerous monsters that were minding their own business, or try to wipe out Goblin Markets and invite the wrath of armies of hobgoblins. And then they have the gall to say that it would have happened anyway, and the damage being caused is just proof of that!

- The Broken Blade is a dangerous tool; it doesn't just draw life energy, but also subtly changes the Fate of the person who uses it. Anyone who picks up the sword will find that tragedy strikes them, until they have lost everything that they loved and swear their own lives to the Squires to gain their own revenge...

THE TWILIGHT GLEANERS

Forever I will look into the mists, to pull aside the veil and chart the course that Fate plans for us. When pathways are hidden, I will be the guide to light the way. When confusion pools around us, I will be the rock to which others may hold. My life is given over to Fate, and my destiny lies before me.

Although most changelings have great power at their disposal, they are still human at heart, and in times of danger or uncertainty they are just as likely to turn to whatever sources of certainty they can find. To these souls seeking guidance, the Twilight Gleaners often seem to be a blessing from the Wyrd. They bring with them assurance that the choices their clients make are guaranteed to success, and such confidence carries many changelings forward on their path.

The Gleaners are not mere charlatans, however. Each member of the Entitlement has forged a connection with Fate itself. Although they do not have the power to control its course, they can see hints of the plans and goals that it holds, and by relaying that information, they can guide their charges to follow Fate's plan. Although some see this as just another servitude, the Gleaners disagree. Fate, they argue, is a greater force than any changeling, and it is better to follow its lead than to waste your effort trying to avoid it. To that end, the Gleaners learn the secrets of teasing out which courses of action carry the blessing of destiny, and which are doomed to failure. Through that end, they argue, changelings can be assured of taking action with Fate at their back, rather than in opposition to it.

The connection that the Gleaners share with Fate grants them many advantages, not least of which is the stable of powerful people who come to them for advice. In areas where the Gleaners hold sway, it is not uncommon for Court leaders and influential changelings to make all of their plans based on which actions will succeed and which will not. These petitioners have the advantage of knowing that, while not incorruptible, the Gleaners at least must give accurate foreknowledge; the very magic that grants their abilities require them to abide by Fate's strictures. To go against their visions is to deny everything that makes the seers of Twilight what they are.

On the other hand, the Gleaners are often attacked by their critics for their blind devotion to Fate's paths. Many changelings prefer to think of themselves as masters of their own destinies, and the assertions of the Gleaners that their Fate

should not be changed strikes a raw nerve with those who do not believe that there is a greater purpose to their lives. In particular, those freeholds that hold members of both the Twilight Gleaners and the College of Worms can look forward to endless arguments and feuds, sometimes escalating to violence; the College feels that the Gleaners are blind fools who cling to a force they do not understand, and the Gleaners believe that the College is meddling with forces that are beyond them by trying to understand the nature of Fate.

Titles: Sir or Madam, Soothsayer, Fateblind (insulting)

Prerequisites: Empathy 2, Occult 2, Wyrd 3

Joining: To become a Gleaner, one must come to understand that her Fate is not entirely her own, and that there is no shame in listening to the wisdom of others. Generally, this happens as one of an existing Gleaner's clients decides they wish to see the hints Fate drops for herself, rather than simply relying on another's visions. Typically, Gleaners also watch out for signs of attunement to Fate's wishes in those they meet, and offer the possibility of recruitment to the few that they think will be responsible and reserved.

Once a would-be Gleaner finds herself a teacher, she must spend arduous months learning to accept whatever visions she receives, rather than trying to push or prod them into the forms she wants. During this time, anyone who fails to demonstrate a properly reverent attitude towards the mysteries they are uncovering is gradually weeded out, leaving the most dedicated to undergo the final initiation rituals. Any Gleaner is able to initiate one of their fellows into the secrets of the Entitlement, and such ceremonies are usually extremely private, attended only by the new Gleaner and her mentor. There, she affirms her connection to Fate, and swears to stand by it for the rest of her life. At the end of the ritual, she enacts her first divination, asking Fate whether she will become a Gleaner. Those who are turned down are never allowed to make another attempt, but it is rare for one who has reached the final test to be denied her goal.

As a side note, Gleaners never ask Fate whether a charge will succeed as a Gleaner before the apprenticeship begins. Such a question is considered to be a sign that the Gleaner's own judgment is faulty, and common legend states it will always be answered in the negative.



Mien: As a general rule, Gleaners prefer to appear humble and unassuming. They are not the masters of Fate, teach the elders of the Entitlement, but merely its servants, and excess pride is something to be avoided. To that end, simple colours are favoured, tending towards the drab.

The primary sign of a Gleaner's devotion is the milky silver tint that grows in his eyes: at first seeming only faint, but gradually expanding as his Wyrd increases until the whole of his eyes appear covered with tarnished silver cataracts. This does not affect his actual vision, but it can be unnerving to see, especially if it begins to bleed into the Mask. The second sign is that the strands of Fate that the Gleaners watch leave traces across their skin and clothes; Gleaners often appear to have silver threads running through their clothing, and faint silver can be seen across their veins.

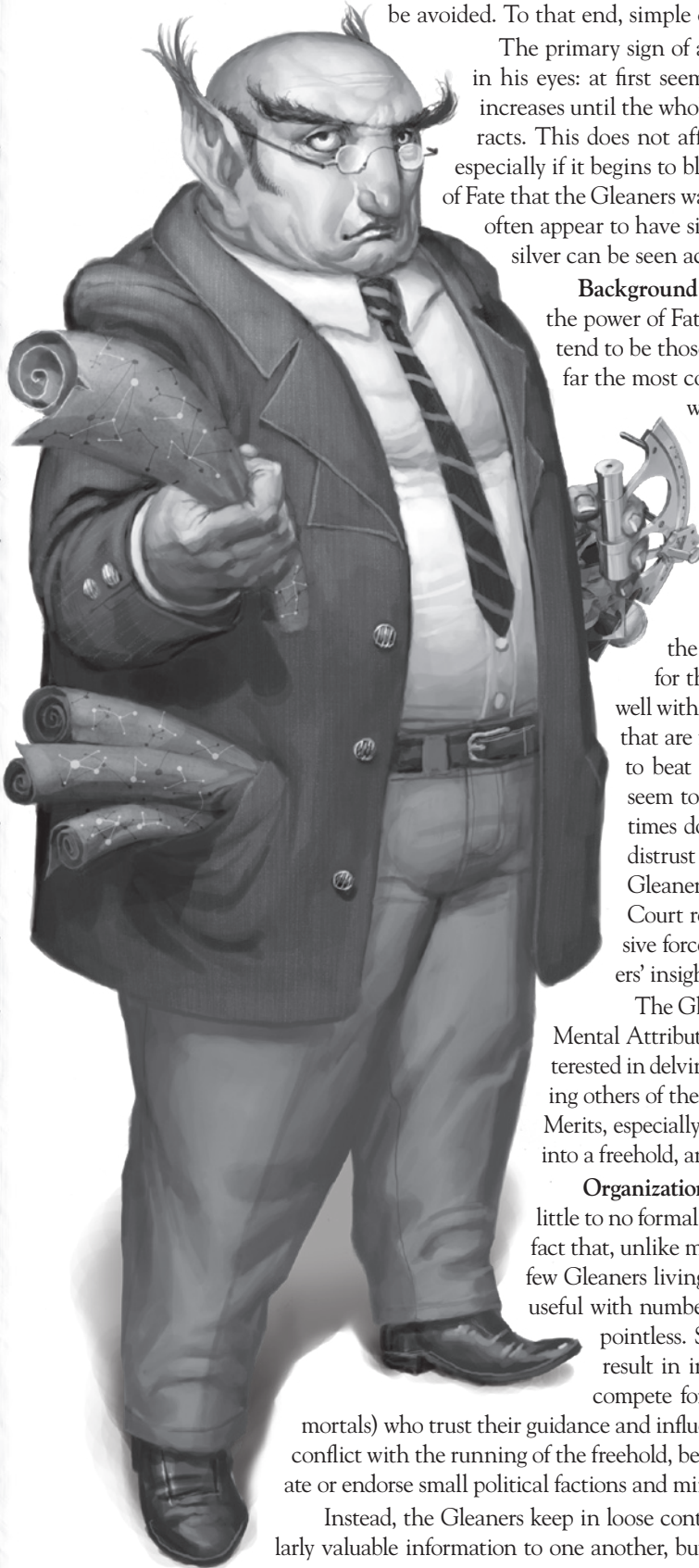
Background: The ranks of the Gleaners are filled by those who feel the power of Fate, and seek to give over their lives to its dictates. They tend to be those who see clearly, and mental-focused characters are by far the most common of their membership. Many Gleaners are those who have suffered, and choose to believe that there was a greater purpose to their lives. A small cross-section are deeply involved in a variety of religions, and equate Fate's guidance with that of their patron deities. Whatever their origins, all Gleaners have a talent for understanding their clients, honed to a razor edge by their understanding of Fate's desires.

Most often, the Gleaners are made up of members of the Spring Court, whose members seek the approval of Fate for their plans, and the Winter Court, whose beliefs interact well with the Gleaners' philosophy that one should enact the tasks that are fated to succeed, rather than wasting their efforts trying to beat the odds. Although Autumn's interest in magic would seem to create a resonance with this Entitlement, it can sometimes do the opposite — Autumn Court fae are often likely to distrust Fate's influence, and can be among the most vocal of the Gleaners' opponents. Similarly, the active nature of the Summer Court renders them less likely to give themselves over to a passive force, although they are more than happy to use the Gleaners' insights to plan their wars.

The Gleaners tend towards Social Attributes and Abilities, with Mental Attributes and Abilities a close second. Usually, they are less interested in delving deeper into understanding than they are with convincing others of the correct path to take. They frequently have strong Social Merits, especially Court Goodwill if they have integrated themselves well into a freehold, and high ratings in Contacts and Allies with their clients.

Organization: As a rule, the Twilight Gleaners tend towards having little to no formal organization. A large part of this comes from the simple fact that, unlike many Entitlements, it is rarely useful to have more than a few Gleaners living in a given freehold, as their gifts do not become more useful with numbers, and asking the same question of two Soothsayers is pointless. Situations where Gleaners gather in numbers generally result in intense but unproductive rivalries, as the two fatetellers compete for the business of those changelings (and, on occasion, mortals) who trust their guidance and influence. In such cases, the Gleaners' rivalries rarely directly conflict with the running of the freehold, being more personal in scale, although they can easily create or endorse small political factions and minor rivalries between their clients.

Instead, the Gleaners keep in loose contact between freeholds, occasionally passing on particularly valuable information to one another, but they more often simply find a network of like-minded



people to be a valuable place where they do not have to justify their beliefs or actions to the dubious masses. While the Gleaners are basically contained in an entire organization in this way, there is no formal leadership or direction that the group takes, beyond whatever Fate might ordain.

Typically, a freehold will hold a single older Gleaner, along with anywhere from one to three of his pupils, depending on how successful he has been. The pupils listen to the guidance of their master, who divides his own clients among them as necessary in order to conserve Glamour and help his students place their own roots in the community. Opinion is divided among the Gleaners about whether it is best to take only one student, thereby concentrating one's influence in a single line of succession, or encourage competition and expansion by taking a small number — most Gleaners take a pair of students if they can, but others prefer more or fewer (and some refuse to take students at all, although this is extremely rare). Whatever the choice, no more than three pupils should be accepted, and a Gleaner who takes on more is generally considered arrogant or foolish.

This state of affairs continues until the mentor dies or chooses to leave the freehold. When he does so, if he had more than one student, he does not choose a single heir from among his students. Instead, his successors must decide who will remain with the freehold and take on students of their own, and who will journey to other freeholds to spread the knowledge of the Gleaners. In cases where the students cannot decide, they allow Fate to be their ultimate arbiter by asking which Gleaners would be successful in the freehold. In cases where more than one student would be successful, and the two still cannot decide, what usually results is one of the political rivalries mentioned above.

Concepts: *Éminence grise*, Dusk Court fatalist, superstitious Fate-worshipper, obsessive statistician, seventh son, dyed-in-the-wool romantic.

PRIVILEGES

The unique connection that the Twilight Gleaners share with Fate gives them access to the following ability:

SENSING FATE'S STRANDS

Any member of the Twilight Gleaners may, at any time, discover whether a planned course of action is fated to succeed or fail. To do so, the character need simply spend 1 Glamour and specify what they seek to discover. This functions only for plans that could succeed or fail — for example, a Gleaner could ask whether a planned raid against a Loyalist encampment will succeed, but not whether a given Gentry will be present.

If Fate indicates that the plan will be successful, the plan gains the weight of destiny, as it is more certain to succeed. (That doesn't mean it *will* succeed, though — Fate can be thwarted, of course.) Any roll made, by anyone, that directly furthers the plan receives a +1 die environmental bonus, and any roll made that directly opposes the plan re-

ceives a -1 die penalty. If Fate indicates that the plan will fail, the bonus and penalty are reversed. Fate never changes its mind; once any Gleaner has asked the question, the answer remains the same, and multiple queries do not stack the bonus or penalty. It is up to the Storyteller whether a plan has the weight of destiny behind it or against it. If a Gleaner asks a question about a plan which has been successfully prophesized in another manner, she will receive that answer, but the mechanics of the previous prophecy will take precedence over those of the Entitlement.

If a Gleaner attempts to help the enacting of a plan fated to fail, or directly opposes a plan fated to succeed — including by lying to a client about whether a plan they are inquiring about will succeed or fail — she is considered to have broken her oath to Fate. This does not remove her from the Gleaners, but she does suffer a penalty: for one month after she broke her oath, she suffers a -2 die penalty to all Persuasion rolls, as Fate twists her words against her. Furthermore, she must roll for degeneration as though she broke a pledge (Clarity 4 sin, see page 92 of *Changeling: The Lost*).

Rumors of the Twilight Gleaners

Although the Gleaners are straightforward in their actions and beliefs, rumors still swirl about them:

- Story goes, the real reason that Gleaners restrict their numbers in a given place is to avoid causing trouble — whenever the soothsayers try and draw information out of Fate, they end up getting its attention. Too many questions, and things start getting really weird around a freehold; old friends and enemies showing up out of nowhere, old stories replaying themselves.

- They may act humble, but the Gleaners actually know how to control Fate; while the weaker members of the Entitlement just ask it questions, the leaders give it answers. The more Court leaders that wind up listening to those answers, the more power the Gleaners actually have; if we're not careful, pretty soon we'll all be puppets dancing to their tune.

- Sometimes, when a Gleaner asks a question, they don't get any answer. Fate's just not there, as far as that plan is concerned. When that happens, they're on their own; nothing can determine what will happen next, and it usually means that something monstrously big is about to go down, and no one could predict the result. You'll know when this happens, because the Gleaners will all book tickets out of town as quick as they can.

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